

**Environmental Factors Influencing the  
Strategic Planning of Academic Libraries:  
A Comparative Case Study of the  
Universities of Fort Hare and Port  
Elizabeth Libraries.**

**A minor Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree  
of Masters in Library Science at the School of Librarianship, Faculty  
of Education, University of Cape Town**

BY

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

**PROF. P.G. UNDERWOOD.**

DECEMBER 1998

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## DECLARATION

I, James Kwadwo Amoah, hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work with the exception of such quotations or references, which have been attributed to their authors or sources.

Signed Signed by candidate

Dated at Alice, this 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1998

## ABSTRACT

Academic libraries play an important role in academic institutions by supporting teaching, research and learning processes. However, it does seem that sustainability of these vital information centres is increasingly below their utility value leading to poor information services. Factors such as increase in student numbers, budget cuts, dependency on foreign sources and falling exchange rates affect acquisitions, quantity and quality of information services. Strategic planning, that is widely propagated in business, is being increasingly considered by academic libraries to offer opportunities for proactive planning that can support uncertainties arising from internal and external environments.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate and analyze the environmental factors that may affect an academic library's strategic planning. The relevant literature on strategic planning, not only in libraries but also in the wider field of management has been reviewed. The research traces the origins of strategic planning from military science through the corporate world and to non-profit organizations like academic libraries.

The questionnaire and interview methods as well as discussions were employed in the research. The scope of the investigation is limited to two university libraries, one, historically-disadvantaged and the other, relatively advantaged.

Though the author avoided generalization because the investigation is based on only two academic libraries he arrived at the conclusion that the following are the main environmental factors that may influence the strategic planning of academic libraries in South Africa:

- government policy
- economics
- society
- technology

- funding
- staffing
- facilities
- users

Some of the major recommendations are:

- Strategic planning should be flexible and only achievable goals should be set.
- The involvement of all staff members in strategic planning is essential to avoid resentment and to create a sense of belongingness.
- The library should foster close relationship between it and the academic departments it serves in order to achieve the goals set up in its strategic plan.
- Keeping of records is very important in strategic planning.
- For resource sharing and cooperation to succeed libraries need to discuss each others strategic plans.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to record my indebtedness, grateful thanks and sincere appreciation to the following people who have contributed their time, patience and knowledge towards my dissertation.

- ♥ Professor Underwood, my supervisor, for his invaluable and unfailing support, encouragement, critical reviews and regular motivation throughout the preparation and writing of this dissertation.
- ♥ Mr. Namponya, the Deputy University librarian of UPE, for his valuable advice, perspective guidance and assistance, whenever I visited his institution to collect data and information.
- ♥ Grace, my beloved wife, for her superb and meticulous typing skills and for her moral support, encouragement, and understanding during the period of this study.
- ♥ Finally, I would like to acknowledge my debts to the authors of all published and unpublished writings I made references from, and all other people, who helped in diverse ways to make this work a reality.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my special “twins”, Grace and Hannah (my wife and daughter, respectively).

University of Cape Town

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### *1.1 Preface*

The principles of strategic planning have their roots directly or indirectly in military science. The term “strategic” comes from the Greek word “strategia” meaning generalship. It epitomises the traditional “armies which relied on their generals to see the long-term outcomes of present plans and actions, to see the composite structure for the war effort, to understand the various functions of the different branches of the military, and to focus the resources of the entire nation on key objectives at critical times”. (Hensley, 1992: 8). Generalship is of such importance that in most countries the president or head of state is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. In times of war the president has the mobilisation authority over both the public and the private sectors. According to Hensley (1992:8) generalship gives the president the power to subordinate all units within a common plan and to subordinate current activities for long-term common good. Left on their own, units will operate autonomously for individual benefits that will not assure the preservation and advancement of the nation as a whole.

From military science strategic planning found its way into the corporate world and later on, non-profit organisations such as libraries. Though traditional planning has been part of library management responsibility for a long time, the application of the concepts of strategic planning to library planning situations are relatively recent. The business world realised the importance of strategic planning in the 1960s as their operational activities became more and more complex and the necessity to survive in the rapidly changing needs

of society became paramount. Gradually non-profit organisations like the libraries and information services started to emulate the corporate world, by adopting strategic planning, in the 1980s.

The reasons why strategic planning has become common in libraries, especially in the 1990s, following its use in other organisations, are not far-fetched. After a period of relative stability in the internal structure of higher institutions world- wide we are now in an era of fundamental discontinuous change. Libraries in general, and academic libraries in particular, are now competing in an environment where many of the old certainties have been removed. The only certain factor in the library and information services world is change itself.

Just as the invention of the printing press in the 15th century changed the fabric of society, information technology, especially electronic communication, is reorganising contemporary society. In the academic sphere, change is occurring in organisation cultures, managerial academic structures, funding mechanism, accountability, student profiles, disciplinary boundaries, organisation of teaching and research. To survive in such a rapidly changing environment academic libraries must be business-like, hence the need for strategic planning.

The purposes of a strategic plan may be to accomplish the following:

- To bring the mission of the library, that is, its purpose and objectives to

focus

- To determine what the library can achieve, that is its goals
- To set forth the library's direction and priorities
- To show how the library will reach its goals, that is, the library's strategies
- To help in efficient allocation and use of the scarce resources - human, physical, financial and time
- To note critical issues and constraints

(Asantewa, 1992: 1; Corral, 1994: 4).

The potential benefits of undertaking strategic planning may be outlined as follows:

Strategic planning provides a rational response to uncertainty and prevents ad hoc and random decisions that narrow the choices for tomorrow. It helps the library administrators to assess their environments and provide alternatives for change. As Winstead and Tucker (1978: 542) rightly assert "strategic planning will not provide a perfect crystal ball or predict the future with accuracy nor prevent mistakes, but a strategic planning process will minimise the degree to which one is taken by surprise and will allow one to make decisions with greater confidence that the needs of the institution are being responded to".

Strategic planning's focus on issues such as institutional mission and goals, is beneficial to the library administrator. Without goals and plans, a rational indicator of effectiveness cannot be determined. Strategic planning provides a means to develop a better sense of direction for the library's future. Objectives can be derived which capitalise on strengths,

minimise weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and eliminate threats. (Moran, 1985: 290; McClure, 1978: 457).

Strategic planning is important as an aid to cost-effectiveness by establishing priorities for funding. The emphasis on identifying programmes with special advantages or opportunities and concentrating resources in these programmes could benefit the library. The strategic planning process recognises the fact that the library cannot do everything, therefore, it must allocate resources on a priority basis to those activities that lead to the effective accomplishment of goals and objectives. (McClure, 1978: 457).

Strategic planning may be used as a public relations tool. It enhances the standing of the library with its parent body, having demonstrated its grasp of strategic issues and stated its plans in relation to the perceived needs of the organisation. According to Rosser and Penrod (1994: 22) "it is believed that articulating an envisioned future for the institution and innovatively working to create it will improve the image of the library".

Encouraging the involvement of all the staff in strategic planning improves communication and feedback. This enhances working relations and team spirit, job satisfaction, improved morale and motivation of staff.

Though strategic planning has been hailed by many organisations as a good management tool to tackle the problems associated with the rapid changing environment, it is not

without problems and pitfalls.

Since strategic planning involves change, it is sometimes feared, because it may disturb the status quo, a threat to job security, or a change in the established way of doing things. There may be resentment from some quarters of the establishment, especially from staff members who do not want change. (Riggs, 1984: 9).

Strategic planning does not always produce the anticipated results. Lack of commitment, especially on the part of management, unforeseen circumstances and failure to make the necessary connections between the planning process and the reality of day-to-day operations may cause a strategic plan to flop. For strategic planning to succeed it needs the commitment of those who have to implement the decisions embodied in the plan, hence the necessity of involving everyone in the planning process. Strategic planning must be flexible in order to accommodate short-term crises. (Corrall, 1994:6).

Strategic planning can raise expectations within the library and among the users. The process itself does not create additional funding sources. For example, identifying about R5 million resource needs and receiving only R2 million may create disillusionment with the process. Therefore strategic planning needs to be related to realism. But still, it is important to dream and be ambitious.

Strategic planning is an ongoing process and as such time-consuming. It needs the attention and time of many individuals in the library. (Cline & Meringolo, 1991:218).

Some writers like Ida Vincent (1988:35-47) raise some serious concerns about the application of strategic planning in libraries. Vincent argues that a mismatch occurs between the prevailing “normative model” of strategic planning and the needs of libraries, “partly as a result of certain structural characteristics of libraries, in particular their status as small and relatively powerless units in larger organisations ---” like universities.

By using six cases as an example Vincent arrives at the conclusion that the “normative model” of strategic planning is deficient because it:

- Assumes a sufficiently stable environment in which chosen objectives will remain viable;
- Assumes that the organisation will have excess resources to devote to strategic initiatives;
- Requires a single, clearly articulated mission statement;
- Presents the planning process as a linear, logical progression of steps.

She suggests that because many libraries cannot abandon the notion of strategic planning since it is imposed from above, modifications to the “normative model “ is essential to enable “these libraries to turn an unavoidable necessity to greater positive advantage to them”. She therefore made the following proposals: incremental, bottom-up planning especially for small libraries which do not have sufficient resources and expertise to profitably engage in a system-wide planning exercise, flexibility leading to dealing with

dependency and uncertainty; acknowledgement of the importance of individual and group attitudes, motives and skills; planning should involve everybody instead of limiting itself to top management.

This work has its intellectual genesis in the writer's personal involvement, experiences and observation of the University of Fort Hare Library's first 'proper' strategic planning process, started in 1994. The aim of the research is to examine the internal and external environmental factors that have a bearing on the academic libraries' strategic planning processes, their direction and extent. It is hoped that the work will be of importance to academic libraries already undertaking strategic planning and those contemplating doing so.

### *1.2 Statement of the problem*

An important aspect of the managerial revolution for the past three decades has been the tremendous interest in strategic planning by all forms of enterprise - business, government, education etc., and libraries are no exception. Environmental factors, both internal and external, have a great influence on the planning strategy of these organisations.

A major concern of today's library administrator is the ability to cope with the turbulent and rapidly changing environment. The library's internal and external environments have generated much attention and many libraries are undertaking strategic planning to cope with these changes.

In the light of the preceding paragraphs and the research topic, one could discern one main research question and four subsidiary ones, which could be formulated as follows:

### ***1.2.1 The Research Question***

The major problem to be investigated by this research is what key external and internal environmental factors influence the strategic planning processes of the Universities of Fort Hare and Port Elizabeth libraries. Here, the writer's aim is to identify the broad political, economic, social, technological, library and information industry and internal environmental factors that have a bearing in academic libraries' strategic planning in general and those of the Universities of Fort Hare and Port Elizabeth Libraries in particular.

In support of the basic research question, the following subsidiary questions are addressed:

#### ***1.2.1.1 Sub-question 1***

What are the extent and direction of influence of the environmental factors?

Having identified the environmental factors, there is the need to examine their extent and direction of influence,

#### ***1.2.1.2 Sub-question 2***

How do the libraries react to such environmental influences?

The aim here is to investigate how the libraries react to the environmental influences. This

involves investigating how the libraries plan to counteract the effect of the environmental influences.

#### ***1.2.1.3 Sub-question 3***

Do both libraries experience similar or different environmental factors influencing their strategic planning?

The University of Fort Hare is a historically-disadvantaged institution and the university of Port Elizabeth is relatively advantaged. Here, the researcher intends investigating whether the libraries of these institutions experience similar or different environmental influences. This leads directly to sub-question 4.

#### ***1.2.1.4 Sub-question 4***

Can one use what pertains in these two libraries as a basis of generalisation for other academic libraries in relation to strategic planning?

In conclusion the writer would like to investigate whether enough grounds have been covered for one to use the environmental factors influencing the strategic planning of these two libraries to generalise for the academic in general.

### ***1.3 Significance of the study***

Empirical evidence in the literature on planning has shown that strategic planning is an approach to solving some of the problems experienced by many organisations brought about by the rapidly changing environmental factors. There is no room today for the library administrator who focuses only on doing today's job well, there must always be an

ability to visualise what is likely to happen in say, three to five years ahead. According to Woodsworth et al (1989:132) “to describe the future is speculative and risky. To articulate what the future should hold, however, is another matter - and requires more insight than foresight. To influence the shape of libraries in the future, not only is it desirable to describe what the future should be - to outline a vision or an ideal - but doing so is a first step in ensuring that the vision becomes a reality”.

Libraries have to cope with the turbulent and rapidly changing environment. In order to survive in such an atmosphere it is expedient for their administrators to know the direction and extent of influence of such environmental factors to help them plan ahead in order not to be overtaken by events.

Libraries, especially academic libraries, see resource sharing and co-operation as a means of survival and meeting the increasing demand for more and better services by users. In order for such co-operative ventures to succeed, the libraries need to know the extent and direction of environmental factors under which each of them operate to make room for accommodating each other.

The findings of the research could result in some uniformity in strategic planning and control framework for many academic libraries. The value of the research lies in the provision of new ideas and additional insights into the strategic planning process especially as it relates to academic libraries. There is the need to develop a framework to aid library

administrators in decision-making.

The writer would like to suggest that the results of the research would be beneficial to both students of library administration and library administrators. To the students, the research will give a better understanding of the strategic planning processes in libraries and their benefits. To the library administrators the results will throw light on the different factors that influence strategic planning in libraries of different environments. The differences and similarities will be of much importance to libraries contemplating undertaking joint ventures. Joint ventures by libraries involve a special strategic problem. For such ventures to succeed, libraries need to make special accommodation for each other. It is also necessary for libraries undertaking such ventures to know the planned direction of each other. The study should be of considerable assistance in understanding how strategic planning is carried out, the need for strategic planning in academic libraries, and the benefits and pitfalls of strategic planning.

On a broader perspective, an examination of the external and internal environmental factors and pressures can assist business and information executives, practitioners and professionals to focus on those factors which influence the successful management and future direction of the multinational information systems resources and functions within their environments. This is of special significance due to the present movement towards the globalisation of information. (Selig, 1980: iii).

#### *1.4 Methods of investigation*

The nature of the problem demands a qualitative approach, which is inherently exploratory, rather than verification. A case study offers a researcher an excellent vehicle for amplifying the hypotheses and concepts of a standard test. In its detailed exploration of an event, a case study permits a researcher to view phenomena as more than cold, recorded facts. It explores in depth the interplay of various individuals within the context of institutions they are associated with as they confront the objective situations and forces of the broader environmental context. (Ross, 1991:1). In conducting the research the writer did extensive study and review on the literature on strategic planning. Much of the literature came from published works on strategic planning in library and information services. Where there was no substantive body of readings on certain concepts the writer reviewed literature on other major disciplines. For example, education, business and public administration contain an extensive amount of concepts and practices on strategic planning and control techniques which can be applied to library and information services functions. Documentary sources of the libraries concerned, like their strategic planning programmes, discussion papers, minutes of strategic planning meetings and annual reports were extensively used.

The other technique of collecting data for the research included survey and response method and consisted of a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire was mainly meant for library administrators but was distributed to all the professional librarians in both libraries to get a high response rate and wide and varied range of ideas on their

strategic planning processes. In this regard twenty copies of the questionnaire were administered to the University of Fort Hare Library professional staff members and twenty-five to those of the University of Port Elizabeth Library. A high response rate of 90% was achieved because the writer administered and collected the questionnaires personally. Interviews were conducted with a cross-section of the library staff members through random sampling, the university librarians and their deputies, all the strategic planning committee and library committee members.

A combination of questionnaire and interviews is appropriate for this type of research. The questionnaire is a method of fact-finding suited to circumstances in which the researcher is dealing with an organisation in which an overall view of a system is needed. In this particular study the questionnaire allowed the respondents to divulge information freely without embarrassment or fear of reprisal because its anonymity. The interviews allowed the cross-checking of the answers given in the questionnaire and to verify some information provided. The interviews allowed the researcher to find out facts and verified them and provided the opportunity of meeting the respondents. When more than one person is used as an informant, the interview process allows for a wide variety of information.

Both questionnaires and interviews have their weaknesses and strengths. The writer is of the opinion that the combination of the two information-gathering techniques yielded accurate results. The writer further used the technique of triangulation to test the reliability of the data collected. Where data and information are collected from various

sources, by using different methodologies, triangulation is imperative to cross-check on the validity of the information.

### *1.5 Limitations of the study*

The objective of the research was to find out what environmental factors influence the strategic planning of academic libraries, their extent and direction. Only two libraries were investigated. The libraries studied are not intended to represent the practices in all academic libraries. However, the knowledge gained from studying the practices of these libraries may be extended to other academic libraries but too much generalisation may be dangerous since the other libraries may operate under different environments.

The two libraries, University of Fort Hare Library and the University of Port Elizabeth Library were chosen to represent “historically black” and “white” universities, respectively. It must be emphasised that, though the University of Fort Hare continues to remain a black university because the white student population is negligible, the composition of the student population of the University of Port Elizabeth is changing so rapidly that in the near future it can no longer be called a white university. For example, the proportion of white students at the University of Port Elizabeth decreased from 82.7% in 1991 to 52.2% in 1998. At the same time period the proportion of the other population groups increased as follows: Coloureds, from 10.5% to 12.9%; Indians, from 1.9% to 4.1% and Africans, from 4.2% to 29.7%. However white and black universities should not be distinguished only by the composition of the student population but more importantly,

by the available resources and facilities.

## ***1.6 Definition of terms***

It is important to define some concepts in the context in which they are used in this work.

### ***1.6.1 Planning***

According to McClure (1978: 457) planning may be defined as “a process of identifying organisational goals and objectives, developing programmes or services to accomplish those objectives, and evaluating the success of those programmes vis a vis the stated objectives.” A plan, as a written document, formalises the planning process. The plan determines which objectives and services will be allocated what resources. The planning process, which is continual or ongoing, outlines the steps and actions required in creating a fundamental strategic plan. Planning and the planning process recognise the fact that organisations cannot do everything, hence the need to prioritise the allocation of resources to achieve optimum goals and objectives.

### ***1.6.2 Strategic planning***

A wide variety of activities are sometimes categorised under the title of “strategic planning” and as such there is substantial misunderstanding of what it actually involves. The definitions of some of the writers will be given, then an attempt will be made to explain what strategic planning really is.

Trotter (1984: 5) defines strategic planning as “that top-level, long range, integrated

corporate and business unit planning activity which focuses on what the corporation should be in future regardless of current trends or projections”. Riggs (1984: 1-2) quotes the definitions of strategic planning by (1) Robert N Anthony, (2) Peter F Drucker and (3) William R King and David I Cleland, respectively as follows:

(1) “Strategic planning is the process of deciding on objectives, on the resources used to attain these objectives, and on the policies that govern the acquisition, use, and disposition of these resources.”

(2) “A continuous process of making present entrepreneurial (risk-taking) decisions systematically and the greatest knowledge of their futurity; organising systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring the results of these decisions against the expectations through organised feedback.

(3) “Strategic planning deals primarily with the contrivance of organisation effort directed to the development of organisational purpose, direction, and future generations products and services, and the design of implementation policies by which the goals and objectives of the organisation can be accomplished”.

A review of the literature on the topic shows that though the definitions are varied there is agreement on certain aspects of strategic planning. It is concerned with the relationship between the organisation and its environment. It deals with where the organisation is at present and where it wants to be in future. It is a process in which options are identified and evaluated in the context of the organisation’s shared values as articulated in its mission statement, the external environment in which it operates, and the resources

required to achieve its goals. Strategic planning works within a time frame. Usually strategic plans cover a five-year cycle and are revised annually. Strategic plans are subjected to change. They are never written on stones but are continuously updated as the need arises. (Moran, 1985: 289).

Strategic planning for an academic library is directly related to the overall management of the library; it is not a separate or distinct planning feature. According to Riggs (1984: 2) “a library’s strategic planning process encompasses its mission statement, goals, objectives, strategies, alternatives and contingencies, policies, and resource allocations, and their implementation and evaluation”.

### *1.6.3 Environmental factors*

Libraries do not operate in a vacuum but are influenced by driving forces that have an impact on their future. The environmental factors that should be taken into account during strategic planning may broadly be divided into three components. There are the macro or external environmental factors. These encompass the broad social, cultural, economic, political, technological and demographic parameters within which the library must operate. Secondly, we have the library industry environment and thirdly, internal environment, which involves the library itself and its parent body (e.g. the university). (Jacob, 1990: 3; Corral, 1994:10; Kemper, 1970: 218).

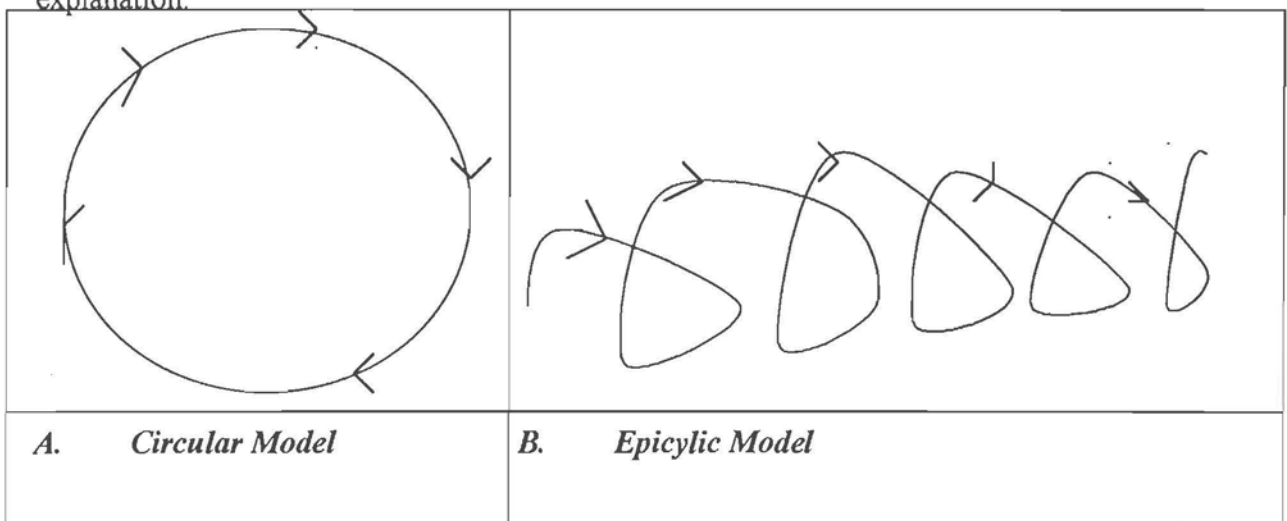
## CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning is a complex process which, needs to follow certain steps in order to yield results. It must however be emphasised that there is no sharp line of demarcation between these steps as discussed below and they are not mutually exclusive. Different libraries may approach their strategic planning processes differently.

Drake (1979: 11) shows the strategic planning process as a circular one, in which four phases may be identified. Each phase is triggered by a key question:

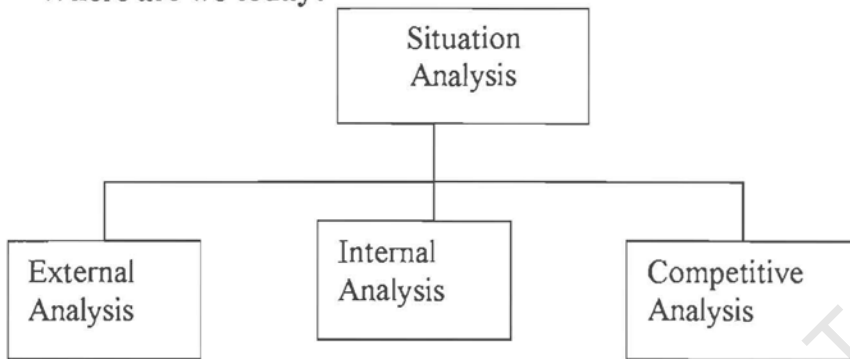
1. Situation or position audit: "Where are we now?"
2. Role definition: "Where do we want to be?"
3. Programme or planning strategies: "How are we going to there?"
4. Performance audit or evaluation: "How do we know we have arrived?"

It is worth commenting on Drake's assumption. A circular model returns to the beginning, and does not emphasise movement forward. An epicyclic model may be a better explanation.

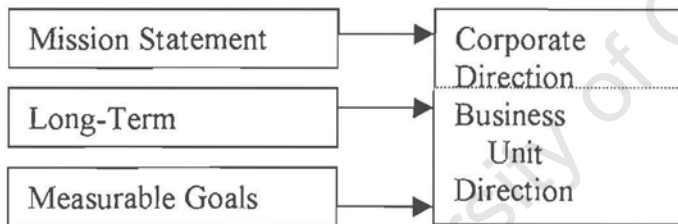


Forbes (1996:4) gives a diagrammatic illustration of the strategic planning process as follows:

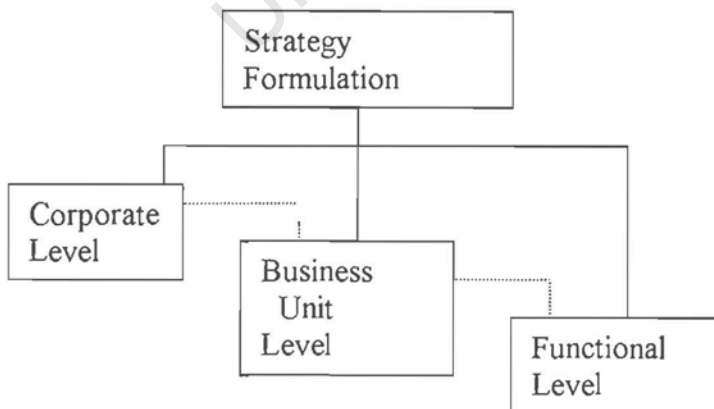
**Where are we today?**



**Where are we going?**



**How do we get there?**



*Source: Forbes 1996: Section 1.2.1*

However, Forbes leaves out an important step in his model, that is, “how do we know we are there?” This involves evaluation of the library’s performance, whether the goals and objectives set have been achieved or not. As will be explained later this is a very crucial aspect of the planning process.

An examination of the various models of strategic planning may reveal the following key steps in the planning process.

### ***2.1 Positioning the architects***

Choosing the right people to do the planning is vital for the success of the whole strategic planning process. A library cannot apply strategic planning unless it has the commitment and involvement of the head. This is because, ultimately, he or she will be responsible for the implementation of the plans. Although the university librarian will not be expected to handle every aspect of the strategic planning alone, he or she must personally be involved in the whole process as it is carried out in his or her library. (University of South Africa. Department of Information Science, 1993:18).

It needs to be mentioned that strategic planning is much too important to be left to the discretion of the university librarian alone. The process is inherently a group activity, since it must involve many different varieties of expertise. All organisational members - especially heads of the various sections, have a responsibility to develop a planning

process as well as formalise plans for their given areas of responsibility. The sectional heads need to consult those under their supervision to ensure that best use is made of the ideas of each and every staff member. Strategic planning committees may be formed to facilitate the process. For example, at the University of Fort Hare Library there are five strategic planning committees, each in charge of certain aspects of the library. Participation by staff members at all levels helps to offset the resistance to any changes that may occur. Interactions among many participants permit necessary adjustments in goals and objectives to be divulged and implemented. (Riggs, 1984: 17; McClure, 1978: 456).

Professional planners can be used to facilitate a planning process but they cannot themselves do the library's planning. They can be used to suggest planning procedures, evaluate the feasibility of particular plans, or even suggest some strategies. They can advise the library staff on the techniques of strategic planning. Consultants may be used to collect data on the external environmental factors likely to affect the library. But the library should do the planning process itself. (Riggs, 1984: 12; McClure, 1978: 456). In order to avoid resentment, the librarians need to be involved in the planning process. It should not look as if the exercise is an imposition by outsiders.

## ***2.2 Situation audit***

Situation audit is also referred to as position audit or situation analysis. Before commencing on planning, the library administrators must evaluate the library's past performance and its current status in order to determine its strategic direction. The

external and internal environmental factors that have a bearing on the library's future will have to be examined critically. Brainstorming sessions in which staff members and key users of the library participate may be necessary to generate ideas on the situation audit. The situation audit involves environmental scanning and Strengths–Weaknesses–Opportunities –Threats (SWOT) analysis. (Riggs, 1987:42; University of South Africa, Department of Information Science, 1993: 19).

### *2.2.1 Environmental scanning*

Environmental scanning is a formal ongoing process of monitoring the environment and assessing the impact of various trends on an institution. Environmental scanning is what distinguishes strategic planning from other forms of planning. Planning has long been in existence in organisations. However, most organisations have not been planning strategically because their environments have been stable. What used to take a number of years to change, may now happen in just a number of months. Organisations must now be more aware of the changes in their environments and make the necessary effort to use that information to determine long-range actions. The idea is to assess the impact on that environment and change it to the advantage of the organisations. Though different organisations exist in different environments and it is difficult to draw a list of exhaustive and definitive environmental areas for all organisations, the common areas for most organisations are (1) political (2) economic (3) technological (4) social (5) demographic (6) profession. These may form a good basis for determining the specific environmental trends that are significant for the take-off of the strategic planning process. Environmental

scanning may be done in different ways by different organisations. For the library, members of the strategic planning committee or team may be assigned to examine its internal forces, especially within the library itself and the parent body. Consultants may be used to explore the external forces that are or will affect the library. Surveys may be conducted to collect information that is needed, but not readily available.

### ***2.2.2 SWOT analysis***

SWOT analysis is the acronym for **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. The strengths are those qualities that an organisation has that make it better able than others to achieve certain of its goals and objectives. Weaknesses, on the other hand are those characteristics or conditions that work against or prevent the organisation from achieving its goals and objectives. Opportunities may be created by trends in the environment or threats when viewed from a different perspective. Threats are the conditions in the environment usually created by others that can interfere with an institution's plans or welfare. In strategic planning parlance, WOTS UP, which is an alternative acronym for **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats and **S**trengths **U**nderlying **P**lanning, is also used. (Corrall, 1994: 16).

In order for the library to effectively determine its current and future status it is important to do a SWOT analysis. The planners must look at the library's and parent body's strengths and weaknesses and identify their ambitions, problems, needs and concerns. Typical questions that are to be asked here are "What are our strengths?" "What are our weaknesses?" The essence is to maximise the strengths while minimising weaknesses. This

needs to be done also to check the degree of agreement between the library's SWOT and that of the parent organisation. For example, a strength in the library may represent an opportunity for the parent organisation.

The strengths of the library may be qualified and innovative staff and technology that needs to be exploited to the maximum advantage. The weaknesses may include shortage of funds and lack of facilities such as computers. The library's existing weaknesses have to be pin-pointed and talked about in a direct and constructive manner. The strengths of the library have to be identified and how they can be better put into use examined. (Riggs, 1987: 42; Jacob, 1990: 14-15).

Those involved in the planning exercise should make a point of finding out what the opportunities are for the library in the current environment and what threats it is likely to face. Are the opportunities within or outside the library, or both? How can the threats be removed? These questions need to be asked and answers provided for them. It must be noted that opportunities and threats must not be regarded as absolute. Changes in the environment and the organisation may make an opportunity less attractive and after a while a threat may be transformed into an opportunity. (Riggs, 1987:42; University of South Africa. Department of Information Science, 1993: 20).

### ***2.3 Role definition***

After a situation audit is completed, the next step in the strategic planning process is the role definition, that is, where the library would like to be in the near future. This step involves the formulation of the library's mission statement, goals and objectives.

#### ***2.3.1. Mission***

A mission statement defines in broad terms the grand design for the library. It is a statement of why the library exists. It identifies the library's sphere of influence, its users and major activity focus. It is a statement of organisational philosophy developed to form the basis of agreement among members of the library from which goals and objectives can logically follow. Generally, mission statements are defined in broad, abstract and sometimes in vague terms. The statement must be broad enough to allow changes as long as the core business remains the same. At the same time, it must be sufficiently specific to distinguish the library from other libraries. Though there may be the need to review and refine the actual wording to maintain currency, the main message or purpose should be expected to have a life span of three to five years. (Corrall, 1994: 21; Riggs, 1984: 30; Riggs, 1987:42).

The mission statement may begin with a brief statement of the historical background of the library as well as its current activities. The purpose is to recognise the origins of the library, draw upon its historical strengths, and identify critical experiences in its development. Since the strategic planning processes of academic libraries are closely

related to the overall planning strategy of the parent bodies, their mission statements should always be in congruence with their parent organisation's missions. An academic library's mission cannot contain aspects that are diametrically opposite to those of the university itself. For example, the mission statement of the University of Fort Hare Library reads in part as: "Within the context of the mission statement of the University, the chief mission of our Library and its branches is to support the curricular offering of the University of Fort Hare..." According to Jacob (1990: 63) "The mission of the university library is to support the quality of teaching, research, and service missions of the university as a state-wide comprehensive university providing access to recorded knowledge through the acquisition, organisation, preservation and interpretation of information appropriate to current and future needs of the staff, faculty, students and the immediate community served by the library". The mission statement of the University of Fort Hare Library is rather too narrow. It mentions only teaching (i.e. curricular offering). It makes no reference to learning, research or the broader perspectives offered by Jacob. However, an examination of the whole strategic planning programme of the Library reveals that it supports learning and research.

Writing a mission statement is an individual library affair; there is no one statement that could be applied to all types of libraries. However, for a mission statement to benefit the library and its parent body it has to fulfil certain criteria. Corral (1994:21) lists some of these criteria as follows:

- "Unambiguous and reflect consensus - understandable and acceptable to

staff;

- measurable, feasible and expressed in concrete terms - not remote from reality;
- concise, yet complete - memorable, but full enough to identify the organisation;
- alive, relevant and open to suggestions for improvement -not seen as sacrosanct.”

### *2.3.2 Goals*

The broad mission statement is followed by the development of goals and objectives. “Goals” and “objectives” are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature on strategic planning. For the purpose of this work, goals will be used as an umbrella term, preceding the narrowly defined objectives. Goals, being broad and unspecified, must be capable of being converted into specific, measurable objectives. Goals and objectives may be analogous to a forest and trees. Goals allow a view of the forest whereas the statement of objectives allows a view of the trees. (Riggs, 1984: 32).

Goals are broad and general statements identifying long-range objectives and activities an organisation plans or intends accomplishing in order to fulfil its mission. Goals should indicate the long-term results the library wants to achieve and these are stated in more concrete and shorter terms than mission statements. Determining what the goals of a library should be is a hard task that should not be done in isolation or by one person. To define the current goals requires interviewing many individuals and groups as to what they

think the library's and their goals are. One of an academic library's goals may be to use computer technology to promote research. (University of South Africa. Department of Information Science, 1993: 20-21; Riggs, 1992: 94; Kotler & Murphy, 1981: 478).

Though goals are broad statements they must satisfy certain criteria for them to yield results. Some of these criteria are listed below:

- The goals should be attainable. For example stating that all the library functions will be automated within a year is not realistic if the funds and expertise are not available.
- Goals must be capable of being converted into specific, precise and measurable objectives. Though goals are expressed in general terms, they must be stated in clear and operational terms so that the resulting objectives can be expressed in quantifiable, measurable terms.
- Goals must support the mission statement. They must agree with the mission statement instead of contradicting it. Participation by the library staff in goal setting serves as the best motivator for achieving the goals. Personal and organisational goals should be compatible. The library's goals should make room for some flexibility to avoid resistance by the staff.
- The goals statement should be in few and simple sentences or phrases. The wording should be in plain language to facilitate easy understanding by intended readers. (Asantewa, 1992: 22; Riggs, 1987: 43; Riggs, 1992: 94-95).

### *2.3.3. Objectives*

After the formulation of the goals, the next step is to convert these goals into specific, measurable and achievable objectives. Objectives are specific measurable and time-limited actions or activities in support of goal statements. They express the library's means of achieving its goals. They outline what is to be accomplished within a given time frame. Objectives imply a resource commitment, challenging a library to use the necessary resources in order to achieve the desired results. According to Riggs (1984: 35) objectives are "purposeful, short-termed, consistent with goals, linked to other objectives, precise, measurable, verifiable, understandable, and flexible". They bring more focus on what the library intends doing.

Objectives may be formulated by reviewing the goals that generated them. It is then decided on what actions that must be taken to accomplish those goals. Each action is measured in numerical terms, such as to employ three additional cataloguers, to install 20 more terminals for the users, etc. Each objective is accompanied by a starting date and expected date of completion and also the associated cost. It is also a good practice to 'bracket' such completion date by a 'best, worst and most likely' date range.

With the help of the situational analysis, it can be determined whether the objective is attainable or not. The objective-setting process may be done in four stages, namely: preliminary, tentative, revised and final. (Asantewa, 1992: 22; Riggs, 1984: 35).

Objectives should possess the following qualities:

- Only enough objectives to satisfy a goal must be generated. Superfluous objectives are irrelevant and counterproductive.
- They must have the blessing of the library leadership and will be best realised if many staff members are involved in establishing them.
- Objectives must be linked to one another as closely as possible.
- They must be specific and expressed in measurable units such as time, money space, quantity of items produced, etc.
- Objectives should have short life spans. Before any goal can be reached, all of its objectives must have been completed. (Riggs, 1987: 43; Asantewa, 1992: 23)

#### ***2.4 Programme strategies***

After the mission, goals and objectives have been established, the next step is to translate them into a programme that will accomplish the stated objectives. Through the translation of objectives into actions the library responds to the wants of its users as well as addresses the information needs of its environment. This stage involves strategy and alternative strategy formulation.

##### ***2.4.1 Strategies***

Strategies are means of achieving specific objectives or carrying out specific activities. For

Riggs (1987: 43) “Strategies are the specific courses of action used in advancing library programs”. Organisational goals and objectives by themselves are of little value until they are translated into a programme or service that will accomplish the stated objectives. All goals and objectives of the strategic planning process are realised through strategies. A strategy entails an explanation of what means will be used to achieve what goals and objectives. Strategy formulation is therefore the most important part of strategic planning. (Riggs, 1992:95).

Strategies are normally conceived and planned by top library management but at times they may emerge from ad hoc situations. The library administrator needs to involve his deputies, sectional heads, line and staff personnel in the formulation of strategies since the strategies may need clarification and interpretation at various levels. The strategic planning committee set up may play a major role in the strategy formulation. It may seek input from throughout the library. Brainstorming of groups may generate strategies. Strategy is a major key to the success of a library’s strategic planning process and as such it should be consciously designed and assessed regularly. (Riggs, 1984: 39).

Strategy development depends on the individual library situation and needs. There is no a single best way of developing a strategy. Strategy may be perceived as evaluation of what alternatives are open to the library and the selection of what best course to follow in order to be where it wants to be in future. Strategies should not be formulated haphazardly but follow a certain criteria. Some of these criteria are outlined by Riggs (1984: 46) as follows:

- The strategy must be consistent with the library's goals and objectives. There should be little or no conflict among the library's strategies.
- Strategies have to be consistent with the external environment. The external environment is subjected to rapid change. Strategies should be able to accommodate both the present situation and the future environment.
- Strategies must be related to the library's resources. The library must develop only strategies that can be achieved with its available resources.
- Strategies must be given enough time for implementation. Goals and objectives must be reviewed before setting time for strategies to be implemented.
- Only workable strategies must be set.

To achieve the above qualities, however, feasibility studies need to be undertaken – a point Riggs fails to emphasise.

#### ***2.4.2 Strategic Options***

Strategies are evaluated on periodic basis. If a particular strategy is not working as anticipated, it can either be merged with another or abandoned. Choosing strategic options is essential in problem solving. Strategic options are generated to meet unplanned contingencies. It is a way of making preparations as to what action is to be taken when an event not planned for in the original planning process does take place. Riggs (1984: 62-63) maintains that at least two options should be developed for each strategy to provide for such contingencies.

Strategic options are developed to provide answers to the question “what if?” Libraries have to deal with a lot of “what if “ questions. For example “what if the prices of books rise by 15%?” “What if the library loses some of its experienced staff?” By addressing the “what if “ questions, the library will be developing options to be implemented when unexpected events occur. Alternative strategies eliminate uncertainty, time delays, and over-reaction in response to an emergency. They cater for imminent threats to existing activities. Alternative strategies help the library to provide a more flexible response to unforeseen circumstances and to avoid the practice of crisis management. (Corrall, 1994: 35; Riggs, 1984:63; University of South Africa. Department of Information Science, 1993: 21; Riggs, 1987: 45).

### ***2.5 Performance audit or evaluation***

Since strategic planning is an ongoing process, periodic evaluation of the process is necessary to assess whether the library has attained its objective in the time set, whether it has reached its goals in the time set, and whether the mission originally formulated is still valid. This phase answers the key question “ How do we know we have arrived?” The kind of questions that should be asked here includes: “ what went right?” “ What went wrong?” “How might we improve our strategic planning process?” “ What should be added or removed from the process?” Mistakes are bound to occur in any planning process. They need to be identified and corrected. Environmental changes and changes in user needs have to be incorporated into the planning process where appropriate. (University of South Africa. Department of Information Science, 1993:23; Riggs, 1987: 51).

The evaluation and control of the planning process is not an easy task. Much work needs to be done in order to have a process in place that will yield the best results. It must be stressed that no two libraries have the same goals and objectives and consequently no two evaluations systems will be identical. The evaluation system must be carefully tailored to suit the individual library. The central focus of the library during evaluation should be to examine whether the strategies adopted achieved the desired goals and objectives. According to Riggs (1987: 52) questions such as “Did the strategies produce substantive results?”, “Were the entrepreneurial strategies well designed?” must be asked and the answers provided for by the strategic planners.

### ***2.6 Management information systems***

The strategic planning process cannot succeed without the necessary information. The development of management information systems (MIS) should therefore form part of the planning process. MIS focuses on information that supports the development and implementation of strategies, forming the basis of effective decision-making. “MIS provides library management with the timely and relevant information it requires to assess the library’s internal and external environment, monitor progress, detect trends, evaluate alternatives, and make decisions for optimum results”. (Riggs, 1984: 76).

Relevant databases containing qualitative as well as quantitative information should be provided to facilitate the evaluation of strategic alternatives. Background information on all the library’s operations is necessary prior to planning. Information files on special

competencies of the staff should form part of the MIS to ensure that such information is available when needed. Information about the library's activities may be extracted from its annual reports. Information on the external environment that affects the library should be collected and analysed. Depending on its size, a library may use computer technology to analyse the information. (Riggs, 1984: 77; University of South Africa. Department of Information Science, 1993: 23-24)

University of Cape Town

### **CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE LIBRARY.**

A useful framework for analysing the environmental factors that influence the strategic planning of a library is to consider issues and influences under the following broad headings: external environmental factors, library industry environment and internal environmental factors. The external environmental factors consist of the broad political, economical, social and technological parameters within which the library must operate. The library industry environment involves the library and its relationship with other libraries or information providers. The internal environmental factors include such factors as the library and its parent body, staff, facilities, services and users.

#### ***3.1 External Environmental Factors***

The external factors that influence the strategic planning process of the University of Fort Hare Library may be discussed under the following headings:

##### ***3.1.1 Government Policy***

Some past and present policies of the government have a direct or indirect bearing on the planning strategy of the University of Fort Hare Library. From the responses to the questionnaire the following are identified as the major government policies that influence the library's strategic planning.

### *3.1.1.1 Apartheid*

The University of Fort Hare was established in 1916 before the days of apartheid, but it became part of the apartheid structure as a “Black” University after the National Party came to power in 1948. The downgrading of the University to an apartheid structure meant insufficient funding and hence underdevelopment. The present condition of the Library is a manifestation of the government’s apartheid policies (Kagan, 1996:48-49).

The Library is housed in an old building that was built in 1970. Other library buildings erected at the same time in Western Cape and in Durban have been rebuilt. The library building has undergone many structural adjustments that it can no longer be expanded to accommodate the materials and users. Though the library management attributes the present state of the Library solely to the apartheid policy of under-funding to the historically Black Universities, the writer thinks that it is the interaction between government policy and other factors such as the use by universities of external funding. If it were solely the government policy of under-funding why has the University of the Western Cape (a historically- disadvantaged institution) been able to rebuild its Library? The Library has only about 160 000 volumes of monographs and serials. This collection is mainly for undergraduates because there is no budget to meet the needs of the postgraduates (Kagan, 1996:49).

The major task facing the University of Fort Hare Library in its strategic plan is to overcome this formidable apartheid legacy and to provide access to information to its users as pertained in the historically-advantaged universities. The planning committee has

therefore been mandated to fundraise nationally and internationally to put up a new library building and increase the Library's holdings. In 1995 Anglo-American Mining Corporation made a donation of one million rand for the Library to increase its periodical holdings from 850 to 1000 titles. Since this was a once - off donation the Library has to plan in such a way that it will get money to maintain this subscription and increase the collection of postgraduate books.

### *3.1.1.2 Censorship*

The draconian laws of censorship, like the Publication Control Act, the law which prevented banned people from being quoted, implying their publications were equally banned (for example Steve Biko's publications) have created a lacunae in the Library's collection. This is much evident in the Africana collection of the Library. Due to the cultural boycott books from certain countries could not be ordered, thus limiting the choice of books. The cultural boycott also meant a restriction of library co-operation between the University of Fort Hare Library and libraries in other countries. Under apartheid there was restriction on the subjects taught at the University of Fort Hare. The emphasis was only on teaching-subjects and religious studies since it was training mainly teachers. Subjects like Economics, Accounting and Development Studies are newcomers. As an example of the apartheid legacy, it must be noted that African history was introduced only in 1993! The above government policies have had a direct influence on the Library's strategic planning. The main objective of the Library's strategic planning is to fill in the gaps in the Library's collection. As part of this process the Library has

acquired the archives of the African National Congress (ANC) and is planning to acquire the archives of the other liberation movements to help researchers rewrite the lost history of South Africa.

### *3.1.1.3 Taxation*

The Value Added Tax (VAT) on books is a serious problem to libraries and the University of Fort Hare Library is no exception. In all transactions with books and other library materials there is VAT. VAT on books purchased affects prices and thus collection development. The government has been inundated with requests for tax dispensations on books. But the Department of Finance has argued that there is no basis for reducing tax on one field of spending without doing so in other areas of social need e.g. housing. (Book Development Council of South Africa, 1997:135-136). In the library's planning strategy it has to take into account the governments policy on VAT and do a projection on how VAT will affect the library's acquisition of materials over the next five years.

Below is an overview of the practices regarding VAT and taxes on books in 43 countries around the world, including South Africa. This information is drawn from the International Publisher' Association (IPA), Geneva.

**Table 1: VAT AND TAXES ON BOOKS: 1996**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>BOOK RATE (%)</b>	<b>STANDARD RATE (%)</b>
Argentina	0	18
Austria	10	20
Belgium	6	21
Brazil	0	NA
Bulgaria	18	18
Canada	7*	15,5**
Chile	18	18
Colombia	0	14
Czec Republic	5	23
Denmark	25	25
Estonia	18, textbooks 0	18
Finland	12	22
France	5,5	20,6
Germany	7	15
Greece	4	18
Hungary	12	25
Iceland	14	24,5
Ireland	0	21
Israel	17	17
Italy	4	19
Japan	3	3
Kenya	0	18

Korea	0	10
Latvia	0***	18
Lithuania	0	18
Luxembourg	3	12/5
Netherlands	6	17,5
Norway	0	23
Philippines	0	10
Poland	0 to 7	NA
Portugal	5	17
Russia	0	21,5
Slovakia	6	25
Slovenia	3	15/20
South Africa	14	16
Spain	25	25
Sweden	25	25
Swaziland	2	6,5
Turkey	1	NA
Uganda	0	NA
Ukraine	28	28
UK	0	17,5
USA	0 to 8,5	NA

Federal

\*\* Federal + Provincial

\*\*\* Children's, Textbooks, STM

Source: *International Publisher's Association, Geneva, 1996.*

Of the 43 countries listed, only 7 (including South Africa) do not differentiate between VAT on books and the state rate of tax. In some cases there is a further differentiation between general and textbooks such as in Estonia where only textbooks are zero-rated while in Latvia children's books, as well as textbooks are zero-rated. According to this information South Africa is out of step with international trends. (Book Development Council of South Africa, 1997:137). It is part of the planning strategy of the Library to throw its weight behind other lobby groups to have VAT on books zero-rated.

### **3.1.2 Economics**

The University of Fort Hare Library does not operate in isolation but within the broad spectrum of the South African economy in particular and that of the world in general. The purchasing power of the library is therefore affected by market forces, especially inflation and the exchange rate.

#### **3.1.2.1 Inflation**

The high rate of inflation has a two-pronged effect on the University of Fort Hare Library. One result of this has been the inability of the Library to purchase computers, books, and other information products and to develop information infrastructure as previously projected under the strategic plan. The high inflationary rate has also affected the purchasing power of the staff leading to low morale. The staff members used to get at least 5% salary increase yearly to cushion the effect of inflation but for the past two years the University has not increased the salaries of staff due to the subsidy cuts by the central

government. Under the strategic plan promotions are recommended to boost the morale of the staff but these are subjected to approval by the university management.

### ***3.1.2.2 Exchange Rate***

The University of Fort Hare Library buys about 95% of its monographs and periodicals from overseas suppliers. The book supplier, Ballen, supplies most of the monographs. The depreciating and unstable Rand affects the Library's strategic planning. The Rand, which averaged three to a dollar in the early 1990s, is now trading at about six Rand to a Dollar. The effect of the weak Rand in relation to the Dollar is that the cost of books, periodicals and other library materials and equipment has risen steeply thereby further weakening the financial position of the cash-strapped Library.

The Library initially made a projection of an annual depreciation of the Rand to the Dollar by 10%. Then in 1997 the Rand dropped sharply against the Dollar forcing the Library to revise the collection development aspect of the strategic plan by cancelling the importation of certain books, especially the periodicals and reference materials. If the Rand continues to depreciate against the Dollar more cuts in the acquisition of books and other library materials are imminent.

### ***3.1.3 Society***

Society is not static, but is subject to some changes. These changes affect a library's strategic planning if the library is to meet user needs. Below are some of the effects and trends in the social environment that influence the strategic planning process of the

University of Fort Hare Library.

### ***3.1.3.1 Changing pattern of learning, teaching and research***

Learning, teaching and research are undergoing dramatic changes at the University of Fort Hare. The strategic planning process recognises the effects and trends of these changes and tries to implement policies that will meet the new challenges.

Historically, the University Fort Hare Library has collected and preserved the record of knowledge relevant to the paths of inquiry taken by the faculty, students and researchers at the University of Fort Hare. Of late, the trend is for lecturers to shift from didactic style to guiding students to search for knowledge and develop themselves academically. Students are therefore encouraged to use the resources of the Library to seek the information they need badly. The effect of this on the Library is for it to be more user-focused, creative and innovative. The strategic planning process recognises that the Library will continue to be a place for self-education and discovery outside the classroom and the laboratory. The Library therefore places emphasis on identifying user needs, growth areas and trends. At the end of the day the value of the Library will not be measured by the size, depth, or breadth of the collections owned, but rather, its ability to provide access to information in all formats.

For the Library to meet the changing needs of the faculties, a circular letter was sent to all heads of departments seeking inputs such as: possible curricula changes, introduction of

new course(s), postgraduate studies that the department intends to introduce, and programmes that will be phased out within the next five years of the planned period. This would enable the Library to plan ahead with regard to its collection development and to fulfil its mission as set out in the plan.

### ***3.1.3.2 Affirmative Action***

The strategic planning process of the University of Fort Hare Library is linked to the overall planning of the University.

The affirmative action policy of the University is made clear in its strategic plan and all sections of the University, the Library inclusive, have to abide by this policy. The effect of this policy on the Library's strategic planning process is that people from disadvantaged backgrounds have to be given the opportunity to train and improve themselves. To this end the Library Assistants are encouraged to study part-time, as part of the staff development programme embodied in the strategic planning of the Library. The result of this policy is that at present, twenty of the thirty-two non-professional staff members are studying part-time for their bachelors degree. In the short term this is a weakness for the Library because more often than not these staff members leave their workstations to attend lectures. It is envisaged that in the five year plan period it will turn up to be an opportunity since most of the Library Assistants would have become qualified librarians with skills and expertise necessary to cope with the modern trends of academic librarianship.

### ***3.1.3.3 Gender Issues***

Closely related to the affirmation action programme is the gender issue. There is a strong gender task force at the University of Fort Hare which has lobbied top management to make it a policy of the University that all sections should encourage and train females to take up responsible positions. Though this is mentioned in the strategic plan of the library, its effect is very minimal. The females outnumber the males. Out of the present nine professional members of staff, six are females. Until the death of the University Librarian (the position of which is still vacant) both the University Librarian and the Deputy were females.

### ***3.1.4 Technology***

The environment, in a technological sense is very important to librarians, and the University of Fort Hare Library is no exception. The changing technological environment has a profound effect on a library. The library must be aware of and able to cope with the increasing rate of change through strategic planning. The main aim of technological planning is two fold: one, to avoid being overtaken by technological breakthrough; and two, to use technology to provide innovative services (Kemper, 1970: 220). Though the technological environment influences the whole planning strategy of the University of Fort Hare Library, the following important aspects will especially be explained.

#### ***3.1.4.1 Automation***

Though the University of Fort Hare Library was automated in 1989, five years before the Library's main strategic plan, its influence on the plan is still very evident. The major effect of the automation is that though it has made the work easier, faster and more efficient, it has created a problem whereby the new stock of the Library are online whereas some of the old books are yet to be catalogued online. In order to eliminate this problem, it was agreed in the strategic plan that every professional member of the Library has to catalogue at least five 'old' books a day in order for the backlog to be cleared in five years. However, with the spate of resignations, donations of new books and shortage of staff this can not be achieved and that aspect of the strategic plan has to be revisited. Automation also raised the expectations of the users and room has to be made in the strategic plan for the training of staff who will then train the users on how to use the automated facilities.

#### ***3.1.4.2 Networking***

The advances in information technology have made the lecturers and some students more aware of, and interested in the use of, information networks. The influence of this on the Library's strategic planning is to use the Library's resources in the development of networks. To this effect the catalogue is now online and lecturers can access this catalogue in the comfort of their offices. As part of the strategic planning process the Subject Librarians are given the responsibility of organising workshops to teach both lecturers and students how to do online searches. It is envisaged in the strategic plan that by taking some time now to teach the students to do their own searches instead of doing it

for them will save the Library contact time in the near future when most of them become library literate. The lecturers and postgraduate students are taught how to do searches on SABINET and the Internet.

The strategic planning committee has been mandated to constantly investigate the trends of information technology and its influence on the Library. Contingency plans have been put in place to meet any changes and challenges. It is worth mentioning that though the University of Fort Hare itself has no World-Wide Web home page the Library has created its own home page.

#### *3.1.4.3 Obsolescence*

An improvement in information technology may render some facilities in the library obsolete. During strategic planning such possibilities have to be identified and solutions sought in order to minimise their effects. The strategic planning process of the University of Fort Hare Library has recognised that its card catalogues are becoming obsolete and most of the users, and even some staff themselves do not know how to use them. There is therefore the urgent need to finish cataloguing the old books that are still on the card catalogues so that the card catalogue structures can be removed to create space in the Library.

When the Library was automated in 1989, computer terminals were bought instead of actual personal computers. With the introduction of Internet search, E-mail, and the

students desire to use word processors for their assignments these terminals have become virtually obsolete. The strategy is to have these terminals replaced by personal computers in two years.

The strategic planning process recognises the possibility of some staff members becoming “obsolete” themselves. With information flooding on personal computers through the Internet and World Wide Web there is great anxiety among librarians over the possibility of losing their jobs. However, new advances in information technology may open new opportunities for those librarians who are prepared to learn. Staff development is given priority of place in the library’s strategic plan.

### ***3.2 Library Industry Environment***

Most library planners agree that local library planning should be based on knowledge of the main forces and influences of the library profession. As a library begins to identify the kind of library system it wants to be, it is expedient for it to talk to and have links with peer groups and other information providers about their planned directions.

#### ***3.2.1 Co-operation and Resource Sharing***

The University of Fort Hare Library realises that it cannot “go it alone” if it is to continue to provide the services needed by its users with its limited resources. As part of the strategic planning processes it is agreed that the Library must foster greater relationship, co-operation and resource sharing with other academic libraries. The effects of such co-operation are embodied in the plan.

The Library has become a member of the South Eastern Libraries System (SEALS). SEALS is a regional grouping of the university and technikon libraries of the Eastern Cape. The envisaged benefits of the Library's membership of SEALS include discussions of library automation, mutual user problems, rationalisation of periodical subscriptions and interlibrary loans. Presently, the Library uses SAMARC. In about a year's time USMARC will be the standard MARC format adopted by South African libraries. To keep in line with this new development in South African libraries, the University of Fort Hare Library has made changes in its strategic plan to cater for the effects of the change over to the USMARC and the training of cataloguers.

### *3.2.2 Computing Centre*

Another important factor influencing the strategic planning of the University of Fort Hare Library is the increasing importance of the Computing Centre on campus. Though some writers see the growth and development of computing centres as a threat to academic libraries, the University of Fort Hare Library sees this as great opportunity in its strategic plan. These two agencies are striving towards a future that requires them to function as cohorts. To the Library the rapid development of information technology means increasing interdependence of the Computing Centre and the Library. By working together both agencies can get good deals from information vendors and software publishers. Both the Library and the Computing Centre face rising client expectations and improved services. By working together, they should become a powerful influence in the

reshaping of research and scholarship in the University. The Computing Centre has a strong representation on the Library's Strategic Planning Committee. Both agencies are supposed to lobby the University management as a group for allocation of more funds for the advancement of information technology on campus. The Library has no systems administrator and relies on the Computing Centre for the updating of its databases, training of staff in new developments of information technology and upgrading of its computers. This is not to say that the relationship between library staff and information technology staff is always good. Twenty percent of the Library staff who answered the questionnaire expressed the fear of the Computing Centre taking over the functions of the Library in the future.

### *3.2.3. Competitive relationships*

It is rather unusual to think in terms of competition for libraries but within the institutional framework the library competes with other divisions, departments, and agencies for available resources. The university library competes with various departments for new staff positions that have been allocated to the university as a whole. The library not only competes with the various other departments in the institution but it also seeks their support when lobbying for funds. According to Kemper (1970: 221) "this requires the library administrator to know what plans are being contemplated by the various departments and their future direction of growth". All the seven faculties at the University of Fort Hare are represented on the Library Committee. Unfortunately, the Library has no representation on any of the faculty boards. It takes some time for important decisions taken by the academic department to filter through to the Library. The Strategic Planning

Committee has been mandated to find ways of having the Library represented on the faculty boards. This will help the Library to know what is going on in the faculties in order to plan ahead to meet any changes that are in the pipeline and secondly to get the faculties on its side when asking for funds.

The Library sees the Centre for Cultural Studies as a threat to its bid to acquire the archives of all the liberation movements. The Centre for Cultural Studies has been able to raise funds to put up a new building. There is fear among the librarians that if funds are not raised to build a new library, the university management may decide to transfer the ANC archives to the Centre for Cultural Studies for security reasons and greater accessibility. There is still competition between the two agencies as to who gets the archives of the other liberation movements.

### ***3.3 Internal Environmental Factors***

A library exists in relationship to the forces around it. The internal library environment indicates its relationship with the parent body, its staff, clientele, facilities and services.

#### ***3.3.1 Parent body and Funding***

Strategic planning for the library as a whole is dependent on the direction chosen by the parent body, that is, the university. The library must reflect the needs of the institution that it serves. The main source of funding to the University of Fort Hare Library is the University, which in turn gets its income from the central government in the form of

subsidy. For the past three years government subsidy to the University of Fort Hare has reduced drastically in real terms. Library management has realised that whenever there are subsidy cuts to the University the Library suffers greatly. This is evidenced by the budget allocation to the Library as shown below:

**BUDGET ALLOCATION TO THE UFH LIBRARY, 1994-1998**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
Budget	1 115 500	2 000 000	1 360 000	1 500 000	2 100 000

**Source: University of Fort Hare Library Annual Report, 1998**

In real terms the budget allocation to the Library is dwindling every year with consequent adverse effect on its commitments. For example, all new book purchases came to a halt at the beginning of 1996. The library realises that this trend will go on for a long time. As part of its strategic planning the Library has to widen its scope of funding if it is to survive. To this end the Library's strategy is to canvas for donations, fundraising and to lobby the university management for more funding. The possibility of service charge, selling of duplicate books and increase in charges of photocopying and fines is being looked into as yielding extra income in future.

### 3.3.2 *Staff*

The staffing component of the Library is a vital factor in its strategic planning. The Library sees a well-trained, highly motivated people, with a clear sense of direction and a high degree of control over their work as a compensation for the inadequate funding. As Johnson (1994: 13) points out “good quality staff are vital parts of an efficient and effective library service. The number of staff needed and their training have to be considered when planning for the future”.

For the University of Fort Hare Library, the staff component plays a vital role in achieving its goals and objectives. An inadequate number of staff to cope with the increasing number of users and to assist in the Library’s outreach programme is seen as a weakness. However, the quality of the staff is regarded as strength. A plan has been put forward for the training of the existing staff and induction training for new staff members to improve on their productivity and the quality of services provided.

The interviews revealed a great concern by the staff about the future in the profession with the rapid development in the field of information technology and underlying factors. To this end an ad hoc “in-service training committee” has been formed to see to the training needs of the staff. The staff members have also been advised that “variety of experience will be more important than specialisation in a single area, whether functional or budget-based, no matter the academic qualifications of the librarians concerned”. (University of Fort Hare Library Strategic Planning Report)

However, training costs money, and funds should be secured for the purpose of staff education in all library services. The question of lobbying for funds is essential here. The In-Service Training Committee was therefore mandated to draw up a staff training policy that will help make a case for funds for this important activity.

### *3.3.3 Facilities and Services*

Despite the advances in information technology, the University of Fort Hare Library recognises that materials will continue to be produced in print and paper format. Considering the unsophisticated nature of most of the Library's users and lack of funds there has to be changes to the use of existing facilities instead of doing away with them completely. Existing facilities will be adapted to function as service models, closer to user groups. As a long-term measure, instead of maintaining a large historical collection, most capital expenditure will go towards the construction of storage and preservation facilities that are separate from "use" facilities. Materials will not necessarily be housed permanently in the facilities used to deliver service. Further user services will be characterised by proactive identification or anticipation of user needs, provision of access to all information at the level of the user's workstation. The Library recognises resource sharing and networking as a means of achieving this goal.

### *3.3.4 Users*

The investigation revealed that the University of Fort Hare Library serves about five thousand students, most of who come from a disadvantaged background and are not

familiar with the functioning of a computerised library. As part of the strategic planning programme, it is envisaged that through the Library orientation and subsequent training programmes about 90% of the student population will be “library literate” by the year 2000. The Library’s goal is that instead of finding information for the students they should be taught how to find the information for themselves. It is hoped that as more and more students are taught how to do their own searches they will help their colleagues, hence relieving the librarians for other duties.

There is no public library in Alice and its environs so the University of Fort Hare Library also serves as community library and therefore has to respond to this challenge. Though the Library has decided to continue with its services to external borrowers, it sees the reopening of the Alice Municipality Public Library and the school libraries as a long-term solution to the burden on the University of Fort Hare Library. To this end the Strategic Planning Committee has been given the green light to open up consultations with the municipality in connection with the public library. As part of the Library’s outreach programme, the professional librarians are encouraged to help the teachers and pupils in establishing school libraries. Donations of books, which are not useful to the university students, are given to the local schools. It is hoped that the functioning of the municipal public library and the establishment of school libraries will reduce the number of external users thereby easing the burden on the scarce resources of the University of Fort Hare Library.

## **CHAPTER 4: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT ELIZABETH LIBRARY.**

As discussed in the case of the University of Fort Hare Library, the environmental factors influencing the University of Port Elizabeth Library have to be examined under the subheadings: external environmental factors, library industry environment and internal environment.

### *4.1 External Environmental Factors*

The external environment, as the name implies, consists of variables that are outside the organisation and not within the short-term control of the organisation's management. Though they do not directly touch on the short-term activities of the organisation they can and often do influence decision. These external forces and constituencies are therefore extremely important variables to be considered in a strategic development plan. The external environmental factors to be discussed here include government policy, economics, society and technology and the influence of these on the strategic planning of the University of Port Elizabeth Library.

#### *4.1.1 Government Policy*

The imbalances created by the National Party government and the present government's ambition to correct such imbalances has a profound effect on educational institutions and libraries of such institutions have to follow the directions in which their parent bodies are moving . Below are some of the government policies that influence the University of Port

Elizabeth Library's strategic plan, as came out of the questionnaires and interviews.

#### *4.1.1.1 Apartheid*

The University of Port Elizabeth was established by an Act of Parliament in 1964 as a 'White' university. The collection development of the Library, which was established in 1965 to provide support services to the academic departments, is skewed towards the needs of the white students. With the 'influx' of the other population groups to the University, especially since the 1990s, the Library has to redirect its resources to cater for their needs too.

#### **Student Enrolment by Population Group 1991 – 1998**

<b>Population Group</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
White <i>Percentage</i>	4123 82.7	4165 80.7	3989 75	3850 68.5	3554 62.2	3223 58.7	3098 53.7	2717 52.2
Coloured <i>Percentage</i>	525 10.5	570 11	637 12	702 12.5	756 13.2	698 12.7	688 11.9	672 12.9
Indian <i>Percentage</i>	97 1.9	113 2.2	119 2.2	146 2.6	167 2.9	169 3.1	194 3.4	212 4.1
Chinese <i>Percentage</i>	35 .7	36 .7	33 .6	36 .6	36 .6	49 .9	58 1	58 1.1
African <i>Percentage</i>	208 4.2	279 5.4	538 10.1	883 15.7	1204 21.1	1348 24.6	1732 30	1545 29.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>4988</b>	<b>5163</b>	<b>5316</b>	<b>5617</b>	<b>5717</b>	<b>5487</b>	<b>5770</b>	<b>5204</b>
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

*Source: University of Port Elizabeth Students Registration Statistics, 1998*

From the above table it can be seen that whilst the proportion of the white students decreased from 82.1% in 1991 to 52.2% in 1998, that of the coloured increased from 10.5% in 1991 to 12.9% in 1998, the Indian population increased from 1.9% in 1991 to 4.1% in 1998, that of the Chinese increased from .7% in 1991 to 1.1% in 1998 and the African (Black) population increased from 4.2% in 1991 to 29.7% in 1998. It may be pointed out that though the absolute number of students in each cohort has not increased or decreased significantly, the proportion of students of different groups has changed considerably. This trend is most likely to continue and should be taken into consideration in the Library's strategic plan.

As a further step towards the University being more representative, the Department of Nguni and Sotho Languages was opened in 1991. With the government funding to universities shifting more and more towards the previously disadvantaged institutions the proportion of other population groups (apart from white) will continue to rise. The challenge facing the Library in its strategic planning is to review its collection development policy and redirect its resources towards providing services to the needs of the diversity of its users. To this end there has been a remarkable increase in African languages books and more needs to be done to correct the imbalance in the Library's collections.

#### *4.1.1.2 Censorship*

In South Africa censorship under the National Party regime owes its origins to the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and its supplements and amendments of the

following three decades, which were drawn together in the Internal Security Act of 1982. (Merrett, 1990:217). Though the apartheid government applied different types of censorship, the ones that affected the academics and researchers, and for that matter, academic libraries, most were those derived from the Publications and Internal Security Acts. Together these two Acts placed a limitation on the circulation and possession of certain monographs and periodicals. For example, the works of a renowned botanist Edie Roux, lawyer Albie Sachs and journalist Ronald Segal were banned. Apart from banning the works of local writers “standard primary works by Marx, Lenin, Mao, Engels and others were first banned and then, after 1974, prohibited for possession as were numerous secondary works”. (Switzer, 1988:108).

In 1978 the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS) set up a special committee to negotiate in order to gain clarity as to the legality of possession and use of banned publications in university and other libraries. In 1980 an exemption was given to certain libraries to hold banned publications. Unlike the University of Fort Hare, the University of Port Elizabeth Library was one of the libraries allowed to hold banned publications. (Musiker, 1986: 61). However, the strict restrictions imposed on such publications, like having them locked away, having a separate catalogue, restricted availability to lecturers and post-graduate students, and restricted to in-library consultation did not make their acquisition and accessibility easy for academic libraries.

Censorship has had a far-reaching influence on academic institutions in South Africa. The damage done to the collections of the academic libraries due to censorship led to “books in locked cupboards; people in locked cells; and the suspension or outright banning of anti-apartheid newspapers”. (Merrett, 1990:215). The exemptions granted to the University libraries did not augur well for creating the necessary access to information that was so vital for teaching and research. Most writers on censorship agree that such a policy hampered universities’ research and teaching roles in fields such as African Studies, political science, religion, anthropology, sociology, literature and economics.

Like most South African academic libraries, the University of Port Elizabeth Library’s collections in the above disciplines are sparse. The Library intends bringing its collections to international standards but finance is the major constraint. The new dispensation and the global village have opened gateways for the Library to establish links with overseas libraries, after having been in isolation for such a long time.

#### ***4.1.1.3 Taxation***

The effects of Value Added Tax (VAT) on the collection development of libraries and the acquisition of other library materials has been discussed in detail in the chapter on the University of Fort Hare Library. The effects of VAT are similar in both libraries. South Africa is among the few continents in the world that charges VAT on books.

The University of Port Elizabeth Library is a member of South East Academic Libraries (SEALS). This consortium is still at its embryonic stage. One of the objectives of such a

venture is that when it becomes a fully-fledged consortium it will establish relationships with other consortia and interest groups to lobby and put pressure on the government to reduce or abandon VAT on books. Through cooperative acquisition member libraries may negotiate with suppliers to be offered discounts on purchases.

#### ***4.1.2 Economics***

Libraries, like many other organisations, exist in a highly unstable economic environment. During strategic planning a library needs to monitor economic indications, both nationally and internationally to help in prioritization and efficient allocation of resources. Changing economic trends may call for constant revision of a library's strategic plan. Economic factors that may influence a library's strategic plan include inflation and the exchange rate.

##### ***4.1.2.1 Inflation***

The volatile economic situation in the country makes long term strategic planning difficult. Inflation pushes up the prices of books and other library materials. This may lead to the cancellation of certain projects and reallocation of resources. A strategic planning report of the University of Port Elizabeth Library partly reads "for the financial outlook, we identified a need to monitor economic indicators and attempt to influence those that we could, especially the subscription of journals, and the need to reallocate resources to achieve our desired goals". The University of Port Elizabeth Library has made a projection for an annual inflation rate of 10% in its strategic plan. With the recent high inflationary rate such a projection is unlikely to be realistic and the Library will have to

revise its strategic plan and forgo certain projects if it does not receive a substantial increase in funding. Inflation makes the acquisition of materials locally very expensive. A library may decide to import such materials but the depreciation of the Rand against the other currencies makes the situation even worse. It seems the country is experiencing both inflation and a weakening of the exchange rate as discussed below.

#### **4.1.2.2 Exchange Rate**

A greater proportion of monographs and periodicals of the University of Port Elizabeth Library is imported. Fluctuation in the exchange rate is a factor that has an influence in the Library's strategic plan.

In 1997, the Library made the following calculations about the depreciated of the Rand and its effects on the ratio of importation of library materials – based on 1995 and 1996 exchange rates.

**Depreciation of Rand: July 1995 – July 1996**  
 (Calculated: \$ (50% of fund), £ (30% of fund), DM (10% of fund) and R (10% of fund))

Unit	Ratio	Exchange Rate – July 1995	Exchange Rate – July 1996	Percentage Change	Equivalent Ratio – July 1996
Rand	10	-	-	-	10, 00
DM	10	2, 6631	2, 9674	+11,43%	11, 14
£	30	5, 8560	6, 8400	+16,80%	35, 04
\$	50	3, 6520	4, 4100	20,76%	60, 38
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>			<b>+ 16,56%</b>	<b>116, 56</b>

*Source: University of Port Elizabeth Library Budget Allocation Report, 1997a.*

In 1995 the Rand was about 3.7 to the Dollar. Today the Rand is trading at about six to the Dollar, getting to almost double the 1995 exchange rate. This year (1998) alone the Rand has depreciated by 26%. The Library's budget allocation increased from R2 370 000 in 1995 to only R2 860 000 in 1998. If the Rand is to continue depreciating and the Library does not receive more funding then it cannot realize some of its goals in the strategic plan. That is one of the reasons why the Library advocates more funding from the parent body and the need to explore alternative sources of funding as discussed under 4.3.1. Another option that needs to be investigated by the Library to counteract the effects of currency fluctuations is purchasing 'forward cover' on the money market.

#### ***4.1.3 Society***

A library cannot operate as an island. It must be flexible towards the changing needs of society. A good academic library is the one that is able to study and follow trends in society so that it does not become anachronistic. Though the whole societal set up may have an influence on the planning strategy of an academic library the following factors are considered important as far as this study is concerned.

##### ***4.1.3.1 Changing Pattern of Learning, Teaching and Research***

The trend in universities is towards the development of student-centred learning in the form of projects, dissertations and assignments. Such a trend is providing a dramatic increase in demand for library services. The undertaking of bibliographical searches by

students in order to identify appropriate information materials is becoming increasingly common. (Brophy, 1991:10)

One of the strategic planning documents of the University of Port Elizabeth reads “the Library sees itself as needs-driven. We provide services proactively and reactively according to what happens in the lecture rooms, seminar rooms, laboratories, research offices, etc. of the University of Port Elizabeth”. The Library has to adapt and supply services according to the changing needs of the University of Port Elizabeth community.

To achieve the above purpose, a survey was conducted in June 1997 to find out the information needs of the users of the Library and to seek input from the various sectors of the University. Based on this survey of needs, observations and information gathered by the Library staff the following recommendations were made in the Library’s strategic plan in connection with the changing pattern of learning, teaching and research.

- Changes (in the Library) during the next five years will be evolutionary rather than revolutionary and will have to be in tandem with changes on the academic front at the University of Port Elizabeth.
- The Library should be recognized as part of the academic activities and facilities of the University of Port Elizabeth.
- Collection development should concentrate on the needs of taught courses.
- The traditional print material will still form part of the bulk of material

purchased.

- Advanced research should be dependent on electronic information retrieval and document delivery.
- Centres of excellence with a proven sustained record of research output will be supported within budgetary constraints. It should be considered that a percentage of funds obtained for research projects be allocated for information resources.
- An integrated approach towards multi-media resource-based learning should be kindled at the University of Port Elizabeth.

(Source: University of Port Elizabeth Library 's Second Strategic Planning Report September 1997b

#### ***4.1.3.2 Affirmative Action***

The University of Port Elizabeth defines affirmative action as “a set of interim policies, to be regularly reviewed, designed to ensure equality of opportunity and diversity at the University of Port Elizabeth, through the recruitment, selection, admission, education, training and promotion of persons possessing basic competence from hitherto disadvantaged ‘groups’, focusing particularly on ‘groups’ of South Africans, which, as a consequence of the policy of Apartheid, are numerically under-presented on the University’s staff and student populations”.

With the inception of South Africa’s new democracy, in 1994, it has been the

government's policy that all institutions redress the issue of discrimination in employment in terms of race, sex and disability. A representative-working group of a Broad Transformation Forum was tasked to develop an affirmative action policy for the University in 1997. "The aim of this policy is to entrench the core values of equality and democracy in our organization, and to enrich the University of Port Elizabeth in all aspects through the diversity of staff and student population". (A circular letter from the Principal's office to all members of staff at the University of Port Elizabeth). It is the policy of the university to "increase the diversity of its staff and students to enhance the quality of the institution and thereby optimize the contribution of the University to society". The circular letter emphasizes that "all appointments will occur within the provisions of the (Affirmative Action) Policy so as to place all new staff in an equal position to contribute optionally to strategic objectives of the university".

All departments of the University, the Library inclusive, are to abide by the affirmative action policy of the University. According to the circular letter "The promotion of this policy is a key function of all managers in the university, and the successful implementation thereof will be included in the criteria on which their performance is assessed". For the first time in the annals of the Library, a black person has been appointed to the senior management position of Deputy University Librarian. The Library has a comprehensive programme, under its strategic plan, for the development of its staff, especially those from previously disadvantaged background. This will be discussed under the Library's staff development programme.

#### *4.1.3.3 Gender Issues*

Part of the affirmative action programme of the University of Port Elizabeth involves gender issues. There is a predominance of males in top positions at the University. Departments are encouraged to retrain and promote females to senior positions. Like in the case of the University of Fort Hare Library, gender issues do not need much attention in the strategic plan of the University of Port Elizabeth Library. Of the 15 professional librarians 10 are females. Apart from the University Librarian, his Deputy and Head of Acquisitions, all the other heads of departments in the Library are females. The predominance of females, in senior positions in the Library, as compared to the other departments in the University may be attributed to more of a historical factor than to the Library's deliberate plan to have females in those positions. Librarianship, like nursing, was considered a discipline mainly for females. Males are newcomers in the field of librarianship. It follows that there are more qualified female librarians than males.

#### *4.1.4 Technology*

Of all the issues facing academic librarians, those posed by information technology seem to be the most fundamental (Brophy, 1991: 12). The rapid development of information technology is an opportunity to those librarians who can and have the means to keep up with the pace. On the other hand, those librarians who lag behind may see information technology as a threat especially with the high increase of user expectation.

Though the University of Port Elizabeth Library recognizes the importance of information technology it is clearly stated in its strategic plan the problems it is facing, especially from the parent body, the University of Port Elizabeth and the Computing Centre.

- “State of the art of information technology is very important to the University of Port Elizabeth Library. It is still just a tool and does not replace an efficient library service and collection.
- The UPE (i.e. the University of Port Elizabeth, the parent body) is not in the forefront of information technology, and services from the UPE Computer Centre are problematic.
- The cost of information technology as well as electronic information resources puts the ‘virtual library’ out of reach for UPE for the next five years. Even if we could afford it experts at UPE are not able to cope with and support it.
- The Library will, however, keep motivating for information technology with proven utilization and systems that will assist with proven needs.
- Serious consideration should be given to out-sourcing the installation and maintenance of information technology to secure an acceptable level of service”.

**(Source: University of Port Elizabeth Library Strategic Plan Programme, 1996)**

The following aspects of information technology will be discussed under the University of Port Elizabeth Library’s strategic plan.

#### ***4.1.4.1 Automation***

The University of Port Elizabeth Library was computerized in 1990. All the management functions, except the periodicals, are automated. It is part of the library's plan to have the periodicals section automated as soon as possible to ease workflow.

Automation of library functions such as cataloguing, acquisition, circulation and interlibrary loan makes the provision of services faster and more efficient. However, a library needs to be aware of the rapid changes in automated functions and plan to have its staff updated and retrained. The library must also plan to have funds available for upgrading its state of computerization.

Automation does not affect only the library staff but also the users. Computerization raises the expectation of the users. However, they cannot benefit much from computerization if they are not trained properly to access and retrieve the right information. The continuous training of staff and users occupy prominence in the strategic plan of the University of Port Elizabeth Library. The Library laments a lot about the lack of commitment on the part of the parent body, towards providing enough funds for the realization of its goal of rapid advancement in information technology.

#### *4.1.4.2 Networking*

An important aspect of information technology that has much influence on the Library's strategic plan is networking. The Library recognizes the importance of networking in the efficient provision of services to its users. Networking is given prominence in the Library's strategic plan in order to make information readily available to its users. Like the University of Fort Hare, the University of Port Elizabeth Library's catalogue is online for the academics to do searches in their offices. This facility has been extended to students whereby they can do searches on the computers at the Computing Centre and come to the Library to fetch the materials.

Apart from its online catalogue, the Library's aim is to install Microsoft CD-ROM network. The benefits to be derived from such a venture as envisaged by the Library include "easier management, installation, configuration and updates, and better security". "They also offer cost savings in hardware and network software licenses and ultimately, higher user productivity and higher performance". Networking also allows multiple users to access a CD-ROM simultaneously. In addition, a single PC user can access multiple CD-ROM drives. The economic and productivity benefits can be significant. Eliminating the need for CD-ROM drive at each PC can be substantial saving in itself. Productivity gains from not having to wait in line for information is also one of the advantages.

Through the Library's orientation programme, workshops and daily interactions with the users, it plans teaching as many of its users as possible to do searches not only on the Library's online catalogue but also on SABINET and the Internet.

#### *4.1.4.3 Obsolescence*

As a library applies information technology to improve its services some of its facilities may become obsolete. During strategic planning such facilities need to be identified and alternative use sought or they are discarded. The University of Port Elizabeth Library is in the process of having its periodicals online so that its card catalogues are discarded. The Library has also planned to replace all its terminals with computers and these computers replaced every three years.

Secondly, due to obsolescence, the maintenance contract on the Ultimate computer, on which the URICA library system was run was terminated. A Sun Computer, running under a UNIX operating system has been approved as a replacement. The system has been transferred to the UNIX/Universe version of URICA. This means retraining of staff to make the changeover smooth.

A comment in the Library's strategic plan with regard to obsolescence is quite debatable. According to the Library, it is a "misconception that information will make libraries obsolete. The library is not books, nor a building – it is a SERVICE". Personally, I think a service can also become obsolete if the people the service is being delivered to are no longer interested in that service or the way it is being delivered. Librarians must be prepared to learn new ways of delivering services so that they and their services do not

become obsolete in the eyes of the users.

Below are the University of Port Elizabeth Library's view of the implications of trends in information technology and the way forward as contained in its strategic plan:

- State of the art information technology is still just a tool and does not replace an efficient library service and collection.
- The Internet, while being an important information source, is not a substitute for an efficient collection. Internet should be viewed as supportive and not a primary source of information.
- With the transformation of the student body, most students are in the “pre-book” stage and cannot be deprived more, by just offering “post-book services”.
- Electronic information sources, especially electronic journals, offer the UPE no solution at the moment since these sources are much more expensive than the printed versions.

**Future Plans Include:**

- Investigation into the networking and increased access to Internet, CD-ROM networking.

- Public access to PCs and Internet Full text documentary delivery.
- Electronic journals.
- Employment of information technologist in the library.

## ***4.2 Library Industry Environment***

An academic library must not exist in isolation. The strategic plan of a library must make room for links with other libraries and their planned directions. During strategic planning it is important to interview administrators and staff of peer institutions. Information from such interviews may validate the directions identified for the library and give it a sense of where it stands in relation to other libraries in adapting to change.

### ***4.2.1 Cooperation and Resource Sharing***

With the increasing reduction of budget allocation to academic libraries by their parent bodies, the rising cost of library materials and rising user demand for better services and resources, many libraries are now turning to resource sharing and cooperation with other libraries. Such cooperative ventures should not take place on ad hoc basis. They should form part of the libraries' strategic plan if they are to be beneficial to them.

The University of Port Elizabeth Library recognizes the importance of cooperation and resource sharing as a factor which should be given prominence in its strategic plan.

A Research conducted by the writer in 1996 for an internship project revealed that the University of Port Elizabeth Library enjoys a very good relationship with libraries of sister

institutions like Vista (Port Elizabeth branch) and Port Elizabeth Technikon. Not only is the Library's relationship with sister institutions in Port Elizabeth, it has links with other academic libraries in the Eastern Cape. Like the University of Fort Hare Library, it is a member of SEALS.

Below are the issues raised under the Library's strategic plan in relation to library cooperation and resource sharing:

- The University Library should identify common areas of cooperation and service with other regional libraries.
- It should be the aim of the libraries to have common operating systems, e.g. cataloguing.
- Regional cooperation will need sophisticated TI (Technical Information) communication structure to provide superior service from a small teletrading base, UPE (University of Port Elizabeth) should plan for this.
- In seeking and developing resource sharing the libraries should avoid empire building and recognize common library aims and identities.
- The Library should adopt cost - benefit - analysis, which includes short term, medium and long term analysis and avoid retrogressive action.
- The Library also recognizes that "to go beyond the existing cooperation requires very large sums of money to investigate and to set up a consortium".
- More intensive cooperative with the Port Elizabeth Technikon will mean

that the University Library “will form the central library and will have to provide space for Technikon students. “The first implication of such cooperation will be that a new building has to be found for the Building disciplines (currently occupying the top floor of the library) so that the library can occupy the whole building.

- The University of Port Elizabeth Library staff will also want to be on the salary scale of the Technikon.

#### *4.2.2 Computing Centre*

There are two schools of thought about the relationship between a library and the computing centre in an institution like the university. On one hand, we have those who believe that the two departments complement each and therefore enjoy mutual coexistence. On the other side of the coin, we have those who think that the emergence of the computing centre in academic institutions, due to information technology, should be seen as rivalry to the library’s existence since the former is capable of taking over some of the functions of the latter especially in the provision of information.

The investigation revealed that though there is no rivalry between the University of Port Elizabeth Computing Centre and the Library in terms of functions the latter is not happy with the help it receives from the former. This assertion is buttressed by the following quotation from one of the Library’s strategic planning reports: “The University of Port Elizabeth is not at the forefront of information technology, and services supplied by the

University of Port Elizabeth Computing Centre are problematic (to state it mildly). The purely re-active role of the University of Port Elizabeth Computing Centre makes holistic and integrated planning and development difficult. The University of Port Elizabeth Computing Centre is playing no pro-active role regarding information technology for the Library. Everything the Library has is as a result of its own initiative, research and investigations. The cost of all the information technology is even funded from the Library's own account in contrast with other South African universities where it is borne by their computing centres".

In order to foster better relationship with the Computing Centre and to avoid duplication of services and for the Library to benefit more from the technological advancement undertaken by the Computing Centre the former invited the latter to make representation in its strategic plan. The presentation highlighted the core services provided by the Computing Centre as: providing both internal and external connectivity to information systems, information delivery systems such as e-mail, World -Wide Web, print services, front-end tools and corporate information systems. The Library stresses the need for the two departments to cooperate more with each other and put their resources together in seeking advancement in information technology instead of each going it alone. It is part of the strategic plan of the University of Port Elizabeth Library to encourage the Computing Centre "to sell IT (information technology) benefits and create awareness of the facilities available at UPE".

### *4.2.3 Competitive Relationships*

Apart from the Library competing with the other departments for new positions and the allocation of scarce resources from the parent body it does not face any serious competition from any quarters except in its relationship with the Computing Centre. The Library however needs the support of the academic departments to lobby for more funds and inputs from these departments to make its (Library's) collection development relevant to the students and lecturers. The Library wants more presentation on the academic affairs of the University. This is clearly stated in its strategic plan as follows:

- Departments should, as part of their regular procedure, include the strengthening of library resources where necessary to support their work. In this respect, deans of faculties and heads of departments should forge a closer association with the work of the University Librarian and his colleagues by involving them in academic planning.
- The Library should be kept informed of university wide academic developments to keep abreast of new and expected demands likely to be placed on the Library through joint planning and the University Librarian's membership of relevant committees.

The Library is not happy with the planned "study centre" for the University of Port Elizabeth. To the Library "it is short-sighted to provide any such learning facility away from the learning media". (University of Port Elizabeth Library Second Strategic Plan

Report). The Library would like to see an integrated media approach to learning and it should be provided with an electronic classroom instead of creating a study centre.

### **4.3 Internal Environmental Factors**

The internal environment of a library involves the assessment of the immediate situation in which the library operates. This includes the library and its parent body, its staff, facilities and services and its users.

#### **4.3.1 Parent Body and Funding**

Academic libraries usually belong to a “mother body” and serve the needs and goals of this body. The strategic plan of an academic library like that of the University of Port Elizabeth is therefore linked to the overall planning strategy of the parent body, that is the university.

Though the universities recognize the importance of academic libraries as part of academic excellence, when it comes to budget cuts the libraries suffer greatly. Strategic plans become mere documents on files if the libraries do not get enough funding from their parent bodies to implement them. Funding from the parent bodies is therefore an important factor that should take prominence in an academic library’s strategic plan.

The University of Port Elizabeth expects the Library to provide excellent support services to the departments but its budget allocation to the Library shows that it is paying lip-service to the development of information technology as evidenced by the figures below.

### BUDGET ALLOCATION TO UPE LIBRARY, 1994 – 1998

Year	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Budget	2 137 500	2 370 000	2 500 000	2 700 000	2 860 000

*Source: University of Port Elizabeth Library Annual Report, 1998*

In nominal terms the budget allocation to the Library rose from 2 137 500 in 1994 to 2 860 000 in 1998. Taking into consideration the high inflationary rate, the depreciation of the rand and the increased demand for new and better services, the budget is dwindling in real terms. The Library has recognized that the parent-body is not providing it with enough funds to meet its obligations. This is clearly stated in one of its strategic plan reports as: "Academic excellence is mentioned as the first core value of UPE. Without a proper academic library, filled with 'cutting-edge knowledge', the UPE will indeed be offering an unique learning experience – one without learning resources!" According to that report the Library should receive at least 6% of the total expenditure of the University, as is the international norm for small universities.

Realizing that the budget allocation from the University will continue to decrease, the

Library has put up the following proposals in its strategic plan to increase its funds:

- Fundraising
- Library charges in the form of fines, outside users, inter-library loan
- Duplicate book sales
- Making academic staff aware of library's need for funding
- Approach research committee about outside funds and library services
- Selling services to other libraries
- Rationalize journal subscriptions in favour of electronic media where cheaper
- Resource sharing
- Selling stationery

#### *4.3.2 Staff*

The staffing component of the Library is an important factor that should be given prominence in its strategic plan. Without a well-trained and efficient staff services cannot be delivered to the satisfaction of the users. Good staff can make a great difference even if the other resources are inadequate.

The University of Port Elizabeth Library recognizes the need for staff at different levels, viz, professional, paraprofessional and clerical to fulfil its role. The trend nowadays is for librarians to act as intermediaries between the users and the vast range of information resources. The Library's emphasis is to shift more towards the development and training

of professional staff who can provide the services needed by the users. The Library has included a comprehensive staff development programme in its strategic plan to train its staff in “handling information technology at an advanced level for access and retrieval, and also to guide students towards information literacy”.

The staff development programme of the University of Port Elizabeth Library include the following:

1. University and library orientation.
  - 1.1 Basic orientation to the job and general conditions
  - 1.2 General orientation to the aims and organization of the University and the Library.
  - 1.3 Work experience rotation – A new staff member of the Library will visit other departments in the library after spending six weeks on the job to which he or she is appointed. “This is intended to assist the new employee in gaining an oversight and understanding of different aspects of the Library’s operation”.
2. On-the-job-training – This is necessary for the new staff member to “become competent in the procedures followed by the department and to become familiar with the policies underlying those procedures”.
3. Library training and development opportunities which will include:
  - 3.1 Interchange programmes to help individual staff members gain experience in other sections of the Library. This may be done by job exchange, or job sharing, or job release for a certain period of time. The overall aim of the programme is to further

the development of staff to meet the Library's objectives and at the same time to meet the individual staff member's personal interests and motivations".

- 3.2 Seminars to afford the librarians at all levels opportunity to discuss librarianship issues.
- 3.3 Individual skill development opportunities for staff members to acquire relevant skill to meet changes like technology and policy.
4. Off-campus conferences and/or courses.
  - 4.1 Staff members will be encouraged to attend seminars and provide feedback in the form of written reports.
  - 4.2 The Library will look for training courses outside the university and funds available for staff members to attend. This will enable staff members to develop technical skills, for example, online information retrieval.
  - 4.3 "Tertiary level education support will be provided, in approved cases, according to the provisions of the university regulations".
5. External work experience or visits: Librarians from the University of Port Elizabeth are to be encouraged to visit other libraries to "experience work methods and conditions". Such experience may be gained by:
  - 5.1 Visits to other libraries to investigate particular methods relating to specific services.
  - 5.2 Secondment for a specific period to allow in-depth investigation and/or project work.
6. Staff development reviews: "The University Librarian in consultation with the Human Resources Directorate will implement staff reviews and performance

appraisal as an integral part of the staff development programme with individual requirements, and their relationship to organizational needs, being discussed, at least annually, between the individual and their Head of Department.”

**Source: University of Port Elizabeth Library Staff Development Programme, 1997c.**

### ***4.3.3 Facilities and Services***

Unlike the University of Fort Hare Library, the University of Port Elizabeth Library, which was built in 1965, is well designed. It was expanded in 1993. The basement of the library is being used as lecture rooms and the third floor houses the Building disciplines (Architecture, Surveying and Planning). It has been projected by the Library that “if either massification of higher education or more extensive cooperation with the PE Technikon becomes a reality”, the complete building will be needed. Secondly, the short loan section will have to be expanded and redesigned in the next five years “if tertiary didactics changes strongly to recommended reading for large groups”. Thirdly, it is envisaged that if more intensive cooperation with Port Elizabeth Technikon becomes a reality the University of Port Elizabeth Library will form the central library and will have to plan to provide space for the Technikon students.

As a long-term measure the Library intends providing space for students working late at night and early in the morning to eat. Computers are to be made available to students to do their assignments. The students want the computers to be linked to Internet and be accessible to all of them, not only the post-graduates.

The undergraduate students are by far the majority in the University of Port Elizabeth and their needs are accorded priority in the Library's strategic plan. The emphasis for the next five years will be on basic books for undergraduates and a core journal collection of research material will have to be developed for sustained research in centres of excellence. The future trend will be to develop electronic information retrieval for research purposes and linked to different forms of documentary delivery.

The increase in student numbers leads to an increase in the number of students with impaired vision. In the long term the Library intends providing special services to students with impaired vision. At the moment the Library finds such a project as too costly. Since the Library cannot provide services to students with impaired vision because of its limited resources it has advised departments with such students to mobilize the staff and other students to help. Such students may also be referred to the Grahamstown National Library for the Blind for help.

#### **4.3.4 Users**

A library exists because of its users. In an academic set-up, changes in student members, composition, and information needs are factors that need to be taken into consideration in a library's strategic plan.

The University of Port Elizabeth has encouraged the Students Representative Council (SRC) to be actively involved in the Library Committee and the Strategic Planning

Committee to establish channels for liaison with students and problem-solving regarding library matters. The SRC established a subcommittee for library matters to provide inputs to the Library for its strategic plan.

With a rapid increase in the number of disadvantaged students attending the University the Library has to increase the number of personnel who will provide user education to the students. Contrary to the perception that students from disadvantaged communities do not use libraries, a visit to the University of Port Elizabeth Library during day-time revealed that they are the majority of the users. Such students are well aware that they are at a disadvantage and are extremely keen to acquire knowledge and information. The Library plans increasing the information literacy level of the students through orientation and workshops.

Mainly undergraduate students doing taught courses and the staff for preparation of lectures use the Library. Only about 6% of the users use the Library for research purposes. The Library intends continuing to provide basic materials for the users since the majority of them are not familiar with electronic information. As a long-term measure, there will be gradual shift of emphasis towards the provision of electronic information. The Library will need more staff to train the users.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUDING SUMMARY, COMPARISON AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

### *5.1 Concluding Summary*

Libraries are facing critical times. Their futures are threatened by a burgeoning volume of print publications, by information technology, especially the proliferation of information in electronic form, by reduced budgets and high cost of library materials, and by high user expectations and the demand for new and better services and products. For libraries to survive in such an unstable environment they need strategic planning. Libraries need strategic planning not only to meet the complex political, social, economical and technological circumstances, but also formal planning is increasingly assumed and required in their organisational and professional environments. Libraries need to face the problems of their future survival and strategic planning is a significant part of the solution to those problems. (Baker, 1989: 206). To the academic library, the environment is unstable because of uncertain funding and declining value of the Rand but also offers opportunities because of changing technology. However, the matter is complex because the rate of substitution of electronic for print-on-paper and other media sources is difficult to predict. It is this mixture which makes strategic planning, which concentrates on the quality of service, an important tool for library management.

There is a large and growing literature on strategic planning in library science and other disciplines like management and planning. While individual accounts may vary considerably in

detail, there is a general consensus about the essential features of strategic planning.

Vincent (1988: 36) summaries the main characteristics of strategic planning as follows:

- Strategic planning takes into account the organisation's environment, as a source of both constraints and pressures and opportunities.
- Strategic planning is future-orientated. It may deal with the future descriptively, by attempting to predict what it will be like, or normally, by attempting to create and control it.
- Strategic planning is change-orientated. It analyses where the organisation is now, envisions a desirable or feasible future position, and develops strategies for moving from the first to the second.
- Strategic planning views the organisation as a system. Its ideal outcome is a single plan for the whole organisation. Sectional plans must conform with and contribute to the total plan.
- Strategic planning considers alternatives among goals and objectives, and among strategies for achieving them.
- Both the procedures of the strategic planning and the plans are formal and documented.

Riggs (1984: 119) sees strategic planning as being "complex, time-consuming, exciting, long-range, annually recycling, ongoing and rewarding". Strategic planning should be recognised as

an integral part of the function of managing an organisation.

Certain steps have to be followed in the strategic planning process to achieve good results. However, libraries operate in different environments and may need to adopt different approaches to their strategic planning process. The following are the processes of strategic planning emerging from the summary of the literature review:

- Choosing people to be involved in the planning process, what is known as "positioning the architects."
- Evaluating the current position of the library.
- Deciding on where the library would like to be in future.
- Putting plans forward for the library to achieve its goals and objectives.
- Constantly evaluating the library's performance to see whether it has achieved the goals and objectives set.

In a nutshell, the strategic planning process involves where the library has been, what it does well, and what needs to be improved. The process promotes discussion of future directions for the organisation.

Rosser and Penrod (1994:14) assert that a good strategic planning process should demonstrate the following features:

- The process should be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.
- It should promote change within the institution through the normal decision making

structure.

- Planning should be focused on decisions and actions rather than on documents.
- The process should allow some flexibility and encourage innovation.
- It should unite plans with individual work plans.
- It should be linked to the resource allocation process.

Strategic planning has worked for the business community and according to Corral (1994: 44) strategic planning techniques have shown good results in libraries which have already applied them throughout the world. Because strategic planning also focuses on the setting and accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the organisation, it can make a considerable contribution towards organisational effectiveness; without proper planning, no rational indicators of effectiveness can easily be determined. As Riggs (1987: 52) puts it, "it (i.e. strategic planning) provides the library leadership with a grand opportunity to turn the corner from being creative with things to being creative with people."

Strategic planning is an awesome and complex management tool. If operationalised properly, good results may be yielded. Riggs (1984:5) gives an outline of the benefits that are to be realised if a library moves from traditional planning to strategic planning as follows:

<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
Random planning	Systematic planning
Reactive decision making	Proactive decision making
Incremental evaluation	Synoptic evaluation
Goal-setting based on operational needs	Organisation's mission
Isolated decision making	Team decision making
Decision making based on subjective evaluations	Decision making based on objective evaluations as a result of gathering data
Guessing results	Evaluating all possible outcomes

It needs to be stressed that strategic planning is not without any attendant problems. It is time-consuming, needs commitment and dedication from all the stakeholders and may meet resistance from those who want to maintain the status quo. Strategic planning can raise expectation levels within the library and among the users. It can sometimes be difficult to attach resource needs to proposed strategic initiatives, which are that far into the future. However, whilst this assertion may be true, one of the tenets of strategic planning is to distinguish between short, medium and long-term planning. The immediate availability of resources becomes acute with short-term plans but it is the function of the medium term plan to make sure that resources of the next 'short term' plan are obtained in good time. The long-term plan provides a perspective on the policy issues which are going to need to be addressed in

order that the medium term plan can be reasonably put in place the practical means of obtaining resources. Butler and Davis (1992: 395) citing Ida Vincent expressed concern that libraries may lack the requisite autonomy, power, and funding stability that the strategic planning process requires. It has also been noted that some recent writers like Mintzberg (1994) are beginning to doubt the value of planning. Mintzberg's main thesis is that planning and strategy making are mutually exclusive activities. While acknowledging a vital role for planning, he claims that the process can straitjacket an organisation by stifling innovation and commitment. On the other hand, strategy making is a fluid, informal process requiring adaptability. In other words, we must be sure that the structures which are created to foster such planning approaches do not also lead to a 'freezing' of the organisation so that it is, again, unresponsive to change.

Environmental scanning is an important aspect of strategic planning. There is the need for the practitioners of strategic planning to assess and reassess environmental factors that influence the existence of the library and use evaluative information about the prior year's activities to determine the library's future goals objectives. The library must examine its external and internal environmental factors to determine what type of business it wants to be in the future.

## *5.2 Comparisons*

The Universities of Fort Hare and Port Elizabeth libraries were chosen for the purpose of this study to represent the historically black and white universities respectively. One may argue that the conclusions and comparisons drawn from only two university libraries may not give a good

picture of what pertains in all the academic libraries in South Africa. The writer admits this limitation but, from information already noted in the literature survey, believes that the study has identified broad, key issues, which would be applicable to most academic libraries. The examination of the influences of such environmental factors is of utmost importance if the libraries are to succeed in their strategic planning. Broadly, the findings are that similar environmental factors influence planning in the libraries of the University of Fort Hare and the University of Port Elizabeth. However, the extent and direction of influences and how the two libraries react to such influences may be different.

The hangover of the past government's policies such as apartheid and censorship influence the strategic planning of both libraries. Through strategic planning both of them are trying to correct the imbalances created in the past though in different directions. The apartheid policy of under-funding to the historically black universities has left the University of Fort Hare Library with poor infrastructure, facilities and resources. The aim of the Library is to upgrade its facilities and resources to be at par with its counterparts, the white university libraries. Though the University of Port Elizabeth Library on the other hand, has better facilities and resources, the new dispensation have led to a rapid increase in the proportion of non-white students. This has put a strain on the Library's resources. The Library has to put forward plans to cater for the needs of the other population groups.

The government policy of censorship has affected the collection development of both libraries. Unlike the University of Fort Hare Library, the University of Port Elizabeth Library was allowed to keep banned publications. The restrictions imposed on those publications prevented

the Library from acquiring much of them. Both libraries could not acquire books from certain countries because of the international isolation of South Africa. As part of strategic plan, both libraries intend bringing their collections to international standards.

The imposition of VAT on books and other library materials has a negative impact on both libraries. Both of them belong to SEALS which intend seeking the support of other consortia to lobby the government to have VAT on books scrapped.

Local and international economic situations have influence on the strategic planning of both libraries and for that matter all libraries undertaking such a venture. Whatever happens in local and foreign markets affects libraries both directly and indirectly since the bulk of library materials and books are purchased in the open market. An unstable economic environment makes strategic planning rather difficult. To succeed in such an environment the planners need to study the economic situation very well so that they are not overtaken by events. Enough room needs to be created for a continuous assessment and revision of strategic plans. Apart from the chosen strategy, the implications of other changes in the environment need to be considered and contingency plans established to cope with such events.

The economic factors that influence the strategic planning of both libraries are inflation and exchange rate. Only 5% of books and periodicals are purchased locally by the University of Fort Hare Library compared to 10% by the University of Port Elizabeth Library. Domestic inflation therefore affects the latter more than the former. The recent high depreciation of the

Rand affects the University of Fort Hare Library more than the University of Port Elizabeth Library. The University of Port Elizabeth Library buys 50% of its books and periodicals from United States of America, 30% from the United Kingdom, 10% from Germany and 10% locally. The University of Fort Hare Library imports 95% of its books and periodicals from the United States and 5% locally. The University of Port Elizabeth Library therefore has more room to manoeuvre than the Fort Hare Library as far as the fluctuating exchange rate is concerned. The University of Port Elizabeth Library also has a budget allocation better able to absorb the effects of inflation and fluctuating exchange rates than the University of Fort Hare Library.

Academic libraries exist to provide support services to the academic departments on campus. The services provided should be relevant to the changing pattern of learning, teaching and research in the institution. It is therefore necessary for the libraries to study and incorporate these changes in their strategic planning. The Universities of Fort Hare and Port Elizabeth libraries both realise that teaching at their parent institutions is shifting from a didactic style to student-centred learning. This will continue to put pressure on the libraries to aid students to search for the required and relevant information. Whereas the University of Port Elizabeth Library sees the changes as a gradual process the University of Fort Hare Library believes that such changes are going to affect the library very much. Additional resources are going to be required and a shake-up of the libraries is imminent.

In conforming to the government policy of correcting the imbalance of the past both the Universities of Fort Hare and Port Elizabeth have affirmative action policies that all sectors of

the institutions, the libraries included, have to abide by. The imbalance is more evident in University of Port Elizabeth Library than the University of Fort Hare Library. There is only one black person in a senior position in University of Port Elizabeth Library whereas three of the nine professional librarians of the University of Fort Hare are white. Whereas both libraries have plans to train people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds to take up responsible positions the University of Port Elizabeth Library has a long way to go. The Library has a very comprehensive staff development programme but more needs to be done if its affirmative action policy is to succeed. Though both parent bodies have plans to address gender inequality in employment these do not affect the libraries very much. In both libraries there are more female professional librarians than males. As explained in chapter four this can be attributed more to historical factors than deliberate policy.

Information technology is an important factor that influences the strategic planning of the two libraries. Both libraries recognise the need for advancement in information technology if they are not to be overtaken by events. Their approaches are however different. Though the University of Port Elizabeth has better resources and more advanced users it plans to have a gradual shift from print material to electronic media. Strangely enough, the University of Fort Hare gives prominence to electronic media in its strategic plan though it lacks the resources. When the writer questioned the Library management on this issue the explanation given was that electronic media would solve the Library's space problem. Whether the Library will get enough funding to achieve the goals and objectives of such an ambitious project is yet to be known. The writer thinks that the assumption by the management of the University of Fort

Hare Library that salvation lies in the use of electronic resources is very unsafe and does not seem to be supported by experience in other countries. There is certainly a degree of substitution but there is also increasing evidence that the electronic resources are developing as complements rather than replacement in many areas.

Library cooperation and resource sharing are given prominence in the strategic planning of both libraries. They believe that by pulling resources together libraries can serve their users better than going it alone. Cooperative ventures and resource sharing should not be done on ad hoc basis but should form part of the overall planning strategy of the libraries. Both libraries are members of SEALS. The University of Port Elizabeth Library enjoys better cooperation with other academic libraries than that of the University of Fort Hare. The former has links with libraries of sister institutions like the Port Elizabeth Technikon and Vista (Port Elizabeth campus). For Fort Hare, the nearest academic library is that of Rhodes University which is about 70km away.

Though both libraries recognise the importance of the Computing Centres on their campuses they are not happy with the help received from the latter. The Computing Centres do not help the libraries much in imparting to them developments in the field of information technology. Both libraries have plans to foster better working relationships with their respective Computing Centres. The libraries also want better representation on faculty boards. They need better input and support from the academic departments in the strategic planning. The libraries need the help of the Computing Centres in the areas of latest developments in the field of information technology and the training of staff. The academic departments should let the

libraries know of the developments in their curricula, like new courses that are to be introduced and those that are to be dropped. This will enable the libraries to plan ahead, especially in their collection development.

Academic libraries, as providers of support service to the academic departments, depend on their parent bodies for funding. Funding is an essential ingredient of strategic planning. Without proper funding the library cannot achieve the goals and objectives set out in its strategic planning. The parent bodies of the libraries expect them to provide good support services to enhance teaching and learning but the amount of funding to these libraries is often insufficient. Strategic planning enables a library to put forward a coherent plan and to enable it to reduce the plan in an informed manner if funding is insufficient. In their strategic plans both libraries have to put forward other means of survival like fundraising and seeking donation of books.

As a comparison of the budget allocation to the two libraries shows, the University of Port Elizabeth Library is in a better financial position than the University of Fort Hare Library. Surprisingly, the former has come out with better proposals in its strategic plan to increase its funding base than the latter. For example, University of Port Elizabeth Library with better collection was allocated R2 860 000 for books and journals compared to R2 100 000 to the University Fort Hare Library in 1998. Apart from both libraries proposing more fundraising, selling duplicate copies of books, lobbying management for more funds and library charges, the University of Port Elizabeth Library plans charging other libraries for services rendered and

selling stationery to make more money.

The image of a library and the service it provides depend much on its staff members. Without a well-trained and efficient staff good services cannot be rendered even if the resources are abundant. Staff development is therefore a factor that should be given greater consideration in a library's strategic plan. In their strategic planning, both libraries see the training of their staff as very essential and as an opportunity for their survival. However their approaches are slightly different. The University of Fort Hare Library proposes that the Library Assistants should be encouraged to study part-time to improve their academic qualifications to become professional librarians. To the University of Port Elizabeth Library the emphasis is more on on-the-job training like work rotation, interchange programmes, secondment to other libraries, individual skills development, etc.

Closely related to staff development is the training of library users. The librarians should be competent enough to train the users. It is no use acquiring resources when the users cannot make use of them. Both libraries have training programmes in their strategic plans for the users. It needs to be stressed, however, that the University of Fort Hare Library has more "library illiterates" than the University of Port Elizabeth Library. The former should therefore devote more resources to training the users than the latter.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Strategic planning concentrates on the direction in which the organisation should move and how to achieve that movement. Since strategic planning is clearly long-term it faces the danger

of becoming out of date by the time that it is approved. According to Brophy (1991: 4) "All too often they (i.e. strategic plans) are written, discussed endlessly by staff, discussed in committee, approved, circulated to management and colleagues - and then all but forgotten. By the time that the first strategic plan is approved it is out of date and anyway it's time to start writing the next one". The implementation of strategic planning is essential. It should not be allowed to become static and fossilised. Strategic planning should be a flexible and continuous process subjected to constant monitoring. The plan should make room for updates. The goals and objectives set out in the strategic plan should be achievable. Over-ambitious projects should be avoided. The library must know what its capabilities are and then develop its strategy based on them. For a strategic plan to succeed it needs an input of environmental analysis from outside the library and performance feedback from the library (Brophy, 1991: 7).

Though strategic planning is the most fundamental of activities for top management the involvement of the staff members is highly essential. The involvement of many staff members leads to the proper provision of inputs, collective responsibility and the avoidance of resistance to change. As Forsman (1990: 152) rightly points out "when the library goals are consistent with personal and professional values, resistance is minimised. When employees are also comfortable with how the goals will be achieved, accomplishment is even more probable".

Academic libraries are organisations within organisations. Though the strategic plan of an academic library should be linked to the overall planning strategy of the parent body, the library should be given some autonomy and flexibility over its strategic plan. For example, the strategic planning process in the University of Fort Hare was entrusted in the hands of the

former academic registrar who coordinated the activities of the departments from a central point. When he resigned to work with the national government the strategic plans of the departments, especially that of the Library, were put in disarray. The parent body should not dictate the techniques and approaches that the various departments must follow. According to Cline and Meringolo (1991: 220) "if too a heavy hand is applied in editing, refining, controlling the planning documents or if the goals are too finely crafted by a control office and then handed down, there is a likelihood of resistance".

The library must be recognised as an important department in the university. A library should not be seen as subordinate to the academic departments simply because it provides support services to the latter. The library should be provided with enough funding by the parent body to achieve the goals and objectives set out in its strategic plan. A library service of high quality is the heart of an academic programme of high quality. The academic departments must advocate for the strengthening of library resources to support their work. Closer relationship between the library and academic departments and the involvement of the library in academic planning is essential. According to Brophy (1991: 10) the library should be kept informed of university-wide academic developments to keep abreast of new and expected demands to be placed on the library through joint planning and the university librarian's membership of relevant committees". The library needs inputs to plan ahead in order not to be overtaken by events. The library should develop means of keeping itself informed and of participating in the debates, which shape the environment.

A very important issue, which the writer realised during the investigation, is the proper keeping

of records. Records are very essential in strategic planning. They help in making projections and easy understanding of the strategic plan. The University of Port Elizabeth Library must be commended for the proper keeping of records. They have records of almost all the activities in the Library. This has made their strategic plan more comprehensive, more realistic, simpler to understand and likely to yield better results than the University of Fort Hare Library.

The two libraries studied subscribe to cooperation and resource sharing. However, in their strategic planning processes they do not study and refer to the planning strategy of the other libraries they are taking these joint ventures with. The writer finds this as an anomaly. It is true that libraries operate in different environments and there is no specific set of instructions for them to follow that will take into consideration all the various contingencies inherent to a specific library situation. However, for resource sharing and cooperation to succeed libraries need to discuss their strategic plans with other libraries. They need to know the planned direction of other libraries and where and how to fit in their joint ventures. The study of the strategic plans of other libraries will help them know whether they are on the right path and what is happening in the library world in general.

As part of their strategic plan to meet the demands of the changing pattern of teaching and learning both libraries need to explore the implication and effects of distance education on academic libraries. The University of Stellenbosch has introduced a satellite teaching programme where students can receive lessons at remote stations. Soon many universities may follow suit. What part will the libraries play in such a learning process? According to Brophy

(1991: 12) the library will have a limited input in the production of satellite programmes but its role in off-air recording, retransmitting and storage will be central. Secondly, the television studio will result in the need for indexing, storing and retransmission of in-house video productions.

The University of Port Elizabeth is creating an electronic learning unit. As part of its strategic planning process the Library needs to investigate the impact of such a study unit on its provision of services. The University of Fort Hare is introducing a bridging course for first year students next year. The Library needs to know what part it will play in such a programme. The Library may be required to supply the required material when such a post-matric course is introduced. Another area, which needs attention, is the government's Curriculum 2005 programme and its effect on the Library.

Some important planning issues are raised in the study that warrant a continuing need for strategic planning. Some of these issues are tabulated below.

- The existence of academic libraries is threatened by dwindling budgets and the declining value of the Rand. Libraries need strategic planning to justify their existence and seek more funding from their parent bodies.
- Because academic libraries get insufficient funding from their parent bodies they turn to outside donors for help. For fundraising to be effective proper strategic plans are needed. Donors want to see results. For example the European Union and the Department of Education are offering assistance to the previously disadvantaged institutions like the University of Fort Hare

in the form of computers, printers and books. They would like to know the present status of the libraries, their future plans and what the impact of the donations will be in the delivery of services.

- The development of information technology, especially non-print media, is seen as an opportunity for libraries. Without proper planning, the libraries cannot exploit to the full, the opportunities offered by information technology.
- The methods of teaching, learning and research are changing, as students are encouraged to search for information in the form of project works. There is the continuing need for strategic planning to meet the demands of students and lecturers.
- With the proliferation of information, especially on the Internet, and other information providers like the computing centres, academic libraries need strategic planning if they are to continue attracting users and securing funding.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How long is your experience as a librarian?  Years
2. How long have you been in your present library?  Years

**Please, place an 'X' against the option (s) of your choice.**

3. What is your rank in the library?

- (a) Assistant librarian
- (b) Librarian
- (c) Senior librarian
- (d) Deputy University Librarian
- (e) University librarian
- (f) Other (specify) .....

4. Are you involved in the library's management decision making, especially strategic planning?

- (a) Not involved at all
- (b) Partly involved
- (c) Fully involved

5. Has your library ever experienced censorship? (a) Yes

(b) No

6. If 'yes' what form did the censorship take?

(a) Ban on the acquisition of certain reading materials

(b) Funds for the acquisition of specific reading materials

(c) Other (specify) .....

7. How did the censorship affect your library's planning?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. List any other government policies (if any) that might have affected or are affecting planning in your library.

- (a) .....
- (b) .....
- (c) .....
- (d) .....
- (e) .....

9. What is the main source of funding for the library?

(a) Central government

(b) Provincial government

(c) Parent body (university)

(d) Other

.....

10. Is funding for the library increasing or decreasing in terms of reading materials that can be ordered?

(a) Increasing

(b) Decreasing

(c) Same

11. Do you order reading materials from South Africa or outside South Africa?

(a) South Africa

(b) Outside South Africa

(c) Both

12. If the answer to 11 is (b) or (c) what effect has the exchange rate (Rand/\$ or Rand/£) have on the importation of the reading material?

(a) Greatly reduced

(b) Reduced

(c) Same import

(d) Increased

13. Do you have difficulties with external procurement of reading materials?

Yes  No

14. If yes, name some of the difficulties.

(a) Delays in delivery

(b) Foreign exchange problem

- (c) Increased costs
- (d) Other (specify) .....
15. How does inflation affect your budgetary allocations?
- (a) No effect
- (b) Less reading materials can be ordered.
- (c) Much fewer reading materials can be ordered.
- (d) Other specify .....
16. How do you rate the personnel employed in your library in terms of skills?
- (a) Very lowly skilled
- (b) Lowly skilled
- (c) Skilled
- (d) Highly skilled
17. How many staff members are there in the library?
18. How many of them are professionals and how many are non-professionals?
- (a) Professionals
- (b) Non-Professionals
19. Are there some training programmes for the staff members?
- No  Yes
20. If yes, how is the training structured?
- (a) Local training
- (b) In-service training
-

- (c) Overseas training
- (d) (a) and (b)
- (e) Other specify .....
21. Is there an affirmative action programme in your university?
- (a) Yes  No
22. How many staff members of the library are from the racially disadvantaged community?
23. With regard to 22 how many are in senior positions?
24. Is there pressure from some quarters for the library to employ more from the disadvantaged community?
- (a) No pressure  Not much pressure  Much pressure
25. Is there Gender Task Force in your university? Yes  No
26. How many females are employed in the library?
27. With respect to 26 how many are in senior positions?
28. Is your library automated? Yes  No
29. If yes, are all the sections automated Yes  No
30. What are some of the effects of automation on your library?
- (a) No effect
- (b) Not much
- (c) Improvement in library services
- (d) Considerable improvement in library services
- (e) Other (specify)  
.....

31. Do you still maintain the card catalogue system in your library?  
 (a) Yes  No  Partly
32. Do your library staff and users use computers or terminals to process and access library materials?  
 (a) Yes   
 (b) No   
 (c) Some computers and some terminals
33. Can your library's on-line catalogue be accessed by lecturers in their offices?  
 (a) Yes (b) No  (c) Some
34. Is your library a member of SABINET? (a) Yes  (b) No
35. If yes, do you send your cataloguing records to SABINET?  
 (a) Yes  (b) No
36. How does your membership of SABINET affect your library's strategic planning?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
37. Is there cooperation (e.g. resource sharing) between your library and other academic libraries in your regions? (a) Yes  (b) No
38. If yes, how does this joint venture affect your library's strategic planning?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

.....  
.....  
39. Do you think the services provided by the Computing Centre are complementary or in competition to those provided by your library?

(a) Some competition

(b) Competition

(c) Complementary

40. Does the Computer Centre provide training services to the library staff?

(a) No training

(b) Limited training

(c) Complete training

(d) Other specify .....

41. Does your library's strategic programme affect its relationship with the computer centre? (a) Yes  (b) No

42. How is the strategic planning of your library linked up with the overall strategic planning of the parent body (the university)?

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43. Please, list any other environmental factors that affect the strategic planning process of your library.

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.....  
.....  
.....

**Thank you very much for your time in completing this questionnaire.  
Kwadwo Amoah.**

## APPENDIX 2

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