Professor Thiruthlall Nepal
Executive Dean

MISSION STATEMENT

In 2008, the Faculty as a whole decided that the mission statement, confirmed by the Faculty of Commerce was still relevant. The Institution also embarked on a new vision and mission statement, which was only finalised in September 2008. As a consequence, the Faculty resolved to begin the process of establishing a new vision and mission for the Faculty during 2009.

The faculty is still committed to ensuring a unique teaching, learning and research environment that is optimally conducive to the dissemination of real world education, by:

- Providing relevant, quality career focused business education,
- Utilising innovative learner-focused teaching methods,
- Inspiring excellence in applied, relevant research,
- Engaging with business and the community to ensure an ethical, relevant and socially responsible return and
- To provide adequate and appropriate resources for effective service delivery.

OVERVIEW AND FACULTY STRUCTURE

Overview

During 2008 the Faculty embarked upon consolidation of its position as a separate Faculty. Although efforts have been made to establish separate offices for the Faculty, this has not been possible as a result of financial constraints. The Faculty Office is shared with the Faculty of Management Sciences while the Dean's office is situated in the Department of Information Technology and the Deputy Dean is still located in the Department of Financial Accounting. Although this is not an ideal situation, the

Faculty has managed to service its constituency and hopes to find suitable premises on the Ritson Campus in 2009.

The Faculty operated independently during 2008. The management of the Faculty was strengthened by the appointment of an Executive Dean: Prof T Nepal on 1 December 2007. It was further strengthened by the appointment of a Deputy Dean, Mr Saleem Kharwa who was appointed in March 2008 and a Faculty Officer, Ms Sazi Ndlovu in February 2008. These appointments have assisted in the facilitation of the operational aspects of the Faculty.

FACULTY STRUCTURE

The re-organisation of the Faculty resulted in the Faculty having six departments. These departments consist of existing departments, and a combination of others resulting in new departments.

- Auditing and Taxation
- Information and Corporate Management
- Information Technology
- Financial Accounting
- Management Accounting
- Finance and Information Management (Midlands)

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The focus during 2008 has been on the improvement of quality and throughput. Identification of "at risk" students and remedial measures necessary were carried out by all departments. Several staff members have investigated using e-learning approaches in their lectures.

The Faculty made available laptops and LCD projectors which has had a positive impact on delivery methods in many departments. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) continues to play a major role in the Department of Information and Corporate Management as it forms part of the curriculum of Office Management and Technology. Although WIL is not part of the Auditing programme, the Department of Internal Auditing and Taxation has successfully built partnerships with three of the "big four" auditing firms. Seventy eight students were placed with Deloitte, PWC and KPMG. In addition, funding for internships was secured.

Several Departmental staff had close contact and served on the boards of Professional Institutes and Education. These include the Institute of Internal Auditors and the South African Institute of Professional Accountants and SETAs. Faculty members also serve on International Boards of Education in specific fields. The memberships of such Boards encourage changes in curriculum as required by the market.

Ongoing development of teaching materials resulted in partnerships between the Information Technology Departments, Translate.Org and Microsoft to include other South African languages. It is envisaged that these initiatives will continue to be strengthened in 2009.

RESEARCH

Although the Faculty of Commerce split into the Faculty of Management Science and the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics in 2007, 2008 saw the faculty operating under its own umbrella in terms of research. Professor Jaya Raju was seconded as the Faculty Research Co-ordinator. The Faculty constituted its own Faculty Research Committee, which drew up its own Terms of Reference and had it approved by Faculty Board. Prof Raju was unanimously elected as the chairperson of the Faculty Research Committee. She was instrumental in driving the research agenda in the Faculty.

The Faculty Research Committee organised the Faculty Research Day on 17 September 2008. A detailed programme was available together with a book of abstracts (18) of papers presented. This was a very successful event with book vouchers being awarded to 'best papers' in staff as well as in student categories.

With support from the Directorate for Postgraduate Studies and Development (PGDS), the Faculty held the following workshops which were enthusiastically received by staff in the Faculty:

A First Proposal Writing Workshop was held on 20 August 2008 at Khaya Lembali Conference Centre, Morningside with 30 participants. A Second Proposal Writing Workshop was convened to accommodate the increased demand in the Faculty. A further 30 staff members participated in this workshop. The workshop was held on 27-28 November 2008 at eMakhosini Conference Centre, Morningside. Both these workshops were facilitated by Prof Santy Daya. In both workshops Prof Daya was very motivational and helped to demystify the research concept among many staff.

He was cognisant of the need to build research capacity in the Faculty and presented research as something that is do-able and within reach of all academics.

The Centre for Research Management and Development was responsible for organising and co-ordinating a Publications Workshop which took place on 3-4 October 2008 at the Assagay Hotel, Kloof with nine young researchers participating from the faculty. This workshop was facilitated by Prof John Daniels who has continued to liaise with participants as they worked on their manuscripts.

Towards the end of 2008 the Faculty, again with the support of the PGDS, organized a SPSS Workshop among 20 staff and senior students with the express intention of strengthening postgraduate supervision among staff and to promote completion of current research projects. The workshop was scheduled to take place in January 2009. Although the level of research activity in the Faculty is not high, it is hoped that with all the interventions and workshops, a greater number of staff will feel motivated enough to register for higher degrees and/or engage in research publication. The Faculty will continue to rigorously drive research in the new year but along more structured lines in terms of work-in-progress postgraduate research seminars culminating in the Faculty Research Day towards the end of the year. Presentations here will be used as a resource pool to draw out papers for publication in accredited journals. The Faculty intends to use interventions such as those cited above and other research related activities to grow a research culture and thus make a contribution to research capacity building in the institution as a whole.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR 2008

The major goals for a new faculty, and particulary one in which research outputs are low, is to increase publication outputs and to encourage staff within the Faculty to register for their masters. In keeping with this goal, two workshops were held on proposal writing (August and November 2008). The Faculty Research Day (September 2008) was used as a nursery for presentations to be converted into journal articles. In order to assist presenters to pursue this objective a publications workshop was held in October 2008. It is envisaged that these initiatives will result in journal publications in 2009.

IDENTIFIED RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS CAN BE SUMMARISED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Library and Information Studies: (LIS) Education and its synergies with the LIS work environment.

2. Information and Communication Technology ICT and development.

FACULTY RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR 2009

The Faculty intends continuing with its strategy identified in 2008. However, in order to improve the research agenda in the Faculty the following strategic goals were identified for 2009.

1. Inviting visiting Professors to increase research capacity.

2. Identifying and inviting post doctoral fellows to assist in supervision and conversion of dissertations/thesis into journal publications.

3. The provision of a dedicated post graduate study centre.

4. Exploring the possibility of developing a course-work masters.

5. Establishing a focus area in the Accounting disciplines linked to education.

DoE ACCREDITED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Department of Information and Corporate Management:

Raju, J. 2008. LIS qualifications in an African context: considerations from a South African Study. *South African journal of libraries and information science*, 74(2): 129-137 (in press)

Raju, J., Rajagopaul, A., Dlabantu, E. and Ngubane, S. 2008. University and university of technology graduates in the work place: comparison between LIS services and services of other selected disciplines. *Mousaion*. (in press)

Khomo, M and Raju, J. Membership of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) among LIS workers in Kwa-Zulu Natal. *South African journal of libraries and information science*. (in review process)

Rajkoomar, M. and Moodley, K. (manuscript submitted). Google versus electronic resources at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). *South African journal of libraries and information science.*

Petkov D, Petkova O, Andrew T, Nepal T. 2008. On the process of combining soft systems methodologies and other approaches in systemic interventions. *Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change, Volume 5, Number 3*, 291-303. Intellect.

CHAPTERS IN BOOKS

Department of Information and Corporate Management:

Raju, R and Raju, J. (manuscript submitted). Current status of academic libraries in Africa. In Abdullahi, I.H. (Editor-in-Chief). *Global library and information science* to be published by K.G. Saur Verlag as an IFLA publication (in press)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLISHED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Department of Information Technology:

Eyono Obono, S.D. e-Development future scientific evolution learning from e-learning history, ICTAFRICA 2008, 18-21 December 2008, Yaounde, Cameroon

Department of Information and Corporate Management:

Raju, J. 2008. Re-thinking boundaries in the African LIS work place: a contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Standing Conference of East, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations (SCECSAL), Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka, Zambia,*

15-18 July 2008.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Department of Management Accounting:

Six (6) staff members attended the South African Accounting Association Conference, Emperor's Palace, Gauteng, June 2008.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Departments in the Faculty continue to be involved in partnerships with the community. During 2008 the Department of Information Technology partnered with Nedbank and Mr Price to provide disadvantaged schools with computers. Of significance is the fact that third year IT students were encouraged to participate in this project as part of community awareness. The IT department also provided tuition to teachers in these schools where the computers were supplied at no cost.

Professor Thiruthlall Nepal

Executive Dean