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Mission Statement

At its workshop in August 2006, the Faculty adopted the following Mission Statement as confirmed at a subsequent Board Meeting in September:

To ensure 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.
- Providing adequate and appropriate resources for effective service delivery.

Overview

Although there are certain specific points to be made, the year can be summed up as one in which the faculty undertook a significant amount of reflection and strategic planning.

A major feature of 2006 was the progress made in the adoption of a strategic plan, a process which involved a well attended two day workshop and two discussions at Faculty Board. The Plan, as developed, is acknowledged to need further refinement as well as ensuring its alignment with the institutional operational and strategic plans. It also represented an important opportunity for the faculty to debate the nature of the shift from being a Technikon to becoming a University of Technology.

The Faculty was fully involved in preparations for the institutional audit and in this connection developed a self evaluation report as its contribution to the process. However, the report not only enables the DUT as a whole to comply with audit requirements but it also assists us in identifying areas, such as community engagement, where more effort can be made. In short, the process so far has been one by which the faculty has an opportunity to be a more substantially learning organization than it has been in the past.

Some departments, mainly those with a management focus, participated in the Foundation Programme and benefited from the new Teaching Development Grant (TDG). Evaluations of these two initiatives are to be undertaken in 2007 although a concern at this stage would be that not all proposed activities were implemented in the TDG which is clearly a matter for consideration in the future.

The year saw a growth in the number of staff pursuing further studies to improve qualifications. This is expected to benefit the faculty by enabling us to move towards a staffing profile which is better aligned with what is expected of a university.

As part of our effort to improve infrastructure, it is a pleasure to report that the new Hospitality Management Sciences building was given the green light with construction due to commence in 2007. This will enable us to concentrate this somewhat dispersed department on one site and enable the faculty to vacate the Steve Biko teaching area completely.



Professor Malcolm Wallis
Executive Dean: Faculty of Commerce

Enrolments

As in previous years, our total enrolment (head count of 11,165) amounted to about half of the total student body registered at DUT. Towards the end of the year, management mainly through the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic began preparing proposals for reducing the size of the faculty by splitting it into two, one to be based on the Management Sciences, the other on Accounting and Information Technology. It was also agreed that some possibilities for expansion existed on the Midlands campus.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Most departments in the faculty require work integrated learning at a part of the curriculum of the various diplomas and are thus fully in support of the idea that it is fundamental to the rationale of a University of Technology. This varies in scope, intensity, supervision and the rigour of assessment with some departments such as Hospitality Management Sciences attaching a great deal of priority to WIL whilst others, such as the Accounting fields, have opted out altogether. Where WIL operates most effectively is where links with industry are strongest. An important mechanism for this are the Advisory Boards which are operational in most of our departments. The various audits that have taken place suggest that, in conjunction with the Cooperative Education Unit, the faculty needs to take a closer look at how it promotes and manages WIL. A key issue, still to be resolved, is to find the optimal relationship between the central unit and the faculties.

Some departments such as Hospitality Management Sciences and Tourism organise international placements such as Disneyworld in the USA, London, Dubai and the Seychelles.

Staffing

Our total academic staff complement stands at 206. This figure has to be seen in the light of a staff - student ratio of over 50 students to each staff member. This is very high by national standards and is thus a cause of concern because of its implications for work loads and throughput. Whilst financial constraints hinder the creation of new posts, in 2006 we were permitted to appoint ten Junior Lecturers (JL) as part of the institutional 'Growing our Own Timber' project. These additional lecturers will improve our staff: student ratio in later years and, because these posts are reserved for persons of Black African and Coloured backgrounds, they will also significantly improve our equity profile. The JL posts were allocated to the following departments: Entrepreneurial Studies, Human Resource Management, Information Technology, Management, Management Accounting, Operations and Quality Management, Marketing, Public Relations Management, Statistics and Tourism. Some of these (8) were filled in 2006 whilst others, although approved, will be filled in 2007.



Departments

- Applied Law
- Auditing
- Economics
- Entrepreneurial Studies
- Financial Accounting
- Governmental Studies
- Hospitality Management Sciences
- Human Resources Management
- Information Technology
- Library and Information Studies
- Management
- Management Accounting
- Marketing
- Office Management and Technology
- Operations and Quality Management
- Public Relations
- Sport Management
- Statistics
- Taxation
- Tourism



Research

In 2006 we secured the services of a Research Co-ordinator for the entire year. Professor Jinabhai has contributed a great deal in this respect including preparation of a Faculty Research Plan. His reports on our profile and scorecard in respect of research appear later in this report. In addition the following highlights are mainly drawn from his annual report:

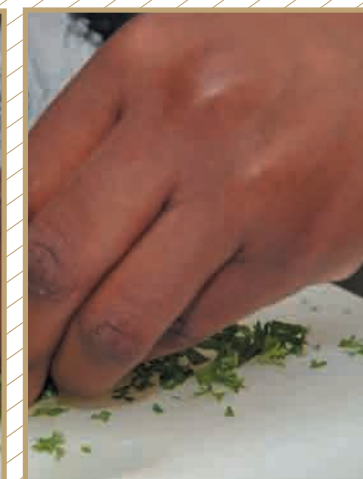
- We are still performing poorly in relation to publications (see the scorecard).
- We now have five staff who have attained the status of Associate Professor and above, a requirement of which is evidence of publication activity (Jinabhai, Nepal, Raju, Reddy and Wallis).
- The Faculty Research Committee is playing an important role in the quality management of our research carried out by post graduate students (we now have 82 in total).
- The Faculty Research Day on September 21 was successfully hosted. The following received awards for their presentations on that day: Mrs T Naidoo (Executive Dean's Secretary), Ms P Moodley (Sport Management), Ms J Sepeame (Management) and Mr M Khomo (Library and Information Studies).
- The National Research Foundation niche area project under the supervision of Professor Nepal continued to focus on IT and rural development and involved staff of three departments in the faculty (IT, Management and Financial Accounting) as well as the Executive Dean in a research capacity. In support of this project, a workshop for post graduates was facilitated by an international academic, Professor Don Petkov from the USA.
- Professor J Raju of Library and Information Studies holds a Thutuka Women in Research grant which enabled her to carry out collaborative research with universities in Australia and Canada.

The Faculty Research Scoreboard for 2006

RESEARCH OUTPUT 2006	No. of Academic Staff			Staff registered for HD			Research Funding		Publications			Conference s		Post grad Award		Post Grad Reg.	
	Doc. PhD	M	O	Doc PhD	M	O	INT. (DUT)	EXT.	Acc	Sub	Other	Nat.	Int.	M	D	M	Doc. PhD
Executive Dean	1								1			1					
Deputy Deans		2															
Research Co-ordinator	1																
Faculty Research Grants (RDG)							R275 000										
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS																	
Department of Applied Law - Servicing	1	4	7	1													
Department of Statistics - Servicing		2	3		1		R13 000 *					1				1	
Department of Business Studies		6			2	1											
Department of Economics	1	4	1		2				2	3						2	
Department of Entrep. Studies		1	1														
Department of Financial Accounting		3	12														
Department of Manage. Accounting		4	7		3	1	R14 750 *					1					
Department of Taxation		2	2	1												1	1
Department of Auditing		5			3							3					
Department of Govt. Studies		7	1	1	2							2				2	
Department of Hos. Man. & Sciences.	1	2	13														
Department of Marketing	3	2	5	1								2					1
Department of Management		4	7	1													1
Department of Human Resources Man.	1	5	4	-	1	-			-	-	-	1	-		1	1	
Department of Sport Management		2	1	1		1	R60 000 **									1	1
Department of LIS	2	3	-			1			2			4	1			1	
Department of Office Man & Tech.		13	1	1	5											5	
Department of Information Technology	1	9	34	1	8		R75 750	R151 500				1	1			13	
Department of Op. Man & Quality		2	4	1	2	1	R200 000			1	1					2	
Department of Public Relations		4	3	2	3											3	2
Department of Tourism		4	5														
TOTAL FOR FACULTY FOR 2006	12	90	111	11	32	5			5	4	1	13	5	0	1	32	6

* Funds allocated by IRC for presentation of papers at local/international conferences OR funds allocated from the RDG monies for programme related workshops.

Figures for staff establishment reconciled with Headcount of academic staff per qualifications for 2006.



A Summary of Research Focus Areas in The Faculty of Commerce

1. Project Leader: Professor T Nepal (IT)

NRF funded niche area: Information and Communication Technologies.

2. Project Leader: Professor Jaya Raju (Library and Information Studies)

Thuthuka (NRF) Women in Research grant: Information and Library science project.

3. Project Leader: Dr Marie De Beer & Professor M Wallis

NRF funded niche area; Financial Management and Information Technology for small business in rural areas (completed 2006)

4. Other: Extended Curriculum Programme - Foundation Course (Dr J P Govender - Department of Marketing) funded from DoE subsidy (surplus subsidy from the migration period).

Administration

The Faculty is managed through the office of the Executive Dean, supported by a Secretary. The Faculty Office, headed by a Faculty Officer, plays an important role in registration, assessment and general management of students progression through the system. As the workload is high, given our high number of students, the performance of this office has been impressive, albeit in need of strengthening so that we can provide a better service.

Critical bodies in the governance of the Faculty are the Board and the Executive Committee which hold meetings regularly and attempt to resolve issues that arise. One drawback to the existing system is the lack of opportunities for ordinary staff to participate in other than departmental meetings.

The faculty contains 21 departments of which 16 also have teaching activities in Pietermaritzburg. This presents major challenges as far as co-ordination is concerned.

Merger Issues

Although the merger took place in 2002, there are still issues that need attention. At this stage, the biggest challenge lies in the identification with one or other of the former Technikons. These challenges are often the source of conflicts which the Executive Dean and others are called upon to mediate on a regular basis. We are also struggling with problems of physical infrastructure which were not fully resolved at the time of merger.

Community Service and Partnerships

Not all departments are active in this field but there is increasing attention to this issue, partly because of the emphasis placed upon it in the audit exercise.

Community Engagement Research

The following activities were reported at DUT

Review of Research and Community Engagement:

- Safety, Security and Tourism Marketing in Mpumalanga Province (Department of Marketing). Data was gathered from approximately 400 visitors to the province.

- ICT development for rural entrepreneurs in KZN (inter departmental faculty action research led by the Executive Dean and Dr M De Beer, Research Fellow, with the Departments of Management and Information Technology but actually covering six disciplinary areas). This programme also provides short course training in a rural area south of Durban, for which 57 persons received certificates in 2006.

In addition, research of community relevance is under way elsewhere in the faculty. For example, there is work in the Public Relations Management Department which is focusing on communication issues in the response to HIV/AIDS, and in Governmental Studies, with a focus on disaster management and community involvement in public and private partnerships.

Industry and Institutional Links

In addition to the Work Integrated Learning already reported upon in the overview, the following initiatives are of note:

The Departments of Management and IT have collaborative links with the Universal Services Agency and the Sobanakhona Makhanya Tribal Authority (IT for rural development).

The Public Relations Department launched its Siyakhula Consultancy wing, the aim of which is to promote student involvement in community matters. This department has also restructured so that service learning is to be undertaken in each year of its diploma. Students were involved in providing support services for the Durban Grand Prix.

The various Accounting departments play a leading role in various professional associations and have active Advisory Boards.

The Department of Hospitality Management Sciences has a well organised system of Advisory Boards which have a regional presence around the country such as Cape Town where the following companies and hotels participate: Mount Nelson, Southern Sun, Villa Belmont, The Bay, Nestle, ICC, Breakwater Lodge and 12 Apostles. Within the department, Consumer Sciences, Food and Nutrition participate in the South African Chefs Association competitions (Natal Young Chefs Challenge) in which DUT emerged triumphant ahead of Christina Martin School of Food and Wine, the Fusion School, the Chef School and the Chantecleer. Unilever sponsors a third year nutrition project.

In the Department of Statistics, Mr. P Naidoo presented at a conference in Brazil on online examinations, as a result of which links may be forged with the Catholic University of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Department of Governmental Studies hosted the annual conference on Public Management for the Association of Southern Africa Schools and Departments of Public Administration and the South African Association of Public Administration and Management. It is to be particularly complemented on this effort as it was asked to do this as short notice when the original hosts pulled out. It is now a full member of the African Association of Public Administration and Management which will open up opportunities to network throughout Africa.

The Department of Sport Management, for the fourth year in succession, assisted in the running of the Comrades Marathon (prize giving, dope testing, media relations). This event is the premier one of its kind in the world; it is an annual race between Durban and Pietermaritzburg of about 80km in length.

The Department of Tourism organised a careers exhibition at the Ritson Hall with partners such as the State Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, the Provincial Department of Education, Tourism KwaZulu Natal, Ezemvelo Wild Life, South African Tourism Services Association, South African Airways, University of Zululand and the principal banks. Senior students have been researching sustainable tourism at the Shongweni Nature Reserve. Mrs N Mazibuko of the department has been appointed as Chair of the Standards Generating Body for Nature Conservation.

The Department of Library and Information Studies is involved in a community project titled Story Telling which is run by public libraries in the province.

The Department of Marketing, in collaboration with the University of KwaZulu Natal and the National Research Foundation, is involved in research on marine systems and biodiversity (Dr Roger Mason). This includes study of the Sardine Run, an important annual event in the province.

The Department of Operations and Quality Management has a very active Work Integrated Learning Programme with a well established Advisory Board which gives vital advice. It has particularly strong links with Transwerk a division of Transnet, Davin Scott Garment Manufacturers, Kelly Foods, Defy, Aberdare Cables and Toyota South Africa.

The Business Studies Unit, although not formally part of Commerce, trains community HIV/AIDS workers in the Richards Bay and northern KZN areas.

Entrepreneurial Initiatives

Much entrepreneurial work which can be seen as within the subject matter of Commerce is carried out by two bodies external to the faculty. The Business Studies Unit and the Centre for Skills Development, based at DUT, work closely with the Faculty of Commerce in carrying out entrepreneurial initiatives. It thus has relationships, albeit indirect, with Nestle SA, SAB Miller, Blendrite, Fiskor, Whirlpool, Telkom, Rainbow Chickens, PG Bison, SAPPI and the Food Bev Seta.

Two entrepreneurial programmes, the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and the Institute of Marketing Management were transferred from the faculty to the Centre for Skills Management in 2006. However, the relevant departments continue to support these programmes in a facilitative capacity.

The Department of Hospitality Management Sciences purchased a Bed and Breakfast establishment, The Gardens Guest House, which is a five minute walk from the campus. This income generating activity is also used to educate students.

The Department of Entrepreneurial Studies engages with its students in a series of flea market exercises each year and did so in 2006.

The Department of Marketing finalised plans to work with the Direct Selling Association of South Africa to enable its students to apply marketing skills whilst obtaining income. This will commence in 2007.

Although it is possible for staff to conduct entrepreneurial activities, this is generally on an individual rather than departmental basis.

Conclusion

This may prove to be the last year on which a report is made on the faculty in its current form given the proposals for restructuring which may be implemented in 2007. It is anticipated that their implementation will reduce some of the problems currently experienced. However, there are several positive trends to note which, it is hoped, can be the basis for improved performance in the years ahead.

Professor Malcolm Wallis
Executive Dean: Faculty of Commerce

