

# **The Restructuring Of The Higher Education System In South Africa**

## **Foreword**

In March last year following the release of the National Plan for Higher Education, I appointed the National Working Group (NWG) to advise me on the appropriate arrangements for restructuring the provision of higher education on a regional basis through the development of new institutional and organisational forms, including institutional mergers and rationalisation of programme development and delivery.

I am pleased to indicate that the NWG has discharged its mandate admirably and has produced an excellent report that provides the basis for taking forward the restructuring of the higher education system to enable it to respond to the equity and developmental challenges that are critical for improving the quality of life of all our people. I am particularly impressed by the fact that while sensitive to the historical and political complexities involved, the report has not allowed these complexities to stand in the way of advancing a bold framework for the restructuring of the higher education system.

The report will contribute to and enrich the debate on the restructuring of the higher education system. I am in no doubt, however, that those opposed to restructuring will examine the report with a fine toothcomb to support their objections. I am confident that they will not succeed. While, as can be expected given the complexities involved, there may be differences in terms of the detail, the principles that underpin the framework of the recommendations cannot be challenged.

I will consider the recommendations and intend finalising my response for approval by the Cabinet in March 2002. I have no doubt of the historic importance of the report. However, ultimately, its importance and the success of the restructuring process will be judged by posterity.

I would like to thank the NWG and acknowledge their commitment and dedication in taking on this task despite their busy schedules. This testifies to the fact that civic duty and responsibility remain abiding values that underpin democracy in South Africa.

Prof Kader Asmal, MP

Minister of Education

31 January 2002

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The National Working Group (NWG) was established by the Minister of Education in April 2001 to advise on restructuring the institutional landscape of higher education, as outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education, which was released in March 2001.
2. This report represents the NWG's recommendations to the Minister of Education on appropriate arrangements for consolidating the provision of higher education on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms, including reducing the number of higher education institutions.
3. The NWG took as its point of departure the emphasis in the National Plan on the need to ensure the "fitness for purpose" of the higher education system, that is, the extent to which the elements constituting the structures and operations of the system are suited and well-equipped to fulfil effectively those functions which are its *raison d'être*, thus enhancing the quality of the higher education system.
4. The NWG undertook its investigations and arrived at its recommendations through considering relevant policy documents, outcomes of previous investigations and data in relation to the recent and current trends of the higher education system. It formulated a number of guiding principles to frame its work and shape its recommendations and developed an associated set of performance indicators and linked benchmarks. Meetings were held with various higher education constituencies and written submissions on institutional mergers and collaboration were invited. It also took cognisance of international experiences of mergers in higher education.
5. The NWG's recommendations are two-fold. The first relates to a number of general issues which cut across all regions. The second is a set of proposals and recommendations for the consolidation of higher education provision on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms, including a reduction in the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 21 through mergers.

## **6. GENERAL ISSUES AND ASSOCIATED RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 6.1 Regional Collaboration: The NWG believes that there is considerable room for structured forms of regional collaboration, but is not in favour of regional collaboration being completely left to the free will of institutions. It believes that regional collaboration could best be promoted by applying an appropriate mix of incentives and sanctions through utilising the programme approval and funding processes outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education.

- 6.2 Universities and Technikons: The NWG supports the view that universities and technikons should continue to operate as higher education institutions with distinct programmes and mission foci. It does not support the suggestion that technikons be renamed Universities of Technology, but is of the view that an alternative such as "Institute of Technology" could be considered, where this status is appropriate.
- 6.3 Comprehensive Institutions: In some cases where it is considered appropriate, given particular circumstances and conditions, the NWG recommends, as part of a single co-ordinated system, the merger of a university and a technikon to establish a comprehensive institution. The NWG believes such institutions should facilitate the effective and efficient provision of higher education, but cautions that in these forms of combinations great care should be taken to prevent academic drift.
- 6.4 The College Sector: The NWG recommends that colleges of agriculture and nursing should be integrated into and administered as part of the higher education system. It has, in a number of instances, included these colleges as integral parts of its merger proposals.
- 6.5 Distance Education: The NWG recommends that in line with the National Plan for Higher Education distance education programmes at traditionally residential institutions should be strictly regulated without jeopardising, however, those programmes that are of high quality and meet agreed national and regional needs.
- 6.6 Satellite Campuses: The NWG supports the proposals in the National Plan for Higher Education to regulate satellite campuses and to stop their unplanned proliferation.

## 7. **REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The NWG advances the following proposals and recommendations for the consolidation of higher education provision on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms:

### **The Eastern Cape**

- 7.1 Port Elizabeth Technikon and the University of Port Elizabeth should merge into one unitary institution, with the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University incorporated into the merged institution. The new institution should be a comprehensive one offering both university-type and technikon-type programmes, guarding against academic drift, but with optimal articulation arrangements put in place.

- 7.2 Border Technikon and Eastern Cape Technikon should merge into one unitary institution, with two primary sites in East London and Umtata as well as with campuses elsewhere in the region. The exact locations of these additional campuses, including the future of the current Butterworth campus, should be determined by the new merged technikon in consultation with the Ministry of Education.
- 7.3 The University of Fort Hare, Rhodes University and the medical school of the University of Transkei should merge into one unitary institution. The new institution should develop an East London campus which will be the base from which the new institution will grow, looking in the first instance at the development of information, communication and technology programmes.
- 7.4 The remaining academic programmes of the University of Transkei should be discontinued with the necessary provision made to enable existing students to complete their studies. The infrastructure of the University of Transkei should form the core of the academic activities in Umtata of the new technikon. It could also be used as a learning centre for the new Open Learning University of South Africa, which was recently announced by the Minister of Education.
- 7.5 The Fort Hare campus of the new merged university should diminish its academic programmes, keeping and developing a core of those programmes in which it is particularly strong.
- 7.6 Only the merged new technikon and new merged university should offer contact education in East London and in the rural eastern part of the Eastern Cape. Only the new merged distance education institution should be permitted to offer distance education programmes in this region.

### **The Free State**

- 7.7 Technikon Free State and the University of the Free State should be retained as separate and independent institutions. Both institutions, however, should give priority to issues of increasing access and equity, improving success rates and should apply themselves to the development of an enabling environment in which all South Africans can pursue their studies unhampered by social and cultural impediments.
- 7.8 In consultation with the Department of Education, serious consideration should be given to the rationalisation of unnecessary overlap and duplication. Any academic drift away from the current offering of technikon-type programmes should be avoided.
- 7.9 The Bloemfontein campus of Vista University should be incorporated into University of the Free State.

- 7.10 The Welkom campus of Vista University should be incorporated into Technikon Free State, with suitable provision being taken to ensure that current undergraduate degree students are able to complete their programmes of study.
- 7.11 Consideration should be given to merging the nursing and agricultural colleges of the province with either the University of the Free State or Technikon Free State.

## **Gauteng**

- 7.12 Rand Afrikaans University, the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand should be retained as separate and independent institutions. However, all three universities should give priority to issues of access and equity and to serious regional collaboration with a view to rationalisation as well as strengthening of programmes through co-ordination and consolidation. These should at a minimum include the disciplines of medicine, dentistry, business and management, engineering and the performing and creative arts.
- 7.13 All three universities should pay special attention to the development of an enabling environment in which all South Africans can pursue their studies unhampered by social and cultural impediments.
- 7.14 The three technikons in the Tshwane metropole, namely, Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria should be merged into one unitary institution with two sites, one at the current Technikon Northern Gauteng site and the second at the current Technikon Pretoria site.
- 7.15 The feasibility of Technikon North-West's infrastructure and resources being put to other uses, for example further education, while its students and staff are accommodated in the new merged technikon, should be explored.
- 7.16 Technikon Witwatersrand should be retained as a separate and independent institution. However, the institution should give priority to regional collaboration, particularly the optimal collaboration of its school of engineering with other schools in the region.
- 7.17 Vaal Triangle Technikon should be retained as a separate and independent institution and the facilities of the Sebokeng campus of Vista University allocated to it to allow growth. The students and staff of the Sebokeng campus should be incorporated into the Vaal Triangle campus of the merged Potchefstroom University for CHE and the University of the North-West.
- 7.18 The Mamelodi campus of Vista University should be incorporated into University of Pretoria.

- 7.19 Rand Afrikaans University, the University of the Witwatersrand and Technikon Witwatersrand should jointly propose to the Minister of Education how the East Rand and Soweto campuses of the Vista University could best be used to facilitate the access of students to higher education. These proposals should form the basis for deciding the most appropriate institutional allocation for the Vista campuses.
- 7.20 The recent distance education developments at the University of Pretoria and at Pretoria Technikon should be reviewed and where appropriate discontinued.

### **KwaZulu-Natal**

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- 7.21 The merger of ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal should be brought to a speedy conclusion.
- 7.22 Mangosuthu Technikon should be merged with the new technikon; this merger should be phased in, with negotiations starting immediately after the appointment of an Interim Council for the new merged technikon.
- 7.23 The University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal should merge into one unitary institution, with serious consideration given to the rationalisation of programme offerings across the three campuses.
- 7.24 The University of Zululand should refocus its mission and become a comprehensive institution offering technikon-type programmes as well as a limited number of relevant university-type programmes, with its future growth being in the technikon programme area, and with major involvement in the Richards Bay region.
- 7.25 The Umlazi campus of the University of Zululand should be used by the new merged technikon, with appropriate arrangements made for existing university students to complete their programmes of study.
- 7.26 Apart from the one urban university and one urban technikon, and apart from the one comprehensive rural institution offering both technikon and university programmes, no other publicly funded higher education institutions should be allowed to offer programmes in the province, with the exception of the new dedicated distance education institution.

### **The Northern Province**

- 7.27 The University of the North, University of Venda and Medunsa should be merged into one unitary institution.
- 7.28 All the colleges of nursing and agriculture of the province should be incorporated into the new institution.
- 7.29 The new institution should extend the range of offerings available in the province by developing and introducing technikon-type vocational programmes and qualifications, in keeping with the need-profile of the region and preferably in such a way that different types of educational strengths are concentrated on different campuses.
- 7.30 Medunsa should continue to offer its current range of programmes and qualifications in the health sciences but its programmes in science should be rationalised through the building of optimal forms of synergy with the other two campuses.
- 7.31 Medunsa's Faculty of Dentistry should be retained and it should focus more and more on the needs of the northern parts of the country.
- 7.32 The Ministry of Education should, in consultation with the new institution, assess, investigate and make decisions on the relocation (over the medium to long-term) of Medunsa's programmes and infrastructure to the Northern Province.

### **North West**

- 7.33 The Potchefstroom University for CHE and the University of the North-West should merge to form one unitary multi-campus institution for the North West Province. The new institution should be encouraged to refocus, over time, the mission of the North-West campus by introducing more technikon-type programmes to meet the specific vocational and technological needs of the region.
- 7.34 As part of this merger, the Vaal Triangle campus of Potchefstroom University should be retained and its telematic programmes regulated within the provisions of new government policy in this regard.
- 7.35 The nursing and agricultural colleges of the province should be incorporated into the new institution.

- 7.36 The students and staff (but not the facilities) of the Sebokeng campus of Vista University should be incorporated into the new institution.

### **The Western Cape**

- 7.37 The University of Cape Town, the University of Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon should be retained as separate and independent institutions. All three institutions, however, should give priority to issues of access and equity and to serious regional collaboration, including programme rationalisation.
- 7.38 The Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch should establish a single platform for the teaching of the health sciences and the performing and creative arts as a matter of urgency (recognising that cognisance must also be taken of allied programmes offered by other institutions in the Western Cape). Further areas where consolidation of programmes can be achieved, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including the areas already identified by the regional consortium, should be actively explored in close co-operation with the Department of Education.
- 7.39 The University of Cape Town, the University of Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon should apply themselves to the development of an enabling environment in which all South Africans can pursue their studies unhampered by social and cultural impediments.
- 7.40 As a form of reconfiguration, the University of Stellenbosch should pay particular attention to the enrolment and support of significant numbers of contact African and under-prepared Afrikaans-speaking students.
- 7.41 Peninsula Technikon and the University of the Western Cape should merge to form one unitary comprehensive institution offering both university-type and technikon-type programmes, guarding against academic drift, but with optimal articulation arrangements put in place.
- 7.42 The Western Cape College of Nursing should be merged with the new institution.
- 7.43 The dentistry schools of the University of the Western Cape and the University of Stellenbosch should be merged into a single school and should be located in the new comprehensive institution. There should be close collaboration between this school and the medical schools of the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch.

## **8. IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSALS**

The NWG is firmly of the view that the successful implementation of its recommendations requires:

- 8.1 The commitment of the government to make available the necessary financial resources both to facilitate merger processes (including the removal of current debt burdens) and to implement the myriad consequences of mergers in particular, and to enable the higher education system to discharge its mandate in general. This requires the leveraging of additional resources from both the private and the public sectors, to ensure that the higher education system is adequately funded.
- 8.2 The commitment and political will of the Government to restructuring. It requires the Ministry to act decisively in clarifying its response to the recommendations and in initiating the formal legal processes that are necessary to give effect to the merger proposals.
- 8.3. The commitment of the institutions and institutional constituencies to the success of the merger process, as well as the engagement of expertise to facilitate and support the merger process.
- 8.4. The setting of clear targets and time-frames for the different processes and phases of the merger process, both formal in terms of the establishment of the interim councils, as well as substantive in terms of the range of issues that have to be addressed.
- 8.5. The development of a social plan, as proposed in the Council on Higher Education's report (June 2000) to provide a framework for addressing the human resource implications. These include developing measures to minimise job losses as well as a process for ensuring compliance with the obligations of the Labour Relations Act.
9. The NWG identified a number of issues, which are critical for the successful restructuring of the higher education system, but which fall outside its Terms of Reference. These issues are referred to the Minister for his consideration and further investigation.
10. The NWG believes that the implementation of its recommendations will result in the fundamental restructuring of the higher education system. It will transform the apartheid edifice of the higher education system and lay the foundation for a higher education system that is consistent with the vision, values and principles of our young and vibrant democratic order.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 CONTEXT**

The National Working Group (NWG) was established by the Minister of Education in April 2001 to advise on the restructuring of the institutional landscape of the higher education system, as outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education, which was released in March 2001.

The National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) was the culmination of a wide-ranging policy process for the transformation of the higher education system, which started in the early 1990s. It provides a framework for implementing the policy proposals contained in Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, which was released in July 1997.

The White Paper's central proposition is the creation of a single national co-ordinated higher education system that is planned, governed and funded as a single system. This is underpinned by two inter-related factors:

- The need to overcome the apartheid-induced fragmentation, inequalities and inefficiencies, which distorted the development of the higher education system and its ability to address the knowledge, human resource and social and economic needs of the country. It resulted in structural inefficiencies through the duplication and overlap of programme offerings, management structures and administrative and other services, which continue to hamper the higher education system.
- The challenges of reconstruction and development in the context of globalisation and its impact on knowledge and skills development, as well as on the world of work. These challenges require the system to produce graduates equipped with appropriate skills and competencies to ensure that there is an adequate provision of high-level human resources to meet the changing needs of the South African economy and society.

The structural inefficiencies, furthermore, have given rise to a range of systemic problems, which adversely impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the higher education system. These problems, as the National Plan suggests, relate to the "overall quality and quantity of graduate and research outputs; management, leadership and governance failures; lack of representative staff profiles; institutional cultures that have not transcended the racial divides of the past; and the increased competition between institutions which threaten to fragment further the higher education system" (NPHE, p. 6).

The White Paper argues that the goal of a single national system requires an assessment of the optimal number and type of institutions needed to ensure a higher education system which is, on the one hand, affordable and sustainable and, on the other, able to contribute effectively to social and economic development.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE), in turn, in its report, *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (June 2000), argued firstly, that a differentiated and diverse higher education system is necessary to achieve the transformation goals of the White Paper; and, secondly, that institutional restructuring could take a number of forms, including greater programme collaboration between institutions within regions, as well as the merger of institutions.

The National Plan for Higher Education supports the need for a differentiated and diverse higher education system based on mission and programme differentiation linked to the type and range of qualifications offered, instead of differentiation linked to various institutional types, as proposed by the CHE.

The National Plan also supports the CHE's view that institutional restructuring could take different forms, including:

- Inter-institutional collaboration at the regional level in joint programme development and delivery, as well as in the rationalisation of small and costly programmes which cannot be sustained across all the institutions within a region.
- The reduction in the number of institutions but not the number of delivery sites, through mergers, in order to overcome both administrative, human and financial capacity constraints, as well as the race-based, ideology-induced fragmentation of the system.

The National Plan indicated that an analysis of the available data suggested that the number of institutions could be reduced. The key issue was to determine the extent and form of such a reduction (NPHE, p. 3).

The establishment of the National Working Group and its Terms of Reference must be understood against the background of these policy developments. The Terms of Reference (cf. Appendix 1) specify that the NWG must advise on appropriate arrangements for consolidating the provision of higher education on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms, including reducing the number of higher education institutions.

## **1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND BENCHMARKS**

The Terms of Reference of the National Working Group specify that its investigation must be guided by the principles and goals for the transformation of the higher education system as outlined in the White Paper. These are:

- Equity and Redress.
- Democratisation.
- Development.
- Quality.
- Effectiveness and Efficiency.
- Academic Freedom.
- Institutional Autonomy.
- Public Accountability.

The NWG developed a working paper to identify the key elements of the principles that should frame its work and shape its recommendations. It took as its point of departure the emphasis in the National Plan on the need to ensure that the higher education system produces high quality graduates with the appropriate skills and competencies, as well as the knowledge and research required to contribute to social and economic development. In short, in line with the National Plan, the NWG focused on the need to ensure the “fitness for purpose” of the higher education system, i.e. the extent to which the elements constituting the structures and operations of the system are suited and well-equipped to fulfil effectively those functions which are its *raison d’être*, thus enhancing the quality of the higher education system.

The NWG identified three main properties flowing from the principles, which it believes are critical to ensuring the “fitness for purpose” of the higher education system. These are equity, sustainability and productivity. A restructured higher education system should be socially just and equitable in its distribution of resources and opportunities, it should meet the requirements of long-term sustainability and it should enhance the productivity of the system through effectively and efficiently meeting the teaching, skills development and research needs of the country. The NWG’s understanding of equity, sustainability and productivity is outlined in the working paper on guiding principles in Appendix 2.

The NWG developed a set of performance indicators and linked benchmarks to enable it to assess the current state of the higher education system in the light of the properties flowing from the guiding principles. The indicators and benchmarks, which are described in Appendix 3, provide a framework for assessing quantitatively the equity, sustainability and productivity properties that in the NWG’s view should characterise healthy and well-functioning higher education institutions. It should be noted, however, that where appropriate, the benchmarks were adjusted to take into account the historical differences between technikons and universities.

The NWG recognises that the indicators and benchmarks do not reflect properties, such as leadership, management, governance and academic standards, which can only be assessed through qualitative judgments and peer review. The NWG also recognises that the methodology used to derive some of the indicators, such as graduation rates, is open to discussion. This is largely due to the limited availability of appropriate data because of shortcomings in the old SAPSE management information system. However, despite these concerns, the NWG is convinced that the indicators provide a useful framework with which to

identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of the higher education system in general and individual institutions in particular.

The indicators and benchmarks were translated into “radar charts” or “spidergrams” in order to facilitate comparison both between institutions within the university and technikon sectors, as well as between the two sectors.

The spidergram for universities which appears on the next page shows that the university sector satisfies on average only 4 of the 12 benchmarks, namely, student equity, enrolment stability, enrolment size and staff availability. The university sector does not meet any of the output benchmarks, and on average its financial stability and staff equity profile is below the benchmark.

The spidergram for technikons, which also appears on the next page, is similar to that of the universities. However, reflecting historical imbalances in some cases, it indicates that the technikon sector is weaker than the university sector in relation to the output benchmarks.

#### Universities: Benchmarks and Averages

### **1.3 PROCESS**

The National Working Group undertook its investigations and arrived at its recommendations through:

- Considering the relevant policy documents, outcomes of previous investigations and background data and analysis of the recent and current trends, including the size and shape of the higher education system. A full list of the documents consulted is included as Appendix 4.
- Developing a working paper on the guiding principles that should frame its work and shape its recommendations. This is included as Appendix 2.
- Developing a set of benchmarks based on quantitative indicators of equity, sustainability and productivity that should characterise a healthy and well-functioning higher education system in order to assess the existing state of the higher education system in general and of individual institutions in particular. The benchmarks are described in Appendix 3. The appropriateness of the benchmarks was discussed at a special meeting with vice-chancellors or their representatives. In addition, institutions were invited to submit written comments on the benchmarks.
- Inviting institutions to verify the data used in the benchmarks and in other analyses used for the report.

- Developing a working paper<sup>1</sup>[1] to clarify the concept of merger in higher education, including different models, the international experience and lessons in relation to the conditions for successful mergers, the obstacles that have to be overcome and the benefits that might accrue from mergers. The NWG's recommendations were informed, however, by the specific context of South Africa.
  
- Complementing its understanding of the international experience and lessons through engaging with visiting international experts.
  
- Considering conceptual and practical issues with regard to federal type combinations and mergers.
  
- Meeting between May and July 2001 representatives of 34 higher education institutions to discuss and solicit their views on institutional mergers and collaboration. UNISA and Technikon South Africa were excluded because the merger of these institutions and the distance education branch of Vista University fell outside the brief of the NWG.
  
- Considering written submissions on institutional mergers and collaboration from higher education institutions.
  
- Meeting between September and October representatives of trade unions and staff associations and the Directors of regional consortia of higher education institutions to discuss their views on institutional mergers and collaboration. Student organisations were also invited but did not respond.
  
- Discussing the process with the Council on Higher Education at its invitation in November.

The NWG found the regional visits and the exchange of ideas that took place informative and useful in providing a first-hand and broad overview of institutional missions and niche areas and of the state of higher education, inter-institutional collaboration within the different regions, as well as clarifying the views of institutions on mergers, collaboration and related issues.

## **2. GENERAL ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The National Working Group is convinced that the reconfiguration of the institutional landscape of the higher education system is essential if higher education is to contribute to the challenges that South Africa faces as a developing country in a globalising world. The structural and systemic defects of the higher education system are a cause for concern. It is clear that the overall performance of the higher education system as measured against the benchmarks is well below the optimal level that should characterise a healthy and well-functioning system. These defects, which have adversely impacted on the effectiveness and efficiency of the higher education system, are in large measure a legacy of the distorted planning and social engineering of apartheid and can only be overcome by a fundamental but realistic and practical programme of reconfiguration. The NWG therefore agrees with the overall framework and proposals for restructuring contained in the National Plan for Higher Education.

The NWG is firmly of the view that its proposals for reducing the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 21 will lay the foundation for an equitable, sustainable and productive higher education system that will be of high quality and contribute effectively and efficiently to the human resource, skills, knowledge and research needs of South Africa.

The NWG would like to emphasise, however, that the reconfiguration of the institutional landscape in itself is not sufficient to ensure an equitable, sustainable and productive higher education system. This requires, in addition, a concerted effort to enhance management, leadership and governance capacity, as well as staff capacity, both administrative and academic.

The NWG believes that the successful implementation of its recommendations is contingent on engendering a general spirit of collaboration across the system and on the willingness of individual institutions to give up some of their own aspirations in the interests of a well-functioning, balanced and vibrant system, with diverse institutional missions. Successful implementation will, furthermore, also depend on additional investment on the part of the Government and the private sector in order to remove crippling deficits, develop capacity and support merger processes.

There are, however, a number of general issues, which cut across all the regions. The NWG would like first to highlight these, including associated recommendations.

### **2.1 REGIONAL COLLABORATION**

The NWG found that there was general acknowledgement amongst higher education institutions of the need and potential for closer collaboration between institutions on a regional basis. In all the regions there already exist consortia of institutions with the purpose of developing and implementing ways and means of structured co-operation.

The regional consortia have achieved some success in the sharing of facilities and infrastructure, including the joint purchase and use of expensive equipment. There seems to be consensus, however, that much

more could be done with regard to the joint development and delivery of new academic programmes, with regard to the co-ordination of existing programmes to ensure the optimal use of resources and the satisfactory fulfilment of needs, and with regard to co-operation in the building of capacity where it is lacking or inadequate. There are still many instances of unnecessary programme overlap and duplication and other forms of inefficiency and waste. All institutions offer a variety of small and costly programmes, some of which could be rationalised through regional collaboration. There is also the possibility of two or more institutions collaborating to establish regional postgraduate schools for the joint offering of postgraduate programmes in a specific discipline or group of disciplines, thus providing a common platform for a greater variety of specialised expertise and scholarship, facilitating interaction and research collaboration and increasing student choice. There is, in other words, room for combination at meso- and micro-levels, alongside combinations at the macro-level in the form of mergers between two or more institutions.

It would seem that one of the main obstacles to collaboration in programme development, delivery and rationalisation is the fact that the regional consortia are voluntary associations and lack the power to enforce joint agreements. It was suggested by some of the institutions that significant progress could only be made if the regional structures were to be given "teeth" to steer or regulate collaboration.

The NWG agrees with the National Plan for Higher Education in not supporting the idea of establishing a regional tier in the governance of higher education. Aside from capacity constraints, the NWG is of the view that a regional tier of governance may unnecessarily impinge on the autonomy of higher education institutions. It is, however, also not in favour of regional collaboration being completely left to the free will of individual institutions. Where vested institutional interests are at stake, there is no guarantee that entirely self-driven actions to strengthen the system would have the impetus and thrust to succeed.

The NWG believes that regional collaboration could best be promoted by applying an appropriate mix of incentives and sanctions through utilising the programme approval and funding processes outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education, thus precluding the need for additional statutory bodies or structures. The mechanisms, including the role, responsibilities and authority, of regional bodies or other facilitating agents, that institutions establish to advance regional collaboration in order to meet the requirements of the Ministry should be left to the institutions within each region to decide. The regional consortia could be used to fulfil this function if the institutions so decide.

The NWG, in line with its Terms of Reference, has identified potential areas of programme collaboration and rationalisation in its regional proposals below. However, it recognises that because of time and other constraints, it may not have identified the full range of potential programme areas that lend themselves to regional collaboration and rationalisation. The NWG therefore recommends that the Department of Education should complement its proposals in the context of the Department's assessment of the programme profiles submitted by higher education institutions.

## **2.2 UNIVERSITIES AND TECHNIKONS**

In the course of its consultations and through written submissions, the NWG became aware that there is a prevailing ambition amongst the majority of technikons to become universities of technology. This ambition in part derives from the fact that the continued distinction between universities and technikons is seen as

anachronistic given the policy framework for establishing a single national co-ordinated higher education system. It also derives from the fact that there are apparently perceptions of inferiority and lower status associated with the name, which has a negative effect on the recruitment of students, the morale of staff, the attraction of donors, the attitude and support of the public, and development of international partnerships.

The NWG is sensitive to the concerns of the technikons. However, it believes that the perceptions of lower status must be addressed through enhancing the quality of programmes and the capacity of technikons to undertake research and to offer postgraduate programmes linked to their vocational and career-oriented mission and focus.

The brief of the NWG does not include questions of nomenclature. However, while it cannot support the suggestion that technikons be renamed Universities of Technology, it is of the view that an alternative such as "Institute of Technology" could be considered, where this status is appropriate, as it is likely to address the concerns of the technikon sector.

The NWG is firmly of the view that a blurring and eventual abolition of the boundaries between university and technikon programmes and mission foci would be detrimental to the development of an effective and efficient higher education system that is responsive to the social and economic needs of the country. In this regard, the NWG agrees with the National Plan for Higher Education that establishing a single national co-ordinated system does not necessarily imply institutional homogeneity. The NWG therefore believes that without drawing rigid demarcation lines, universities and technikons should in general continue to render their services to society within the bounds of the broad role-definitions and functional differentiations that have characterised their development historically.

However, the view that universities and technikons should continue to operate as higher education institutions with distinct programmes and mission foci does not preclude the merger of a university and a technikon to establish a comprehensive institution to facilitate the effective and efficient provision of higher education in particular circumstances and conditions. This can include, for example, circumstances where geographical proximity, competition for students in the same limited catchment area, convergence of niche areas, overlap of programmes, and other factors such as the need to develop critical mass through combined resources and capacities, indicate the desirability and potential benefits of closer association. Such co-operation will also be required in the National Institutes to be established in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga.

In cases, however, where the NWG recommends the establishment of comprehensive institutions, great care should be taken to prevent "academic drift" towards university-type programmes at the expense of technikon-type programmes. The comprehensive institution should be required to maintain an appropriate balance between university and technikon-type programmes in its mission and programme foci. The Department of Education, together with the Council on Higher Education, should monitor and combat signs of academic drift in comprehensive institutions through the programme approval and funding processes. In relation to nomenclature, the NWG is of the view that 'comprehensive' institutions should be described as universities.

### **2.3 INCORPORATION OF THE COLLEGE SECTOR**

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The NWG has noted and agrees with the proposal in the White Paper on Higher Education that all higher education colleges, including colleges of agriculture, education and nursing, which currently fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial administrations, should be integrated into and administered as part of the higher education system. This is consistent with the policy framework for the establishment of a single national co-ordinated higher education system that is planned, funded and governed as a single system.

The NWG has further noted that colleges of education were rationalised and successfully incorporated into the higher education system with effect from January 2001.

The NWG is also aware that the future role and location of colleges of agriculture and nursing were the subject of investigations jointly undertaken by the Ministries of Education and Agriculture and Health respectively. Although these investigations were completed in mid-2000, final decisions on the future role and location of colleges of agriculture and nursing are still awaited.

The NWG has, in a number of instances, included these colleges as integral parts of its merger proposals on the assumption that it is not only consistent with the policy framework of the White Paper, but more importantly, that it would consolidate, strengthen and enhance the provision of higher education in the regions concerned. It is therefore imperative that, as a matter of urgency, the Minister of Education together with the Ministers of Agriculture and Health resolve the future role and location of these colleges

### **2.4 DISTANCE EDUCATION**

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The NWG shares the concerns raised in the National Plan for Higher Education regarding the proliferation of distance education programmes that are offered by a growing number of traditionally residential institutions, often in partnership with the private sector.

The NWG is concerned that this proliferation apparently seems to be motivated by and large by financial gain. The NWG believes that it should not be allowed to continue in its present form. Aside from concerns relating to the quality and relevance of such programmes, it is also clear that they may be impacting on the sustainability both of the new dedicated distance education institution (the Open Learning University of South Africa), as well as residential institutions in regions where these programmes are offered. However, in line with the National Plan, the NWG is of the view that a total restriction of any form of distance education programmes at residential institutions may be counter-productive given the role that the developments in information and communications technology could play, through the use of resource materials, in enhancing the quality of teaching, including student support, at residential institutions. Moreover, such programmes

through targeting non-traditional students could be instrumental in increasing the participation rate and in providing for the needs of students who would otherwise be denied access to higher education.

The NWG therefore agrees with the proposals in the National Plan that the approval of any distance education programme at residential institutions should be subject to a set of criteria, including whether it falls within the institution's mission and capacity, whether it addresses regional and national needs, and whether it meets quality assurance criteria of the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC). In this way, poor quality programmes or those that impact on other residential institutions in particular or the dedicated distance education institution in general could be regulated without jeopardising those programmes that are of high quality and contribute to agreed national and regional needs.

## **2.5 SATELLITE CAMPUSES**

The NWG has noted with concern the proliferation of satellite campuses established by a number of higher education institutions both within as well as outside their traditional region of operation. The NWG has three concerns. First, it seems that the financial difficulties that some institutions find themselves in are in part due to the establishment of satellite campuses. Second, the service provided to students is often not of the same quality as that available on the main campus. Apart from the fact that students are taught by part-time staff, many without qualifications equivalent to their full-time counterparts, students also do not have access to the full range of services such as libraries, laboratories and other facilities. Third and more importantly, these campuses are often established in direct competition with other public higher education institutions. This not only compounds the problems of duplication and overlap, but it has also resulted in weakening the sustainability of the public institutions with which the satellites are in competition.

The NWG therefore supports the proposals in the National Plan for Higher Education to regulate and stop the unplanned proliferation of satellite campuses. The NWG agrees that this should be done on the basis of the criteria outlined in the National Plan, and that institutions should not be allowed to establish satellite campuses outside their traditional area of operation except in cases of "demonstrated regional and/or national need" or with "clear strategies for inter-institutional collaboration" (NPHE, p. 83).

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGIONAL RECONFIGURATION

In line with its terms of reference, the NWG concentrated its investigation and focused its recommendations on the reconfiguration of the higher education landscape within a regional context. The regions identified in the Terms of Reference are synonymous with provincial boundaries. However, in developing its recommendations, the NWG has in some cases transcended provincial boundaries given the location of some institutions either on the border between two provinces or with satellite campuses outside of the province in which the main campus is located.

The NWG has approached its investigation and framed its recommendations on a region-specific analysis of the context, current state and the future possibilities for the development of higher education. It has avoided a "one size fits all" approach to restructuring. The NWG is of the view that such an approach, by ignoring social and economic differences and needs would not enable a restructured higher education system meeting the needs of the different regions.

The NWG has specifically linked its recommendations to an analysis of overall regional and institutional enrolment patterns and trends and programme profiles. The new HEMIS system allows for students to be tracked through their home addresses. The NWG is aware of the limitations and problems associated with the use of home addresses to underpin its analysis of enrolment patterns and trends, especially as these have only become available since the replacement of SAPSE by a new higher education management information system in 2000. However, despite its limitations, the use of home addresses does enable broad trends to be identified.

#### 3.1 EASTERN CAPE

The institutional landscape of the Eastern Cape is formed by 4 universities (the Universities of Fort Hare, Port Elizabeth, Transkei, and Rhodes University), 3 technikons (Border, Eastern Cape and Port Elizabeth Technikons) and the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University. The institutions all have a variety of histories, profiles, missions and fortunes. They serve both urban and large rural areas. The majority of the students are poor and from disadvantaged school and socio-economic backgrounds, especially those from the eastern parts of the area. Long distances separate many of the institutions.

In 2000 a total of 56 000 public university and technikon students in South Africa were from the Eastern Cape. These students were distributed between the Eastern Cape universities and technikons (57%), Unisa and Technikon SA (14%), and universities and technikons in other provinces (29%).

The province's 7 universities and technikons, including the Port Elizabeth Vista campus supplemented the total of 32 000 Eastern Cape students who remained in the province by recruiting 7 000 contact students from other provinces and from other countries, and 15 000 distance education students. Enrolments in the province amounted to 9% of South Africa's total enrolments. The province's contact student total is, however, not likely to grow much above 40 000, given the current first-time entering undergraduate intake of around 10 000 and current failure and drop-out rates.

The 2000 FTE total of students registered at the Eastern Cape universities and technikons was only 37 000; which led to the institutions in the province having an average size of only 50% of the national average of 9 000 FTE students per contact education institution. The small size of the student enrolment at some of the province's institutions raises issues of their sustainability, given the extent to which their income is reliant on government subsidies and on the collection of student tuition fees.

The 32 000 students from the Eastern Cape who were registered in 2000 at one of the province's institutions can be divided as follows:

- 41% were from the greater Port Elizabeth region (which includes the country areas up to Grahamstown);
- 41% were from the greater East London region (which includes the country areas up to Alice and Queenstown);
- 18% were from the greater Umtata region (which includes the rural areas to the east of East London).

The demand from students who registered at one of the Eastern Cape's institutions was in 2000 primarily for undergraduate vocationally-oriented diplomas (48% of head count enrolments) and for undergraduate bachelor's degrees (38% of head count enrolments). Registrations for high-level postgraduate programmes were low: a total of 2 000 students at the 7 institutions were registered for masters or doctoral programmes.

### 3.1.1 RECONFIGURATION

The NWG has concluded that the provision of higher education in the Eastern Cape should be reconfigured to take into account the sustainability of some of the smaller institutions, likely population growth points, the current student demand for vocational qualifications, and the current inadequate levels of student output. The NWG proposes that:

- one comprehensive and multi-campus higher education institution should be established in the Port Elizabeth metropolitan area;
- one multi-campus university should be established in the East London metropolitan area and in the rural areas to the north and north west of East London;

- one multi-campus technikon should be established in the East London metropolitan area and in the rural areas to the east of East London.

### 3.1.2 PORT ELIZABETH TECHNIKON, UNIVERSITY OF PORT ELIZABETH AND THE PORT ELIZABETH CAMPUS OF VISTA UNIVERSITY

There are at present three institutions of higher education in the Port Elizabeth metropolitan area: Port Elizabeth Technikon, University of Port Elizabeth and the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University. All three institutions attract the majority of their contact students from the area in and around Port Elizabeth and from the rest of the Eastern Cape. In a limited catchment area, they have to compete not only with each other, but also with other institutions from within and outside the Eastern Cape. As a consequence, the NWG does not believe that contact enrolments in this metropolitan area are likely to grow substantially over the next few years.

The University of Port Elizabeth had nearly 7 000 contact students and over 15 000 distance students in 2000. In 2000, all of these distance students were following courses in education, and most were dealt with administratively by a private organisation in Gauteng acting as the university's agent. It furthermore appears that the permanent and full-time staff of the University of Port Elizabeth have not been involved in any direct way in the teaching of these students. The NWG is deeply concerned about this arrangement because of the implications it has for quality standards and because of the unusual pressure it places on state subsidy. It supports provisions in the National Plan for Higher Education that distance education at contact institutions should be well regulated and closely monitored. The NWG believes that an institution such as the University of Port Elizabeth should concentrate on contact education programs in its seat of operation, and should not dilute its human and other resources in educational engagements in far away places. The NWG noted, however, that the financial and enrolment stability, which the University of Port Elizabeth currently enjoys, would most probably be placed in jeopardy if the enrolment of large numbers of distance education students is drastically reduced or stopped, in accordance with provisions of the National Plan.

As far as its shape is concerned, the University of Port Elizabeth has achieved most equity benchmarks in the composition of its contact student body (its distance education students are mainly African). However, its overall image is not that of a comprehensively developed university with a wide-ranging and well-balanced programme profile. The predominant FTE student enrolment (distance plus contact courses) is in humanities and education (71%), with small proportions only of its FTE students following courses in science, engineering and technology (20%) and in business and management (9%). A key effect of its commitment to distance education is that the majority of University of Port Elizabeth students (60%) were enrolled in 2000 for undergraduate diplomas. The University of Port Elizabeth graduation rates are all below comparable national averages. Although the university had a total enrolment of 865 masters and 119 doctoral students in 2000, its outputs of masters and doctors graduates and of accredited research publications are low compared to national averages.

Port Elizabeth Technikon has a main campus, which is divided only by a fence from the main campus of the University of Port Elizabeth. It has a satellite campus in George. Port Elizabeth Technikon enrolled around 8 000 students in 2000, which is a little larger than the size of contact student numbers at the University of Port Elizabeth. The technikon meets the requirements of student equity, and enjoys enrolment stability. In 2000 85% of its students were enrolled in undergraduate diploma and certificate programmes.

As is the case with most technikons, Port Elizabeth Technikon's graduation rates are below the National Plan benchmarks. The technikon's research output in the form of research publication units and masters and doctoral graduates is low, although above average for technikons.

The third higher education institution operating in Port Elizabeth is a campus of Vista University. In 2000 a head count total of just over 2 000 students was enrolled at this campus. These students were following primarily majors in business and management (42%) and in humanities (also 42%). Enrolments in science, engineering and technology totalled 10% and in education 6%.

The NWG proposes that a comprehensive, multi-campus higher education institution in the Port Elizabeth metropolitan area should be established through merging Port Elizabeth Technikon and the University of Port Elizabeth and incorporating the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University into the merged institution. In this comprehensive institution, the distinction between university and technikon functions would be retained at a programme level.

The NWG based its proposal on the following considerations:

- The programme offerings of Port Elizabeth Technikon and University of Port Elizabeth complement each other in such a way that a merger would produce a good fit, with strong articulation possibilities between technikon-type and university-type programmes. There are also significant differences between their current programmes, which could strengthen the new institution and give it a wider scope. A greater variety of vocational needs could be met, because a better co-ordinated system of multi-level courses with horizontal and vertical mobility could be planned and implemented. This would probably help to improve the metropolitan area's participation rate through offering access to larger numbers of students.
- Both Port Elizabeth Technikon and University of Port Elizabeth enrol large numbers of students for undergraduate diplomas and certificates. In this regard, large-scale rationalisation through measures of co-ordination and consolidation is possible and desirable.
- Both institutions are still in the early stages of trying to establish a research culture. A consolidation of these endeavours could strengthen research capacity, initiatives and resources in the Port Elizabeth area.
- The campuses of Port Elizabeth Technikon and University of Port Elizabeth are immediately adjacent to one another, with multiple opportunities for sharing infrastructural and administrative resources.
- As part of the merger process, the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University should be incorporated into the new merged institution. This would further help to integrate students from different backgrounds and population groups and to create a new organisational identity by giving the new institution a presence in the disadvantaged community of the metropole. Students from this community would have access to the infrastructural facilities of the main campuses. An allocation of specific programmes to different campuses, instead of a duplication of programme offerings on current lines, could further facilitate mobility, interaction and a sense of unity.

The conclusion drawn by the NWG was that the merger of Port Elizabeth Technikon and the University of Port Elizabeth, including the incorporation of the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University would give this metropolitan area one comprehensive institution, under one leadership, with a more focused, needs-oriented mission for the area, with more effective planning capacities and opportunities, with an improved programme spread, and with internal articulation which would better serve the needs of the students and the needs of the metropole than is currently the case. It would be a stronger institution with a much better chance of sustainability as well as the possibility of expanding westwards where it already has a foothold (in George). It would provide the opportunity for a smaller but more concentrated and vibrant core of university programmes, in fruitful interaction with the larger context of technikon activities. While the new institution should continue with general bachelor degrees, with the existing training for the professions and with the strengthening of research programmes in those fields of study where expertise exists, it is important to ensure that the merger should not lead to academic drift. The extra teaching capacity and opportunities should, on the contrary, mainly be used to extend technikon-type programmes. The majority of the programmes should be three-year undergraduate diplomas and professional undergraduate bachelors degrees. There should be more emphasis on science, engineering and technology and on business and management programmes and less on the humanities. Existing strengths in engineering courses should be supported further.

This new institution could be expected to have a head count enrolment total of 15 000 - 18 000 contact students, based on an annual intake of at least 4 000 first-time entering undergraduates. Approximately 45% of these students could be registered for undergraduate diplomas, 40% for bachelor's degrees and 15% for various postgraduate qualifications. About 1 000 of the new institution's postgraduate enrolments could be masters and doctoral students. The shape of the new institution in terms of FTE enrolled students by course could be: 30% science, engineering and technology, 30% business and management and 40% in education and other humanities. The new institution could produce at least 4 500 graduates each year.

The NWG concluded that in order to improve its graduation and success rates, the new institution would have to pay considerable attention to educational processes. There will probably be problems with inadequate teaching staffing levels in certain programmes, which will need to be addressed. Development programmes for existing academic staff would have to be introduced to upgrade qualifications.

### 3.1.3 UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE, RHODES UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TRANSKEI

There are three universities active in East London and the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, each with its own history and traditions, strengths and weaknesses. They are Rhodes University in Grahamstown, the University of Fort Hare in Alice and the University of Transkei in Umtata.

The University of Transkei is not sustainable as an independent and autonomous institution with the broad functions of a university. It is currently without normal leadership and governance structures, and is managed by an administrator appointed by the Minister of Education. It is below the national average on many of the performance benchmarks developed by the NWG. The financial indicators in particular point to this institution being in an irretrievable position, especially without the special dispensation it received from the old Transkei government. It carries a very large debt burden. There has furthermore been a striking fall in head count student enrolments over the past 5 years: from 7 400 in 1996 to only 3 800 in 2000. As far as shape is concerned, 23% of its FTE enrolled students in 2000 were in science, engineering and technology,

12% in business and management, 65% in education and humanities. Only 647 students graduated in 2000. There were only 4 doctoral students and 67 masters students enrolled in 2000.

Rhodes University has its main campus in Grahamstown with a head count student enrolment on this campus of around 5 000. Rhodes indicated to the NWG that the possibility for expansion in Grahamstown is limited due to the lack of sufficient residential facilities to accommodate growth. It has developed a satellite campus in East London with a head count enrolment total of just over 1200 students. In many respects, Rhodes qualifies as a well-functioning institution. It has financial stability, and good leadership as well as management and administrative capacity. As far as the composition of the student body is concerned, its equity measures and progress are satisfactory. Although its postgraduate enrolments are not large, the institution has a good research record. In 2000 it produced about 60% of the province's research publication outputs and 40% of its masters plus doctoral graduates. Its graduation rates, particularly of masters and doctoral graduates, are nevertheless below the benchmarks set by the National Plan.

The University of Fort Hare has had a proud history in South African higher education. However, in recent times a number of factors have had a detrimental effect on the institution. As a rural institution in a small and remote town, it is not as attractive for staff and students as other institutions based in larger towns and cities. In recent years there has been a sharp fall in the university's intake of first-time entering undergraduates, which has affected its enrolment stability. It has been able to maintain a total head count enrolment of about 4 200 only by registering large numbers of teachers for in-service programmes in education. Its graduation rates and its research outputs have been low. In 2000 Fort Hare produced a total of only 536 graduates; of whom only 12 obtained masters or doctoral degrees. Its research publication total has been below 50 units for a number of years.

Poor leadership and inadequate administrative capacity in the years before 2000 aggravated Fort Hare's problems. The university has recently acquired strong leadership with a vision and which could put it on the road to recovery and success. However, there still seems to be a lack of depth in its administrative and management resources. Weak financial indicators through both 1999 and 2000 reflect poor liquidity, and levels of personnel expenditure relative to income received are not sustainable. Despite the good and committed financial management currently in place, it may take some years and then only if economic and local conditions were to improve considerably, before the university could move onto a sound financial basis. If various environmental conditions become adverse, then Fort Hare's ability to survive would have to be questioned. In spite of the negative picture which these data portray, the NWG is convinced that Fort Hare has areas of academic and educational strength that should be nourished because of their actual and potential contributions to the needs of the region and the country as a whole.

The NWG proposes that one multi-campus university be established in East London and in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. This new university should be formed from the current operations of Fort Hare and Rhodes Universities and of the medical school of the University of Transkei in Umtata. The remaining academic programmes of the University of Transkei should be discontinued with the necessary provision made to enable existing students to complete their studies. The infrastructure of the University of Transkei should form the core of the academic activities of the new technikon in Umtata. It could also be used as a learning center for the new Open Learning University of South Africa, which was recently announced by the Minister of Education.

The NWG based its proposal on the following main points and arguments:

- The University of Transkei as a corporate body is functioning at present at such a low level that those of its activities which need to continue will have to be passed on to other institutions based in the province. In particular, the medical school of the University of Transkei will survive only if it becomes part of the new multi-campus university referred to above. The medical school should strengthen the existing formal ties with the medical school of the University of Cape Town, aiming at close co-operation in both undergraduate and postgraduate education and training. The Cecilia Makiwane Hospital in Mdantsane should be used as an additional teaching hospital, and the medical school should take responsibility for the training of nurses in addition to its present tasks. This could occur both in Umtata and in Mdantsane.

- The evidence available suggests that the University of Fort Hare cannot be sustained as a single institution confined primarily to its Alice campus. Even if new substantial resources were to be injected into it over a long period of time, there can be no guarantee of Fort Hare's longer-term viability as an independent and stand-alone institution. Account has nevertheless to be taken of the long established identity of the institution and of the symbolic and strategic role it has played in the higher education history of South Africa and of the continent. The only way to safeguard and nurture this important heritage, however, is to strengthen the university through a merger with other institutions of the region.

- All available evidence suggests that growth in higher education in the region will be centred in East London since this is where the population is growing. There is a proposal from Rhodes University to establish a centre for information and communication technology in East London in partnership with the technikon sector. The NWG is convinced that it is a proposal with merit which should be explored further and that it could be, together with the present activities on the Rhodes East London campus, the nucleus for university higher education in East London. A condition would have to be that no other university should be allowed to teach in East London or the sub-region, whether in the contact or the distance mode, apart from the new single distance education institution.

These points have led the NWG to conclude that university-level higher education in the East London and rural regions of the Eastern Cape can best be served by one strong and sustainable university, which has a developing campus in East London as its growth point, a Fort Hare campus in Alice, a Rhodes campus in Grahamstown and a medical school campus in Umtata. The NWG is aware that the distances between the three institutions and the distinct culture of each campus would present special challenges. Optimal use should be made of modern communication technology to overcome the obstacle of distance. The NWG believes that a combination of the strong and visionary leadership of the Fort Hare and Rhodes campuses would help the new institution to develop a new mission and culture for the future, while at the same time retaining the inspiration of the long standing traditions of the two merging institutions.

A merger would mean that the two currently small liberal arts universities could jointly establish fruitful links in certain areas, and could begin to rationalise their programme offerings. They could combine to develop to the full the many opportunities for higher education growth which the East London area offers. This development could also help to ensure a more balanced spread of disciplines across the region's enrolment profile. The Alice campus would be sustainable as part of a larger institution, and would be required to develop a reduced number of cost effective programmes and niche activities where there is a comparative advantage. The merger would allow the in-depth administrative capacity of the Rhodes campus to support and strengthen the Fort Hare campus. Fort Hare could benefit from the strong research ethos of Rhodes and the Rhodes campus could benefit from greater exposure to the rural, poorer areas of the eastern parts of the Eastern Cape. The medical school in Umtata would be able to continue and could draw on science programmes of the Fort Hare and Rhodes campuses.

The new institution could have a head count enrolment total of at least 10 000, based on an annual intake of between 2 000 and 2 500 first-time entering undergraduates. The majority (at least 65%) of these

students could be registered for undergraduate bachelor's degrees, with a small proportion only (at most 5%) taking specialised undergraduate diplomas. The postgraduate proportion could be about 30%, with about 800 students following masters and doctoral programmes. The new institution's shape by FTE enrolments could be similar to that of the new comprehensive institution proposed for the Port Elizabeth metropolitan area: 30% science, engineering and technology, 30% business and management and 40% education and other humanities. The new institution could be expected to produce at least 2 800 graduates each year.

The NWG noted that the proposed merger could succeed only if the current debt burden of the University of Fort Hare is not carried over into the new institution. In addition, financial support will be needed and controls will have to be put in place to ensure that the new institution is able to sustain the medical school. There would also still be a need to strengthen Fort Hare's middle and lower levels of administration.

#### 3.1.4 BORDER TECHNIKON AND EASTERN CAPE TECHNIKON

There are two technikons in this region: Border Technikon located in Mdantsane close to East London and Eastern Cape Technikon with its main campus in Butterworth. Both have additional campuses. Apart from the one operating mainly in rural areas and the other in urban and peri-urban environments, they have much in common as far as size and shape are concerned.

In 2000 each institution had between 4 000 and 4 500 students enrolled in undergraduate diploma and certificate programmes. Between them there were only around 120 students enrolled in professional bachelor degree programmes, and less than 60 in postgraduate diploma programmes. They had no masters or doctoral students. In their broad discipline profiles, both place a heavy emphasis on science and technology and on business and management. In some respects, their programme offerings complement each other, but there is also a great deal of overlap. Neither technikon is performing well in terms of the outcomes of educational processes or of research output. Their throughput rates are poor.

Border Technikon is in a satisfactory financial position, but Eastern Cape Technikon was dependent on short term borrowing to meet its normal operating expenditures in 1999. It has not yet reported its 2000 financial results.

The NWG has concluded that, because of the realities of the Eastern Cape economy in which they are competing for students, neither technikon is sustainable if it remains an independent institution and that a combination of the two would be the only way to ensure longer-term viability and greater functionality. The complementarity of programmes would ease a merger as well as create the opportunity to plan more effectively and rationalise overlap. The two institutions seem to share this view. They have been discussing the possibility of unification from time to time in recent years.

The NWG has concluded that the two technikons should merge under a single leadership and that it should be seated in two primary sites, East London and Umtata (using the infrastructure of the present University of the Transkei), with campuses elsewhere in the Eastern Cape, including the present Butterworth campus, to be decided in consultation with the Ministry of Education.

A merger of the two technikons would lay a foundation for capacity building, better planning and more effective utilisation of resources through economies of scale and scope. The NWG believes that optimum benefits would accrue from a stronger new institution if it concentrated on vocational programmes, primarily towards three-year undergraduate diplomas. This would serve the needs of the region best. A merged technikon would also be in a much better position than two independent institutions to meet the challenges technikon education is facing in this region. The current graduation rates in both institutions are, for instance, amongst the lowest in the technikon sector and are a cause of real concern. A stronger institution should be in a better position to improve the quality of these educational processes, and to procure the additional resources that would be needed.

The new merged technikon could have a head count enrolment total of at least 9 000 to start with. If it becomes the type of institution anticipated by the NWG and is able to draw on a pool of potential students in the Umtata region (currently not enrolling in higher education institutions), it would have the potential to grow over time. A potential enrolment of around 12 000 would be based on an annual intake of about 4 000 first-time entering undergraduates. The majority (at least 70%) of these students could be registered for undergraduate diplomas, with the next largest proportion (about 25%) being registrations for professional bachelor's degrees, and with a small proportion only (at most 5%) following postgraduate qualifications. The new institution's shape by FTE enrolments could be 35% science, engineering and technology, 40% business and management, and at most 25% following education and other humanities. The new institution could be expected to produce at least 2 500 graduates each year.

The NWG has been persuaded that East London is the growth area in this region and that higher education should be strengthened in that city. However, the NWG believes that the new merged technikon should be the only technikon permitted to offer programmes in the East London area, as well as the eastern parts of the Eastern Cape, apart from the new merged national distance education institution. The proliferation of institutions having satellite campuses or delivery sites in East London and elsewhere in the region should cease, and those currently operating there should leave. Contact technikon programmes should be entirely taken over by the new single technikon, which should be assisted to find its particular niche.

### 3.1.5 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EASTERN CAPE

The NWG's recommendations for the reconfiguring of the higher educational landscape of the Eastern Cape Province are:

(i) Port Elizabeth Technikon and the University of Port Elizabeth should merge into one unitary institution, with the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University incorporated into the merged institution. The new institution should be a comprehensive one offering both university-type and technikon-type programmes, guarding against academic drift, but with optimal articulation arrangements put in place.

(ii) Border Technikon and Eastern Cape Technikon should merge into one unitary institution, with two primary sites in East London and Umtata as well as with campuses elsewhere in the region. The exact

locations of these additional campuses, including the future of the current Butterworth campus, should be determined by the new merged technikon in consultation with the Ministry of Education.

(iii) The University of Fort Hare, Rhodes University and the medical school of the University of Transkei should merge into one unitary institution. The new institution should develop an East London campus which will be the base from which the new institution will grow, looking in the first instance at the development of information, communication and technology programmes.

(iv) The remaining academic programmes of the University of Transkei should be discontinued with the necessary provision made to enable existing students to complete their studies. The infrastructure of the University of Transkei should form the core of the academic activities in Umtata of the new technikon. It could also be used as a learning centre for the new Open Learning University of South Africa, which was recently announced by the Minister of Education.

(v) The Fort Hare campus of the new merged university should diminish its academic programmes, keeping and developing a core of those programmes in which it is particularly strong.

(vi) Only the merged new technikon and new merged university should offer contact education in East London and in the rural eastern part of the Eastern Cape. Only the new merged distance education institution should be permitted to offer distance education programmes in this region.

### 3.2 FREE STATE

The Free State is a large geographical region with only two major higher education institutions. They are the Technikon Free State and the University of the Free State, which are both situated in Bloemfontein. The contact education institutions nearest to the Bloemfontein institutions are between 300 and 400 kms away. In addition, Vista University has a campus in Bloemfontein and in Welkom and the University of the North has a campus in Qwa Qwa. In line with the National Plan for Higher Education, the Qwa Qwa campus of the University of the North is currently in the process of being incorporated into the University of the Free State.

In the 2000 academic year, a total of 30 000 of South Africa's university and technikon students were from the Free State. A total of 14 500 (or 48%) of these students were enrolled at an institution within the province. Of the remaining students, 23% were registered for contact education programmes in universities or technikons in other provinces and 28% for distance education programmes with other institutions.

The head count student enrolment total in the 2000 academic year at the University of the Free State and Technikon Free State and at the various satellite campuses in the province was 25 000, amounting to 4% of the total enrolment of South Africa's 36 public universities and technikons. All these students were enrolled in contact education programmes. This implies that the province's institutions were able to 'import' 10 500 contact education students from other provinces and other countries in 2000. Head count enrolment totals in

2000 at the Vista branches in the province were 1 580 in Bloemfontein and 1 130 in Welkom. These enrolments were about 16% lower than those for 1999.

The 25 000 students enrolled in the province were divided into the following qualification categories: undergraduate diplomas 37%, undergraduate bachelor's degrees 41%, postgraduate qualifications below the level of masters 14%, masters degrees 7%, and doctoral degrees 2%. Student demand at undergraduate level was thus spread reasonably evenly between diploma and degree studies. The two institutions based in Bloemfontein enrolled 21 000 (or 84%) of students studying at the province's various institutions (the University of the Free State enrolled just over 12 000 students and Technikon Free State just under 9 000 students). The other 4 000 students in the province were enrolled in one of the province's satellite campuses.

### 3.2.1 RECONFIGURATION

The NWG has concluded that the needs of this province will be served best if higher education programmes offered in contact mode become the responsibility of one university and one technikon, given that these institutions will be expected to serve at least 25 000 students across a wide geographical region.

The NWG proposes that:

.. the University of the Free State should be retained as an independent institution, but the Bloemfontein campus of Vista should be incorporated into this university (the process of incorporating the Qwa Qwa branch of the University of the North into the University of the Free State has already begun);

.. Technikon Free State should be retained as an independent institution, but the Welkom campus of Vista University should be incorporated into this technikon.

### 3.2.2 UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE, TECHNIKON FREE STATE AND THE BLOEMFONTEIN AND WELKOM CAMPUSES OF VISTA UNIVERSITY

The University of the Free State is one of South Africa's older institutions with a long tradition of a well-balanced higher education programme mix, including most of the professional courses. It has established a commendable research capacity and culture with a good publication record as well as masters and doctoral degree outputs. This should be supported and nurtured. Technikon Free State plays an important role in providing the province with career-focused and work-place oriented training. In a number of respects, it functions above the national average for technikons.

Both the University of the Free State and Technikon Free State are well functioning and stable institutions in sound financial positions. In some areas of educational offerings there seems to be a considerable amount of overlap and duplication between the two, which calls for rationalisation.

With regard to their respective student bodies, they have had reasonable success in transforming historically white Afrikaans speaking institutions into multi-cultural, parallel-medium organisations, although the University of the Free State is still below the national average on student equity. Both institutions have differences in success rates by race group. The overall undergraduate success rates for the two institutions were, however, above the national averages for universities and technikons. As with other similar institutions, it is difficult to ascertain whether the underlying cultures and ethos remain alienating to Black students. Evidence suggests that even with large numbers of black students at an institution, students may still feel alienated because of other factors, including the absence of academic and other role models. Both institutions are below national averages with respect to staff equity. Much has still to be done, therefore, at both institutions to create an enabling environment in which the pursuit of scholarship can flourish unhampered and uninhibited by social and cultural impediments.

The student enrolments of both the University of the Free State and Technikon Free State increased sharply in 2000 compared to 1999, after they had both experienced slow or even zero growth over the previous 5 years. Indications are that these increases in enrolments have continued into 2001.

Student enrolments at the Vista campuses in the Free State have fallen in recent years. For example, head count enrolments at the Bloemfontein campus were 1940 in 1999 and 1580 in 2000, and at the Welkom campus 1 300 in 1999 and 1 130 in 2000. Most students at the Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses were following undergraduate degree programmes in humanities and in business and management. They had very small numbers in science, engineering and technology.

The graduation rates of the University of the Free State and Technikon Free State were in 2000 below the benchmarks set in the National Plan for Higher Education. Nevertheless, the University of the Free State graduation rates were on or close to the national averages for universities, and Technikon Free State graduation rates were well above the national averages for technikons.

The research outputs of the University of the Free State have been consistently good. In 2000 it produced 317 research publication units, which gave it a ratio of academic staff to units above the national average. In the same year the University produced 325 masters and 59 doctoral graduates. Technikon Free State's research outputs are similar to those of other technikons. It produced only 13 publication units, and 8 masters and 3 doctoral graduates in 2000.

The NWG believes that the region requires the provision of both university- and technikon-type qualifications for its development and that the continued existence of these two institutions is necessary to meet these needs. In order to maintain and further develop its research strengths as well as its focus on a broad range of university-level qualifications, the University of the Free State should be given the opportunity to consolidate its university activities after its merger with the Qwa Qwa campus of the University of the North. Likewise, Technikon Free State should get the chance to build on the foundations of a firm niche and clear mission as provider of career-focused and workplace-oriented programmes in the province. This role should not be jeopardised by new entry requirements constraining access, nor should academic drift away from this role be encouraged. At this stage, a merger between these two institutions would not address equity goals and could delay rather than promote educational developments.

With respect to areas of concern, the NWG considers that both institutions would benefit from the incorporation of Vista campuses to allow growth and to improve equity goals, since the Vista campuses have been historically black. The NWG believes that the Bloemfontein campus of Vista University should be incorporated into the University of the Free State. It also believes that the incorporation of the Welkom campus of Vista University into Technikon Free State would help to stimulate further fruitful interaction of the technikon with industry in the area.

In the spirit of rationalising the provision of higher education in the province, the NWG also recommends that consideration should be given to merging the nursing and agricultural colleges within the province with either the University of the Free State or the Technikon Free State.

The NWG would like to encourage the greatest possible amount of co-operation to ensure that the two institutions continue to serve a variety of needs of the region and the country, in terms of their different capacities as a university and a technikon, and of their different mission foci. Co-operation has not been optimal in the past and this must be corrected. Neither academic nor vocational drift should be allowed. Provided the university and the technikon keep to their demarcated, different niches and missions, with rationalisation through collaboration of any unnecessary overlap, the NWG sees no need for further mergers in the Free State.

### 3.2.3 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FREE STATE

The NWG's recommendations for the reconfiguration of the higher education landscape of the Free State Province are:

- (i) Technikon Free State and the University of the Free State should be retained as separate and independent institutions. Both institutions, however, should give priority to issues of increasing access and equity, improving success rates and should apply themselves to the development of an enabling environment in which all South Africans can pursue their studies unhampered by social and cultural impediments.
- (ii) In consultation with the Department of Education, serious consideration should be given to the rationalisation of unnecessary overlap and duplication. Any academic drift away from the current offering of technikon-type programmes should be avoided.
- (iii) The Bloemfontein campus of Vista University should be incorporated into University of the Free State.
- (iv) The Welkom campus of Vista University should be incorporated into Technikon Free State, with suitable provision being taken to ensure that current undergraduate degree students are able to complete their programmes of study.

(v) Consideration should be given to merging the nursing and agricultural colleges of the province with either the University of the Free State or Technikon Free State.

### 3.3 GAUTENG

While Gauteng is geographically small, it is the economic engine room of the country and very densely populated. The region's concentration of trade and industry as well as of administrative activities lends itself to opportunities for university and technikon education. The province, as a consequence, has 8 contact higher education institutions. These include 4 universities (The Medical University of South Africa [Medunsa], Rand Afrikaans University, University of Pretoria and University of the Witwatersrand) and 4 technikons (Pretoria Technikon, Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon Witwatersrand and Vaal Triangle Technikon). The headquarters of the 3 national distance institution (Technikon SA, Unisa and Vista) are also based in this province, including 4 of Vista University's 7 satellite campuses (East Rand, Mamelodi, Sebokeng and Soweto).

In the 2000 academic year a total of 173 000 (or 28%) of South Africa's university and technikon students were from Gauteng. Of this total, 88 000 students (50% of the province's total) were enrolled at one of Gauteng's 8 universities or technikons or at one of the 4 branches of Vista University. The remaining 85 000 students were distributed between Unisa and Technikon SA (40% of the total) and universities and technikons in other provinces (9%). A large total of 78 000 (or 45%) of the 173 000 university and technikon students from Gauteng were in 2000 studying through the medium of distance education programmes.

In 2000, the province's 8 universities and technikons and the 4 Vista campuses had a total head count student enrolment of 181 000 of which 133 000 (or 73%) were in contact education programmes and 48 000 (or 27%) were in distance programmes. The institutions based in the province (unless indicated otherwise, these will include the 8 universities and technikons plus the 4 Vista campuses) were major 'importers' of both contact and distance education students from other provinces and other countries. In 2000, 50 000 of these institutions' contact students and 43 000 of their distance education enrolments were from other provinces and countries. This import total of 93 000 amounted to 51% of the total head count enrolment of these Gauteng institutions in 2000.

A large proportion (about 52%) of the 181 000 students enrolled in the province's institutions were following undergraduate diploma level programmes. A further 35% were following undergraduate bachelor's programmes, and the remaining 13% various postgraduate programmes. The province's institutions had in 2000 large numbers of masters and doctoral students. Its head count total of masters students was 11 000 and of doctoral students 2 300.

The FTE enrolled total of the 8 universities and technikons in the province was 110 000 in 2000 (the Vista campuses are not included because no information on their FTE enrolments was available). Their average

size was therefore close to 14 000 FTE students per institution, which was well above the national average of 9 000 FTE students per contact institution.

The 4 Vista campuses in Gauteng had a combined head count enrolment of 9 000 in 2000, which would normally generate an FTE total of about 7 000, making their average size under 2000 FTE students.

The graduation rates of all 8 institutions (the Vista campuses are not included because no information on their graduates was available) were below the benchmarks set in the National Plan. However, in the case of 3 of the 4 universities, their undergraduate graduation rates were on or above the national averages for universities (The exception was Medunsa whose graduation rates for postgraduate qualifications were below average). Their average success rates in contact undergraduate courses were well above national averages. Two of the 4 technikons (Pretoria Technikon and Technikon Witwatersrand) had graduation rates above the national averages for technikons. The 4 technikons' average undergraduate success rates for contact courses were all on or above the national averages for technikons.

The research outputs of the province's universities and technikons have been amongst the highest in South Africa. Three of the 4 universities (with Medunsa being excluded because its output rate was below the national average, and the Vista campuses being excluded because of lack of information) produced a total of 1 790 research publication units in 2000, which was 33% of the total output for South Africa's 21 universities. This group of universities produced 1 600 masters graduates in 2000 (30% of the overall university total) and 262 doctoral graduates (33% of the overall university total in 2000).

The 4 technikons produced 68 research publication units, which represented 43% of the total publication outputs of South Africa's 15 technikons. They produced a total of 73 masters and doctoral graduates in 2000, which was 36% of the technikon total for that year.

### 3.3.1 RECONFIGURATION

For reasons of geographical proximity and interests they have in common, the NWG decided to deal with the Technikon North-West in the context of the Gauteng cluster of institutions. Medunsa was considered in conjunction with the two universities of the Northern Province. Proposals concerning Medunsa are included in section 3.5. The East Rand, Mamelodi, Sebokeng and Soweto campuses of Vista University were dealt with in the framework of the Gauteng configuration of institutions. The national distance education institutions fell outside the brief of the NWG.

The NWG has concluded that given Gauteng's concentration of trade and industry and administrative activities, the province's higher education institutions should be reconfigured to take account of these key locational assets as well as the issues of detail raised in the subsections which follow. The NWG proposes that:

- there should be three universities in Gauteng;

- there should be three technikons in Gauteng.

The NWG reports first on the universities of the region and then on the technikons. The future of the four Vista campuses in the province is discussed in the relevant sub-sections.

### 3.3.2 RAND AFRIKAANS UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND AND UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

In trying to find a feasible solution to the challenge of reconfiguration in Gauteng the NWG first considered the circumstances of the three large universities in the province. They are Rand Afrikaans University, University of the Witwatersrand and University of Pretoria.

Rand Afrikaans University and University of the Witwatersrand, which are in close proximity to each other, have experienced slow declines in their student enrolments over the past 5 years. These enrolments appear, however, to have reached a plateau of stability, with the University of the Witwatersrand head count student enrolments just below 18 000 in 2000 and Rand Afrikaans University's just below 20 000. Rand Afrikaans University's major decline in student enrolments has been in its distance programmes. Its head count distance student enrolments fell from 9 400 in 1997 to 6 000 in 2000. Both institutions have FTE enrolled student totals which are about 50% higher than the national average of 9 000 for contact education institutions. The University of the Witwatersrand's FTE enrolled student total was 13 400 and Rand Afrikaans University's 14 000 in 2000. University of the Witwatersrand has a close relationship with industry and with business which is reflected in part in the large percentage of its FTE student numbers enrolled in the broad discipline categories of science, engineering and technology (50% in 2000) and of business and management (19% in 2000). At Rand Afrikaans University the proportion of FTE enrolments in science, engineering and technology is much smaller. In 2000 only 18% of its FTE student was in science, engineering and technology. Its FTE enrolment in business was 20%.

University of the Witwatersrand has a long tradition as one of the leading research institutions in the country. It, for example, produced 16% of the research publication outputs of the university sector during the 10-year period 1991-2000. Rand Afrikaans University is in the process of building a research culture of its own. Its total research output in terms of publication units has been about half of that of the University of the Witwatersrand, but it has in terms of outputs per academic staff member achieved one of the highest publication unit ratios in the country. Rand Afrikaans University has done equally well with regard to the number of masters and doctoral graduates per academic staff member.

Both universities are stable, well managed and in good financial positions. Despite their strengths, they do not meet all the NWG's criteria for well functioning institutions. The University of the Witwatersrand has made good progress in achieving equity in its student body although much still remains to be done with regard to achieving equity in its academic and administrative staff profiles. In 2000, 57% of the students enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand were black, but only 20% of all permanent academic staff and 22% of all permanent professional staff were black. Likewise, Rand Afrikaans University has gone through a process of transformation in which black students are now slightly in the majority in overall enrolments, and where English has become one of the languages of tuition. Notwithstanding this, a great deal still needs to be done to correct the imbalances in demographic profile of the contact student body,

which to date remains as much as 70% white. In addition, the success rates of African students are low compared to those of white students. The institution also needs to move towards a more satisfactory degree of representivity among academic and administrative staff. In 2000 only 7% of Rand Afrikaans University's permanent academic staff and 8% of its total of permanent professional staff were black.

The third university in the region is the University of Pretoria. This is the largest higher education contact institution in the country with a head count enrolment of about 59 000 students in 2000. 29 000 of these students were registered for contact education programmes and 30 000 for distance education programmes, mainly in education and education management. Nearly all the distance students were registered with the university in terms of a partnership agreement with a private higher education provider.

The data show that the University of Pretoria is performing well on all the indicators of stability and sustainability. It is an institution with strong management and administrative capacity and is in an extremely good financial position. It is achieving very well as a research university and in postgraduate studies. Its publication unit ratios are high in comparison to the national average, as is its output of masters and doctors graduates. However, like Rand Afrikaans University, while the university has gone through a process of transformation in which black students are now in the majority in overall enrolments, the undergraduate contact student body to date remains about 70% white. The different success rates of students, particularly those of African students in undergraduate contact programmes are further signs of inequities at the university. The distance education programmes offered by the university are, in marked contrast to its contact programmes, overwhelmingly black: in 2000 only 2% of the distance students registered by the university were white.

The NWG is concerned about the extent to which the Pretoria University's very large distance education enrolments have contributed to its apparently favourable equity profile. There also seems to be a question mark over the quality of over-subscribed distance education programmes offered by an institution geared for contact education. The university's distance education programmes should be regulated in terms of the policy guidelines of the National Plan for Higher Education. Clearly, the present situation is unsatisfactory and untenable. The University also still has a long way to go in achieving equity in its academic and administrative staff profiles. In 2000 only 6% of its permanent academic staff members as well as of its total of professional staff were black.

Apart from equity and internal transformation issues that need urgent attention, the NWG is of the view that there is considerable overlap and duplication in programme offerings and neglect of opportunities to strengthen educational processes and offerings through closer association and collaboration. This holds for the entire Gauteng region and for the relations between all the institutions. The NWG is aware that Rand Afrikaans University and the University of the Witwatersrand, along with Technikon Witwatersrand, signed a Declaration of Intent this year to engage in a constructive process of collaboration and co-operation and that preliminary discussions are already underway to collaborate in a number of academic areas. The NWG is also aware of similar collaborative agreements entered into by the University of Pretoria. The NWG welcomes these voluntary ventures of co-operation. There is, however, still much to be done to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources through inter-institutional rationalisation. Such rationalisation does not only refer to the sharing of infrastructure, facilities and expensive equipment. There is also the possibility of expensive educational programmes of different institutions being co-ordinated, and even consolidated, at the meso- and micro-levels of institutional organisation, to bring down unit costs as well as enhance academic capacity, the quality of programmes and the level and extent of research initiatives. The NWG would like to propose that mechanisms be put in place to implement forms of consolidation and rationalisation between the three universities, including the other institutions in the region, in specific programmes and fields of study. The NWG believes that a good start would be to investigate the closer collaboration of institutions with regard to the rationalisation and strengthening of programmes especially in medicine, dentistry, engineering, business and management and the performing and creative arts.

The NWG accepts that in all three universities in Gauteng there are issues to be addressed and improvements to be made. Notwithstanding this, the NWG is convinced that the three universities are sustainable with relatively strong research profiles and with a wide range of well-established educational programmes. While the NWG seriously considered the possibility of a merger between Rand Afrikaans University and the University of the Witwatersrand it decided against this for several reasons. It is doubtful whether a merger would lead to more productive research activity. By South African standards, both universities are indeed doing very well as research institutions. The country needs its existing research initiatives and programmes to be protected, nurtured and improved. The NWG also believes that the weaknesses identified above can be dealt with in other ways. A process of internal transformation, deliberately targeted at consolidating new orientations and combating the alienation of black students and staff, would be a far more fruitful instrument of restructuring than a merger. Similarly, there is every reason to believe that structured co-operation/collaboration and consolidation of programme offerings would not only cut costs, but also strengthen and enhance the quality of the programme offerings through a combination and better utilisation of scarce human, financial and infrastructural resources. What has been said about the undesirability of a merger between the University of the Witwatersrand and Rand Afrikaans University also applies to the position of the University of Pretoria.

The NWG has therefore come to the conclusion that Rand Afrikaans University, the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand should be retained, but that all three universities should give priority to issues of access, equity, regional collaboration and rationalisation of programme offerings.

To promote equity and to give these institutions a presence in disadvantaged communities, the NWG further recommends that the Mamelodi campus of Vista University should be incorporated into the University of Pretoria. The Mamelodi campus had a head count student enrolment of 3 300 in 2000, of whom 9% were following majors in science, engineering and technology, 38% in business and management, 4% in education and 49% in other humanities. The NWG believes that the incorporation would not meet with any obstacles and would benefit both the parties. While the Vista University campus would be assured of good management and future stability, the incorporation of the campus would, on the other hand, give the University of Pretoria a direct presence in and fruitful interaction with the disadvantaged communities of the environment.

The NWG also recommends that in the light of the formal agreement to collaborate, Rand Afrikaans University, the University of Witwatersrand and Technikon Witwatersrand should be asked to submit a joint proposal to the Minister of Education on how the East Rand and Soweto campuses of Vista University could best be used to facilitate access of prospective students to higher education. These proposals should be the basis for deciding the most appropriate institutional allocation of the two campuses. The East Rand campus had a head count student enrolment of about 1 100 in 2000, with student majors being divided between business and management (40%), education (6%) and other humanities (54%). There were no science or engineering or technology students at this campus. The Soweto campus had 2 100 students in 2000, 9% following majors in science, engineering and technology, 39% majors in management, 4% majors in education and 48% majors in other humanities.

### 3.3.3 TECHNIKON WITWATERSRAND AND VAAL TRIANGLE TECHNIKON

In considering the provision of technikon education in Gauteng, the NWG first considered the circumstances of the two technikons situated in the central and southern regions of Gauteng. They are the Technikon Witwatersrand and Vaal Triangle Technikon.

Technikon Witwatersrand is a well-administered institution with financial and enrolment stability (over 12 500 students in 2000). In terms of most of the indicators, the functionality of the technikon is above average. It has moved from a historically white institution to one with more than 80% of its student enrolments black. About 55% of its FTE student enrolments in 2000 were in science, engineering and technology courses, and 30% in business and management courses. There is, however, a need for the upgrading of staff qualifications: only about 25% of its permanent academic staff members have either masters or doctoral degrees as their highest formal qualifications. A great deal also needs to be done with regard to achieving equity in its academic and administrative staff profiles. In 2000 over 80% of the technikon's permanent academics and professional staff body were white.

Because of Technikon Witwatersrand's location, the NWG looked carefully at possibilities of a merger with one or both of the two universities in its neighbourhood, that is, Rand Afrikaans University and University of the Witwatersrand. It has become clear, however, that Technikon Witwatersrand offers different kinds of programmes from those of the universities and that it would be difficult to find a proper fit without an entire refocusing and restructuring of its mission and its niche. The NWG is not convinced that it would be in the interest of higher education in the central parts of Gauteng to merge Technikon Witwatersrand with any of its neighbouring institutions.

With regard to the future of Technikon Witwatersrand, the NWG believes it would be wise to retain a strong technikon in the central parts of Gauteng, with a mission focus on vocational and technological level skills-training, to help fulfil the industrial needs of the area. Notwithstanding this, the NWG is of the view that there is considerable scope for rationalisation of programme offerings particularly in relation to the two neighbouring universities. A good start would be to investigate the closer collaboration of the three institutions with regard to the rationalisation and strengthening of programmes in engineering. The need for three schools of engineering in this sub-region warrants serious scrutiny, given the cost of offering engineering and the high levels of overlap and duplication in programme offerings. In addition, the possibility of articulation between technikon diploma and B.Eng. degrees should be explored.

The Vaal Triangle Technikon in Vanderbijlpark has changed its student profile to the extent that in 2000 close on 90% of its head count enrolment of 14 700 were black. The bulk of its FTE student enrolments (80%) were spread evenly between science, engineering and technology and business and management. The data show, however, that there is considerable room for improvement with regard to the productivity of its educational processes. Student drop-out rates at this technikon are higher than the averages for the technikon system. There is also considerable room for improvement in relation to equity in its academic and administrative staff profiles. In 2000, the technikon's permanent academic staff body was 75% white and its total body of professional staff 69% white. The institution presents a picture of general stability, though, in spite of some recent disturbances at management level.

The NWG believes that given its location in the industrial heartland of the region, it makes sense to retain Vaal Triangle Technikon. This allows industries in the immediate environment to benefit from the vocational and technological level skills training which Vaal Triangle Technikon is able to provide and would, on the other hand, provide Vaal Triangle Technikon with ready access to an industrial environment for experiential training. The NWG further proposes that the facilities, but not the staff and students, of the Sebokeng campus of Vista University should be allocated to the Vaal Triangle Technikon so as to allow the technikon the potential for further growth. The students and staff of the Sebokeng campus should be incorporated into the Vaal Triangle campus of the merged Potchefstroom University for CHE and the University of the

North-West (see section 3.6.2). The rationale underpinning this recommendation is that there are small numbers of students (just over 800 in 2000) following mainly university level degree programmes.

### 3.3.4 TECHNIKON NORTHERN GAUTENG, TECHNIKON NORTH-WEST AND TECHNIKON PRETORIA

The next group of technikons considered by the NWG in the context of reconfiguration of higher education provision in Gauteng were Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon Pretoria and given its location near to the Gauteng border, Technikon North-West. All three technikons are within close geographical proximity of one another.

In order of size, Technikon Pretoria is a large institution with several satellite campuses and a rapidly growing head count enrolment (33 300 in 2000). 11 600 of these students were enrolled in distance education programmes offered in partnership with a private provider. The institution's head count enrolment in 2000 included 550 masters level and 44 doctoral level students. Because of its heavy commitment to distance education programmes in the field of education, this technikon's overall FTE student enrolment is very different to those of other large technikons. In 2000 only 29% of its FTE student enrolment was in science, engineering and technology and 17% in business and management. The benchmark used by the NWG was that at least 70% of the FTE enrolments of a technikon should be in these broad categories. This technikon comes close to meeting the benchmark if account is taken only of its FTE contact student enrolments. The technikon meets equity requirements in its contact student body. In 2000 about 70% of its head count total of contact students were black. It does, however, face serious equity problems as far as staff are concerned: in 2000 only 7% of its permanent academic staff and 8% of its total professional staff body were black. Relative to other technikons, however, the academic staff at the Pretoria Technikon are well qualified. Student graduation and success rates are on or above the averages for technikons. There is, however, a serious concern about the financial sustainability of the institution. After years of prudent financial management resulting in surplus and accumulated investments, the institution has in recent years embarked on extensive expansion utilising its reserves/investments. The result is that the institution is now in a weak financial position and is reliant on borrowings to relieve the stress on its current funds position. The NWG is also deeply concerned about the extent, the tempo and the nature of distance education developments at Technikon Pretoria and strongly recommends that these developments should cease.

Technikon Northern Gauteng is a smaller institution with a head count enrolment of

9 400 in 2000. This enrolment has remained at much the same level for the previous 4 years. Its spread of FTE student enrolments satisfies the benchmarks used by the NWG: 39% of its FTE student enrolment was in 2000 in science, engineering and technology courses and 35% in business and management courses. The technikon's graduation rates are well below the benchmarks set in the National Plan and are also below the national averages for technikons. This is an indication that it has high rates of students dropping out without completing their qualifications. It has few postgraduate students and a low research output. In 2000 it had a head count total of 49 masters students and only 1 doctoral student. It produced only 3 research publication units in 2000. Only 26% of the permanent academic staff of the technikon had in 2000 masters or doctoral degrees as their highest formal qualification; which is a proportion below the NWG's benchmark and the average for technikons. The technikon's financial position and its administration are in a reasonable shape.

Technikon North-West is a small institution with a head count enrolment of 4 200 in 2000. There seems little chance of this technikon growing much beyond its current levels in future years. There is furthermore very little sign of postgraduate or research activities in this technikon. It has no masters or doctoral enrolments

and has produced a total of only 12 research publication units during the past 5 years. The situation with regard to staff qualifications is a further matter of concern. In 2000 the technikon had 102 permanent academic staff members of whom only 2 held masters degrees and none had doctorates. The NWG believes that Technikon North-West finds it difficult to establish its own niche, which could serve as a draw card. This is understandable given the fact that it has to compete for students with other stronger institutions, with long established missions and niches, operating in its vicinity. The situation of competition with more than one strong technikon in its immediate neighbourhood will not disappear. The probability is great that Technikon North-West will always remain below the average performance of technikons in all those respects that constitute an institution's productivity and longer-term viability.

The NWG believes that there are good reasons why a merger between Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria should be seriously considered. They are in many respects similar institutions situated close to each other with many areas of overlap. A merger would create the platform for much more effective planning, which would in its turn lead to rationalisation, economies of scale and the development of more needs-oriented programmes for the region. Instead of unmitigated competition with all the negative effects that it normally has, there could be a consolidation of student recruitment drives, of staff competencies and of other resources. Staff and student equity issues would benefit. Within the framework of one organisation, the potential for fruitful synergy between the campuses would be so much more. Leadership and management capacities would be enhanced and the end result could be a much stronger technikon. An argument against a merger might be the size of the new institution. However, the cessation of a large number of Pretoria Technikon's distance education programmes, in line with the National Plan provisions, would result in a new institution whose size would not present insurmountable new challenges to management and administration. Another argument might be the destabilising effect of financial uncertainties at Pretoria Technikon. The NWG believes that a merger could only be considered on condition that the proper financial provisions be made to cover any costs, including the payment of existing debts, and that a financial plan with appropriate financial controls and management be put in place for the implementation of a merger. The NWG is also of the view that consideration should be given to whether there is a need to retain the Technikon North-West site. The possibility of its infrastructure and resources being put to other uses, e.g., further education and training, while its students and staff are accommodated in the new merged technikon should be explored.

The NWG therefore proposes that Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria, should be merged into a single unitary institution. The analysis undertaken by the NWG suggests that, if this proposal is accepted, then the new technikon could have the following size and shape:

The new technikon could be an institution, which operates on 2 main campuses (the present main campus of Technikon Northern Gauteng and the present main campus of Pretoria Technikon). Its enrolment could be about 36 000 head count students in contact education programmes, with an annual intake of 9 000 first-time entering undergraduates. Most of these students (at least 70%) could be enrolled in undergraduate diplomas, with the balance being mainly in professional bachelor's degrees. The new institution could produce at least 7 500 graduates each year. It could have an FTE student enrolment of about 29 000, with 70% of these being in science, engineering and technology and in business and management. If educational processes in the new technikon are to meet the national policy requirements, additional academic staff may be needed in those fields of study in which student: staff ratios are exceptionally high at present.

### 3.3.5 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GAUTENG

The NWG's recommendations for the reconfiguration of the higher education landscape for Gauteng are:

- (i) Rand Afrikaans University, the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand should be retained as separate and independent institutions. However, all three universities should give priority to issues of access and equity and to serious regional collaboration with a view to the rationalisation as well as the strengthening of programmes through co-ordination and consolidation. These should at a minimum include the disciplines of medicine, dentistry, business and management, engineering and the performing and creative arts.
- (ii) All three universities should pay special attention to the development of an enabling environment in which all South Africans can pursue their studies unhampered by social and cultural impediments.
- (iii) The three technikons in the Tshwane metropole, namely, Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria should be merged into one unitary technikon with two sites, one at the current Technikon Northern Gauteng site and the second at the current Technikon Pretoria site.
- (iv) The feasibility of Technikon North-West's infrastructure and resources being put to other uses, for example further education, while its students and staff are accommodated in the new merged technikon should be explored.
- (v) Technikon Witwatersrand should be retained as a separate and independent institution. However, the institution should give priority to regional collaboration, particularly the optimal collaboration of its school of engineering with other schools in the region.
- (vi) Vaal Triangle Technikon should be retained as a separate and independent institution and the facilities of the Sebokeng campus of Vista University allocated to it to allow growth. The students and staff of the Sebokeng campus should be incorporated into the Vaal Triangle campus of the merged Potchefstroom University for CHE and the University of the North-West.
- (vii) The Mamelodi campus of Vista University should be incorporated into University of Pretoria.
- (viii) Rand Afrikaans University, the University of the Witwatersrand and Technikon Witwatersrand should jointly propose to the Minister of Education how the East Rand and Soweto campuses of the Vista University could best be used to facilitate the access of students to higher education. These proposals should form the basis for deciding the most appropriate institutional allocation for the Vista campuses.
- (ix) The recent distance education developments at the University of Pretoria and at Pretoria Technikon should be reviewed and where appropriate discontinued.

### 3.4 KWAZULU-NATAL

There are three universities and three technikons in KwaZulu Natal. The universities are the University of Durban-Westville in Durban, the University of Natal with a campus in Durban and in Pietermaritzburg, and the University of Zululand in Empangeni with a satellite campus in Umlazi. The technikons are the Mangosuthu Technikon, M L Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal. All three technikons are situated in the Durban Metropolitan area.

In the 2000 academic year a total of 98 000 of South Africa's university and technikon students were from KwaZulu-Natal. Of this total, 50 000 (or 51%) students were enrolled at one of the province's 6 universities or technikons. The remaining 48 000 students were distributed between Unisa and Technikon SA (28%) and universities and technikons in other provinces (21%). 6 000 of the students registered at contact education institutions in other provinces were taking distance education programmes, thus amounting to 33% of the province's students studying through the distance education mode.

In 2000, the province's 6 universities and technikons had a total head count student enrolment of 59 000, all in contact education programmes. This implies that the province's universities and technikons were able to 'import' 9000 contact education students from other provinces and other countries. The largest recruiter of these students was the University of Natal with 5 600 (or 23% of its total enrolment) being out-of-province students. The remaining 3 400 out-of-province students were shared between the other 2 universities and the 3 technikons. The enrolment at the province's universities and technikons amounted to 10% of the total enrolment of South Africa's 36 public universities and technikons.

The intake of first-time entering undergraduates into the province's 6 universities and technikons has been about 14 000 for a number of years. This total, on the province's current graduation and drop-out rates, suggests that there is little prospect of the universities and technikons in this province increasing their contact head count enrolment total much above their current level of about 60 000. Future enrolment growth would have to depend on the institutions being able to recruit more of the students whose homes are in KwaZulu-Natal.

Because the universities and technikons in the province record no distance education enrolments, their head count enrolment total of 59 000 students generated a high total of 48 000 FTE enrolled students in 2000, an average enrolment of 8 000 FTE students per institution. This average size was 11% below the national average of 9 000 FTE students per contact university or technikon.

The demand from students living in KwaZulu-Natal, as well as from those from other provinces, who registered at one of the province's universities and technikons was in 2000 primarily for undergraduate qualifications. The demand for high-level postgraduate programmes was low: fewer than 5000 students from the province were registered for masters or doctoral programmes. Most of these students appear to have registered at 2 of the 3 universities (University of Natal and University of Durban-Westville).

The graduation rates of all 6 institutions were below the benchmarks set in the National Plan for Higher Education. For example, the Universities of Durban-Westville and Zululand's graduation rates for three-year

bachelor's degrees were below the national institutional averages for 2000. The low graduation rates imply that these 6 institutions, taken collectively, have experienced unacceptably high levels of student failure and drop out. The province's average success rates in 2000 for undergraduate courses taken in contact mode were also below national averages.

The research outputs of the province's universities and technikons have been mixed and tend in the main to be concentrated in the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville. In 2000, these two institutions produced 600 of the province's total output of 620 masters and doctoral graduates (470 from University of Natal and 130 from University of Durban-Westville). These same universities produced 607 of the province's total of 714 research publication units in 2000 (487 from University of Natal and 120 from University of Durban-Westville). The province's research publication output for 2000 amounted to 13% of the total output of the university plus technikon sector. Its output of doctoral graduates amounted to only 9% of the total produced in 2000.

There are a number of general issues, other than those raised above, which prompted the NWG to look seriously at realignments and reconfigurations of higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal. Some of the main issues of concern to the NWG were:

- With the exception of the University of Zululand, the province's universities and technikons are urban institutions, which are in close proximity to one another. This proximity has inevitably caused competition between the institutions. Should they decide to combine in order to diminish competition, their proximity could, of course, be a facilitating factor.
- Most of the institutions have aspirations to expand their student enrolments, but apart from a lack of infrastructural capacity as a constraining factor, a limited catchment area must place a question mark over the likely availability of sufficient numbers of students. In addition, as reported earlier, many prospective students seek access to higher education outside the province, a circumstance that further restricts the growth potential of institutions in the region. If competition in the recruitment of students continues, and if the stronger and larger institutions keep on growing, some institutions run the risk of becoming non-viable.
- The universities on the one hand, and the technikons on the other, have many offerings in common, with considerable overlap. Some of the duplications are those of small and under-subscribed programmes, others of expensive courses, all of which have high unit costs. These and other inefficiencies call for rationalisation through collaboration.
- There are, furthermore, indications from employers and other stakeholders that economic development could only be advanced in the province if special kinds of vocational capabilities and technological skills are available. To provide for these needs, institutions would have to enhance their capacity through closer association and consolidation.
- As is the case in other provinces, some of the institutions have in recent years experienced administrative, managerial and governance problems. Although combinations would not be automatic solutions to this kind of problem, they could, with some form of support, strengthen the competencies and leadership that are needed to run a higher education institution effectively.

- There are finally a number of other weaknesses in the province's higher educational processes, leading to poor graduation rates. These could be better addressed from a common platform and in a joint effort, drawing on consolidated resources and bargaining powers.

#### 3.4.1 RECONFIGURATION

The NWG has concluded that the provision of higher education in KwaZulu-Natal should be reconfigured to take account of the broad issues discussed above as well as the issues of detail raised in the subsections which follow. The NWG proposes that:

- one multi-campus university, with a major satellite in Pietermaritzburg, should be established in the Durban metropolitan area;

- one multi-campus technikon should be established in the Durban metropolitan area;

- a university, which should over time be redeveloped as a comprehensive institution which offers both university and technikon programmes, should be retained in the northern region of the province.

#### 3.4.2 UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NATAL

There are 2 universities in the Durban metropolitan area. These are the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal. The NWG noted the following specific points about these universities:

The University of Natal had in 2000 a head count enrolment total of 23 000 students, spread across its campuses in Durban and its campus in Pietermaritzburg. Its Durban campus is substantially bigger than that in Pietermaritzburg. The university is a well-run institution with financial stability and a solid research tradition. Its publication output ranks among the best in the country, and it boasts a network of national and international academic partnerships. Being for years a multi-campus institution, the University of Natal has had substantial experience of managing and administering university activities which are not concentrated in one location.

The University of Durban-Westville, which is approximately 10km from the Durban campus of the University of Natal, was established in terms of the apartheid ideology to serve the needs of the Indian community. In 2000 the university had a head count enrolment of about 8000 students. It is in a good financial position, although it experienced some campus turbulence in recent years. The university has developed some research programmes over the years, but its publication output as well as the success rate of its educational processes, fall below the national averages for universities.

There is a great deal of overlap between the academic programme offerings of the two universities.

The NWG proposes that the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal should be merged to form a large, multi-campus university. This should be a unitary and not a federal form of merger.

The NWG believes that there are good reasons for a merger to take place between the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville. Their geographical proximity to each other is not the only or even the most important of these reasons. The NWG has based this specific proposal on the following additional considerations:

There is a complementarity of academic programmes in the two universities which, on the one hand, could facilitate a combination, and, on the other, help to strengthen and develop existing programmes in a new combined institution. There is for instance a medical school and nursing programme at the University of Natal, while the University of Durban-Westville provides training in dentistry and allied health disciplines. Serious consideration should be given to the establishment of a fully-fledged dentistry school for KwaZulu-Natal, which would complement existing health science offerings. Centralised planning of engineering courses could help to avoid overlap, to share resources between the two campuses and to lower unit costs. Other areas include education, law and research institutes where co-ordination and/or consolidation could greatly improve efficiency and quality.

The current movement of staff from one institution to the other, and the disrupting effect this practice has on both, could also be stopped, while the deployment and utilisation of academic expertise could be better organised in the region. In general, resources could be used more effectively and more efficiently, and combining the two institutions could strengthen academic programmes.

There seems to be agreement between the two institutions with regard to the desirability of closer association. The only difference appears to be that of what model of merger should be adopted. Some have argued in favour of a federal arrangement, and others have pressed for a unitary combination. The main argument against a unitary merger seems to be that the institutions would lose their specific academic image or 'brand' which could, in its turn, have an adverse effect on their national and international relationships. The NWG believes that it would be easier to find solutions to these concerns within a unitary merger than in a federal association. The NWG believes further that a federal model could be the source of serious conflict and disruption if relatively autonomous campuses should start making irreconcilable claims on limited pools of resources. The NWG supports a unitary merger as the only basis on which the full benefits of a combination could be reaped and the possible disadvantages could be counteracted. Such a merger would give the opportunity for a strong leadership to develop a new academic image and organisational identity which could inspire staff, attract students and ensure the continuation of national and international partnerships. Serious consideration, however, would need to be given to the rationalisation of programme offerings across the three campus sites.

The analyses undertaken by the NWG suggest that, if the proposal to merge the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal is accepted, then the new multi-campus metropolitan university could have the following size and shape:

One could expect this to be a large institution which is likely to have a head count enrolment total of around 30 000 students, based on an annual intake of 6 000 first-time entering undergraduates. One third of these students are likely to be enrolled in postgraduate programmes, which would include a wide range of masters and doctoral programmes. This new institution could produce at least 8 000 graduates each year, with at least 1 000 of these being masters and doctoral graduates. It is expected that more than 50% of FTE students would be in courses in science, engineering and technology and in business and management. There may be problems with inadequate teaching staffing levels in certain broad fields of study which will have to be addressed.

### 3.4.3 ML SULTAN TECHNIKON, TECHNIKON NATAL AND MANGOSUTHU

#### TECHNIKON

There are at present three technikons in KwaZulu-Natal. They are Mangosuthu Technikon, ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal. The NWG has noted the following about these technikons:

Technikons ML Sultan and Natal decided some time ago that it would be in both institutions' interests to merge. Geographical proximity and a conviction that a merger would strengthen the institutions administratively, financially and educationally were some of the reasons that informed the decision. The two technikons are already well advanced on the road to a merger. It is anticipated that an interim council and a single vice-chancellor will take office early in 2002. Valuable lessons could be learned from the process of this merger, which could also be applied in the implementation of other reconfiguration proposals.

Mangosuthu Technikon is situated in Umlazi. It had a head count enrolment of around 6000 in 2000. Although there was recently instability on campus, mainly in management and governance, the institution is in a relatively sound financial position. In other respects, it functions well below the national averages for technikons. It has very low success rates by course and very low graduation rates. This is an indication that it has high rates of students dropping out without completing their qualifications. Its graduates are almost entirely in 3-year undergraduate diplomas, with hardly any B.Tech and masters and doctoral graduates. The institution's research output has been extremely low. The institution has produced a total of 3 research publication units in the last 5 years. Its staff qualifications are also way below benchmarks and way below technikon averages. Only 1% of staff have doctorates and 12% have masters. There is also considerable overlap in its programme offerings with those of the other two technikons. Except for programmes in agriculture and possibly a few management/administrative type programmes all the current programmes offered by Mangosuthu Technikon are offered by either and/or both ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal.

The NWG proposes that the voluntary merger between ML Sultan Technikon and Natal Technikon should be concluded as soon as possible. The success of this merger would ease the way for further reconfiguration in the province.

The NWG further proposes that Mangosuthu Technikon should be merged with the new technikon, but that this merger should be dealt with as a phased operation with negotiations commencing soon after the appointment of an Interim Council for the new technikon. The NWG based this proposal on the following considerations:

It would be in the best interests of higher education in KwaZulu-Natal if one large and strong technikon could be formed which could establish and develop a pronounced niche for itself alongside the activities of the proposed new metropolitan university. It can be expected that the larger and stronger technikon which will be created by the merger of ML Sultan Technikon and Natal Technikon will almost certainly be active in many more areas and fields of study than those in which Mangosuthu Technikon is currently active. It would also have access to larger numbers of staff and resource pools than Mangosuthu Technikon would. This will almost certainly have a detrimental effect on the longer-term viability of Mangosuthu Technikon as a separate and independent institution. It would, therefore, be to the advantage of Mangosuthu Technikon if it were to be united with the consolidated campuses of the other two technikons. Merger plans for ML Sultan Technikon and Natal Technikon indicate that a merger of Mangosuthu Technikon with the new larger technikon would bring additional benefits, not only to Mangosuthu Technikon itself, but also to the other two campuses. Overlap and duplication could be reduced, and the strengths of the different campuses could be developed through careful planning and joint capacity building. More effective measures could be taken to improve the quality of education processes, and a more balanced spread of programmes in the different broad discipline categories could be introduced. A large consolidated technikon could serve a variety of regional needs more effectively than could be the case with two or three smaller and weaker technikons. The only condition which the NWG believes should be placed on this proposed merger of Mangosuthu Technikon with the new large technikon is that it should be phased in, so that it does not delay or compromise the currently proceeding merger between Technikons ML Sultan and Natal.

The analyses undertaken by the NWG suggest that, if the above proposal to merge Mangosuthu Technikon with the province's two other technikons is accepted, then the new multi-campus metropolitan technikon could have the following size and shape:

This institution would be smaller than the new metropolitan university, but could still enrol about 23 000 students, on an annual intake of 7 000 first time entering undergraduates. More than 80% of the annual enrolment of 23 000 students is likely to be in vocationally oriented undergraduate diplomas with the balance of the enrolment in professional bachelor's degrees. There would be a limited number of masters and doctoral students in areas of study in which the institution has a proven research record. At least 75% of the FTE enrolments are likely to be in science, engineering and technology and in business and management. Development programmes for existing academic staff would have to be introduced to upgrade qualifications.

#### 3.4.4 UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

The NWG has noted that the University of Zululand is still contending with the structural problem of its apartheid-induced origin and rural location. It is extremely vulnerable with very low and highly unstable enrolment numbers and with a great degree of financial uncertainty. Data show that, apart from equity achievements, its functionality as a university in general is far below the national averages. The poor success rate of its educational processes suggests the need for large-scale remedial action.

The NWG is aware that a merged University of Durban-Westville and University of Natal and a large merged technikon would further threaten the viability of the University of Zululand. The NWG nevertheless sees merit in an attempt to revitalise the institution as a higher education institution, so that it can continue to serve communities in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal. This region needs two kinds of skills and

expertise. The first are those that are instrumental to rural development, for instance teaching, nursing and agricultural skills and expertise. The second are technical and technological competencies which are needed in the industrial environment of the Richards Bay area, which all available evidence suggests to be the growth area in the region. If it is to fulfil these functions, then the mission of the University of Zululand will have to be redefined.

The NWG therefore proposes that the University of Zululand should be transformed from an institution performing traditional university tasks to an institution whose primary functions are to offer technological skills-training and work-force preparation programmes. The refocusing of the University of Zululand's mission should be encouraged and monitored over the next 5 years and, at the end of this period, the progress that has been made should be assessed, together with the sustainability and productivity of the institution at that time.

A number of consequential proposals flow from this main proposal about the future of the University of Zululand:

- The nursing and agricultural colleges of the sub region should be incorporated into the University of Zululand, as has already been done with the colleges of education.
- The new technikon to be formed in the Durban metropolitan area should not be allowed to offer its own programmes in northern KwaZulu-Natal. It should be encouraged through incentives to help the University of Zululand to develop capacity in the offering of technikon-type vocational and technological programmes.
- The NWG is convinced that Richards Bay offers opportunities for expansion and that the University of Zululand should seriously explore ways in which it can strengthen its presence in this area. One way would be to develop further links with the technical college in Richards Bay, which could help with the refocusing of its mission in the direction of technikon-type courses and qualifications.
- While implementing an incisive change in its mission and broad educational policies, the University of Zululand will be hard pressed to continue its current programmes at its Umlazi campus. The new merged technikon should be asked to propose how it could best use the Umlazi campus in future. Appropriate arrangements should be made to allow the existing university students to complete their qualifications.

The NWG hopes that a new comprehensive higher education institution based in northern KwaZulu Natal could over time grow to, and sustain, a minimum head count enrolment total of between 6 000 and 7 000. Two-thirds of the qualifications offered should ideally be technikon-type qualifications, with the majority of enrolments at the undergraduate diploma and professional bachelors degree level. The balance of enrolments could be in three-year standard bachelors degree programmes, with a small proportion in postgraduate programmes. The new institution should aim to have at least 70% of its FTE enrolments in science, engineering and technology and business and commerce. It is clear that for the University of Zululand to shift its focus to offering more certificate and diploma qualifications the current academic staff would need to be re-skilled and re-trained. Major staff development programmes would have to be put in place to address this need.

### 3.4.5 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KWAZULU-NATAL

The NWG's recommendations for the reconfiguring of the higher educational landscape of KwaZulu-Natal are:

- (i) The merger of ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal should be brought to a speedy conclusion.
  
- (ii) Mangosuthu Technikon should be merged with the new technikon; this merger should be phased in, with negotiations starting immediately after the appointment of an Interim Council for the new merged technikon.
  
- (iii) The University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal should merge into one unitary institution, with serious consideration given to the rationalisation of programme offerings across the three campuses.
  
- (iv) The University of Zululand should refocus its mission and become a comprehensive institution offering technikon-type programmes as well as a limited number of relevant university-type programmes, with its future growth being in the technikon programme area, and with major involvement in the Richards Bay region.
  
- (v) The Umlazi campus of the University of Zululand should be used by the new merged technikon, with appropriate arrangements made for existing university students to complete their programmes of study.
  
- (vi) Apart from the one urban university and one urban technikon, and apart from the one comprehensive rural institution offering both technikon and university programmes, no other publicly funded higher education institutions should be allowed to offer programmes in the province, with the exception of the new dedicated distance education institution.

### 3.5 NORTHERN PROVINCE

In the Northern Province there are two universities, the University of the North and the University of Venda. The University of the North is located about 30km east of Pietersburg and the University of Venda at Thohoyandou, with two satellite campuses at Giyani and Makhado. The Qwa Qwa satellite campus of the

University of the North is in the process of being incorporated into the University of the Free State. The Northern Province has no technikons.

The third institution, which the NWG considered in the context of the Northern Province, was the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa). Although Medunsa is located in Gauteng, the NWG felt it was more appropriate to look at it in combination with institutions in the Northern Province, given that Medunsa already has a strong presence in Pietersburg.

In the 2000 academic year a total of 51 000 of South Africa's university and technikon students were from the Northern Province. A low total of 11 000 (or 21%) of these students were enrolled at the University of the North and at the University of Venda. (For the purposes of these analyses, and unless stated otherwise, all references to data in relation to the University of the North do not include the current Qwa Qwa campus). Of the remaining 40 000 students, 10 000 were registered for contact education programmes in universities in other provinces, 12 000 for contact education programmes in technikons, and 18 000 for distance education programmes offered either by Unisa or Technikon SA or by universities and technikons in other provinces.

In 2000 the University of the North and the University of Venda had a total head count enrolment of 12 500, which amounted to 2% of the total enrolment of South Africa's 36 public universities and technikons. This implies that the province's 2 universities were able to 'import' only 1 500 contact education students from other provinces and other countries in 2000. Given their current intake levels, and their current poor success and graduation rates, it is unlikely that many more than the current numbers of students will be attracted to these 2 universities. Their combined head count enrolment totals will almost certainly remain in the band 12 000–13 000 for the foreseeable future.

The graduation rates of the two universities were below the benchmarks set in the National Plan for Higher Education and below national averages. The institutions' average success rates in 2000 for their undergraduate courses were well below national averages, which implies that both are experiencing high levels of student wastage.

The research outputs of the 2 universities have been low. The University of the North (including the Qwa Qwa campus) produced 82 research publication units in 2000. In the same year, the university (excluding the Qwa Qwa campus) produced 24 masters and 3 doctoral graduates. The University of Venda produced 1 research publication unit, 3 masters graduates and no doctoral graduates in 2000.

There are a number of general issues, other than those raised above, which also informed the NWG's thinking on how best to reconfigure the provision of higher education in the Northern Province. Some of the main issues and concerns were the following:

- Both the Universities of the North and Venda are still contending with the structural problems of their apartheid-induced origin and rural location.
- In the case of the University of the North the institution has in recent years experienced a fluctuation in student enrolment numbers, first a rapid growth and then a dramatic drop followed again by a slow

increase. The decline in student numbers was accompanied by financial instability, the accumulation of a large debt and campus turbulence in the form of conflicts between university leaders. The unfavourable report of an independent assessor prompted the Minister to appoint an administrator from outside to try to put the management and the governance of the institution back on track. As already indicated the data show that there is much room for improvement as far as research scope and output, postgraduate studies and educational processes in general are concerned. Evidence before the NWG suggests, however, that the campus still retains a certain level of academic capacity and commitment which could, with additional support and restructuring, be harnessed to make a substantial and indispensable contribution to the provision of higher education in the province.

· The picture that emerges from various sources of information about the University of Venda points to an institution that still has a long way to go to establish itself as a well-functioning university with sustainable academic and educational success. As in the case of the University of the North, a major drop in student numbers has also occurred in the recent past at the University of Venda. If nothing is done to enhance its productivity and to improve its enrolment stability, its longer-term viability seems to be in serious doubt. The university has expressed a desire to increase its student numbers by bringing its educational programmes more in line with the specific vocational and technological needs of its immediate environment.

· Since the auditor general's investigation into Medunsa's financial status, the institution has put in place measures to restore its financial position. Notwithstanding this, Medunsa's longer-term financial viability remains of concern given that as a single purpose institution, unlike multi-purpose institutions, it is unable to rely on income generated through cross subsidisation by other faculties and disciplines. It has, in fact, started to introduce more non-medical programmes, which is also a source of concern.

### 3.5.1 RECONFIGURATION

The NWG has concluded that the provision of higher education in the Northern Province should be reconfigured to take account of the broad issues discussed above as well as the issues of detail raised in the subsection which follows. The NWG proposes that one multi-campus university be established in the Northern Province, and that this institution be formed from the two universities currently operating in the Northern Province and from Medunsa, which is currently based in Gauteng.

### 3.5.2 UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH, UNIVERSITY OF VENDA AND MEDUNSA

The 12 500 students enrolled at the universities of the North and Venda in 2000 were all in contact education programmes and were divided into the following qualification categories: undergraduate diplomas (1% of the enrolment total), undergraduate bachelor's degrees (84%), postgraduate qualifications below the level of masters (9%), masters degrees (5%), and doctoral degrees (1%). In relation to fields of study, the data show that both institutions have well over 50% of their students enrolled in the humanities.

The intake of first-time entering undergraduates into the universities of the North and Venda has increased over the past 3 years from 2 000 in 1998 to 3 000 in 2000. Even the high total of 3000 can, on the province's current graduation and drop-out rates, at most support a head count enrolment total of 12 500 contact students. The FTE enrolled student total of the 2 institutions was only 10 000 in 2000. This total made their average size 5 000 which was 44% below the national average of 9 000 FTE students per contact education institution.

Medunsa had a head count enrolment total of 3 800 in 2000 and an FTE enrolled student total of 3 000. Its FTE enrolled student total in 2000 was only one third of the average total of comprehensive contact education institutions. Medunsa's research outputs have been low. In the 2000 academic year it produced only 45 research publication units, and only 1 doctoral and 69 masters graduates. However, in many other respects Medunsa seems to be a stable institution playing a pivotal role in the training of black doctors and other health professionals, and in taking health care to rural areas. It also has the expertise and commitment to meet the educational needs of prospective health science students who enter higher education ill prepared because of the problems in the school system.

The NWG is of the view that the University of the North and the University of Venda both render a service of strategic importance in giving access to higher education to students from remote areas who would otherwise most certainly have been deprived of higher education opportunities. Closing one or both of them as higher education institutions, and allocating their infrastructure and facilities for other educational purposes, would not be in the best interest of the region and the country.

The NWG considered retaining the University of Venda as an independent and autonomous institution because of its location far from other centres of higher education, but with a total refocusing and restructuring of its programmes to those of technikon qualifications. The reason for the latter would be the fact that the Northern Province has no independent technikon, although some technikons from other regions are currently offering programmes in the area. However, the University of Venda's present shape differs too much from that of a technikon for a full-scale, one-off transformation, and given its location, the institution would also have difficulty organising extensive links with industry or opportunities for experiential learning which are essential for skills-based training and development.

The NWG has come to the conclusion that the only way to strengthen and restructure the University of the North in order to help it to mobilise its strengths again and overcome its weaknesses and at the same time create the planning capacity, resources and opportunities for the development of a more realistic and more needs-oriented programme profile for the University of Venda, is to merge the two institutions, together with Medunsa, into a larger and potentially stronger university. Such a merger would result in an institution with the basis and the potential for a wide and comprehensive range of vocational, technological and professional training and of general formative education. The concentration and consolidation of management and administrative capacity, as well as the combination of academic staff components, would help to provide the critical mass which would be necessary to plan, build and maintain, within the organisational context of one institution, complementary mission foci and a balanced set of programme offerings which could meet the varied needs of the province. This would most probably improve and stabilise student enrolments and contribute to the sustainability of the institution. It would also give the opportunity to rationalise overlaps and unnecessary duplication, which could in the longer-term help to improve financial viability.

There is every reason to believe that forms of closer synergy with the institutions of the Northern Province could enhance Medunsa's capacity, scope of action and focus of mission, and furthermore, help to lay the foundation for the much needed strengthening and development of higher education in this province. In this regard, it should be noted that in accordance with National Health Policy, the Academic Health Services Complexes of Medunsa and the University of Pretoria have each developed at different locations,

relationships and infrastructure with the provinces of Northern Province and Mpumalanga respectively. It therefore makes sense to consider a realignment of Medunsa's services and facilities in ways that will further strengthen its presence in the Northern Province.

While strengthening the professional programme section of the new institution considerably, Medunsa could also benefit from the encouragement and new scope for further development it would gain through a merger. It could gradually reorient its vision and mission more deliberately to the Northern Province and other rural regions and help to bring about strong health science and health service programmes in these areas through a co-ordination and consolidation with nursing, pharmacy and optometry courses at the present University of the North and with related courses at the present University of Venda. Likewise, the non-medical science programmes of Medunsa can be rationalised through co-ordination and consolidation with those of the Universities of the North and of Venda. The Faculty of Dentistry of Medunsa should be retained and it should focus more and more on the needs of the northern parts of the country.

The NWG further proposes that all the nursing and agricultural training of the region should be incorporated into the new institution. This would, on the one hand, be to the advantage of these training programmes and, on the other, strengthen the career-focused component of the proposed new university's mission and educational profile. In addition to the proposal for the incorporation of these colleges, the NWG strongly recommends the gradual introduction of more certificate and diploma programmes and short courses, as well as other technikon-type qualifications so that the vocational and technological needs of the region can be better met. This could build on programmes currently offered by technikons in the region. The possibility can also be explored to allocate over time these and other career-oriented and skill-training programmes to one of the campuses, preferably that of the University of Venda. In this way, a merger would help not only to extend the range of programmes, but also to develop specific strengths at specific campuses. Such an arrangement might be conducive to an increase in student enrolments and participation rates as well as to the concentration of expertise and the stimulation of interaction which, together, might help to inspire research initiatives.

The analysis undertaken by the NWG suggests that, with the merger of the University of the North, the University of Venda and Medunsa one could expect a new multi-campus institution with a sustainable size of about 16 000 head count enrolments. The programme profile would most probably meet the required balance between the different broad categories of disciplines (SET, business/management, education and humanities) and between the different kinds of educational goals (sub-degree skills-training, vocational, professional, general formative), in keeping with policy objectives of the National Plan for Higher Education.

There are further implications that would need to be taken into account. The first of these is that if the new institution were to take all the current academic staff of the three institutions, it would, on the national benchmarks, probably be over-staffed. Most of the over-staffing is likely to be in the areas of the humanities and this would have to be addressed as would a shift of focus to offering more certificate and diploma qualifications.

The staff of the new institution would, also on the national benchmarks, be under-qualified to a considerable extent. Major staff development programmes would have to be put into place to improve qualifications to a level that would be required for an academically competitive institution.

The relevant data show that all three institutions suffer from financial instability. This means that, prior to a merger, attention would have to be paid to the financial state, including the debt profile and the financial management of all three institutions if a new institution were to be formed with the prospect of longer-term

financial sustainability. No current debt should be transferred to the new institution. Graduation rates in 3-year bachelor degree programmes are at present also low in all three institutions. To benefit fully from a merger, the new institution would have to put special mechanisms in place for the professional support and improvement of both teaching and learning processes.

The Ministry of Education should, in consultation with the new institution, assess, investigate and make decisions on the relocation (over the medium- to long-term) of Medunsa's programmes and infrastructure to the Northern Province.

### 3.5.3 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NORTHERN PROVINCE

The NWG's recommendations for the reconfiguration of the higher education landscape of the Northern Province are:

- (i) The University of the North, University of Venda and Medunsa should be merged into one unitary institution.
- (ii) All the colleges of nursing and agriculture of the province should be incorporated into the new institution.
- (iii) The new institution should extend the range of offerings available in the province by developing and introducing technikon-type vocational programmes and qualifications, in keeping with the need-profile of the region and preferably in such a way that different types of educational strengths are concentrated on different campuses.
- (iv) Medunsa should continue to offer its current range of programmes and qualifications in the health sciences but its programmes in science should be rationalised through the building of optimal forms of synergy with the other two campuses.
- (v) Medunsa's Faculty of Dentistry should be retained and it should focus more and more on the needs of the northern parts of the country.
- (vi) The Ministry of Education should, in consultation with the new institution, assess, investigate and make decisions on the relocation (over the medium- to long-term) of Medunsa's programmes and infrastructure to the Northern Province.

### 3.6 NORTH WEST

There are three higher education institutions based in the North West Province. They are the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, the University of the North-West and Technikon North-West. Potchefstroom University has its main campus in Potchefstroom with a satellite campus in Vanderbijlpark in southern Gauteng. The University of the North-West is based in Mafikeng and Technikon North-West is located close to Pretoria.

Information available on the province is at present incomplete because the University of the North-West has not been able to submit to the Ministry of Education any of the data required for the national higher education database. As a consequence, the picture presented in this background is based on unaudited institutional records and on assumptions made about the home origins of students enrolled at University of the North-West. The following trends should be noted with these cautions in mind.

In the 2000 academic year, about 29 000 of South Africa's university and technikon students would probably have come from the North West Province. About 34% of these students would have been contact students at the 3 institutions, with another 2% enrolled for distance education programmes with the University of Potchefstroom. A further 28% were registered for contact education programmes in universities or technikons in other provinces, and the final 36% for distance education programmes offered elsewhere.

The head count student enrolment total in the 2000 academic year at the three institutions was 27 500, which amounts to 4% of the total enrolments in South Africa. About 22 000 of these students were enrolled in contact education programmes, and 5 500 in distance education programmes offered by the University of Potchefstroom. The division of head count enrolments between the 3 institutions in 2000 was just over 18 000 at University of Potchefstroom (although only around 13 000 of these were contact students), just over

5 000 at University of the North-West and just over 4 000 at Technikon North-West. This implies that these institutions were able to 'import' about 12 000 contact education students from other provinces and other countries in 2000. The information available suggests that 3 000 of these would have been Gauteng and Northern Province students who registered at Technikon North-West, and 3 500 Gauteng students who registered with the University of Potchefstroom either at the main campus in Potchefstroom or at the satellite campus in Vanderbijlpark.

The student enrolment total of 27 500 in 2000 in the province's 2 universities and 1 technikon was divided into the following qualification categories: undergraduate diplomas 27%, undergraduate bachelor's degrees 44%, postgraduate qualifications below the level of masters 20%, masters degrees 8%, and doctoral degrees 1%.

The student enrolment total of the University of Potchefstroom has grown over the past 5 years primarily because of its move into distance education. Its distance head count enrolment total grew from 1 800 in 1998 to 5 200 in 2000. Its contact enrolment total over the same period grew from 11 600 in 1998 to 13 700 in 1999, and then fell to 13 000 in 2000. First-time entering undergraduate enrolment intake at the University of Potchefstroom has been unstable over this period, and suggests that the university may not be able to enrol many more than 13 000 contact students.

The other two institutions in the province have had difficulty in sustaining their student enrolments and are well below the average size of 8 000 FTE enrolments per institution. The head count enrolment at the University of the North-West has declined by 22% since 1998 and Technikon North-West has experienced a 9% decline in the same period. Analyses of their intakes and of their drop-out rates suggest that the decline in the enrolments of these 2 institutions is likely to continue.

The graduation rates of the 3 institutions in 2000 were mixed. The graduation rates of the University of Potchefstroom and of Technikon North-West were below the benchmarks set in the National Plan for Higher Education and below the national averages for universities and for technikons. Graduation rates at University of the North-West were above the national averages, but were boosted by the effect of the 1998 enrolment 'bulge' working its way through the university.

The research outputs of University of the North-West and of Technikon North-West have been poor. In 2000 Technikon North-West produced no publication units and no masters or doctoral graduates. University of the North-West produced only 4 publication units, and 36 masters graduates. It produced no doctoral graduates in 2000. The University of Potchefstroom's research output totals have been better. It produced a total of 202 research publication units in 2000, and 506 masters and 47 doctoral graduates. Its publication output per academic staff member was in 2000 below both the National Plan benchmark and the national average for universities. Its output of masters plus doctoral graduates per academic staff member was, however, above the National Plan benchmark in 2000.

### 3.6.1 RECONFIGURATION

As already indicated, the NWG considered Technikon North-West in the context of those Gauteng institutions with which it has closer and more natural relations and interests in common. Proposals concerning Technikon North-West have already been discussed in section 3.3.4.

In relation to the remaining two institutions, the NWG has concluded that the provision of higher education in the North West Province should be reconfigured to take into account the issues discussed above as well as issues of detail raised in the following section. Given low student demand, the likely difficulty of sustaining even current contact enrolments, the small size of one of the institutions and its weak research profiles, the NWG proposes that one multi-campus university be established in the North West Province.

### 3.6.2 UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH-WEST AND THE UNIVERSITY OF POTCHEFSTROOM

The University of Potchefstroom has a long history and tradition of a very specific approach to higher education, although it seems geared towards change and adjustment to new social and educational demands. From a managerial and administrative point of view, it is a well-run institution in a fairly healthy financial position. The university has well-qualified staff. It enrolls approximately 85% of the province's masters and doctoral students and its output of masters and doctoral students relative to permanent staff is above the national average. Although its research publication unit ratio is rather low for an institution of its

nature and history, it produces by far the most of the province's accredited research publications. Indicators of academic output and productivity on the undergraduate level show a slightly less than average success rate which signals the need for the quality of educational processes to be addressed.

The University of Potchefstroom student profile suggests that it has not been able, as quickly as some other institutions, to change its student profile. In 2000 60% of on-campus students at the University of Potchefstroom were white, compared with only 6% of its distance education students. Its staff composition was also below national averages for staff equity. It is difficult to ascertain whether its underlying culture and ethos are alienating to Black students, but clearly this is an area which needs attention.

In terms of available data, the University of Potchefstroom has both institutional strengths that should be nourished and weaknesses that present a challenge for new initiatives. It depends for its future viability and growth potential to a certain extent on its distance education and telematic programmes. Both its distance education/telematic programmes and its Vaal Triangle campus are, however, vulnerable, being exposed to increasingly fierce competition in the recruitment of students on the one hand and to curtailment (with respect to distance education programmes) in terms of policy provisions in the National Plan on the other. An extension of its catchment area to other parts of the province could, in the longer term, enhance its enrolment stability and hence its sustainability.

The University of the North-West is a smaller institution with the basic handicap of an unfavourable, apartheid-based location, struggling to cope with declining enrolments and consequent uncertainty and other negative effects. Although the university appears financially viable, other indicators of stability show a different picture. It has a very small postgraduate student component and its accredited publication output is very low. There is deep concern about the administrative viability of the institution as an independent and autonomous organisation. The NWG is, nevertheless, of the opinion that the North-West campus should be kept functioning so that it can continue providing access to higher education for a strategic part of the province that would otherwise be denied such access.

The NWG believes a merger of the two universities of the North West Province into one larger and stronger institution would help to solve existing problems as well as offer new opportunities. One institution with a province-wide appeal and a province-wide catchment area and field of operation could lead to an increased participation rate and ensure greater enrolment stability for both campuses.

A new institution would provide a fruitful possibility of refocusing the mission of the present North-West campus more explicitly and more deliberately towards a predominantly developmental orientation, and of introducing, in the form of technikon-type diploma and certificate programmes, a wider range of vocational and work-force preparation than is currently the case. If the nursing and agricultural colleges of the province were also incorporated into the new institution, the career-focused component of its educational programmes would be further strengthened to meet the training needs of the province. In this case, experience in distance education might help to plan the differentiation of mission foci more effectively and to steer clear of unnecessary overlap between the two main campuses. While keeping the demarcation between mission foci and programme mixes flexible, the Potchefstroom campus could concentrate on the goals of general formative education and of the intellectual preparation for the professions. It could, however, still continue offering those vocational and technological programmes for which there is a need in that part of the province.

Apart from increasing the opportunity for a more effective planning of educational offerings, and strengthening administrative capacity where there is presently a lack of such capacity, a merger could also

create a better foundation and framework for academic staff of both campuses to share resources and establish co-operative research programmes. Such inter-campus collaboration could be mutually inspiring, it could bring about an increase in the number of postgraduate students and it could help to improve research output. There would clearly have to be an investment in staff development to allow for these outcomes.

All indications are that a merger would support sustainability through a more acceptable size, that it would lead to a better and more balanced shape and that it would promote an equitable staff and student body. There is indeed enough difference as well as complementarity between the programme profiles of the two institutions to reshape them into in a workable and fitting combination of offerings. The new institution could be expected to have a sustainable size of at least 18 000 contact students to start with, but with the possibility of growth. It would have a strong and growing presence in undergraduate certificates and diplomas and a spread of subject areas close to the National Plan norms. At the same time, with more students from different backgrounds, a richer diversity of courses could be introduced at a greater variety of levels, providing for a wider range of needs. If the Vista staff and students at the Sebokeng campus were also added to the new institution, their presence would further consolidate desired outcomes.

The NWG is aware of certain factors that can be viewed as impediments to a merger. These are firstly the distance of about 200km separating the two main campuses; secondly, the difference between institutional cultures, with the University of Potchefstroom basing its institutional life and mission explicitly on Christian religious values; thirdly, the language issue, as the University of Potchefstroom has been historically an Afrikaans speaking institution with many of its programmes still taught in Afrikaans; and, fourthly, the marked difference between the two institutions in the level of success that has been achieved in the running of an effective and efficient university administration.

The NWG has considered these obstacles with understanding and sensitivity, but has concluded that they could, with strong leadership, be overcome in the interest of a sound and productive higher education system in the region. The impediment of distance is endemic to the South African situation and the maximum possible assistance should be given by government to deal with this problem in all the regions where it might play a role. The experience gained in managing a satellite campus over a distance could stand the new institution in good stead when it has to organise and administer a multi-campus set-up. The optimal use of modern communication technology could further help to obviate at least some of the difficulties. It lies outside the brief of the NWG to comment on the legitimacy or not of the role of religion in the organisation and running of a university. The NWG is of the opinion though that, with goodwill and a constructive attitude and approach, it could be possible to explore common values and shared commitments and creatively build a new identity which would on the one hand enrich the existing institutional cultures and, on the other, retain the impact of these cultures as inspirational sources of loyalty and support on and around the different campuses. As far as the medium of tuition is concerned, feasible solutions have already been found elsewhere for a similar problem, while Potchefstroom University itself has some experience of accommodating the divergent language needs of different student groups in the same institution. In the last instance, the new institution would be able to count on a legacy of administrative expertise and management skills which could, with good planning and the aid of additional resources, bring the administration of both campuses on a par, and ensure an efficient and stable organisation.

### 3.6.3 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NORTH WEST

The NWG's recommendations for the reconfiguration of the higher education landscape of the North West Province are:

(i) The Potchefstroom University for CHE and the University of the North-West should merge to form one unitary multi-campus institution for the North West Province. The new institution should be encouraged to refocus, over time, the mission of the North-West campus by introducing more technikon-type programmes to meet the specific vocational and technological needs of the region.

(ii) As part of this merger, the Vaal Triangle campus of Potchefstroom University should be retained and its telematic programmes regulated within the provisions of new government policy in this regard.

(iii) The nursing and agricultural colleges of the province should be incorporated into the new institution.

(iv) The students and staff (but not the facilities) of the Sebokeng campus of Vista University should be incorporated into the new institution

### 3.7 WESTERN CAPE

The Western Cape is one of the best-endowed provinces in South Africa as far as higher education is concerned. There are 5 institutions (the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and the Western Cape, and Cape and Peninsula Technikons) clustered within 30 km of each other.

In 2000 a total of nearly 66 000 public university and technikon students were from the Western Cape, of which 46 000 (70%) were enrolled at one of the province's 5 institutions, 22% at Unisa and Technikon SA and 8% at universities and technikons in other provinces.

The province's 5 universities and technikons supplemented their total of 46 000 Western Cape based student enrolments by recruiting 18 000 contact students and about 1 500 distance education students from other provinces and other countries. The extent of recruitment of students from outside the province varied between institutions. In 2000 these students formed the following proportions of total enrolments: University of Cape Town 48%, Peninsula Technikon 42%, University of the Western Cape 33%, University of Stellenbosch 17% and Cape Technikon 13%.

Because the Western Cape has experienced growth in the intake of first-time entering undergraduates into its institutions, the province's contact student total could increase by at least 5% over the next 3-5 years, if current trends continue. Within this context, however, the University of the Western Cape has experienced fluctuations in student enrolments.

The FTE total of students registered at the Western Cape universities and technikons was 54 000 in 2000. This total was sufficient to give the institutions in the province an average size which was 20% above the national average of 9 000 FTE students per contact education institution.

As in the case of other higher education institution in South Africa, the demand from students was in 2000 primarily for undergraduate bachelor's degrees and undergraduate diplomas (47% and 29% respectively of headcount enrolments). Relative to other higher education institutions, however, registrations for postgraduate programmes were high: 7000 students at the province's institutions were registered for masters and 1 600 for doctoral programmes.

Research outputs in the form of masters and doctoral graduates and research publication units recognised for subsidy purposes were amongst the highest in the country. The province's 5 universities and technikons produced on average 320 masters plus doctoral graduates per institution and 300 research publication units per institution. The 3 universities produced in 2000 28% of the research publication output and 25% of the doctoral graduate outputs of the public university plus technikon systems in South Africa.

The graduate outputs of the Western Cape's universities and technikons were in 2000 below the benchmarks of the National Plan for Higher Education, but were close to the national averages for universities and technikons.

The NWG was anxious to maintain and further improve current strengths found in this region, as they are important for national goals. These were above average outputs of research and masters and doctoral graduates, as well as enrolments in science, engineering and technology programmes and business and commerce programmes. Nevertheless, within the context described above, the NWG is concerned about the extent to which the institutions in this province are reliant on recruitment of students from outside the province. In the event of a decline in those student numbers, the longer-term sustainability of the institutions are likely to be at risk. The NWG is not convinced that the province produces sufficient numbers of students to support 5 universities and technikons at their current enrolment levels. The NWG is also concerned about the considerable overlap and duplication in programme offerings across all institutions.

### 3.7.1 RECONFIGURATION

The NWG has concluded that the provision of higher education in the Western Cape should be reconfigured in order to take into consideration the issues referred to in the preceding discussion as well as the issues of detail raised in the subsections which follow. The NWG proposes that:

- the University of Cape Town, the University of Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon should be retained;
- the University of the Western Cape and Peninsula Technikon should be merged to create one comprehensive higher education institution offering both university-type and technikon-type programmes;
- the dentistry schools of the Universities of the Western Cape and Stellenbosch should be merged into a single school, which should be located in the new comprehensive institution.

### 3.7.2 UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN AND THE UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

The University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch are the two oldest higher education institutions in South Africa. Both universities enjoy enrolment stability with steadily growing student numbers, undergraduate as well as postgraduate. There were just over 17 000 students enrolled at the University of Cape Town in 2000 and around 20 000 at the University of Stellenbosch. Both universities have a good spread of enrolments across broad fields of study, with nearly 40% of their enrolments in science, engineering and technology, which is atypical in South Africa. Their publication unit ratios are high in comparison to the national average, as is their enrolment of masters and doctoral degree students. They are well administered at all levels, in a sound financial position and clearly in all respects sustainable institutions. Both rank among the top research institutions in the country and both boast good academic reputations, nationally and internationally. Despite their strengths, they do not meet all the criteria for well functioning institutions and there are also other areas which the NWG believes should be addressed.

The University of Cape Town has made good progress in achieving equity in its student body but recognises that much remains to be done with regard to its academic and administrative staff profiles in order to reflect the diverse society which the university serves.

As far as transformation issues are concerned, the University of Stellenbosch still has a long way to go. Progress with regard to the equity profile of the university's student body is slow. The NWG realises that Afrikaans remains the language of instruction at the University of Stellenbosch and that this may be a barrier to access for many African students. Flexibility with regard to the teaching of some postgraduate programmes in English has increased participation of black students, but other measures should be put in place to correct the imbalances in the undergraduate contact student body and the success rates of African students in particular. The NWG also reflected on the problem of under-prepared Afrikaans-speaking students from rural areas who find it difficult to get access to higher education. Given its medium of instruction, the NWG believes that the University of Stellenbosch should give special attention to enrolling and supporting such students. A great deal also needs to be done to move towards a more satisfactory degree of representivity among academic and administrative staff.

Like comparable institutions in the rest of South Africa, both universities have to ensure that their institutional cultures provide an enabling and comfortable environment for all South Africans to study in and identify with. Apart from equity and internal transformation issues that need urgent attention, the NWG is of the opinion that there is some unnecessary duplication and overlap between the programme offerings of the two universities. Some steps have already been taken to promote the sharing of facilities and expensive equipment by the institutions of the Western Cape and a timetable has been agreed for rationalising identified academic programmes through collaboration and co-ordination. The NWG welcomes these voluntary ventures of co-operation. However, in view of its further recommendations with regard to the Western Cape, it would like to propose that mechanisms be put in place to further implement forms of consolidation and rationalisation between the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch in specific programmes and fields of study. These are, to begin with, the health sciences and the performing and creative arts (which should also involve the other institutions in the region), as well as other areas identified by the regional consortium. There is every reason to believe that such forms of consolidation would not only cut costs but also strengthen and enhance the quality of the particular programmes through a combination and better utilisation of scarce human, financial and infrastructural resources.

The NWG accepts that in both universities there are issues to be addressed and improvements to be made. Notwithstanding this, the NWG recognises that the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch are both relatively strong research institutions with a wide range of well-established educational programmes and with uncommonly strong enrolments in science, engineering and technology. The strengths and diversity of the two institutions are important for national goals and should be preserved. The NWG believes that the weaknesses identified above can be dealt with in other ways. Such strategies should include, among others, a process of internal transformation, deliberately targeted at combating the alienation of black students and staff. In addition, structured co-operation and collaboration between the institutions would not only lead to greater efficiencies in the use of scarce human, financial and infrastructural resources, but also strengthen and enhance the quality of programme offerings.

### 3.7.3 UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE, CAPE TECHNIKON AND PENINSULA TECHNIKON

The third university in the region is the University of the Western Cape. This university has a proud record of establishing itself in adverse circumstances, and in spite of its apartheid-driven early history, as a respected, successful and competitive role-player in higher education in the Western Cape and in the country. It attracted a number of academics who established an inspiring research culture in several recognised centres of excellence on campus. Although there has been an outflow of academic staff in recent years, some of the research programmes are still on course with an output of accredited publications. With regard to its teaching task, the university saw its mission as that of facilitating higher education access and success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It wants to remain faithful to this mission.

In the recent past, however, the University has suffered some serious setbacks. There has been a concern with its sharply falling enrolments (although there has been a slight recovery to just under 10 000 in 2000), and the difficulty in managing the inevitable impact this had on financial and human resources. A large debt accumulated and has plunged the University into a precarious financial position. The NWG understands that it might take a decade for the university to reach financial stability again, provided that favourable circumstances prevail. This means that the University would have to cope with financial uncertainty of a serious nature for the foreseeable future. This uncertainty would, without doubt, also be an ever-present source of potential instability in other respects. If one takes into account, further, that the University of the Western Cape operates in an environment of fierce competition from the two older and stronger universities on its doorstep, one realises that its sustainability would be at a great and constant risk.

Given all of the above, the NWG is of the view that in order to retain and nurture the University of the Western Cape's traditional strengths, the sustainability of the institution has to be safeguarded. This can only happen through a combination with one or more other higher education institutions in the region. Two options were considered by the NWG. The first was to merge the University of the Western Cape, Peninsula Technikon and Cape Technikon into a single multi-campus institution offering both university- and technikon-type programmes. The second was to merge the University of the Western Cape with Peninsula Technikon alone allowing for both university- and technikon-type programmes to be offered by the new institution.

The two technikons of the Western Cape are the Cape Technikon in the central city of Cape Town and the Peninsula Technikon in Bellville. In 2000 Cape Technikon had a head count enrolment of over 10 000 and Peninsula Technikon of just under 9 000. Nearly 90% of the enrolments in both technikons are for undergraduate diplomas and certificates. Both institutions have a spread of enrolments, with relatively high proportions in science, engineering and technology (around 40% in Cape Technikon and over 50% in

Peninsula Technikon) and business and management (over 20% in Cape Technikon and around 35% in Peninsula Technikon). Each institution has its own niche areas but there is also a great deal of overlap. While there are some financial problems at Cape Technikon, stability will be achieved if financial prudence is exercised during this and the following year. Peninsula Technikon is in a sound financial position. There is evidence that in spite of considerable progress in the transformation of its student body, Cape Technikon still needs to develop a campus environment and staff culture that would raise the comfort level for all South Africans.

After considerable debate about the advantages and disadvantages with regard to both forms of combination, the NWG considered the option of merging the University of the Western Cape and Peninsula Technikon into a single comprehensive institution to be the more advantageous to the region and to the two merged institutions. The reasons are two-fold: First, as far as their origins and development are concerned, Peninsula Technikon and the University of the Western Cape have a common history. They are situated virtually side by side and their institutional missions are similar. They share the same ethos of service to the previously disadvantaged communities and of facilitating access to and success in higher education for under-prepared students from these communities.

Second, there are enough similarities and differences between the programme profiles and general shape of the two institutions to bring about a fitting, feasible and fruitful combination. The merged institution would have an enrolment distribution between the broad categories of disciplines, which would be very near to the benchmarks set by the National Plan for Higher Education. A merger would allow strong articulation possibilities between university-type and technikon-type programmes thus benefiting students and widening access. The differences between the programmes would strengthen the new institution and give it a wider scope. The University of the Western Cape would benefit from the experience Peninsula Technikon has of interacting and building relationships with industry and the corporate sector. In its turn, Peninsula Technikon would benefit from the research culture and strengths of the University of the Western Cape in order to achieve its declared objectives of developing research capacity.

The NWG is convinced that the new institution would be in a position to find a unique niche, which could compete successfully with the two remaining universities and technikon of the region. The NWG is of the opinion that the Western Cape College of Nursing with its diploma courses in nursing should become a part of the new institution. In addition to this, there are currently two schools of dentistry in the Western Cape - one at the University of the Western Cape and the other at the University of Stellenbosch. In terms of the National Plan for Higher Education and the reconfiguration proposals of the NWG, the continuation of two schools in one city of the Western Cape can no longer be justified. The NWG proposes that there should be a single school of dentistry and that it should be located in the new institution. In order to have access to appropriate sites of delivery and to specialist medical facilities and training where required, there would have to be continued collaboration and co-operation with the two medical schools at the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch.

As in all the new institutions of this nature, academic drift would have to be avoided. A concentrated core of university programmes, including current areas of strength and excellence, should be retained, supported and, human and other resources permitting, fully developed. At the same time, the mission focus on much needed vocational and skills-training courses should not be allowed to blur or shift. The integrity of the two kinds of programmes should be maintained, but with design of the necessary co-ordination and articulation measures and mechanisms. This means that students should be able to move between the two streams and that there should be several points and levels of entry and of exit to cater for all access requirements as well as to allow for advanced degree levels.

Under single leadership, economies of scale and of scope could be created. This would ensure a more optimal use of resources as well as financial stability. Administrative and management capacity and expertise across the two institutions would be consolidated.

The NWG emphasises that a merger would only be acceptable on condition that no current debt should be transferred to the new institution. Any such outstanding debt should be addressed prior to the merger. The new institution should also be strongly supported in its mission to provide a higher education home for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The NWG recognises that there are merits to including Cape Technikon in the above merger in that it would facilitate greater rationalisation and consolidation of technikon programmes and would also advance staff and student equity. However, the NWG is of the view that these concerns, as argued in the case of the two universities, could be dealt with in other ways. The NWG therefore proposes that Cape Technikon should be retained, but that similar attention be given to issues of access and equity, as a matter of priority. In addition the Technikon should look at ways in which it could rationalise its programme offerings.

#### 3.7.4 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WESTERN CAPE

The NWG's recommendations for reconfiguring the higher education landscape of the Western Cape are:

- (i) The University of Cape Town, the University of Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon should be retained as separate and independent institutions. All three institutions, however, should give priority to issues of access and equity and to serious regional collaboration, including programme rationalisation.
- (ii) The Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch should establish a single platform for the teaching of the health sciences and the performing and creative arts as a matter of urgency (recognising that cognisance must also be taken of allied programmes offered by other institutions in the Western Cape). Further areas where consolidation of programmes can be achieved, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including the areas already identified by the regional consortium, should be actively explored in close co-operation with the Department of Education.
- (iii) The University of Cape Town, the University of Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon should apply themselves to the development of an enabling environment in which all South Africans can pursue their studies unhampered by social and cultural impediments.
- (iv) As a form of reconfiguration, the University of Stellenbosch should pay particular attention to the enrolment and support of significant numbers of contact African and under-prepared Afrikaans-speaking students.

(v) Peninsula Technikon and the University of the Western Cape should merge to form one unitary comprehensive institution offering both university-type and technikon-type programmes, guarding against academic drift, but with optimal articulation arrangements put in place.

(vi) The Western Cape College of Nursing should be merged with the new institution.

(vii) The dentistry schools of the University of the Western Cape and the University of Stellenbosch should be merged into a single school and should be located in the new comprehensive institution. There should be close collaboration between this school and the medical schools of the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch.

#### **4. CONCLUSION: IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSALS**

The National Working Group believes that the implementation of its recommendations will result in the fundamental restructuring of the higher education system. It will transform the apartheid edifice of the higher education system and lay the basis for a higher education system that is consistent with the vision, values and principles of our young and vibrant democratic order. More importantly, it will ensure the improved quality, increased efficiency, greater equity and enhanced sustainability and responsiveness of the higher education system to meet the challenges of reconstruction and development.

The NWG is firmly of the view that the successful implementation of its recommendations requires two preconditions. First, the commitment of the government to make available the necessary financial resources to facilitate merger processes in particular, and to enable the higher education system to discharge its mandate in general. This requires the leveraging of additional resources, including from the private sector, to ensure that the higher education system is adequately funded. The NWG would like to emphasise that the restructuring proposals, bold and far-reaching as they may be, are in and of themselves not sufficient to address the systemic and structural crisis of higher education. In this regard, it is imperative to note that merging two or more institutions, especially, institutions that are currently weak, will not result in the emergence of a new and strong institution unless additional resources are provided to rectify the existing shortcomings, whether academic, administrative or management. This applies similarly to the merger of strong with weak institutions. There is a real danger that in such cases resource constraints would lead to the weakening of the strong institutions, with disastrous consequences for the higher education system as a whole. In this regard, the NWG believes that it is essential that existing debt burdens of institutions should not be transferred to the new merged institution.

It is also essential to ensure that funds are available to cover the administrative and other costs of the merger process itself. While the initial costs of the merger process will be high, caution must be exercised in ensuring that the funds are directed at covering the core activities required to successfully conclude the merger process and not directed to funding grandiose capital projects such as new administrative and other buildings.

Additional resources are also needed to finance the building of capacity. The success of the restructuring process, as well as that of the restructured system, depends to a large extent on the availability of administrative and management abilities and skills. These skills are currently in short supply. Concerted efforts should be made to develop sufficient of the competencies needed to reconfigure the present fragmented system and ensure well-functioning higher education institutions for the future.

The NWG is aware of the constraints and pressures on the fiscus, especially given contending and equally pressing priorities in other social sectors. However, it is equally conscious of the fact that unless the necessary resources are made available to strengthen the higher education system, our capacity as a nation to address the challenges of reconstruction and development, let alone the challenges posed by globalisation, are likely to come to nought. The case for investment in the higher education system is well captured in the CHE's Report, "Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

"Higher education, and public higher education especially, has immense potential to contribute to the consolidation of democracy and social justice, and the growth and development of the economy despite the problems and challenges it faces. These contributions are complementary. The enhancement of democracy lays the basis for greater participation in economic and social life more generally. Higher levels of employment and work contribute to political and social stability and the capacity of citizens to exercise and enforce democratic rights and participate effectively in decision-making. The overall well-being of nations is vitally dependent on the contribution of higher education to the social, cultural, political and economic development of its citizens" (CHE: 25-26).

The second precondition for successful implementation is the commitment and political will of the Government to restructuring. It requires the Ministry to act decisively in clarifying its response to the recommendations and in initiating the formal legal processes that are necessary to give effect to the merger proposals. In this regard, the NWG believes that the establishment of interim councils in terms of the Higher Education Amendment Act (Act No 23 of 2001) provides the legal framework and the governance mechanism for facilitating the merger process.

The interim councils will have the authority and power to drive the merger process to successful resolution. The quality, commitment and expertise of the members of the interim councils will be critical in successfully overseeing and managing the implementation of the merger proposals. It is therefore imperative that the persons appointed should have considerable experience of the structures, operations and culture of higher education institutions in particular, and of large-scale organisations in general, they should be persons of impeccable integrity and they should be highly respected both within and outside of the higher education sector.

The NWG is also of the view that the commitment of the institutions and institutional constituencies to the merger process is critical to the success of the merger process. However, commitment in itself would not be sufficient. Given the complexity of the issues involved and the time-consuming nature of mergers, it is critical that the interim councils have access to the necessary technical expertise to facilitate and support the merger process. The NWG recommends that the interim councils consider appointing full-time merger managers to help co-ordinate and facilitate the merger process. In addition, clear targets and time-frames must be set for the different processes and phases of the merger process, both formal in terms of the establishment of the interim councils, as well as substantive in terms of the range of issues that have to be addressed. This is necessary to avoid any unnecessary procrastination and attempts by different institutional constituencies to derail the merger process. The issues that require addressing include, inter-alia:

- Establishing new governance structures, including the necessary institutional statutes.
- Developing new academic structures and the integration of academic programmes.
- Developing new conditions of service and remuneration.
- Co-ordination of tuition fees.
- Integrating administrative, financial and computer systems and procedures.
- Consolidating budgets.
- Integrating support services such as libraries and student services.

- Planning the utilisation of facilities and infrastructure.
- Reconciling institutional cultures and ethos.

The NWG is of the view that the development of a social plan, as proposed in the Council on Higher Education's report, provides a framework for addressing the human resource implications, which are critical to the success of the merger process. These include developing measures to minimise job losses through identifying new opportunities for staff, building capacity and enhancing staff qualifications through training programmes and developing a process for ensuring compliance with the obligations of the Labour Relations Act.

The NWG has also identified a number of further issues, which are critical for the successful restructuring of the higher education system, but which fall outside its Terms of Reference. These issues, which are outlined in Appendix 5, are referred to the Minister for his consideration and further investigation.

In conclusion, the NWG would like to state emphatically that the reconfiguration of the higher education system is beyond debate. It is a precondition to enable the higher education system to contribute to the national reconstruction and development agenda, and thus to contribute to creating a better life for all our people.

## **APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL WORKING GROUP: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. Purpose**

The National Working Group will investigate and advise the Minister on appropriate arrangements for consolidating the provision of higher education on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms, including the feasibility of reducing the number of higher education institutions. The investigation forms part of the broader process for the restructuring of the higher education system to ensure that it contributes to social and economic development, as outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education.

### **2. Principles**

The investigation must be guided by the principles and goals for the transformation of the higher education system as outlined in the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of the Higher Education System. In addition, the National Working Group must ensure that its recommendations address and promote the following goals:

- Social and educational goals, in particular, the contribution of higher education to social and economic development, both regionally and nationally.
  
- Access and equity goals in relation to both student and staff equity, as well as institutional redress.
  
- Quality and efficiency goals in terms of economies of scale and scope, both programme and infrastructural, as well as the spread and quality of programmes and graduation and retention rates.
  
- Institutional sustainability and viability goals in terms of student numbers, income and expenditure patterns and management and governance capacities.
  
- Institutional identity and culture goals in terms of overcoming the legacy of apartheid (CHE, pp.58-59).

### **3. Terms of Reference**

The National Working Group must:

- 3.1 Address how the number of institutions can be reduced and the form that the restructured institutions should take, and not on whether the number of institutions can or should be reduced.
- 3.2 Ensure that the reduction in the number of institutions does not result in the closure of existing sites of delivery, that is, it must be underpinned by the principle that higher education programmes would continue to be offered at all the current sites of delivery, but within new institutional and organisational forms and structures.
- 3.3 Consider the full range of potential institutional arrangements, including the rationalisation of programme development and delivery through institutional collaboration, as well as different models of mergers.
- 3.4 Consider the role and function of all existing institutions in the development of new institutional and organisational forms, that is, no institution should be exempted from the need to change fundamentally and from contributing to achieving a new higher education landscape.
- 3.5 Recommend the incorporation of the constituent campuses of Vista University into appropriate existing higher education institutions within each region given the decision to unbundle Vista University. This does not include the distance education centre of Vista University, which will be incorporated into a single dedicated distance education institution through the merger of UNISA and Technikon South Africa.
- 3.6 Consider the following regional demarcations for purposes of the investigation:
  - Eastern Cape.
  - Free State.
  - KwaZulu Natal.
  - Gauteng.
  - Northern Province.
  - North West.
  - Western Cape.

#### **4. Process**

- 4.1 The National Working Group must consult with the appropriate constituencies at both the national and regional levels.
- 4.2 The National Working Group may commission specialist studies and draw on the experience and expertise of other individuals both within and outside of the higher education sector as and when necessary.
- 4.3 The Higher Education Branch of the Department of Education will serve as the secretariat to the National Working Group.
- 4.3 The National Working Group is accountable to the Minister of Education. It is required to complete its investigation and to submit its recommendations to the Minister by no later than the end of December 2001.

#### **5. Members**

The National Working Group consists of:

Mr Saki Macozoma – Chairperson; Deputy Chairperson of the Standard Bank Investment Corporation. Served on the Council on Higher Education Task Team on the Size and Shape of the Higher Education System.

Ms Gill Marcus – Deputy Chairperson; Deputy Governor, South African Reserve Bank.

Prof. Hugh Africa, retired Vice-Chancellor, Vista University and a member of the Council on Higher Education.

Prof. Malegapuru W Makgoba, President, Medical Research Council of South Africa, Member of the National Advisory Council on Innovation and former Deputy Vice Chancellor and member of the Council on Higher Education.

Mr. Murphy Morobe, Chairperson, Fiscal and Finance Commission and the National Parks Board.

Prof. Wiseman Nkhulu, Economic Adviser to the President; Chairperson, Council on Higher Education.

Ms Joyce Phekane, Deputy Vice President, Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Ms Maria Ramos, Director-General, Department of Finance.

Prof. Jairam Reddy, Chairperson of Council, United Nations University; Chaired the National Commission on Higher Education.

Prof. Hennie Rossouw, retired Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Stellenbosch; Served on the National Commission on Higher Education.

Prof. Stuart Saunders, retired Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Town.

## APPENDIX 2: WORKING PAPER ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The National Working Group formulated a number of guiding principles to frame its work and shape its recommendations. These guiding principles were gleaned from the visions, values, goals, requirements and expectations for higher education in South Africa as these are reflected in the policy documents referred to earlier, as well as in the Terms of Reference of the NWG itself.

The NWG is required to recommend realistic and practicable measures of institutional reconfiguration or combination, which could help to reduce the number of institutions and strengthen the quality of the higher education system in South Africa. It understands "quality" in this context to mean "fitness for purpose", i.e. the extent to which the elements constituting the structures and operations of the system are suited and well equipped to fulfill effectively those functions which are its *raison d'être*.

The White Paper on Higher Education (1997) gives the following outline of the *raison d'être* (or purpose or defining function) of higher education:

- (a) To meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives;
- (b) To address the development needs of society and provide the labour market with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy;
- (c) To contribute to the socialisation of enlightened, responsible and constructively critical citizens;
- (d) To contribute to the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge, through the pursuit of academic scholarship and intellectual inquiry in all fields of human understanding and through teaching and learning.

The NWG is of the opinion that this outline is in keeping with the two main historical purposes of higher education which it would like to summarise as: (a) to advance scientific and scholarly knowledge by engaging in fundamental discovery and in criticising and extending the traditional view of the world (the service of the intellect function); and (b) to educate and train persons who would enter the "learned" professions or fulfil other social functions and leadership roles and responsibilities to deal, in an intellectually justified and disciplined way, with social, political and economic problems (the service of society function). The NWG sees its task accordingly as an effort to recommend ways and means for strengthening the fitness of the higher education system in South Africa so that it can serve this cluster of purposes effectively and in the interest of all the people of the country.

In the light of the circumscription given by the relevant policy documents of the criteria and ideals of a well-functioning South African higher education system, one could say that the **fitness** of the system and its component institutions to fulfill the purpose of higher education in the South African context boils down to three main properties. These properties are those of equity, sustainability and productivity. A restructured higher education system should be socially just and equitable in its distribution of resources and opportunities, it should meet the requirements of longer-term viability and it should fulfill the higher education teaching and research needs of the nation effectively and efficiently. Strengthening the fitness of

the system therefore means (a) promoting the equity of the system, (b) ensuring the sustainability of the system, and (c) enhancing the productivity of the system.

Promoting the **equity** of the system implies:

- that the ideology-driven fragmentation, in terms of racially differentiated identities and cultures, of the institutional landscape should be overcome by transcending the divide between historically black and white institutions through mergers or, where such a merger is not indicated, through a process of internal transformation with a view to reflecting, as far as possible, the demographic profile and the constitutionally embedded values of the South African society in each institution, thus creating the new South African higher education configuration;
- that the system should meet the future educational needs of all sections of the South African population, and that public funds cannot be used to promote the educational advancement of only select groups;
- that the imbalances in the racial composition of both student bodies and staff components should be rectified through a refocusing and reshaping of institutional cultures and missions, through access and appointment policies which are in accordance with such a refocusing and reshaping, and through transparent mechanisms, processes and measurable goals at institutional as well as systemic levels;
- that redress should be made to institutions and to individuals of population groups previously discriminated against, by ensuring that institutions are able to increase opportunities of access and success, and that individuals are able to make use of such opportunities wherever they are available;
- that the culture of human rights and high ethical standards and practices should be entrenched and promoted as core values within the institutional framework of teaching and research.

Ensuring the **sustainability** of the system implies:

- that a long term view should be taken and that restructuring should lay a solid foundation for future generations to build on;
- that reconfiguration should strengthen the weak elements in the system and not weaken the strong;
- that every possible measure should be taken to secure the financial viability and stability of institutions;

- that student enrolment numbers which fluctuate at individual institutions, because of recruitment competition in a limited catchment area, or because of other reasons, should be stabilised, and that these numbers be increased in order to help ensure the sustainability of the institution.
- that each institution in the system should have a critical mass of academic, administrative and management capacity at its disposal, and that steps should be taken to build such capacity where it is lacking or inadequate;
- that institutions should be assisted to cultivate and uphold sound leadership as well as good governance structures and practices;
- that the number of higher education institutions should be reduced wherever possible, so that the human and financial resources available in the system can be concentrated, managed and utilised more effectively;
- that waste and unnecessary overlap and duplication should be eliminated and economies of scale and scope be promoted, through forms of intra- and inter-institutional rationalisation, co-ordination and co-operation, in order to bring down unit costs and make the system more efficient;
- that higher education in South Africa should become globally competitive by upholding rigorous academic standards and by enabling institutions to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by global transformation in innovation and knowledge production, dissemination and management.

Enhancing the **productivity** of the system implies:

- that institutions should recognise in their visions and missions the critical role of higher education in improving the quality of life of individual citizens, and that this recognition should be reflected in their teaching and research programmes;
- that institutions should have a clear view of the higher education needs of society and the labour market, and that they should be organisationally and operationally geared towards the most effective response to and fulfillment of these needs;
- that the system should offer a diversity of institutional missions and qualification mixes in order to increase student choice and meet the variety of human resource and technological demands presented by a developing country;

- that the difference between university and technikon programmes be recognised and maintained, even though it may be necessary in some cases to allow for both university- and technikon-type academic offerings in the same, educationally comprehensive institution;
- that graduates should be equipped with the knowledge, the skills and the expertise to facilitate economic as well as social and cultural development - regionally, nationally and with regard to the continent as a whole;
- that measures should be taken to increase the participation rate as well as the success rates (throughput rate, retention rate, graduation rate) of institutions;
- that high level research capacity should be secured and advanced in order to ensure both the continuation of self-initiated, open-ended intellectual inquiry and scholarship, and the sustained application of research activities to technological improvement and social development;
- that the output of postgraduate students should be increased and special attention should be given to the promotion of postgraduate training and studies;
- that the sharing of teaching and research capacity through institutional collaboration, partnerships and contractual agreements should be encouraged and facilitated in order to ensure optimal results, in terms of both quantity and quality;
- that the educational culture, identity and character of institutions should be creatively and constructively explored in measures of combination, so that they may play their rightful role in the successful fulfillment of the reconfigured institution's functions, not only by inspiring loyalty, support and a sense of ownership but also by expediting fruitful relationships with other higher education institutions, both nationally and internationally, as well as with other sectors and organisations of civil society.

**APPENDIX 3: DESCRIPTION OF INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS**

**SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES AND TECHNIKONS:**

**SUMMARY OF EXPECTED FEATURES, INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS**

<b>EXPECTED FEATURES</b>	<i>INDICATORS</i>	<b>BENCHMARKS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>A SA university or technikon should have at least the following features</b>			
<b>EQUITY</b>			
[1] Its student body should reflect the equity requirement that the participation in higher education of previously disadvantaged groups should increase	[1] The % of students by race group and by gender in the institution's enrolment	<b>[1] At least 40% of on-campus students are African;</b>  each gender has 50% share of contact student enrolment	[1] Based on average contact heads for 1999-2000
[2] Its staff body should reflect the equity requirement that the participation in higher education of previously disadvantaged groups should increase	[2] The % of professional staff by race group and gender	<b>[2] At least 40% of professional staff are African;</b>  each gender has 50% share of professional staff total	[2] Based on permanent staff data for 2000
<b>STUDENTS</b>			
[3] Its student enrolment should be stable, and not subject to major increases and/or declines in intakes and outflows of students.	[3] Institution's combined student retention and replacement rates	[3] Retention plus replacement rate = 100%	[3] Based on averages for 1997-2000

[4] Its total enrolment should be large enough to ensure that it has reasonable spreads of students across a range of fields of study	[4] Unweighted FTE enrolment total	[4] Unweighted enrolment total = 8000	[4] Based on averages for 1999-2000
[5] It should be a comprehensive institution which has a balanced enrolment shape across the broad fields of SET, business and management and humanities.	[5] Unweighted FTE enrolments by CESM category groupings of SET, business or management and humanities	[5] <b>For universities:</b> at least 50% of FTE enrolment in SET + business/ management; with at least 20% in SET and 20% in humanities  <b>For technikons:</b> at least 70% of FTE enrolment in SET+ business/ management	[5] Based on averages for 1999-2000

<b>EXPECTED FEATURES</b>	<i>INDICATORS</i>	<b>BENCHMARKS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>A SA university or technikon should have at least the following features</b>			
<b>ACADEMIC STAFF</b>			
[6] It should have student to academic staff ratios which ensure that adequate numbers of full-time staff are available to serve the needs of its students	[6] Ratio of FTE students to full-time equivalent academics	[6] Ratios of FTE students to FTE academic staff:  (a) <b>universities:</b> 20 unweighted FTE students : 1 (b) <b>technikons:</b> 25 unweighted FTE students : 1	{6} Based on FTE student and FTE academic staff data for 2000
[7] It should have a well-qualified academic staff	[7] % of permanent academic staff with masters or doctoral qualifications	[7] <b>For universities:</b> at least 50% of permanent academics with doctorates <b>For technikons:</b> at least 35% of permanent academics with either masters or doctorates	[7] Based on permanent staff data for 2000
<b>STUDENT OUTPUTS</b>			
[8] Its output of undergraduates should satisfy the norms set by the NPHE.	[8] Graduates/enrolments as % for 3-year undergraduate qualifications	[8] Graduates/enrolments as % meets the NPHE benchmark of 25%	[8] Based on enrolment and graduate totals for 1999 & 2000
[9] Its output of postgraduates should satisfy the norms set by the NPHE.	[9] Graduates/enrolments as % for masters and doctoral qualifications	[9] Graduates/enrolments as % meets the NPHE benchmarks: 33% masters and 20% doctorates	[9] Based on enrolment and graduate totals for 1999 & 2000

<b>STAFF OUTPUTS</b>			
Its academic staff should produce reasonable numbers of research outputs in the form of:			
(10) research publications;	[10] Ratio of subsidy publication units to permanent academic staff members	[10] <b><i>For universities:</i></b> at least 1 subsidy publication unit per permanent academic per annum <b><i>For technicians:</i></b> at least 0.5 weighted research units per permanent academic per annum	[10] Average subsidy publication units for 1998-1999 and permanent academics for 2000

<b>EXPECTED FEATURES</b>	<i>INDICATORS</i>	<b>BENCHMARKS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>A SA university or technikon should have at least the following features</b>			
(11) masters and doctors graduates.	[11] Ratio of weighted total of masters plus doctoral graduates to permanent academic staff members	[11] <b>For universities:</b> at least 1 weighted masters plus doctoral graduates per permanent academic pa <b>For technikons:</b> at least 0.5weighted masters plus doctoral graduates per full-time academic pa	[11] Average masters and doctors graduates for 1999-2000 and permanent academics for 2000
<b><i>INSTITUTIONAL FEATURES</i></b>			
[12] It should be financially stable and sustainable.	[12] Assessment prepared by professional DoE consultant	[12] Assessment as a 'going concern' of at least 4 on 5-point scale:  5 = certain 4 = probable 3 = likely 2 = risky 1 = high risk	[12] Institutional financial tables for 2000



#### **APPENDIX 4: DOCUMENTS CONSULTED**

In addition to the published documents outlined below, the National Working Group had access to a range of background documents prepared by the secretariat on trends in higher education, including the financial status of universities and technikons.

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Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2000). *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Pretoria.

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Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (1998). *White Paper on Science and Technology*. Pretoria.

Department of Education (1996). *Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation*. Pretoria

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Department of Education (1998). *National and Institutional Planning Framework for the Higher Education System*. Pretoria

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Department of Education (2001). *National Plan for Higher Education*. Pretoria.

Department of Education (2001). *Guidelines for Institutional Submissions of Proposed Teaching/Research Niche Areas and Programme Mix for 2002-2006*. Pretoria.

Department of Education (2001). *Funding of Higher Education: A New Framework – Discussion Document*. Pretoria.

Department of Education and Department of Labour (2001). *Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa*. Pretoria.

Gibbon, T. and Parekh, A (2001). *Uncommon Wisdom: Making Co-operation Work for South African Higher Education*. Centre for Higher Education Transformation, Pretoria.

Government Gazette Notice, No 19501: Investigation of the situation at the University of Transkei by the Independent Assessor; Advocate TL Skweyiya; 20 November 1998.

Government Gazette, No 19842: Report of the Independent Assessor to the Minister of Education to investigate the affairs at the University of Fort Hare, Prof. SJ Saunders; 12 March 1999.

Government Gazette, No 19239: Investigation of the Situation at the Vaal Triangle by the Independent Assessor; Prof. JJF Durand; 11 September 1999.

Government Gazette, No 20485: Report of the Independent Assessor to the Minister of Education on Mangosuthu Technikon, Prof. JJF Durand; 17 September 1999.

Government Gazette, No 21654: Investigation into the affairs of the University of the North by the Independent Assessor; Prof. Thandabantu Nhlapo; 16 October 2000.

Habib, A. (2000). *Structural Disadvantage, Leadership Ineptitude and Stakeholder Complicity: A Study of the Institutional Crisis of the University of Transkei*. Centre for Higher Education Transformation, Pretoria.

Higher Education Act of the Republic of South Africa, No. 101 of 1997.

Higher Education Amendment Act of the Republic of South Africa, No 55 of 1999.

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## **APPENDIX 5: CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION WHICH FALL OUTSIDE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE NWG**

The NWG has identified a number of issues, which fall outside its terms of reference but which are critical to the successful reconfiguration of the higher education system. The NWG refers these to the Minister for his consideration and further investigation.

### **1. Leadership, Administration and Management Capacity**

There is some correlation between strong leadership and management in an institution and institutional stability. However, good governance and administration is dependent on a number of other factors, such as the quality and depth of qualified personnel at middle management levels and the presence or absence of consensus within an institution. The NWG recommends that the Ministry investigate ways (either directly or through bodies such as SAUVCA and the CTP) to develop higher education leadership as well as management and administrative capacity through rigorous training and other interventions.

### **2. Governance**

The NWG has identified that one of the major factors that has impacted on institutional stability in some institutions is the lack of clarity on the role and function of the different governance structures such as the council, management, senate, and the institutional forum. This has, furthermore, been exacerbated by the expansion of councils to enable widened representation and participation. However, the large numbers, in one case over 40 members, the lack of expertise in critical areas such as financial management, the tension between stakeholder interest and expertise, micro-management of institutions by council members, and unreasonable payments to council members have collectively led to severe and intractable problems. The NWG is particularly concerned about reported payment to members of councils, which it believes to be undesirable in any form, except for legitimate expenses.

The NWG believes that optimal and effective governance at the level of councils is imperative for a successful outcome of reconfiguration proposals. Attention is therefore drawn to the urgent necessity for the review and reform of the current structure and functions of councils. The reduction in numbers of council members, the composition of council, careful selection of its members based on expertise, integrity and commitment and the regulation of payment should be considered as part of the review.

The NWG recommends that the existing training programme for council members, which has been facilitated by the Ministry, should be expanded to include all the governance structure, but especially, the institutional forum.

### **3. Staff productivity**

The NWG is aware that, in the absence of any national norm, the contribution and commitment of academic staff vary. In some instances, productivity, commitment and a sense of duty are sadly lacking. The NWG recommends that a thoroughgoing scheme be introduced to encourage academic and research output among staff.

### **4. Remuneration**

The NWG is convinced that academic staff remuneration needs addressing. Overall, the levels of remuneration are not competitive with the public or private sectors. These disparities are widening. There are also significant differences between institutions. It will be necessary for the Minister to consider the introduction of a broad set of guidelines on conditions of service and remuneration levels to steer institutions. In contrast, the NWG understands remuneration of top administrators to be high in a number of instances.

### **5. Strategies for recruiting and retaining staff**

The South African higher education system is in competition not only with the international education system, but also with government and the local business and commercial sector. Qualified academics are recruited by the private sector, which often has higher rates of remuneration. In this competitive environment, strategies have to be developed to recruit and retain not only young academics, but also seasoned and experienced professionals.

### **6. Self perceptions of institutions**

The NWG found that a number of institutions have perceptions of their current and medium term capacity which are completely unrealistic and display an alarming lack of insight and understanding. It is important that institutions be assisted to realise what is achievable in terms of academic programmes, student enrolments and collection of student fees. In this context, the NWG supports the Ministry's current exercise to approve realistic programme mixes for institutions and recommends that this be further reinforced and refined in the next three-year rolling plan exercise.

## **7. Optimal use of the academic year**

The NWG believes that higher education must be more efficient in the use of academic staff and in the use of physical facilities. Staff may, at times, be present on campus for half a day and the lecture halls and seminar rooms may only be in use for part of the day and for part of the year. While it is true that research may be conducted off campus, the NWG gained the impression that this was not the major reason for the absence of academic staff from institutions. Furthermore, some higher education institutions adopt the same attitude as schools with regard to times when students are on vacation and, as a consequence, close down for several months of the year. This is unacceptable. The NWG recommends that the Ministry investigate whether the higher education sector is giving value for money in terms of optimal use of time, space, human and other resources.

## **8. Consolidation of quality in secondary schools**

The large majority of entrants into the higher education system are direct products of the secondary school system. The NWG is aware of the fact that some improvement in the scholastic performance of learners in the school system has been recorded. However, the overall levels of academic performance are low and must be improved to ensure that higher education in turn performs at its optimal level. The NWG recommends that the Minister continue to give urgent attention to improving the quality of learning and teaching at the secondary school level. Particular attention should be given to the languages, mathematics and science.

## **9. The impact of HIV/AIDS on higher education**

Available documentation and surveys indicate that HIV/AIDS-related fatalities are on the increase within the South African community. While there is no comprehensive review of the situation in higher education, alarming statistics are being reported. The NWG recommends that impact studies to assess the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in higher education be undertaken as a matter of urgency. These studies, should, among others, investigate the effects of the pandemic on future enrolments, graduation rates, higher education cost and numbers of qualified professionals working within and exiting from the system.

## **10. Private higher education provision**

The NWG is aware of the fact that the Minister has issued (for comment) draft regulations on the registration of private higher education institutions. In some instances, private providers have an important role to play in extending access to and broadening the provision of higher education. In several instances, however, some public higher education institutions are working with private higher education providers in an unsatisfactory manner and to the disadvantage of the system as a whole. The NWG supports the introduction of regulations to control this situation.