

RHODES COUNCIL IMBIZO INPUT

South African higher education and Rhodes University

- Post-1994 national developments
- Current national situation
- Current situation at Rhodes
 - ✓ Enrolments and enrolment planning
 - ✓ Academic structure and programmes
 - ✓ Staff
 - ✓ Infrastructure
 - ✓ Finances
 - ✓ Equity and transformation
 - ✓ Eastern Cape higher education and other relations

Rhodes University: Challenges and Processes

- Key challenges (VC)
- Key current institutional processes
 - ✓ Institutional Development Plan (Dr Mabizela)
 - ✓ Pre-Determined Objectives (VC)

Introduction

Rhodes has a deserved national and international reputation for academic scholarship and quality. Preserving and further enhancing this reputation are not matters that we can be complacent about or can leave to chance. Myriad challenges face all universities, including Rhodes, and effective institutional planning underpinned by an open, participatory and critical culture is necessary for identifying and addressing challenges, building on our strengths, exploiting available opportunities, overcoming weaknesses and ensuring dynamic and sustainable institutional development. We need to constantly think and talk about all areas of Rhodes and our activities openly and critically, celebrate what we do well and also have the courage to improve where necessary and change what needs to change.

Why there is a Rhodes

Rhodes University exists to serve three key **social purposes**.

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”.

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 through 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”.

Students come to Rhodes University to embark on a voyage centred on the pursuit, making and sharing of knowledge. This is why we refer to Rhodes as indawo yolwazi - a place of knowledge.

We are guided by certain **values**:

- The South African *Constitution* and *Bill of Rights*:
 - ✓ Set out the character of the society that is envisaged
 - ✓ Proclaim the values of ‘human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms,’ and ‘non-racialism and non-sexism.’
 - ✓ State 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.’
 - ✓ Enjoin us to ‘respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights.’
- The 1997 *White Paper* on higher education which expresses the core principles that our universities must embody: equity and redress, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy (and) public accountability.

Our purposes as a university must necessarily intersect and effectively engage with the economic and social challenges of the local, national, African and global contexts - the imperative of economic growth and development; the ability to compete globally; job creation and the reduction of poverty; the effective delivery of social services; the threat

of HIV/AIDS; and also the imperatives of equity and redress; social justice; the building of a substantive democracy, including a culture of human rights and a vibrant civil society; and a culture of vigorous and critical intellectual public discourse.

This requires Rhodes to be a powerhouse of knowledge production and knowledge dissemination, and of the formation of new generations of thinkers and actors. In joining Rhodes University you commit yourself to facilitating Rhodes being *indawo yolwazi* - a place of knowledge.

Session Two

Key Challenges

A. Transformation

- *Social equity* - becoming demographically representative of the South African population, especially at the levels of academic and senior and middle-level support staff
- *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
- Historical ‘legacies of intellectual colonisation and racialisation,’ which are threats to the flowering of ideas, discourse, discovery and scholarship, and also to academic freedom - any serious agenda of inclusion at Rhodes entails the need to substantively decolonize, deracialise, demasculanise and degender our inherited ‘intellectual spaces;’ means creating the space for the flowering of other epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies, issues and questions
- Applicability of slogan ‘Where leaders Learn’ and the motto, ‘Truth, Virtue and Strength’ – Do we wish to ensure that the development of graduates at Rhodes is simultaneously an exercise in the cultivation of humanity?
- Strong *laissez faire* culture at Rhodes, which equates a *laissez faire* approach with safeguarding academic freedom and organisational autonomy - an aversion also to *any* real democratic and peer accountability?

B. Modernisation

- *Modernisation* is long overdue in a number of areas and 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 - 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; give rise to unnecessary bottlenecks and frustration for academics and staff more generally.

C. Institutional Development Plan

An Institutional Development Plan (IDP) is long overdue. Such an IDP

- Will collate, consolidate 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 not meant to be a cast-in-stone invariant blueprint, as much 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; that Rhodes is financially sustainable taking into account its enrolments, academic programmes and operations, and its staffing and infrastructure requirements; that we are able to effectively address and pursue new social and educational imperatives, goals and strategies; that there is an alignment between enrolment planning, academic planning, staffing, infrastructure planning and financial planning, and that occurs on a longer-term horizon than has hitherto existed.

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. A Green Fund has been created to support the University to institute environmentally-friendly short-, medium- and long-term measures, and initiatives and activities that ensure that Rhodes is a Green campus.

It has to be noted that development as Rhodes is sometimes held back by

- 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*

Specific challenges

Enrolment Planning

Our target for 2012 was 7 576 students - 5 329 undergraduate students and 2 204 postgraduate students. We were, however, down 183 students: we had 82 less undergraduate students, 97 less postgraduate students, and 4 less occasional students than was our target.

There are financial implications when we have fewer students than we budgeted for. Fortunately, we are within the 2% leeway that the Department of Higher Education & Training permits regarding our enrolment figures and so won't lose any subsidy.

We asked the Registrar to pay careful attention to the 2013 enrolments so that we can try and meet our targets for next year: a total enrolment of 7645 with 5 329 undergraduates, 2 273 postgraduates. However, we had to adjust these target figures and take more undergraduates to get to the target total of 7 645. This will mean a new first year intake of 1 600 students instead of last year's intake of 1 500.

In so far as Enrolment Planning for 2014-2019 is concerned, for the first time we are being requested to plan for a six-year period instead of the usual three years. This is to be welcomed as three years is too short a planning period. However, it also poses interesting challenges with respect to academic, infrastructure, staff and financial planning.

What we will be next year and in the coming years is the subject of our new enrolment planning (in 2019 we could have a new first year student intake of 1 672; 5926 undergraduate students, and 2777 postgraduate students, giving us a postgraduate proportion of 32%

Academic Planning

Our Enrolment Plan expresses our intention of becoming a more postgraduate university and overall we seek to enhance further our contribution to knowledge production through research and scholarship. We are well-positioned for such a trajectory: we take research seriously and strive to provide our academics with effective support; have the third best research output per capita staff member; we have the second highest percentage of staff with PhDs (56%), and we have very good postgraduate graduation rates and the best at PhD level.

Despite being the smallest university in South Africa, and comprising only 0.8% of South Africa's university students and 1.9% of all full-time academic staff, we possess 7% of all prestigious research chairs that are available to universities as part of the South African Research Chairs initiative (SARChI). The programme was established in 2006 to strengthen scientific research leadership and capacity in South African universities. It aims to create a critical mass of world-class scholars who will train future generations of scholars and graduates to support a South African knowledge-based economy.

SARChI chairs are tenable for five years and renewable for two further five-year periods, giving a total life span of fifteen years. Eligibility for renewal is based on performance. The funding per chair is R2.5 million per annum, and is intended to cover salaries, postdoctoral fellowships, postgraduate student bursaries, research operating costs, and equipment necessary for the work the Chair.

A key criterion for the award of a SARChI chair is that the host university must provide a scholarly environment in which the chair and scholarship can flourish – without doubt Rhodes is such an environment. Our SARChI chairs are in: Medicinal Chemistry and Nanotechnology (Prof Tebello Nyokong); Marine Ecosystems (Prof Christopher McQuaid); Mathematics Education (Prof Marc Schafer); Numeracy (Prof Mellony Graven); Radio Astronomy (Prof Oleg Smirnov); Intellectualisation of African Languages, Multilingualism and Education (Prof Russell Kaschula); ‘Insects in Sustainable Agricultural Ecosystems (Prof ; Interdisciplinary Science in Land and Natural Resource Use for Sustainable Livelihoods (prof Charlie Shackleton); Marine Natural Products Research, and ‘Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction: Human and Social Dynamics.’ We will announce appointments to the latter two chairs in due course. The University will continue to pursue further chairs in proven areas of academic excellence.

As part of our future institutional trajectory, during this year we will continue to give special attention to identifying potential new postgraduate and research niche areas and programmes, and developing the appropriate institutional arrangements to effectively support larger numbers of Honours, Masters and Doctoral students, as well further enhance their academic and social experiences. New postgraduate and research programmes to consolidate our excellence in water, medicinal chemistry and fisheries science are intended to follow. On the basis of our breadth and depth in water education and research, and in partnership with NMMU and UFH we hope to become a key institutional hub on the African continent in this field. We also seek to build acooperative projects in promotion of isiXhosa as a language in higher education initiative with Fort Hare, Walter Sisulu, UWC and other Eastern and Western Cape universities.

In recent years, we have introduced four new postgraduate and research focus areas in the Humanities funded by the Mellon Foundation. Alongside are three new Humanities initiatives. One is the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics, which will be located in the University’s outstanding Philosophy department. Made possible by a five-year, R12.5 million renewable grant from the Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, the Centre will seek to imaginatively and critically investigate what precisely is meant by leadership and specifically leadership with ethics, and how to promote such leadership in diverse contexts and circumstances, with the ultimate intent of promoting such leadership. We propose to begin by promoting genuine leadership with ethics among university students in the first instance and then among other specific constituencies as the Centre expands.

A second Humanities initiative is UHURU – a new *Unit for the Humanities at Rhodes University* – funded to the tune of \$ 1 million over four years by the Mellon Foundation. UHURU seeks to expand this team approach and to establish research themes and foci that engage with critical historical and contemporary issues in the arts, social sciences and humanities. It also seeks to create an intellectual space for dedicated scholars - a mix of

internal staff and visiting scholars - to undertake research on a relatively full-time basis. The aim is to provide an institutional 'home' for groups of leading scholars to realize their scholarly potential; help deepen a vibrant and dynamic intellectual culture at Rhodes; increase scholarly outputs in the Humanities at Rhodes, and help to re-establish and re-invigorate humanities research in South Africa in a way that impacts on state, civil society and society more generally. UHURU will be complemented with an additional Mellon grant of \$100 000 for a visiting writers and scholars programme.

Finally, following a grant from Atlantic Philanthropy we look forward to the start-up for a project based in the History department on *Addressing Legacies of the Apartheid Wars*.

There have also been important developments in the Centre of Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL). CHERTL's new PhD programme in Higher Education Studies, with a special focus on Learning and Teaching, now enrolls over 30 students, with more seeking admission. CHERTL has also been awarded 1 million euros by the Dutch agency Nuffic to conduct a national project on enhancing postgraduate supervision. The funds will be used to develop a course on supervision and to roll this out at South African universities, particularly those with low PhD graduation rates. The project brings together partners Rhodes, Stellenbosch, UCT and Fort Hare - and a consortium from the Netherlands involving the Vrije University of Amsterdam, the African Studies Centre in Leiden and the Institute for Social Studies of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam.

Rhodes and CHERTL are also mobilising support for a R40 million national programme that will see it partnering with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to help build the teaching and learning capabilities of academics and universities in South Africa. The programme is intended to enhance the development of academic staff as professional educators in South African universities. CHERTL supports the Rhodes academic staff in providing first class teaching and learning experiences for students of all levels, and is thus well placed to assist in this project.

Already, CHERTL has offered short courses at other universities in order to enhance the teaching capabilities of academics. In addition, its Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education has been offered over two years in 'block' format to staff from other universities, enabling them to complete the course at Rhodes.

New Masters programmes have been started recently in Creative Writing, Social Policy, Bioinformatics and Applied Computer Science, as well as a new Honours specialisation in Health Journalism in partnership with Discovery Health. A number of new Masters programmes will be introduced in due course in Water, and in Forensics Science.

To give impetus to our plans and support strategic new academic initiatives the University's Council and Board of Governors agreed to create the Sandiswa *Imbewu* ('We are growing/multiplying our seeds') Fund.

R 12.5 million was pledged for the period 2010-2014 as seed funding for new initiatives. The Fund is 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. Various initiatives have been supported including a new postgraduate and research focus area in the Commerce Faculty.

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
- ✓ 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
- ✓ 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.

▪ **Staff planning**

Key, of course, to the quality of our institutional activities and academic programmes are committed staff. In this regard, attention will be given to:

- Improving teacher: student ratios overall and in specific areas
- Improving the equity profile of academic and senior support staff
- Continuing to build the next generation of academics, and especially black and women academics
- Effectively supporting new and emerging scholars academics
- Finalising, after consultation with staff unions, a remuneration policy
- Systematically moving to remunerate all staff on the 50th percentile.

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

Adequate infrastructure in the form of buildings, facilities, equipment and the like are important to our academic and support-staff operations. We have to give continuous attention to

- The available infrastructure to support academic programmes
- The available infrastructure for student accommodation and sports/cultural activities
- The available infrastructure for housing for academics
- The available infrastructure for 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
- The capability and capacity of Makana Municipality to provide the necessary services to support larger enrolments and new infrastructure.

Buildings and facilities are expensive to build and maintain and it is important that we use our infrastructure optimally. My impression is that we are not making effective and efficient use of some 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.

Since 2007 we have

- Built a spectacular new library, completely renovated the existing library and released academic space through the incorporation of some branch libraries into the main library
- Built seven new residences
- Built a new environmental education building
- 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
- Added additional ICT bandwidth and speed with considerable future savings
- Acquired new vehicles and new equipment in various fields of Science
- Replaced the previous telephony to institute considerable future savings
- Purchased two properties on the corner of South and African streets
- Refurbished some residences and wardens and transit housing
- Been provided an option to purchase the land surrounding and including the municipal quarry, on condition that we rehabilitate the quarry

Currently, we have building work on campus to

- Construct a new building for teacher education
- Build a new undergraduate residence

In the next two years we will:

- Build a new Life Sciences building at a cost of at a minimum R100.8 million - R86.2 million; our contribution is R14.6 million, giving a total of R100.8 million.
- Build a new School of Language building at a cost of at a minimum R31.3 million – R25.8 million; our contribution is R5.5 million
- Make improvements in Pharmacy facilities and equipment to the value of R24.2 million.
- Continue to refurbish our residences
- Make improvements to the value of R3.0 million.
- Undertake a comprehensive audit of the state of all our buildings in order to develop a comprehensive maintenance plan

Some of the new infrastructure has been funded from Infrastructure and Efficiency Funding provided by DHET: R 80 million for the library and two residences in 2007/8-2009/2010, 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, and R170 million for 2012/2013 – 2014/2015. We have had to raise R25 million for the library and now need to go out and raise R28.7 million to match the R170 million that we have been allocated by the government.

We continue to aspire to build a new indoor sports centre or to considerably expand the current one, given the increased student numbers and the burgeoning of sport at Rhodes.

New infrastructure development at Rhodes will be guided by a long-term Campus Development Plan, so that we remain a beautiful campus and also incorporate environmental considerations in our planning.

Financial planning

We have three sources of funds:

- 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.

We have to give careful attention to the current and possible future mix of sources of funding and the income from these three sources as part of ensuring that have the finances to

- Maintain current academic programmes
- Initiate new academic (teaching and research) programmes
- Remunerate staff appropriately
- Ensure infrastructure backlogs are addressed and to support additional infrastructure related to growth and development
- The effective and efficient use of available finances to address the social purposes of the University, implement agreed upon strategies and realise defined goals

As far as finances are concerned we have

- Committed ourselves to a zero-deficit budget
- Annually balanced income and expenditure
- Annually generated modest surpluses that have been allocated to an Infrastructure and Strategic Developments Fund
- 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 and Council on 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

Notes

Overall dirigisme

HE Amendments – concerns re this

Reporting regulations

Central Applications System

You may have noted various comments by the Minister in the media on the issue of a Central Applications System (CAS).

Higher Education South Africa, which is the voice of our 23 universities, in principle supports the establishment of a Central Applications System (CAS) for higher education in South Africa. We think that there can be various benefits.

We are however adamant on a number of issues, which we have brought home to the Minister.

- First, the higher education sector must have ownership of the CAS and its processes (as is the case with the KwaZulu-Natal office). This means it should be established and should function in a way that all 23 universities can willingly participate in these processes.
- Second, the CAS cannot be established or operated unilaterally by the DHET.
- Third, the CAS may not encroach on universities' admission criteria or "place" students despite their own choices.
- Fourth, the CAS must be able to sustain itself financially, through the single application fee or/and financial support from the DHET.
- Finally, in establishing the CAS, realistic timeframes must be set, so as not to create confusion and unrealistic expectations amongst prospective students. We strongly believe that a series of pilot projects are necessary before the CAS goes operational at

a national level. We are especially concerned with media reports that this system will begin in 2014.

Enrolments by 'race' and gender from 1993 to 2005 to 2010

Category	1993	2005	2010	% of 2010 Students	% of 2010 Population	Participation rate
African	189 200 (40%)	446,946	595,963	67	79	14
Coloured		46,302	58,219	7	9	15
Indian		54,611	54,537	6	3	46
White	227 040 (48%)	185,847	178,346	20	9	57
Total	473 000	735,073	892,943	100	100	18
Women	43%	401,042	512,570	57	51	21
Men	57%	334,030	380.353	43	49	15