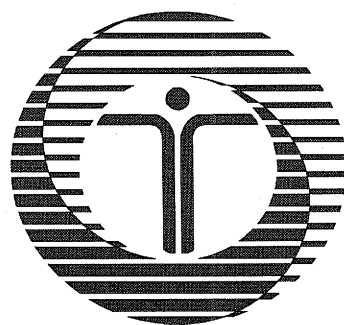


CHILD, YOUTH, FAMILY & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL



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3838

## PATHWAYS TO CHANGE: AN ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING AT NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

Report prepared for Education, Science and Skills  
Development, HSRC

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HSRC RESEARCH OUTPUTS

3838

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## Acronyms

ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BEd Hons	Bachelor of Education Honours
DET	Department of Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
INSET	In-service education for teachers
MEd	Master of Education
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education
PDE	Provincial Department of Education
PRESET	Pre-service education for teachers
NWU	North-West University
TED	Transvaal Education Department
UCT	University of Cape Town
UniBo	University of Bophuthatswana
UNW	University of the North-West
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand

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## Introduction

This report forms part of a broader research project focusing on teacher education and institutional change in South Africa. The aim of the project is to understand the 'pathways to change' that institutions involved in the training of teachers have undergone since 1994. This involves considering the distinct new organisational bases that have emerged from these processes, and also the conditions these institutions represent to meet policy ideals and the national demand for a new kind of highly skilled teacher in the global context of the knowledge economy. The processes of change that teacher education has undergone for at least the last ten years have entailed a 'double dynamic' – of changes in both teacher policy and changes in higher education. It is this double dynamic which frames the discussion in the report.

The purpose of this report is to present one of the case studies of the broader project: that of North-West University. The report seeks to understand the distinct pathways to change for teacher education in the creation of the new institution of North-West University. Crucially, the interest is in how these processes and the resulting new forms of institutional governance have impacted on the nature of initial teacher education approaches and programmes at the institution.

The research captured the process of restructuring in mid-stride. The merger (the main form of restructuring at North-West University discussed here) was far from complete at the time of the research. The research is therefore unable to paint a complete picture of a finalized process. Rather it attempts to capture in detail the complexities of change. Institutional restructuring is not a neat process, and the interviews upon which this case study is primarily based, took place at a time of complex policy and political change, and changing dynamics within teaching and teacher education more generally. The report attempts to capture these aspects.

The report is divided into four parts. The first part considers the history of the institution since 1994. Because North-West University (NWU) is the outcome of a merger between a number of universities and colleges, the story is told in terms of these individual

institutions. Formally, North-West University only came into being in January 2004; its statute only accepted in August 2005.

The second part of the report provides an overview of the current institutional governance of, and provision for, teacher education programmes, following the processes of restructuring. The status of Education within the institution is considered, as well as the structuring of education programmes, and those of initial teacher education in particular. The overarching structure and the divisions/departments according to which education programmes are provided are presented. The section provides an overview of current structures and processes that have been developed as the basis for teacher education, focusing on the relative power and contribution of constituent institutions (i.e. the merging universities and former colleges that were incorporated).

The third part of the report focuses on the mediations of the restructuring processes. The interest here is on how teacher educators have experienced the pathways to change. Teacher educators' interactions with new policy, with national and provincial education departments, and their own institution are considered.

The final section of the report considers initial teacher education specifically, and the impact of restructuring on the core business of initial teacher education, exploring consensus, conflict and tension around the pedagogical approaches and discourses of teacher education that have emerged in the newly formed institution.

## **Research methodology**

The analysis in this report relies primarily on interviews and focus groups interviews conducted at the Mafeking and Potchefstroom campuses of North-West University in February 2006. Telephonic interviews were conducted subsequently in March 2006 with staff on the Mankwe and Vaal Triangle campuses of the University. Documents relating to the Faculties of Education were collected from the Internet, and primary documentary material was collected from the institution. The data sources are listed below.

**Table 1: List of interviews**

	Date	Place of interview	Position of person interviewed	Interview mode
1	20 February 2006	Mafeking	Acting Dean (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
2	20 February 2006	Mafeking	Senior lecturer (Mafeking Campus)	In person focus group
3	20 February 2006	Mafeking	Lecturer (Mafeking Campus)	In person focus group
4	20 February 2006	Mafeking	Lecturer (Mafeking Campus)	In person focus group
5		Mafeking	Acting Director School of Undergraduate Studies (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
6	20 February 2006	Mafeking	Senior Lecturer (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
7	20 February 2006	Mafeking	Senior Lecturer (Former Dean) (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
8	20 February 2006	Mafeking	Acting Director School of Post-graduate Studies (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
9	21 February 2006	Mafeking	Acting Dean Commerce (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
10	21 February 2006	Mafeking	Professor of Education (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
11	21 February 2006	Mafeking	Faculty Officer (former Faculty Officer Mankwe) (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
12	22 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Dean (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person interview
13	22 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Acting Head School of Undergraduate Studies (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person interview
14	23 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Acting Head School of Postgraduate Studies (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person interview
15	23 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Professor of Education (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person interview
16	23 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Senior Lecturer (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person focus group
17	23 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Senior Lecturer (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person focus group
18	23 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Senior Lecturer (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person focus group
19	23 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Junior Lecturer (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person focus group
20	23 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Junior Lecturer (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person focus group
21	24 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Senior Lecturer (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person focus group
22	24 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Senior Lecturer (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person focus group
23	24 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Senior Lecturer (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person focus group
24	24 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Acting Dean (Mafeking Campus)	In person interview
25	24 February 2006	Potchefstroom	Dean (Potchefstroom Campus)	In person interview
26	7 March 2006	Cape Town	Former education staff member UNIBO	Telephonic interview
27	14 March 2006	Cape Town	Senior Lecturer (Mankwe Campus)	Telephonic interview
28	16 March 2006	Cape Town	Former education staff member UNIBO	In person interview
29	20 March 2006	Cape Town	Director School of Educational Sciences (Vaal Triangle Campus)	Telephonic interview

Detailed notes were taken in the course of the interviews. Further, all interviews, apart from those conducted telephonically, were tape-recorded. Parts of the tape-recordings were transcribed where necessary for direct quotations and the clarification of field notes.

The analysis relies heavily on accounts provided at Mafeking and Potchefstroom campuses, as it was these two institutions that were most central in the processes of restructuring. Accounts drawn directly from the interviews are indexed in square brackets in the text of the report, indicating the interview number above, prefaced with an I. For example, [I6] would refer to interview number six in the table above, held in person at Mafeking with a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty.

Other data sources included the University Calendars (or year books) from both Mafeking and Potchefstroom campuses for 2005 and 2006, a range of curriculum plans and schedules for the BEd programme at both aforementioned campuses, Council Newsletters for North-West University from 2004 and 2005 and institutional information taken from the institution's website. Secondary sources, which included papers and reports are referred to in the text of the report and are referenced in the bibliography.

## **Part 1: A history of the institution since 1994**

The North-West University was formally established on 1 January 2004 through the merger of the University of the North-West (formerly the University of Bophuthatswana, or UniBo), and Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education which included Potchefstroom's satellite campus in Vanderbijl Park, which had incorporated Vista University's Sebokeng campus. The process resulted in the North-West University being the fifth biggest university in the country with a headcount of more than 35 000 students (with only UNISA, University of Pretoria, Tshwane University of Technology and University of KZN being bigger). The new university had about 4000 staff members (permanent and temporary) on its four campuses: Potchefstroom, Mafeking (with satellite Mankwe) and Vaal Triangle.

The merger was the culmination of a long series of complex restructuring processes at the institutions involved, and at the time of the research the merger process was far from complete.

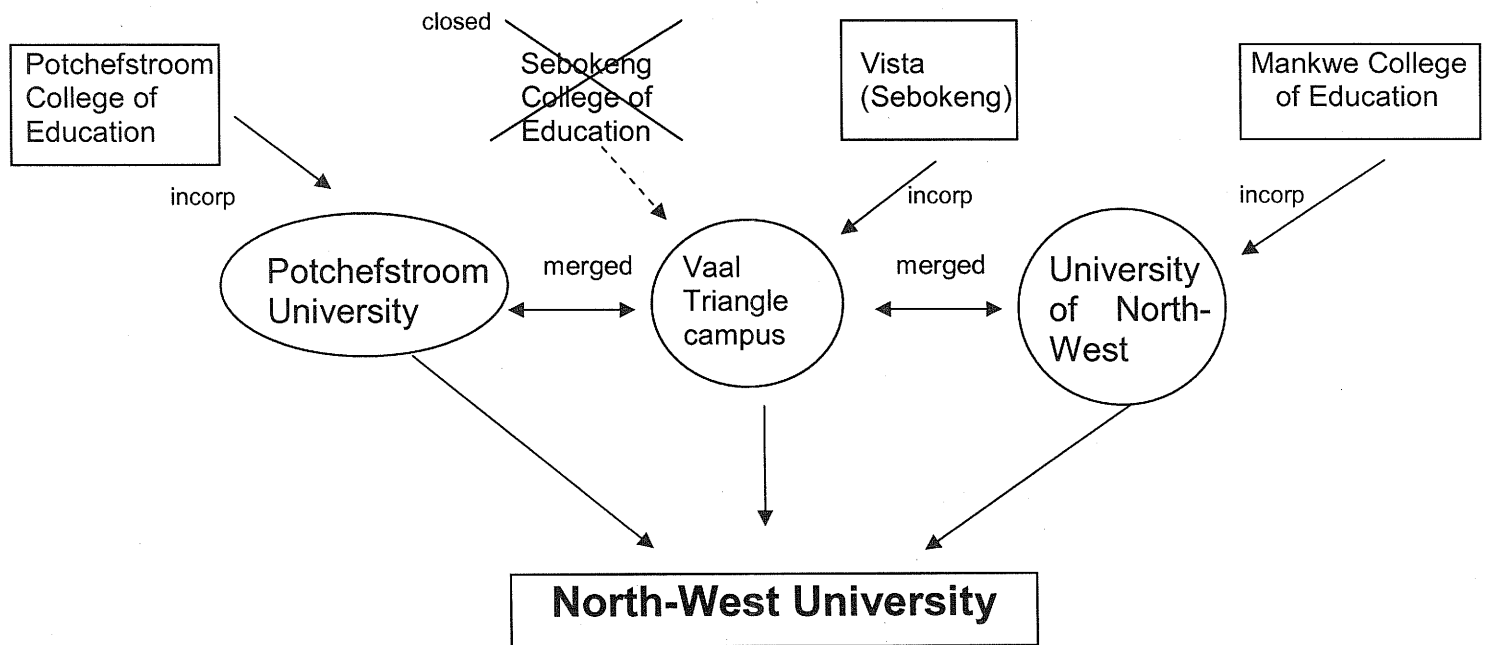


Potchefstroom had since 1966 had a satellite campus at Vanderbijl Park which was intended initially to focus on Engineering. It did, however, include departments of science, commerce and education and humanities. In January 2004, the Sebokeng campus of Vista University was incorporated into the Vaal campus of Potchefstroom, and renamed the Vaal Triangle Campus. Students and staff from Vista were transferred to Vaal Triangle Campus, and their former facilities in Sebokeng were transferred to Vaal Triangle Technicon. Although Sebokeng College was also tabled for incorporation into Potchefstroom's VanderBijl Park campus, it was ultimately closed down.

Potchefstroom had incorporated Potchefstroom College of Education in 2001. Mankwe College of Education had been incorporated into the University of North-West (formerly UniBo) in 2001. At the time of the study the Mankwe campus was in the process of being closed down. Finally both the former University of the North West and the former Potchefstroom University underwent significant internal restructuring, the University of the North-West in 1999 and Potchefstroom University in 1998.

The brief overview of changes presented above makes it clear that there was significant restructuring at the different universities, and this included internal restructuring, the incorporation of colleges, and a merger. The processes are presented diagrammatically in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Institutional restructuring in the formation of North-West University**



The new University is described on its website in the following way:

The North-West University is a unitary, multi-campus institution with campuses spread across two provinces, with a single set of policies, systems and standards. The four campuses i.e. Mafeking, Mankwe, Potchefstroom and Vanderbijl Park function as business units with specific programmes and the institution follows a decentralised management system.

Mafeking (with its satellite campus in Mankwe), Potchefstroom and the Vaal Triangle campuses are supported by the University council and senate and the institutional management located at the Potchefstroom campus. Each campus has a campus rector.

The processes that led to the formation of the new University are detailed below. The focus, in line with the report's purpose, is on teacher education providers – faculties, schools and departments of education and teacher training colleges.

## **Internal restructuring: University of the North-West**

The University of Bophuthatswana (UniBo) was established in 1981, in what was then the 'homeland' or 'bantustan' Bophuthatswana. The University had a strong focus on education when it was set up, and the initial structure of the institution reflected that focus. The University was at that time organised into five schools: the School of Education (which included a Department of Science and a Department of Humanities), the School of Agriculture, and School of Law. In 1995, after the establishment of the new nine provinces, the University was renamed after the province in which it was now located: the University of the North-West.

In 1998, internal restructuring of the University led to the creation of seven faculties: Agriculture, Science, Commerce and Administration, Humanities, Social Science, Law and Education. This had specific implications for the preparation of teachers. With Humanities and Science moving out of the direct ambit of Education, trainee teachers were now required to take content courses outside of the Faculty of Education. Up until then UniBo had had a long tradition of intensive teaching practice, where students spent long periods of time in schools, and were supervised by staff at great expense (in schools all over Bophuthatswana). Once students moved out of the Faculty of Education for content courses, time spent in schools was constrained by the university timetable. At the time of the research Mafeking had decided to adopt the same model as that at Potchefstroom, and content and method courses would be taught within the Faculty from 2007.

From 1999 to 2000 the number of faculties was reduced to five: Human and Social Sciences, Agriculture, Science and Technology, Law, Commerce and Administration and Education Sciences. Odhav (2000) describes how at this time power was devolved to faculties, only to face collapse due to "weakly capacitated management". The organization of the University and the modularization of programmes was "haphazard", and this hamstrung secretarial and administrative staff, and programme/module developers. Management, IT, and human resources were dysfunctional and an inconsistent process of rationalisation meant that staff were retrenched on an on-going basis.

With the merger in 2004 there was a move to further reduce the number of faculties to three. The arguments for this were around deficit in the university funds and duplication across faculties on different campuses. In particular the new Vice Chancellor of the University of the North West wanted to release funds in aid of the merger, and one way to achieve this was to reduce the cost of senior management (especially deans). It was suggested that the Faculty of Education be incorporated into the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences. At the time of the research this had not occurred. The issue will be discussed further below in relation to the merger.

### **Internal restructuring: Potchefstroom University**

Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education was established as an independent institution in 1951, founded on the original Theological School set up in 1869. In 1966 the Vaal Triangle campus of the university was set up in Vanderbijl Park. The preservation of the culture of *Christian* higher education was an enduring aspect of the University's changes over the decades. In 1998 Potchefstroom University underwent significant internal restructuring. At the time there were more than 80 Departments in the University, spread across nine faculties. The Education Faculty was the first to be restructured, its seven departments being reduced to three schools: Graduate School, School of Training and Development, and School for Teacher Training. The Graduate School at this time also had a research division which focused on Masters and Doctoral training.

At the time of the merger, the Education Faculty was reorganised into three new schools: The School of Pre-service Education, the School of In-service Education, and the School of Postgraduate Studies. Three cross-cutting subject divisions for Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Human and Social Sciences, and Education were also created.

The faculty status of Education at Potchefstroom had never been threatened, although its position within the University did change with the incorporation of Potchefstroom College of Education in 2001. Education was one of the oldest faculties, which also had the largest number of students and generated the most revenue in the University.

## **College incorporation: Mankwe Christian College of Education into North-West University**

Mankwe Christian College of Education was built by the Catholic Church, and was administered by the North West Provincial Department of Education from 1994 until its incorporation by the University of the North-West in 2002. Up until 1994 Mankwe had belonged to an affiliation of six colleges in the former Bophuthatswana homeland, linked to the former UniBo. During the period of college incorporation and restructuring, Mankwe College and Potchefstroom College were the only colleges of education in the North West province to be incorporated into universities. The other five colleges of education in the North-West province were closed down, and became either FET or community colleges.

There was extensive discussion and negotiation with the Provincial Department prior to incorporation of Mankwe, and the College was discussed extensively in the Senate. A budget was allocated by the provincial department to cover staff salaries for two years following the incorporation, after which the University would take responsibility for the College and staff remuneration. At the time of incorporation in 2002 all staff at the college were re-interviewed, several left and some were absorbed into the Provincial Department of Education (PDE). Staff members were also appointed to the College on behalf of the University.

At the time of incorporation there were already University of the North-West courses running at the College. Although the College had been administered and funded by the PDE, the University of the North-West had been responsible for the quality assurance, examinations and certification of the College programmes. Mankwe continued to function until the merger in 2004 at which point the University management questioned whether the college was financially viable. Very low student:staff ratios, low student numbers, insufficient income and high staff salaries were some of the issues that were of concern. A number of reports were circulated on the future of Mankwe in 2004 and 2005, and in 2005 a council task team was set up to consider the future of Mankwe. The Task Team report "established facts with regard to the lack of educational and financial viability of the

Mankwe campus" (NWU, 2005a) and recommended that the land and buildings be transferred back to the Provincial Department of Education. It also recommended NWU rent a portion of the facilities as a distance education delivery site. During the months of the deliberation over its future, morale at Mankwe fell, staff left and student numbers declined in the face of possible closure.

In February 2006 the eighteen remaining staff members at the College were offered the opportunity to interview for eight posts at the universities (five to be appointed at Mafeking campus, and three at Potchefstroom campus). Ten staff members came to the interviews, eight were awarded posts, and the remaining two who were interviewed as well as those who did not attend the interviews were given severance packages. Those who did get posts at the University took a significant drop in salary. There were also approximately 500 students at the Mankwe campus, enrolled in BA, BEd, BEd Hons, MEd (two students), ACE and NPDE courses. The approximately 30 BEd students were all offered bursaries of R8000 per annum to complete their degrees at Mafeking. All but three students accepted the offer. The University was threatened by court proceedings if it failed to meet the needs of these three students. These remaining pipeline BEd students would therefore be taught by lecturers from Mafeking on Friday and Saturday once a month. The pipeline BEd Hons students, ACE students would continue their studies to the end of 2006. The campus would run a learning centre for on-going training in ACE and NPDE courses. These courses would be run by facilitators managed from the Mafeking campus.

Orbit, a technical college in Rustenburg would take over the facilities, and the site would be administered by the North-West PDE. There were a number of accounts given in the interviews for the demise of Mankwe. One was financial. The other was that there was a lack of political will and the absence of a strategic plan to deal with Mankwe. Despite statements to the contrary (for example, the Council newsletter of September 2005 (NWU, 2005b) "The Mankwe campus will not be closed down"), effectively the outcome of Mankwe College was a gradual shut down and not an incorporation into the University. In the interviews, the situation was regarded as particularly unfortunate given the strategic location of Mankwe, with access to and for a large number of rural students. Another theory circulating at

Mafeking was the idea that Potchefstroom was behind the closure of Mankwe, wanting to open a Rustenburg learning centre and wanting to draw on Mankwe's previous student base. The Acting Director of the School of Post-graduate studies put it baldly: "The whites are closing it down" [I8]. That this notion appears to have little substance is probably true, the point rather is that the uncertainty and lack of good information flows led in this, and other instances, to the generation of suspicion and mistrust between campuses. This will be taken up further below.

The staff at Mankwe were completely confused and demoralized in the run up to the decision, and were not satisfied with the outcome. There was a great amount of uncertainty as to their fate, and the communication between the management of NWU and the former College was claimed to be very poor by all those interviewed. Although the Faculty of Education staff at Mafeking were extremely supportive of Mankwe remaining open as a campus, they were uninvolved and ill-informed of the negotiations and decisions around its fate. Of all the staff interviewed at Mafeking, aside from the Acting Dean, no one was clear whether Mankwe was to continue or be closed down as a campus, or in what form it would continue to operate. Some pointed out its strategic position regarding the recruiting of students, especially for INSET.

Given the Mankwe staff's small numbers and precarious positioning within the university, it is unlikely that they are to have significant impact on the nature of teacher education within the Faculties at Potchefstroom and Mafeking.

### **College incorporation: Potchefstroom College of Education into Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education**

If the incorporation of Mankwe represents one end of the continuum presented in Jansen's (2002) typology – 'institutional obliteration', then the case of the incorporation of Potchefstroom College of Education into the Faculty of Education of Potchefstroom University possibly represents the other – 'protected enclosure'. Discussions around the possibility of incorporation of the Potchefstroom College of Education began as early as 1996. This was as a result of the decline in quotas from provincial departments regarding

how many teachers were to be trained. Potchefstroom College of Education's student numbers had declined significantly. Many of the rooms of its eleven hostels stood empty, while Potchefstroom University was seeking additional student accommodation. These initial discussions were conducted on an equal footing between Potchefstroom University and the College. By 1999, then, when formal discussions began under government directive for incorporation of the College into the University, many issues had already been raised and discussed.

Potchefstroom University and Potchefstroom College had also historically had a close relationship. They were geographically separated only by a road, and in recent years the College and University had jointly developed BEd and ACE programmes. But a key issue in how the incorporation transpired had to do with the leadership at the time. The current Dean of the Faculty of Education was the Rector of the College at the time of the incorporation discussions. He had been at Potchefstroom University for twenty years prior to taking over the rectorship of the College, and therefore was in a position to both understand the University structures, as well as negotiate a favourable arrangement for the College.

Further, the same individual enjoyed a close relationship with the PDE. The Department official overseeing the incorporation process was a Masters student of the former rector, and although he claimed "never to have pulled rank" on his student, a good relationship had nonetheless been established.

In the incorporation negotiations the Faculty of Education staff were sidelined, and negotiations primarily took place between the University management and the management of the College. Although Faculty staff came on board later they did not participate in many of the agreements reached. There was the perception from the Faculty of Education staff that the senior management of the University were more interested in the material gains for the institution out of this incorporation than educational or academic concerns.



The main areas of negotiation at the time included the question of the structure of the new Faculty, and the accommodation of the 60 teaching staff and 30 administration staff from the College into the Faculty of Education. Posts were advertised and all College personnel were invited to apply for positions within the new faculty. Between 45 and 50 of the college staff were incorporated into the university, and 20 of the administration staff were given positions. Of the remaining staff, some took retirement. The rector also negotiated that ten of the teaching staff be seconded to the Faculty from the PDE in order to deal with a growing In-Service teacher training component, which they did up until 2004, when they were absorbed back into the PDE.

Although the minimum requirement for university staff appointments was a Masters degree, an exception was made in the case of College staff, and several staff members who had only initial degrees (and in one case, a staff member with a diploma only) were appointed to the posts of lecturer and senior lecturer.

A point of contention in the appointment of College staff was that the level of appointment was linked to salary scale in the College rather than qualifications. So, for example, a person with a Masters in a lower salary scale in the College would be appointed as a lecturer, whereas a person with a first degree who was in a high salary rank in the College would be appointed to the level of senior lecturer. Former College staff pointed to the lack of fairness in this process. However, they also pointed to the limitations and unfairness that currently took primarily qualifications as means to promotion. They argued that previously in the College system, although qualifications counted, 'excellence of service' and length of service were important criteria that were recognised. Nonetheless, generally the College staff were well accommodated, there were no job losses, and the Unions were instrumental in the negotiations around appointments and conditions of service.

The University gained a number of fixed assets in the incorporation, including the College buildings, sporting facilities and eleven hostels, as well as R18 million in cash (a church endowment). However, an enduring issue of contention was the movement of the Faculty staff to the College premises. Although the College and University were only separated by a

road, the movement of the faculty to the College premises effectively moved the Faculty of Education out of the University and into an adjacent, separate location. The Education Faculty staff felt isolated from the rest of the University, and they felt that their status within the University had been compromised by the move. As one University professor put it, "If I visit your house, then I must fall in with your rules. You have home advantage" [15].

There was also negotiation around the retention of the name of the College of Education. It was decided that the name could be retained, and the School within the Faculty of Education dealing with initial teacher education was from then on called the Potchefstroom College of Education. As in the case of WITS and JCE, the College was thus "buttressed in a strong college-school structure and culture that simply continued the status quo" (Jansen, 2004). The issue was contentious, with the University staff wanting the name to go, and the College staff wanting to retain the name. In 2006, with the development of a 'new corporate identity' for the University there was pressure from University management for the College name to go, and by 2007 the school will have a new name. Reasons given for why the name was retained were numerous. One rationale concerned marketing purposes. "We wanted to show that teacher training wasn't dead, it was just different. It worked on the positive attitude of principals, who were old college students. It is their home base for their professional identity" [I12]. Another former College staff member expressed that it was a way of maintaining "the culture and history of the College" [I21].

In the new Faculty the previous College rector became the Dean of the new Faculty. The previous vice rector of the College became Director of the Potchefstroom College within the Faculty. With this shift in power, the geographical shift and the number of College staff entering the faculty, the old University staff felt 'swamped'. Another professor stated "We were totally ingesluk [swallowed] by the college" [I15].

Tensions between the College and the former University staff persist. Every person interviewed at the Potchefstroom campus referred to the divisions between the two groups. Some of the comments from the College staff reflected the attitudes they believed the former University staff held:

They think that we are not as smart as them, and they interact with each other and not with us. In the past we supported each other, when something happened to someone, we supported them. That is not there anymore. That feeling of being like a family. They say we were like schools [I22].

Another stated, “We don’t want to be treated like monkeys if we aren’t monkeys” [I16].

These perceptions were related to the division between research and practice:

Before they thought that the college was academically retarded and they still think like that. They don’t think we are equipped to teach for FET... They want to go on with their ivory tower research, and not pay attention to practice, but they also want our students [I18].

The division between staff with respect to the emphasis on theory and research on the one hand, and practice on the other was frequently raised. One University staff member felt that that their independence had been compromised – they were forced to deal with backlogs in the expertise of the incoming staff, and they lost momentum with research. [I14]. The College staff on the other hand resented the pressure to do research. They consistently asserted their identities as *teachers* and *practitioners*. They also drew distinctions between theory, and the old College emphasis on ‘opleiding’. Opleiding, one of the focus groups explained, entailed far more than training, it is “a kind of bringing up, like you do a child, it’s developmental” [I21 & I22]. The College staff also complained about new large class sizes and a bigger lecturing load, which were coupled with research requirements:

... we have to publish one article a year, but they also don’t publish. They accuse us that the faculty doesn’t publish enough. We are ‘low class’ and have a ‘college mentality’, even though we have improved our qualifications and publications [I21].

It is true that the research publication record for the previous year was five accredited articles for the whole Faculty, three of which were produced by one person, the former vice rector of the College. In all interviews, with College and University staff alike, it was clear that the College staff prioritised teaching and the training of teachers, and practice, and University staff felt that their research capacity was compromised in the incorporation.

## **College incorporation: Vista Sebokeng into Vaal Triangle**

Vaal triangle had been a satellite campus of Potchefstroom University since 1966. It is comprised of a Faculty with six schools, one of which is the School of Education Sciences. At the time of college incorporations, Sebokeng College of Education was identified to be incorporated into Vaal Triangle, but in 2001 was closed. In 2004 the Sebokeng campus of Vista University was incorporated into Vaal Triangle, and the staff and students were to be transferred to Vaal Triangle. There were at the time only 10 staff members and less than ten students in Education at Vista. Five staff members went to the Provincial Department of Education, four joined the Vaal Triangle campus, and one staff member retired.

The closing of Sebokeng College of Education left something of a vacuum in teacher training facilities which Vaal Triangle was able to take up. They experienced a growth in student numbers. According to the Director of the School of Educational Sciences at Vaal Triangle, the School was glad to receive four staff members from Vista. The School of Education continued to grow, with healthy student numbers both in preservice and inservice courses, as well as post-graduate courses (see Table 2). The School brought in 43% of the overall budget for the campus in 2005. The courses taught at Vaal Triangle campus were exactly the same as those offered at Potchefstroom.

## **Merger: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and North-West University**

Preparation for the merger between Potchefstroom University and the University of North-West began in November 2002, with a series of meetings between the two councils of the Universities. Task teams were established to oversee the merger, and to consider necessary procedures and operations. The first tasks at this initial stage included a compatibility study, and addressing issues of human resources, finance, student administration, academic issues, commercialisation of the University and language. At this time curriculum issues were not tabled for attention. At the point of the legal merger – 1 January 2004, a joint senate committee and a joint council were set up. These structures were responsible for the

appointment of senior management posts for the new merged University. In the early part of 2004 a chancellor and a vice-chancellor for the University were appointed. In June 2005 the University adopted a Vision, Values and Mission Statement establishing goals for the new institution.

The structure of the new University consisted of an institutional management for the three campuses (with Mankwe as a satellite campus of Mafeking). These campuses were conceived as 'business units' of the University. On each campus a campus rector, vice-rector, and registrar were appointed. The institutional management, with the approval of the Department of Education, was located in Potchefstroom.

The new North-West University Statute was approved by the Department of Education and published in Government Gazette 27872 in August 2005. Up until then all structures had been interim, and a number of processes were slowed by the delay in the approval of the Statute. In February 2006, when this research was conducted, there were a number of crucial issues outstanding in the merger process, the most important ones being identified in the interviews and documentation as curriculum alignment between the different campuses, IT and the integration of systems across campuses, finance issues and a single budget and new requirements regarding admissions and fee structures.

One issue that would create enduring dissatisfaction in the establishing of all these structures was the neglect of channels for communication between academics and the new management. No structure was established that reported from the Joint Senate Committee to and from Faculties. Faculties were represented by their deans on the decision-making committees. Lack of communication around processes, and the idea that the merger took place at management level only, were themes that arose consistently in interviews at both the Mafeking and the Potchefstroom campuses. One academic argued that management were "building bridges without consulting the engineers [academics] to see if it would stay up" [I10].

## Decision-making power – “potchefication”

There was a strong perception, especially from staff in Mafeking, but also confirmed by several staff in Potchefstroom, that power lay in Potchefstroom. The reason for this from the Mafeking perspective had to do with the fact that Potchefstroom had vastly more resources and manpower. Further, in the period leading up to the merger systems and processes at the University of North-West had been stalled. A professor at Mafeking put it this way:

Potchefstroom seems to have the resources. It also has manpower. Here we have. At the time, what was interesting was, when the University was merging, at that time when there was talk of merger, a lot of things at this campus were stalled. They were at a standstill, promotions, all kinds of things that must be done, they said wait, wait, let's wait until the merger. Meanwhile Potchefstroom they were not waiting. They went ahead. Promoting their own people, they were advertising for posts. Here no advertisements. So then, one would say, the power would lie there where they get things [I10].

From 1998 until 2001 there had been no Vice Chancellor at the University of North-West. Although there had been a number of Acting Vice Chancellors, no appointment had been made. Due to the imminent merger, the university entered into an agreement with the National Department of Education that there would be a moratorium on new appointments at the institutions to merge. At Mafeking, a Vice Chancellor was appointed in 2001, but no middle management appointments were made. Thus since 1999 management at North-West University was extremely weak and there was no stable leadership in the institution. The campus had been suffering from student and staff unrest for years, and the University in general was in crisis. Portfolio Committee on Education (2004) visiting the merging institution in 2004 found allegations that the University was riven with disunity, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, unprofessional conduct, corruption, wastefulness, fraud, race and gender discrimination, insensitivity and neglect of duty (p. 3). In May 2004, the campus was closed indefinitely, owing to strikes by staff insisting on the withdrawal of the entire executive management. At the same time, students were striking over dissatisfaction with the SRC, and with the suspension and financial exclusion of certain students.

Potchefstroom on the other hand heeded no moratorium on staff appointments. They were in a stable position at the time of the merger, with a full complement of management positions filled. There was financial and political stability at the University.

What this meant was that when it came to producing new documents containing rules, protocols and procedures for the merger process, Potchefstroom was in a better position to produce these than Mafeking was. The perception from many in Mafeking was a 'potchefication' of their institution, where all directives, decisions and documents appeared to emanate from there.

Further, the seat of the new institutional management was in Potchefstroom, and the new management structure of the new University of the North West was Potchefstroom-heavy in terms of members. Although Council and Senate had more or less equal representation, the Institutional Management of the new University was drawn largely from the previous Potchefstroom management structure, including the Vice Chancellor, the Registrar, the Head of Finance and the Vice Rector. The previous vice chancellor of Mafeking was moved to Potchefstroom to serve as Deputy Vice Chancellor in Potchefstroom. Physically, the feeling at Mafeking was that the power was "over there. There is no power here" [I5].

The idea of potchefication then was widespread. It was felt that Potchefstroom had engineered a strategic take over rather than a merger, that it had brooked little disruption and compromise in its regular way of doing things, that the North-West Council had given in to almost all of its demands and that 'Potchefstroom ways' had been adopted. In the interviews, potchefication was also seen as a result of a feeling of superiority on the part of Potchefstroom actors, attributed to their somewhat better publications record and throughput of students. This superiority was inevitably linked to culture, race and deeply engrained histories in the two institutions that now confronted each other in an attempt to build a new institution on very firmly set, old foundations.

## Curriculum alignment and the HEQC

It would appear that by and large merging of the core business of the university – teaching and learning and research – had not been attended to at the time of the research. Each campus operated as a business unit, which the rector at the campus controlled vertically. On each campus student services related to instruction, examinations, qualifications, libraries, finances, sport and admissions were catered for separately on each site. What had just begun when this research was conducted was the process of horizontal integration, which entailed the co-ordination of programmes, quality assurance of qualifications, and the attempt to avoid unnecessary duplication.

The HEQC reviews appeared to be a major catalyst in the process of curriculum alignment. This was particularly so for Education, which had undergone an HEQC review of its Masters in Education (MEd) programme in 2005, and had further reviews of its programmes planned for 2006. The MEd review in 2005 had highlighted the tardiness of the merger in terms of programme alignment, with significant penalties for Potchefstroom especially. Where Mafeking was granted conditional accreditation of its programme, the MEd at Potchefstroom was not accredited. While there was disagreement as to the reasons why the Potchefstroom MEd was not accredited, many on at Potchefstroom attributed it to the fact that different programmes were offered at the two campuses. Consequently, committees were set up in order to align the PGCE and BEd prior to the HEQC review of these programmes in 2006.

### The form of merger: parallel operation, integration, total obliteration?

The predominant argument made by those interviewed then, was that the merger had up to that point focused far more on issues of structures, administration and control, and had ignored the substantive issues of curriculum and research. In particular in the area of research it was felt that the Mafeking campus could benefit from greater support, especially in growing from a teaching to a teaching and research institution.



Overwhelmingly the merger was understood as happening at the management level, and that the Mafeking and Potchefstroom campuses had run on parallel tracks up until the research with respect to the core business of the university – teaching and learning. The faculty structure at the different campuses is as follows:

#### **Mafeking**

Law  
Education Sciences  
Agriculture, Science and Technology  
Humanities and Social Sciences  
Commerce and Administration

#### **Potchefstroom**

Law  
Education Sciences  
Natural Sciences  
Arts  
Economic and management sciences  
Theology  
Engineering  
Health Sciences

Similar qualifications were on offer at both campuses in the Faculties of Law, Education, the natural sciences, arts and humanities faculties and faculties concerned with economic and management sciences, so that in general there was overlap of the courses supported in the different sites.

At the management level there was a strong sense at Mafeking of 'takeover' by Potchefstroom. This perception was not part of Vaal Triangle campus as it had long been a satellite of Potchefstroom. Further, Vaal's programmes had always been exactly the same as those offered at Potchefstroom. Vaal campus is structured into six academic schools, under a dean. The schools are Educational Sciences; Modelling Sciences; Languages; Behavioural Sciences; Economic Sciences; and Basic Sciences.

The merger had not had any direct impact on staffing at the campuses, nor on physical infrastructure. In fact, the parallel operation and the need for negotiation was a difficulty raised on a number of occasions by Potchefstroom staff members. Two senior academics (I13 and I24) at Potchefstroom expressed the view that it would have been easier had the merger between Potchefstroom and Mafeking been an incorporation, as "then we could have just told them to take over our programmes. Like Bloem and Qwa Qwa- they don't have to

negotiate new qualifications and standards" [I13]. At management level, there was no question that Potchefstroom was dominant. But in day-to-day activities the campuses operated largely on parallel tracks.

Possibly one of the most obvious explanations as to why the merger had taken so long, and had not filtered down to the core, everyday practices of academics, was the distance between campuses. It also appeared to be one of the most crucial and seemingly intractable obstacles to the creation of a unified university.

### Geographical distance

It was unlikely, in the view of almost all those interviewed, that the universities would ever be fully 'merged' or integrated in particular areas because of the geographical distance. It is 280 kilometres from Potchefstroom to Mafeking, approximately 70 kilometres from Potchefstroom to Vaal Triangle campus, and about 350 kilometres from Mafeking campus to Vaal Triangle campus. The Dean of Education at Potchefstroom explained that a meeting at Mafeking cost him five hours on the road, and R1000. It would simply not be financially possible to move staff on a regular basis. The only optimistic note raised by some staff members was in relation to the use of technology, including video conferencing, cell phone and email technology. None of these were in use across campuses at the time of the research, however. In terms of common admission systems and student access to different courses and campuses, as well as a centralized examinations and student marks systems, full merging seemed a long way off. At the time of writing this report, students on the Mafeking campus were striking in response to exclusions and to an attempt to raise fees to bring them in line with those of the Potchefstroom and Vaal campuses (Mail & Guardian, 16 March 2006).

## **Part 2: An overview of current institutional governance of teacher education**

### **The status of the Faculty of Education**

In 2004 there was a move at the newly merged North-West University to reduce the number of faculties, and Education was one that was identified for rationalisation. The arguments for reducing the number of faculties were around deficit in the university funds and duplication across campuses. In particular the new Vice Chancellor wanted to release funds in aid of the merger, and one way to achieve this was to reduce the cost of senior management (especially deans). Education had two Faculties (one at Potchefstroom and one at Mafeking), with two deans, offering the same qualifications. It was suggested that the Faculty of Education at Mafeking be incorporated into the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences was regarded in the words of the former education dean at Mafeking as a “sinking ship”, and the Education Faculty preferred to be merged with Potchefstroom rather than lose its name and status within the University, and be tied to the financial misfortunes of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2004 the Dean of Education at Mafeking was ‘relieved’ of his post, and the Vice chancellor filled the post with the former vice rector of the Potchefstroom College of Education. Becoming the only white male in a completely black faculty, the Acting Dean from Potchefstroom, gave a similar explanation as to why the Faculty hadn’t joined Humanities and Social Science, but presented the reasons in racial rather than financial terms: “The lecturers decided no they would rather be part of Potch, because the black people they don’t want to be going to another black faculty” [I24].

Further, this acting dean made the recommendation that Education at Mafeking not lose its faculty status, due to its size and also due to the revenue it generated, in particular through INSET programmes. In 2005 the income of the Faculty at Mafeking was R38 million, and expenses R18 million. “If a faculty can make a profit of twenty million then I think it can

carry on. So I think that it will carry on as a Faculty with three schools and three directors” [I24].

So the current organisation of the Faculty of Education at North-West University is in fact two faculties (at Potchefstroom and Mafeking) with two deans and a school at Vaal Triangle Campus with a Director. The discussion of the status of education and the organisation of initial teacher education within the institution will therefore address the different campuses separately, and the focus will be on Mafeking and Potchefstroom.

### Potchefstroom campus

It became clear through the interviews that the faculty status of Education at Potchefstroom had never been threatened. Education was one of the oldest faculties, which also had the largest number of students and generated the most revenue in the University. The Dean at Potchefstroom explained that Education cross-subsidizes with 65% of its income; that is, of the R100 million income the Faculty generates, R65 million was in the previous year distributed across the University.

The Education Faculty, however, occupied a lower status position within the university. A number of interpretations for this lower status were given. One was the lower subsidy given Education students by the Department of Education. The other was the not uncommon notion that the work of educationalists is not real academic work: The Dean remarked “The university thinks education is not university-like. They are not really academics” [I12]. Another academic pointed to the fact that the students entering education were generally low school achievers with minimal points on the University admission criteria.

The effect of the incorporation of the Potchefstroom College of Education on the status of the Faculty in relation to the research emphasis was raised earlier. Further, a number of interviewees referred to a particular culture that had resulted from the incorporation. The Director of the School of Under-graduate Studies spoke about this in relation to the expertise of the former college staff: “Many of the staff members didn’t have advanced degrees. Some

of them only their initial degrees, some of them not even at that time a BEd or honours degree. One could ask on what basis were they appointed? On what grounds? We know that they had sport and cultural expertise, but" [I13].

The head of Post-graduate studies pointed out that the status of the Faculty dropped after incorporation, arguing that in part the culture of the College was antithetical to the University culture:

If you know the Afrikaans culture, one of the legacies, many of these students still call us oom and tannie, they say they are doing professional training, but many of the other faculty members question the professionalism in oom and tannie. In English culture you would never call your lecturer uncle or aunt [I14].

The same person also pointed out the differences in culture in relation to how authority was regarded and negotiation took place:

The old TED, that was how the teacher colleges were structured. When we moved over to this campus, they thought these university members had very bad manners because they questioned the dean. The dean will tell us something or expect us to do something, and if we differed we would tell him and get into arguments. They would sit still and only listen, and afterwards they would come to us and say 'how can you do that, that is the dean'? At that time they didn't even call him the dean, they called him the rector of the faculty because he had been the rector of the college. Don't question the rector. Can't you behave yourself? You never questioned the director. We once had a meeting with the director, and they would sit still and never say a word, except when he asked them do you agree with what I say? Yes [I14].

So although the Faculty of Education at Potchefstroom is very likely to remain, its status has clearly been compromised in the eyes of many due to institutional restructuring. This has been as a result of the College incorporation, however, and has remained largely unaffected by the merger.

## Mafeking Campus

As described above, the position of the Faculty of Education at the Mafeking campus at the time of the merger was more precarious. The Faculty had been wracked with a number of corruption and mismanagement cases, and in 2004 the Dean of the Faculty was relieved of

his post. At the time of the research a report had just been issued which reported on the investigation of four staff members for fraud and misuse of funds.

According to the Acting Dean of the Mafeking Faculty, and also some staff members at Mafeking, the mismanagement and fraud centred around:

- Registration fees collected and kept by staff members at one of the learning centres, which came to light when students demanded their results;
- Large sums of money from the Provincial Department of Education for NPDE teacher upgrading courses being misused;
- Huge inefficiencies in the faculty – one department had eighteen students and five staff members;
- Staff travelling to different learning centres and making unnecessary and/or false claims for travel and accommodation; and
- Unfair appointments being made, and part-time lecturers earning far in excess of full time staff.

The Acting Dean took over at Mafeking in October 2005. The department at Mafeking had recently been awarded an R80 million contract by the Department of Education for an ACE course. Further the Institutional Management was concerned at the time about the upcoming HEQC MEd review. The decision around who to appoint as the Acting Dean was taken unilaterally by the Vice Chancellor of North-West University. The incumbent became the only white member of the Faculty, and as a white, Afrikaans male was appointed without consultation with staff, and with very little notice.

The appointment of the Acting Dean from Potchefstroom caused conflict within the Faculty, but the objection was more about the placement of a Potchefstroom person in the Mafeking Faculty than the person himself. Staff at Mafeking were open about the state of chaos in the Faculty at that time, and the difficulty there would have been in making the appointment internally. One interviewee said of the new Acting Dean:

Some things that would take us two years to do would be done in weeks, the approval of budgets, programmes. He's done a lot of good to the faculty, and he's made it clear that he's not here permanently [I10].

There was also acknowledgement that the Acting Dean had access to funds and decision-makers and was able to make "things happen where before they wouldn't happen. He can get things for us" [I6]. However, the manner in which he was appointed, and the context in which the appointment was made (in particular, sensitivity around power relations between Potchefstroom and Mafeking) caused tensions within the Faculty.

The new Acting Dean's main tasks were to restructure the departments into schools and appoint directors; compile the requirements for the MEd review; extract a job description from each of the lecturers; and create a structure for research in the form of a Research Committee (the research output for the Mafeking campus' Faculty of Education had been nil in the previous year).

The Faculty at Mafeking took the same form as that of Potchefstroom – a dean and three schools with directors. The new Acting Dean made a strong argument for the retention of the Faculty at Mafeking, and it was a largely financial argument, reiterated in interviews with staff at Mafeking. Although staff at Mafeking felt unsupported from the institutional level, they too were aware of their financial importance in the University:

There is little support from management. We are just expected to implement their policies. They don't know what is going on in our faculty and they are negative about education. I don't know where that comes from. But we bring in revenue to sustain the whole campus. For example, we have just received R37 million from the national department for the NPDE. We didn't even get a third of this money [I8].

But the retention of the Faculty was also in line with the 'business unit model', and the idea of a multi-campus University. It would appear that the appointment of the Dean from Potchefstroom had been positive with respect to the functioning and status of the Faculty within the University. Council was at the time of the research, however, still to approve the university structures, and this would take place in March 2006.

## **Overarching structure and divisions**

Under the Acting Dean at Mafeking, the structure of the Faculties at Potchefstroom and at Mafeking became very similar. Mafeking's Faculty, with a Dean, was divided into three Schools each with a Director:

School for post-graduate studies (BEd Hons; MEd; PhD)

School for undergraduate studies (BEd; PGCE)

School for continuing education (ACE; NPDE)

This replaced the previous structure which was organised around the Departments of Planning and administration; Teaching and Curriculum; Adult Education; Foundations of Education; and Professional Studies.

New appointments were made for Directors of the schools, and at the time of the research there was a substantial amount of bitterness regarding the appointment process from two of the former Heads of Department who were not made Directors of Schools, and were no longer in management posts.

The Potchefstroom structure also consisted of three schools, but also had three additional cross cutting divisions, which were subject-based. The schools, which consisted of a management and administration section, were:

School of pre-service education (College of Education) (BEd; PGCE)

School of in-service education (ACE; NPDE)

School of postgraduate studies (BEd Hons; MEd; PhD)

The cross-cutting subject divisions were Natural Sciences and Mathematics; Human and Social Sciences; and Education, and together with the schools created a matrix. All staff belonged to a school, but also belonged to a subject area. The Dean's rationale for the matrix was to provide him with a form of decentralized management. He claimed he was able thus



to delegate and collect information efficiently. He acknowledged that some of the staff did not understand the matrix and were resistant to it.

This was an issue taken up by staff in a number of interviews. One staff member claimed that it was a way of creating more management posts so that old College staff could maintain their salary levels at incorporation. Another saw it as confusing and overly bureaucratic, so that line functions were split: "I have to ask multiple people for the same thing, it [the structure] is clumsy and you get shunted around. It has also doubled the admin required of us" [I18]. One Professor of Education Law saw the management in general as overly bureaucratic, which he attributed to the Dean's former designation as Rector of the College:

It has moved towards a bureaucratic, school-driven organisation. It is like a school in its organisation. There is no space be left alone, space to be creative. Now there is constantly looking over your shoulder from the bureaucratic manager style from the College [I15].

The subject-based organisation could be interpreted as an attempt to integrate staff from the College and University. Through the interviews it became clear that the School of Post-graduate studies was populated by former University staff, the School for Pre-service Education was composed wholly of former College staff, and the School for In-service Education is largely made up of a new staff component hired largely in 2003 to deal with the increasing number of INSET programmes being offered. According to staff, the subject-based organisation had not softened these divisions

## The growth of INSET

INSET programmes had become increasingly significant with respect to teacher education in the Faculty at Potchefstroom, referred to as 'off campus' teacher education. INSET had also become an increasingly important component of teacher education at Mafeking campus. The campuses offered a total of sixteen ACE specializations and twenty NPDE specializations.

Potchefstroom had 32 learning centres throughout the country (in six provinces: North West, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Free State and Western Cape). At each of these centres there were twelve facilitators and a centre co-ordinator. These off-campus staff (240 in number) were all accredited by the University but had no direct involvement with the Faculty. They were trained by junior lecturers at the University. The off-campus learning centres were all concerned with teacher upgrading (especially through the NPDE, but also the ACE). In 2006, 18 000 teachers were being trained through these Potchefstroom INSET structures. Student-lecturer contact time was minimal, with the NPDE offering three contact sessions per semester, and a combination of fax, email and mobile phone messaging systems for student support.

Mafeking's INSET programmes had largely been run on campus, but they were progressively expanding their off-campus courses. They had 'learning centres' at Mankwe, Kuruman, Khanyisa, Taung, and Lichtenberg. The former dean at Mafeking qualified the shift in emphasis:

Like I have said, there is an emphasis on in-service. I think if we could have good programmes for the pre-service, and the support for pre-service. Fine. But otherwise I can see that the pre-service is going to die [17].

There was also a significant amount of funding for INSET flowing to all campuses from both provincial and national departments of education.

Van der Walt et al (2002) argue that the focus on distance programmes is part of a more general trend, especially amongst Afrikaans-speaking Universities. Whereas both WITS and UCT have begun to focus on research and postgraduate student recruitment in their marketing strategies, "Afrikaans-speaking campuses have tended to focus upon massively increasing undergraduate student numbers by increasing access to vocational programmes through English-language teaching, part-time studies and distance learning" (Van der Walt et al, 2002:87). The authors cite the former Potchefstroom University's enrolments in distance education programmes rising 25 per cent from 2001 to 2002.

To summarise, at the time of the research, most aspects of the Faculties at Mafeking and Potchefstroom ran along parallel tracks. They had separate admissions, separate programmes and separate examinations. Their structure, with schools and directors was similar, and the process of aligning curricula was to begin. But in general the work of the campuses carried on as before. Much of the restructuring that had taken place at Mafeking had been facilitated by the Acting Dean from Potchefstroom.

## **Position of initial teacher education**

### **Student numbers**

Whereas student numbers in pre-service teacher education had steadily been declining at Mafeking and Mankwe, student numbers at Vaal Triangle and Potchefstroom had grown. For Vaal Triangle this was related to the closure of Sebokeng College of Education, and less so to the incorporation of Vista. Potchefstroom had recently managed to increase their numbers of PRESET students to 1500. When asked what accounted for these numbers, the responses varied.

The Dean claimed that it was largely due to a strong marketing drive on the part of the University, especially amongst former students, many of whom were principals in schools. A different claim by the Dean and also the Head of the School of Pre-service Education argued the issue in cultural terms: that in the Afrikaans culture teaching was still viable profession. A more cynical view came from another senior academic who argued that Afrikaans parents sent their children from very far away to be at an all-Afrikaans speaking campus<sup>1</sup>. It was also argued that teaching was still a viable option for low achieving students who had the resources to enter university, but not the aptitude for most courses of study. Finally, there was the view that, similar to other Universities, the PGCE in particular was used as a stepping stone to overseas work to pay off loans from other degrees.

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<sup>1</sup> Or, possibly, all White. In the prospectus for Potchefstroom campus for 2005, 250 photographs of students are shown in the booklet. Of these 24 (less than 10%) are black. The group photos of lecture theatres and campus shots are all white, and the photos for the health sciences include only white students.

For Mafeking student numbers had been declining seriously, and a number of staff expressed concern that their posts were in jeopardy. Several staff mentioned a significant reliance on Botswana students. In the 2005 PGCE class only five of the eighty students were South African. However, the number of Botswana students had recently declined substantially, and the reason was largely attributed to campus unrest and a decline in the quality of offerings. One professor at Mafeking explained:

In the de-emphasising of the training of teachers the numbers dropped from thousands to hundreds. Fortunately for us we got a booster from Botswana. Students were coming from there. But I think, I hesitate to say it, but I have a feeling that the merger came at a point when the student numbers from Botswana were very big. And because of the internal problems we were experiencing I don't think we handled them as excellently as we would have. Remember those were the days when students were running, I mean strikes about these little little things... and this impacted on the government [of Botswana] decided no no those students are not studying they are going on strike every time. So the department of education reduced the number of students coming here [110].

At the time of the research the increasing emphasis on INSET courses was reflected in the student numbers at all campuses, as is shown in the table below.

**Table 2: Student numbers at the four NWU campuses, 2005**

	<b>Mafeking</b>	<b>Mankwe</b>	<b>Potchefstroom</b>	<b>Vaal Triangle</b>
BEd	30	20		500
PGCE	80	5		100
ACE	400	52		250
NPDE	300	430		200
BEd Hons	80	20		140
MEd	60			68
PhD	20			32

At the time of the research, staff numbers at the different campuses concerned with different areas of work, are reflected below:

**Table 3: Staff numbers at the four NWU campuses, 2005**

	<b>Mafeking</b>	<b>Mankwe</b>	<b>Potchefstroom</b>	<b>Vaal Triangle</b>
PRESET				
INSET	20		24	
POST GRAD				
TOTAL	25		81*	

\*Not including part-time staff, which total 60. Including PT staff 141

## Initial teacher education organisation

### *The structure of initial teacher education*

At Potchefstroom initial teacher education was undertaken in the School of Pre-service Education (still retaining the name of Potchefstroom College of Education) offering the BEd and PGCE qualifications. Teaching on these programmes was undertaken solely by former College staff<sup>2</sup>.

At Mafeking, the School of Undergraduate Studies offered the BEd and PGCE initial teacher training programmes. The PGCE was a post-graduate qualification even though it was located in this School. The course had been taught at both the Mafeking and Mankwe campuses up until 2006, and would continue only at Mafeking in the future.

Up until 2006, the BEd at Potchefstroom and Mafeking had been organised slightly differently, especially with respect to school-based training, and content (method) courses. As set out above, the former University of the North-West had its content courses taught by other faculties, and had extensive school-based training (teaching practice). Potchefstroom on the other hand, taught content or method courses through specifically appointed staff within the Faculty (which they termed an 'integrated model').

Mafeking was however abandoning their model of the teaching of content courses through other Faculties. One reason was difficulties with students missing lectures when doing teaching practice. Other faculties were also reluctant to accommodate education students. One professor at Mafeking described it as the other faculties forcing Education to engage in "permission-seeking, pushing us away from our old structure" [I10].

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<sup>2</sup> One of the problems of this organisation was pointed out by the director of the School of Post-graduate studies. There was a big gap between the contents of the BEd course and its expectations and that of the contents and approach in the BEd Honours. He argued that this was related to the incorporation and the teaching of the BEd by former College staff. Students' academic skills were undeveloped, they had very low reading ability, and no familiarity with research when they entered the BEd Honours.

There were also claims that students were overloaded by having to do full courses in other faculties. As raised earlier, the model was originally conceived under the UniBo structure, where the Departments of Human and Social Science and Natural Sciences fell under the Faculty of Education. After restructuring, these Faculties' priorities extended beyond Education students.

### *Aligning the curricula of the merged institutions*

In order to align the programmes across the four campuses, a number of committees had been established. At the level of management, committees had been set up to oversee the alignment of programmes between campuses, facilitate working together, and avoid unnecessary duplication across campuses. There were three management committees, for INSET, PRESET and Post-graduate Education. The heads of the schools of each of these divisions from each campus comprised the management committees.

Separate programme committees had also been established for the alignment of the curricula for specific programmes, consisting of two members from each campus. At the time of the research the BEd, PGCE and ACE were being aligned in preparation for the HEQC review, and each campus was given the responsibility of co-ordinating the process for one of the programmes – the BEd was co-ordinated by Potchefstroom, the PGCE was co-ordinated by Vaal, and the ACE by Mafeking. Asked why Mankwe wasn't part of this process, one of the senior lecturers from Potchefstroom replied: "We asked all the time about Mankwe, where are the people from Mankwe, but Mafeking just said no" [I22].

The process of alignment was described by one of the Potchefstroom co-ordinators of the BEd committee:

We had to develop the generic part of the programme and then the specialisms. It is a long process, but we think very positive. At first we tried to sell them our programme, then they tried to sell us theirs. Then we realised that that wouldn't work, and now we have one same. About 60 – 70% the same, and then with different electives [I22].

Actual documents from the process of alignment of the BEd were collected. These documents show how comparisons were constructed of the content of the modules, and how programmes were designed to obtain consistency as well as allow for variation through electives.

Again, cultural difference was indicated in comments made with respect to the process, and several examples of the “micro political struggles over whose content matters” (Jansen, 2004:16) arose in the interviews. A senior lecturer at Potchefstroom involved in the alignment of programmes described how allowing for electives in the design made it easier for the staff at the institutions to deal with differences: “They like ubuntu, but we are not really interested in that ... Sports and culture, that is very important to us” [I23].

Likewise, the Mafeking staff involved in the process referred to the Christian orientation of the Potchefstroom staff, and the language issue:

But I also found that when we looked at the BEd curriculum offered at Potch they even have modules on the Christian ideology. Now we are in the process of trying to align our programmes and there's very a lot of resistance about you know doing away with that approach as well as the module or the emphasis on Christian ideology, because they say 'it defines who we are' [I5].

Another comment came from a senior lecturer: “Potch and the christelike wat wat of theirs. We are concerned with the education of blacks for rural schools, especially Tswana speaking teachers. They are just concerned with Afrikaans there” [I9]. The overwhelming sense, however, from both sides, was that the process had been productive and fair, and the outcome representative of both their interests.

## **Part 3: Mediations of restructuring**

### **Understandings of teacher education restructuring and policy change**

In order to elicit the views of staff around teacher education restructuring and policy change, and to obtain a sense of their concerns and levels of awareness, all research subjects were asked the following question:

What do you think are the most significant forms of institutional restructuring and change that the teacher education system in South Africa has undergone since 1994?

The main issues raised by staff at Mafeking and Potchefstroom were different. At Mafeking, overwhelmingly the issue was that of declining student numbers, and its causes. This reflected the institutions' own concerns discussed above around declining student enrolments, and the threat of job losses. Comments also reflected a concern about the supply and demand of teachers more directly, in particular for rural areas. The decline in students entering teaching was attributed to a number of different causes. Several staff members referred, although generally indirectly, to processes in the mid 1990s, when new teacher:pupil ratios were established, and teacher supply and demand was reassessed. The processes are described succinctly by Pratt (2001):

One of the earlier resolutions of the ELRC, taken in 1996, related to pupil-teacher ratios (learner-educator ratios) of 40:1 in primary schools and 35:1 in secondary schools. Implementing this resolution helped destroy the widely-held belief of a huge shortage of teachers in South Africa. Provinces, with the exception of the Northern Province and Eastern Cape, for example, had to deal with substantial teacher surpluses. When planners and other decision-makers considered this new reality, taken together with the fact that most provincial education departments allocated 80 – 90% of annual budget to personnel expenditure, then rationalisation (or right-sizing) became imperative. Teachers at risk included under-qualified and unqualified personnel, and incumbents of temporary posts. Nationally, many thousands of teachers exited the system through being declared 'in excess', and qualifying for voluntary severance packages. Posts were abolished at schools to conform to new provisioning scales based on new ratios, workloads, and minimum contact-teaching hours. Teacher unemployment reared its head as staff establishments were trimmed or vacancies remained unfilled (Pratt, 2001:13).



Several interviewees referred to these processes as demoralizing for teachers, and compromising the status of profession: "Unemployment of teachers sends bad messages out to the community" [I3].

The decline in numbers of students entering teaching was coupled with the introduction of the BEd degree. One staff member indicated that the four-year degree was too costly for many students compared to the previous range of certificates and diplomas. The new degree was therefore associated with problems of recruiting more teachers into the profession.

Interviewees at Mafeking also mentioned in general the 'range of regulations' and the vast number of changes that had been introduced, but referred specifically to the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) which established minimum standards for teacher education, and SAQA, responsible for approving, registering and accrediting programmes. One staff member saw these curriculum policy processes in a positive light, as an opportunity to reconsider old programmes: "When we had to reformat programmes in line with the new legislation SAQA, then this made people rethink things in rewriting programmes" [I2].

Another senior member of staff related these processes to the potential for greater quality in the system. Responding to the same question introduced earlier, he said:

The attempt to bring all institutions to look at teacher performance in terms of competences, in content and delivery. Since these regulations we have tried to structure in line with new policies. If all institutions do this we can say that we are training teachers for the world and the country. Before each institution was just doing their own thing [I10].

The issues raised at Potchefstroom were different, and were also divided. For former University staff, the central issue was college incorporations. Some of the implications of the college incorporation were raised above, in particular the appointment of underqualified staff who were resistant to and unfamiliar with research. Another senior staff member felt that teacher education had suffered in the process – "The college incorporations, this set teacher education back a few years. The colleges were dedicated to teacher training and when they were incorporated they lost focus" [I13]. Another professor raised the question of

whether former college staff would be able to make the transition “from an emphasis on professional development to academic and research-based training” [I14].

For former college staff incorporation was also a central issue, however, their concerns were around what had been lost. In particular the shift from practice to theory, “from the practical to the theoretical and philosophical” [I16] was a central preoccupation. A senior lecturer put it this way:

Twenty years ago we did academic training in the form of the HED, and it was a pain in the neck. We learnt a lot but we couldn't see the point for actual teaching. Now all those things are back. I learnt to be a proper teacher when I became a teacher trainer at college. Before I could speak and use academic terms but I was not prepared for the practice of teaching. This we have lost again practical preparation for the profession. This is lost. It's not that there shouldn't be an academic basis but the emphasis is too much on that [I16].

For more junior staff in the Faculty, particularly those who came into the Faculty in 2003, curriculum issues were dominant in their concerns, in particular the change to an outcomes-based system. This included restructuring programmes in line with OBE and taking account of changes in forms of assessment [I19]. A junior lecturer conceived of the policy change as challenging:

We had to engage with policy in a new way. Actually read the outcomes. Policy before was something in a book on a shelf. These days there is a policy for everything, and you must read these policies [I20].

Other staff focused on the changes in methodology as a result of both policy change and incorporation. “The new methodology of OBE has had a big effect. OBE and FET has meant the retraining of teachers” [I19]. With the incorporation of the College into the University, “class size increased, there are fewer facilities less practical training. Especially time for classroom modelling in college was reduced” [I23].

Also raised at Potchefstroom was the introduction of the BEd degree, although the implications that were drawn focused on the greater level of difficulty of the degree and change of content, rather than the issue of student recruitment as at Mafeking.

Finally a number of College staff felt the loss of contact with students, and a change in the kind of relationship that they had had in the College. One lecturer expressed this in relation to policy changes, and a loss of 'influence' over the student:

Also with OBE there was a reduction in contact time, away from spoon feed to more learner-centred, co-responsibility for learning. And the norms and standards, and constitution, you have less chance to have impact on students. You have to concentrate on academics [I22].

To summarise, the concerns around teacher education and change focused mainly on the recruitment of students into teaching, curriculum policy change, and the changing nature of teacher education related to the college incorporations.

## **Gains and losses**

Staff were asked to identify what the major gains and losses for teacher education had been for them through the restructuring processes. Because of the enduring parallel operation of the two campuses, Mafeking and Potchefstroom struggled to address these questions in any depth. Some of the more comprehensive responses were made in relation to the incorporation of Potchefstroom College of Education into Potchefstroom University, and responses from staff involved in the alignment of the BEd.

Several staff at Mafeking and Potchefstroom actually involved in curriculum alignment made positive comments regarding the merger. One of the senior academics at Mafeking highlighted the role of the HEQC in making the potential gains of the merger evident:

The HEQC review will work to the advantage of both campuses, because we will have to agree with respect to our programmes. And where we disagree this will have to be properly tabled. Our approach is different. We have been in curriculum development for years. This is very different to Potchefstroom. We are small, but we have skills [I7].

A senior academic at Mafeking concurred, "there is an exposure to expertise. It's opening the eyes of everyone. We have the chance to compare, and to ask are we were we doing the right thing" [I10].

Similar sentiments were expressed at Potchefstroom by the Head of the School of Undergraduate Education: "We get to look more critically at our programmes. For example the Mafeking BEd was excellent. I don't know how they implement it but it is very good on paper" [I13].

With respect to the College incorporation, and the gains experienced there, there was general agreement at Potchefstroom that the quality of teacher training had improved since Potchefstroom College was incorporated. One lecturer attributed this to the University acting as a quality assessor.

Some of the former College staff were positive about a new emphasis on research and contact with university staff - "We are more aware and directed towards this. And students benefit as well. There was no emphasis in the past on research, and now we can be better at equipping them better to be life long learners" [I22].

Finally, with respect to gains, an important aspect of the merger for Potchefstroom was greater legitimacy for the former Potchefstroom University. This was highlighted by the Dean at Potchefstroom:

We are one university. We were Afrikaans, and Christian and white. Now we are more black, and more acceptable to the world out there. It is good to work with others out there, and there are some similarities. They also start their meetings with a prayer like we do [I25].

Overwhelmingly, however, most of the other interviewees were either negative regarding the merger, or had not experienced the effects. In response to the question above, one senior lecturer at Mafeking replied "No gains. I can't think of any. Potch are there alone, we are alone" [I5].

In terms of losses more generally both Mafeking and Potchefstroom expressed a loss of independence. For Mafeking this was tied up with the sense that they were "instructed to do things now" [I6] by Potchefstroom. From the Potchefstroom side, it was the loss of independence in particular to assert their language and religion, and to retain their programmes as they were. The comment cited earlier about a take-over being preferable

(likened to University of the Free State and Qwa Qwa) is telling in this regard. The Dean at Potchefstroom repeatedly asserted that the institution at Potchefstroom was “presently disadvantaged”, referring to the enormous barriers that faced the different campuses - the geographical distance, different cultures, language, and the Christian orientation which he felt was being compromised [I12].

Some of the other losses experienced by former College staff at Potchefstroom have been raised, including the loss of ‘practical experiential learning for trainer teachers’ [I22]. The lessening of contact time, and the shortening of school-based teaching practice to fit in with the university timetable were also experienced as significant losses by the former College staff.

## **Points of synergy and conflict and the mediation of change**

### **Race and Culture**

When considering a merger between a former ‘homeland’ university and a White Afrikaans university one would expect the issues of race, culture and language to be key points of tension and conflict. These issues were raised constantly throughout the interviews, and were expressed in different ways. A positive view on the differences between the institutions was rare. In particular at Mafeking, most interviewees’ discourse was suffused with mistrust, suspicion and feelings of irreconcilable difference. As the head of post-graduate studies at Mafeking baldly put it, “We are black here and they are white over there. This is the main problem” [I14]. Another professor put it this way: “It’s a white institution merging with a black institution. People think it will be hard to find common ground, it will be a master-servant relationship” [I10], and again, the Director of the School of Undergraduate studies questioned, “How do you take two institutions with completely different ideologies in almost everything and make them merge?” [I5].

The contrast was often drawn between a participatory style of decision-making at Mafeking and a managerial approach at Potchefstroom. The leadership style at Potchefstroom was described by Mafeking staff as ‘authoritarian’, “They give instructions. We have a culture of

negotiation" [I5]. The differences were also drawn along ideological - educational lines, evoking the old Christian National Education / People's Education dichotomy:

"Potch comes from that background of Christian national education and here it has been more People's university meaning that people themselves sacrificed to build this university and you would expect it to be more useful to them" [I6].

Again, a professor at Mafeking found the Christian ideology, and the superiority of Potchefstroom difficult to deal with.

Potch clings to the Christian ideology. What I have found is that we really have to fight for everything if we really want to be heard. Because you know the Potch approach is we've been there for a hundred and something years whereas we have been in existence for less, and the assumption that they make is that they know more or know better. And even if it is on the other hand even though it is not really obvious there is the undercurrent of the big boss kind of attitude. And the racial undertones are there [I5].

### Potchefstroom dominance

The dominance of Potchefstroom in the process, discussed at length earlier, was also resented among staff at Mafeking. Several reported to feeling imposed upon, feeling "at the fringe". Initially Mafeking staff were required to travel to Potchefstroom for every meeting, although this seemed to be changing. A senior lecturer at Mafeking put it this way:

They wanted to impose their ideas, structure, exams, admissions, they wanted to force us into humanities. We resisted. There was conflict. They had a very negative attitude to us. Even by our own university administration [I6].

The notion of 'potchefication' was also raised frequently. There was a perceived dominance in terms of the adoption of policies, for example the retirement age and new admission policies. One professor recalled receiving guidelines for post-graduate students which originated from discussions between Potchefstroom and Vaal. He did acknowledge that although the incident represented how decision-making processes often began, and that negotiations did often occur further down the line.

Staff at Potchefstroom were more positive about interactions, and less aware of conflict. Again, in particular those who were involved in the micro processes of curriculum alignment found themselves pleasantly surprised by the collaboration. One senior lecturer described the process as follows:

... it is a very positive process, the sharing is positive. And we have each come out with about 80% of our original programmes in tact. There were some that were unhappy about the losses, but it is a merger after all, you are going to lose some things [I23].

And another lecturer said

We are talking about the same concern – education. We have similar views on education. I was surprised by the people from Mafeking. They are curriculum experts, and they are knowledgeable [I13].

However, a very different view is expressed from the Mafeking side. A persistent feeling was one of being under the direction of Potchefstroom, the control often being implicit:

At the end of the day, the overall decision, they say, is taken at the institutional level and where is the institutional level? It is at Potchefstroom campus, so indirectly we are being run by Potchefstroom. It has an overall impact on what we do.

This state of affairs has produced a high level of mistrust and suspicion regarding decisions and actions by Potchefstroom staff. An example comes from the Director of the Undergraduate School at Mafeking:

There seems to have been some kind of deal struck between the Potch management and the DOE. Theuns [the Vice Chancellor] said that the kind of merger we expect won't happen until after five years. When he was asked how could he be so sure, he said just ask Asmal. The national department had a policy of non-involvement, but this makes you wonder about their involvement. Potch is very supported by the national department [I18].

Much of this can be attributed to a lack of communication to staff at Mafeking about processes and decisions taken. They did not feel consulted or properly briefed. An obvious outcome of this was the number of different accounts of events, and rumours, and suspicions that circulated. The interviews were characterised by several people offering

different versions of the same event, contestation around meanings and understandings, and some implausible theories and explanations for events.

## Internal conflict

There was also a measure of conflict internal to the campuses. The College / University split at Potchefstroom has been dealt with in detail above. At Mafeking, there was no conflict between the Faculty and Mankwe, but rather a measure of internal division with respect to the distinction between foreigners and South Africans. Seven of the 28 staff members in the Education Faculty are foreign (from Lesotho, Zambia, Ghana, Zimbabwe). The high number of foreign academics is a University-wide phenomenon; in 1995, 32% of the staff at the University were expatriates (EPU, UWC, 1996). The complex reasons for the number of expatriate staff at the University are presented by Paterson et al (1998), and include, initially at least, the then leader of the homeland, Lucas Mangope's notion of Bophuthatswana as "A Place for All" (see Mangope, 1978, cited in Paterson et al, 1998).

But it was also a place for disaffected African academics, and offered attractive financial incentives for some. The point for the Faculty of Education in 2006, and in relation to teacher education, was that questions continued to arise relating to the knowledge base of expatriates, given their nationality, and the legitimacy of their positions on curriculum and other issues was called into question. A Ghanaian sociologist who worked at the institution from 1990 to 1995 confirmed that there was deep xenophobia, despite the sentiment behind the setting up of opportunities for foreigners to work at the University.

Points of synergy raised by the interviewees revolved around the potential for greater efficiency, and for wider offerings for students. These possibilities had not, however, been realised at the particular point in the merger process at which the research was conducted. The comments from staff were predominantly negative, and the possible effects of the merger on teacher education in their view remained in the realm of the hypothetical. That is, apart from some of those involved in the alignment of the BEd, which was in process.



## Challenges for teacher education

Interviewees were asked what in their opinion were the major challenges for teacher education. There were two main responses. From Mafeking and more junior staff at Potchefstroom, the responses focused on the challenge of recruiting students into teaching, and accurately predicting the supply and demand of teachers. Staff believed that they would be more able to accurately plan and focus their programmes if they had a clear idea of how many teachers were required, and in what subject areas, at which levels. Other interviewees also referred to the need to invigorate an interest in teaching as a career, and encourage more people to want to enter teaching.

The other response came from a few academics at Potchefstroom, who considered the upgrading of staff qualifications to be crucial for the adequate training of teachers. It was clear that they had former College staff in mind. For this they believed that post-graduate teachers needed resources and time to do their work.

## The personal and professional lives of teacher educators

Interviewees were also asked how the restructuring had affected their personal and professional lives as teacher educators. There was an overwhelming sense from all those interviewed, apart from senior management, that academics felt disempowered by the restructuring processes. On the one hand, there was a sense that the merging happened 'at the top' and that everything at the bottom had stayed the same. On the other hand, there was also the perception that decisions were taken at a higher level which then had to be implemented lower down. One Mafeking staff member said "We are the detail, we are not part of policy" [13]. And another senior lecturer put it this way:

I feel my professional integrity has been eroded, now I am just told what will happen, there is no discussion. It reminds me of my own teacher training in Pretoria, we had *opdrag*, 'instruction from above' [19].

At Potchefstroom, as mentioned above, former University staff members felt that their professional lives had changed as a result of their isolation with the move to the College

campus. They felt the loss of interaction with staff from other faculties, and a feeling of belonging to the broader University.

The professional lives of the former College staff had also shifted – as was raised above the shift from teacher to researcher was an enormous challenge for many, and one which was resisted on the basis of deep-seated professional identities forged in the practice-oriented College.

The uncertainty of change, and having to deal with constant change was also something that interviewees referred to often. Especially at Potchefstroom, a number of staff found the relentless changes exhausting: “We were just getting used to the College merger and then we were hit with the University merger. It is tiring to have so many things to do with all the merging” [I18].

### **The role of the provincial and national education departments**

It was notable in the interviews that questions around the role of the national and provincial departments of education in the mediation of the restructuring appeared to be relatively invisible, certainly to those staff lower down in the University hierarchy. At the senior management level, at Mafeking the feeling was that the Department of Education had favoured Potchefstroom. The Portfolio Committee (2004) report refers to submissions from the staff association in 2004, and the response from the Vice Chancellor:

the Vice Chancellor responded that the overriding and recurring assumption in the Staff Association Document is that the merger is of a federal nature, allowing the Potchefstroom campus to continue as before, while leaving the Mafeking campus to flounder, and all of this while the Council is not performing its oversight function.

The Vice Chancellor argued that these pervasive allegations were not supported with evidence or supporting material, nonetheless it was an enduring feeling at Mafeking that the Department of Education had favoured Potchefstroom in the merger.

At Potchefstroom no strong opinions were made regarding the Department of Education, and for most staff members there had been very little direct contact between them and the provincial and national departments.

## **Conclusion**

The mediations of restructuring were characterised by a lack of communication, in particular between University management and University staff. This appeared to generate a substantial amount of suspicion and uncertainty, especially at Mafeking where staff felt marginalized in the process and excluded from decisions.

At the time of the research, stereotypes were asserted rather than challenged. In general, Potchefstroom associated the black campus of Mafeking with incompetence, and Mafeking characterised Potchefstroom as white-Afrikaans and authoritarian. Evocations of the 'master-servant' relationship showed how established, racialized dichotomies had remained in tact.

## **Part 4: Impact on the core business of teacher education**

It is clear from the discussion above that the integration of initial teacher education programmes and the alignment of the curriculum on offer at the different campuses had only just begun. However, similar structures and programme offerings had already been established in the different faculties. Similarities in the actual format of the initial teacher education programmes were attributed to changes that had already been made in line with the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), and the HEQC had clearly become a central driver in further alignment.

But there were also differences between the faculties, and these differences can be traced back to the historical development of Education within the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, and the University of Bophuthatswana. Gilmour et al (1995) describe the general approach at Potchefstroom as follows:

... a pedagogical-didactical phenomenon in order to describe and explain the teaching and learning acts. The theoretical framework therefore forms the basic accountable structures and eventually the basis in terms of which the teacher accounts for his practice. The norms and values basic to education are interpreted in terms of Christian precepts ... (p. 30)

At Potchefstroom there was still a strong emphasis placed on 'didactics'. Fundamental pedagogics was understood as something of the past by the majority of staff, however the Christian ideological underpinnings were sustained through 2005. A comparison of the mission statements from the calendars from the two campuses in that year (2005) is instructive. That of Potchefstroom (2005) reads:

The teaching policy of the Faculty of Education Sciences is based on the founding principles of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education as stated in the mission statement of the University. According to this statement teaching is based on the foundation of and obedience to the Bible as the Word of God, which contains guidelines for the entire life (p.1).

Mafeking campus' calendar for 2005 has a mission statement which reads:

The Faculty of Education aims to utilise available expertise to contribute towards the development of human resources that meet the needs and challenges of pre-university education in South Africa. The main thrust of the teaching and research in the Faculty focuses on the production of high quality teachers, curriculum developers, educational planners, administrators, counsellors and researchers. (p. 5 calendar)

It is clear how Mafeking's mission statement faced outwards – towards the education system. Although most historically black universities that were established in the 1960s after the University Extension Act of 1959 inherited fundamental pedagogics from an early association with UNISA (Gilmour et al, 1995), UniBo was established in the early 1980s, under different conditions. In 1985 the institution undertook to commit itself to research that would "not be encumbered by restrictive and ideological precepts" (ibid., p. 32).

As mentioned earlier, the University was initially populated by many expatriates, in particular academics from England, who brought with them progressive approaches and a liberal ideology. Although there was debate at the time as to whether 'homeland' institutions should be boycotted, there was a strong argument from liberals, both within and outside the country, that internal engagement was more effective (Manson, 1988, and I26).

The curriculum was thus shaped by both an institutional stance and by a range of individuals who sought to establish a liberal conception of education. Courses such as Special English and Development Studies sought explicitly to engender a culture of democratic participation and community development. Community service and relationships were a central feature of the University curriculum.

The six colleges of education in Bophuthatswana also had a measure of academic autonomy through their link to UniBo, which enabled them to structure their curricula free from the constraints of the DET (Jaff et al, 1996: 80). Through UniBo's Institute of Education, college courses and examinations were moderated and accredited.

More recently, the mission statement for education provided on the website of the North-West University for education read as follows:

**Aims and Objectives**

- To prepare graduate teachers for secondary schools in the Republic of South Africa and the Southern African region by offering both undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study.
- To develop new courses to meet the changing education needs of RSA with special reference to innovations such as Outcomes-Based Education.
- To prepare non-graduate specialist teachers for primary and secondary schools and where specific areas of needs are identified.
- To assist in the preparation and upgrading of teacher educators through specialised programmes in Education e.g. the teaching of Maths, Science, Technology and Commerce Education.
- To provide in-service education for teachers at all levels.
- To promote, co-ordinate and conduct research into educational problems at all levels through the prescribed courses and programmes offered by the Faculty.
- To shift emphasis to the provision of postgraduate training in various areas of Education.
- To advance the knowledge in the discipline of Education by conducting research.
- To provide programmes in continuing Education and Community Development.
- To provide programmes in literacy for organisational skills in effective school governance and vocational co-operation.

The attempt to introduce a politically and ideologically neutral language is clear from this rewording of the mission for the Faculty of Education.

## Conclusion

The report shows the complex processes of institutional restructuring that have resulted in the establishment of North-West University. In particular, in relation to teacher education, this restructuring has entailed a number of college incorporations, internal restructuring, and a merger. The merger is still in process, and at the time of the research many issues remained outstanding in creating a unified organisation.

Although the actual policies are not described in this particular report, the changes in the institution are framed by macro policy processes – including college incorporations, university mergers, curriculum change and the HEQC reviews. These macro processes have significantly impacted on the day-to-day work and lives of teacher educators in the institution. Staff at all the institutions describe how policy processes have resulted in the reconsideration of approaches to teacher education (the practice / theory divide); the emphasis of programmes offered (pre-service versus in-service); the alignment of programmes with others (following the Norms and Standards and then the HEQC reviews); and the content of the curriculum and structure of the courses for initial teacher training.

Interviews with 26 education staff members at the different campuses indicated a great deal of uncertainty, dissatisfaction, mistrust and threat related to the processes of restructuring in relation to their day-to-day work. At the organisational level, there was in general pessimism regarding the possibilities for a successful merger between Mafeking, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle. These difficulties were attributed to language, culture and racial differences between the campuses, but also to the distance between campuses and imbalances in power. Overwhelmingly, respondents felt that in the process of merging there had been a denial of the histories and identities of the institutions and their staff.

There were positive signs from those involved in the micro processes of curriculum restructuring that collaboration was possible. However, these processes at the time involved paper work, largely to satisfy the requirements of the HEQC. It remains to be seen whether

these joint programmes translate into greater collaboration between the campuses, or whether the 'federal' system will remain in tact and prove the most fruitful way forward for teacher education at the University.

The interim structures established during the course of the merger, such as Faculties and Schools on the campuses, were still to be finalised at the time of the research. There was no question that across all campuses, staff were struggling with their research output. Whereas a research culture had long been absent from Mafeking, Potchefstroom claimed that their research had been 'set back' by College incorporations. Whatever the case, an increasing emphasis on INSET, and a lack of clear strategies and structures for the support of research, would appear to make the improvement in research output a long-term goal.

It is difficult at this point in the process to draw strong conclusions about the effect of the restructuring on teacher education. The structures and processes are as yet still too unstable. It would seem, however, that much time and energy will be needed to deal with the extent of change, and to mitigate some of the negative outcomes resulting from how that change has been mediated.

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