



This is the author-approved manuscript version of a journal article published in:

Ismail, S. 2007. 'Did I say that?' A follow-up study of the shifts in black and women staff experiences of institutional culture in the Health Sciences Faculty of the University of Cape Town. *Social Dynamics: A journal of African studies*. 33(1): 78-106. DOI: 10.1080/02533950708628744.

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'Did I say that?' A follow-up study of the shifts in black and women staff experiences of institutional culture in the Health Sciences Faculty of the University of Cape Town'

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Abstract

This paper is a follow-up study of how women and black staff experience the institutional culture in the Health Sciences Faculty at the University of Cape Town. The original study was undertaken in 2001 and a follow-up of the same participants was conducted five years later in 2006. The study explores, through qualitative research methods, how change strategies have influenced the institutional culture and whether they have contributed to positive or negative experiences for black and women staff. The theoretical framework draws on the literature which focuses on institutional barriers to change in particular for black and women staff as well as the impact of transformation policies, globalisation, and change strategies on institutional change and the work experience. The study demonstrates the complexity of the institutional culture in a Health Sciences Faculty and makes links between change strategies and cultural change. In so doing, it demonstrates that there has been a positive shift in black and women's experiences of institutional culture.

In 2001 as part of the Health Sciences Faculty (HSF) at the University of Cape Town's strategy to take steps to redress the composition of its staff and students with respect to race, gender, and disability, I undertook a qualitative study to explore the everyday experiences of black, disabled, and women staff of the institutional culture in the HSF.² This study identified ways in which institutional culture, personal, social, and historical factors perpetuated or redressed inequity and made recommendations which would facilitate changes in institutional culture to support transformation objectives. These

included enhancing awareness of gender and cultural diversity, reconciling past injustices, exploring new curricula, finding new ways to nurture and mentor staff, developing new criteria for making appointments, and exploring new work and social arrangements.

In 2006 I did a follow-up study to assess whether the change strategies which had been recommended in the 2001 study and other strategies implemented by the Transformation Office and the broader HSF community had made any impact on staff's experiences of institutional culture. Based on this follow-up study I have, for the purposes of this paper, identified three shifts in staff's experiences of the institutional culture. The shifts identified indicate that changes in collegial and professional development, changes in the composition of leadership and management style, and changes in the student profile can impact on institutional transformation.

Context of the research

There are a number of challenges that face higher education institutions not only in South Africa but world-wide. These include 'financial pressures, growth in technology, changing faculty roles, public scrutiny, changing demographics, competing values, and the rapid rate of change in the world' (Kezar and Eckel, 2002: 1; see also Cloete et al., 2002b; Muller, 2003). In South Africa further challenges are presented by transformation policies. The goals of transformation for higher education are redress, equity, and access which also includes a new co-operative governance policy, responding to educational and economic developments, changing the profile of professionals to reflect the demographics of the country and wider changes in society, and changes to student composition. These changes are expected to occur along with reduced expenditure for higher education.

The state is seen as the key driver of changing demographics and institutional culture through the employment equity legislation and the national agenda of transformation. However there is much concern now that state policies such as the mergers (restructuring) and global forces have sometimes impacted negatively on institutional redress and co-governance (Muller, 2003: 117-19; Cloete et al., 2002b: 7-10).

The study in 2001 was planned as part of the activities of the Transformation Office, to investigate institutional culture, and the social, historical, and personal factors that hinder employment equity and transformation. In

2006 the opportunity arose to do a follow-up study, to revisit and reflect on the impact of change strategies. This opportunity came about because the Transformation Office was also involved in a research project to develop indicators to measure transformation.

Problem identification

The HSF has embraced the position that equity is inseparable from attaining excellence. To realise this vision, the faculty has set out to make its training as accessible as possible to a wide range of talented individuals, reflecting the diversity of its students and staff (London, 2001),

Student diversity has increased not only in the HSF but generally in the university and in the country. (Cloete et al" 2002b: 269-70) show that black students in total university enrolment increased from 30% in 1990 to 60% in 2000. Similarly in the HSF there has been a significant increase in African and Coloured enrolment and in particular of women. Enrolment increased by 50% for this category of student. This is in part due to VCT's targeted approach to admissions. However this has not translated into increased staff diversity or many VCT alumni searching out registrar appointments.

The first study was thus informed by the low numbers of staff in academic posts from the above designated groups, in particular black and disabled staff in senior positions; low numbers from these groups who were applying for promotion; the small number of women staff in academic posts especially at senior level; the slow advancement of black staff; and the rapid turnover of the few black staff that were employed. The aims of the first study were to identify institutional barriers which may impede the recruitment, retention and advancement of designated staff.³

Figures quoted from the employment equity (EE) plan for 2001 illustrate the extent of the disparities. In terms of race, African staff were severely underrepresented with the largest concentration of African staff in junior research: 59% of which 9% were African women. Most Coloured men and women were found in administrative posts as departmental assistants or in administrative support jobs and of the 46 professors there were nine black professors (African, Coloured, and Indian). White women comprised the bulk of the staff, but were outnumbered in senior positions by white men by a ratio of 3:1. Staff with disabilities that could be traced totalled 52. The

quantitative data reported brought to the fore the need for research which described the subjective experiences of staff from the designated groups.

In the 2001 study the overall conclusion reached from a comparison of designated staff's perceptions and experiences of institutional culture was that staff experiences were negative and for many staff, transformation of the institutional culture was an imperative to address historical imbalances, to promote equity, and to remove racial discriminatory practices. The 2001 study identified some of the ways in which the institutional culture, personal, social, or historical factors perpetuated and contributed to negative work experiences. It formulated a number of recommendations to redress inequity, and to make suggestions as to how institutional culture may be changed to support current transformation objectives.

Conceptual Framework

Framework for identifying institutional barriers to change

The international and national literature reviewed for the 2001 study confirmed accounts that showed that trends of employment patterns in the HSF reflected worldwide trends. This literature showed that in many universities and medical faculties (North and South) white males dominated the hierarchy and while white women have moved to the top this has been a slow process (Coker, 2001; Morley and Walsh, 1996).

The writing suggested that the advancement of equal opportunities with regard to the employment and advancement of women and black staff members has proven ineffectual, because it is based on a deficit model of women's and black people's careers. Insufficient attention has been given to underlying injustices or social class because the overriding category to explain transformation has been race or gender (Thompson, 2000; Morley and Walsh, 1996). The literature suggested that the main barriers to advancement were the unchanged interpretation and meanings associated with definitions such as career advancement and merit; and the work ethic, which is macho and fiercely competitive, with the top priorities being to publish and to acquire lucrative externally funded research money.

One explanation offered for this continued trend is that the status quo has been maintained because the power relations have remained intact, and it is these power relations which underlie the stubborn resistance of senior

positions to change (Ismail, 2002; Morley and Walsh, 1996; Heward, 1996). Power is maintained through old networks, social class, institutional culture, and forms of assessment. For example, senior academics control the career aspirations of their peers and junior colleagues by evaluating intellectual outputs, theses, papers, books, and research applications. Thompson (2000) and Heward (1996) suggest that in any understanding of the career progressions of academic professionals, one would need to understand these processes of evaluation.

Evidence from a study of successful women and men academics suggested that seeing yourself, and being seen, as academically able was an important feature on which successful careers are built (De La Rey, n.d.; Heward, 1996: 17-19). So too were self-confidence, and a positive evaluation of staff's own academic ability from the outset of their careers. Other features of success were: encouragement received from peers early on in careers, and qualifying with a good doctoral degree. These tested significant for future success.

Framework for identifying responses to institutional change and framework for studying change

Several theoretical frameworks were identified in the literature survey for the second study which aimed to study the impact of change strategies on institutional culture. Firstly, many similar studies to the 2001 study were carried out at Rhodes University (2003) and at the University of Witwatersrand (2003). These studies reinforced and amplified the results, conclusions, and recommendations from my previous study but did not progress to follow up on the implementation of their respective recommendations. Studies in research on gender and academic medicine (Reichenbach and Brown, 2004) also amplified the themes in the studies quoted above.

The Witwatersrand study used a multicultural framework which concerned itself with issues of identity and diversity (Steyn and Van Zyl, n.d.(a)). I hesitated to use this framework as the political categories used for distinguishing staff provided by employment equity policies produce their own tensions and contradictions. One example of this contradiction is that staff members in designated categories become stereotyped and are seen as victims or people to be acted upon. Their individual identities are subsumed by the assigned categories and agency is taken away from them. This issue surfaced in the 2001 study and was discussed in the report. In addition these

categories were forced on people by apartheid and now by the Employment Equity legislation. Furthermore I did not sufficiently explore identity issues in my investigation, which was required for this framework. Therefore I did not use the framework which explores different discourses of race and identity or transitional identities as used in recent studies of student experiences at white universities (Bangeni and Kapp, 2005; Steyn and Van Zyl, n.d.(b)) and in the HSF at VCT (Erasmus, n.d.; Christian et al., 2002).

Further investigation of the literature revealed a number of studies by the Centre for Higher Education and Training (CHET). Firstly, an empirical study dealt with 'the perennial questions - what is transformation? And what does it intend to achieve?' (Cloete et al., 2002a: 1). This investigation measured the performance of two institutions against transformation indicators. Again the usefulness of the study showed that the issues experienced by staff in the HSF at VCT were national issues at many universities, but the study was limited in offering a sociological lens with which to assess the audit reports of the institutions.

Then a second study by Cloete et al. (2002b) dealt with the impact of global pressures and transformation policies on higher education and the institutional responses. These investigations are macro-studies and 'use the triangular relationships of the state, institutions and society and the effect of globalisation on these relationships to analyse institutional responses' (Cloete et al., 2002b: 10). Cloete et al. trace the impact of the triangular relationship on: funding, staff, leadership, curriculum, and research. In addition they show the impact of similar reforms in Central Europe, India, Japan, and Australia. These studies illustrate that policies have often produced anticipated outcomes which are more attributable to institutional responses to global forces rather than to government policy (286).

Following on from this is Muller's (2003) paper which examines whether institutional changes (innovations in curricula, research, and governance) can be attributed to exogenous (external) or endogenous (internal) factors. He argues that weak universities are more likely to change due to external factors (government policy or niche markets) and that strong, usually elite, universities adapt to change due to internal pressures. In his paper there is no discussion of the internal hierarchies or power elites within institutions and how these can act as constraints on change. In fact there appears to be support for traditional practices which have come under scrutiny in some of

the qualitative reports cited above (see Steyn and Van Zyl, n.d.(a); Rhodes Report, 2003; Ismail, 2000 and 2002).

Both the frameworks provided by Cloete et al. (2000a and b) and Muller (2003) reference themselves to changes driven by globalisation and transformation and the competing goals of these imperatives, as well as how institutions either do or do not change in line with policies. These studies are insightful and allow the reader to grasp the extent and complexity of institutional change at the macro-level. However they offer no guidelines on how to assess internal interventions facilitating change, nor do they examine the qualitative impact of external and internal forces on institutional culture and working relationships.

I then turned to the work of Kezar and Eckel (2002) to explore the impact of changes in institutional culture on staff perceptions. As an alternative Kezar and Eckel (2002: 436-39) suggest that meaningful insight to understand change comes from a micro-level study. Context-based data help the change agent to understand why and under what circumstances strategies work at a particular institution at a particular time. They provide a useful conceptual framework to describe the intertwined institutional cultures in higher education institutions. They have divided institutional culture into four archetypes. These are: collegial (arises from the disciplines of the faculty), managerial (focuses on goals and purposes, efficiency), developmental (based on personal and professional staff development), and negotiational, in which the establishment of equitable and egalitarian policies and procedures is valued.

These descriptors for institutional culture provide a lens through which to view change but are insufficient to describe and analyse change in the HSF context as they do not account for histories of colonial, racial, and gendered oppression and the relationship between the faculty and the health service. Therefore this study uses two conceptual understandings of institutional culture: (1) Kezar and Eckel's (2002) overall descriptors and (2) UCT's conceptual framework which takes into account its history and the development trajectory for the country (Institutional Culture Working Group n.d.).

In this regard, I have used the concept of institutional culture developed by the Institutional Forum (IF) at UCT whose role it is to advise the University Council on a broad range of issues (Alrnland, n.d.: 13), and the change

strategies developed by the Transformation Office in the HSF. I have not isolated or made a detailed study of anyone cultural archetype. Accordingly, I define institutional culture as traditions and practices, often deep-rooted, operating at both social and professional levels, that have become the established norm in an institution. Ways in which institutional culture can be captured are reflected in the physical and administrative arrangements that enhance or detract from individual and collective progress. These include the amenities provided and the nature of the physical surroundings. Institutional culture also refers to the ways in which various groups within the institution interact or avoid interaction with each other (including the extent to which others' perspectives are taken into account), and individuals' personal perception of the institution as a comfortable working environment. Also included is how people experience the physical surroundings, administrative arrangements, employment practices, interpersonal aspects, and the academic culture of the Faculty. The task team on gender equity added the following to this definition: language , ceremonies such as graduation, sexual and racial harassment and violence , recipients of honorary awards, religious and political tolerance, outreach and extension services.

I define change strategies as 'activities implemented by the Transformation Office to redress past injustices and to facilitate the implementation of equity policies as well as to create a more inclusive and enabling working environment' (London, n.d.: 1). The change strategies developed by the Transformation Office and the broader HSF community are framed within a Health and Human Rights paradigm to take cognisance of the racialised history and its role in human rights abuses under apartheid (Perez and London, 2004). The general change strategies planned by the HSF of VCT were to transform its leadership for co-governance, to change its staff composition, to implement changes to the institutional culture in order to recruit and retain black staff, to alter its admissions policy to recruit more black students, to effect curricula transformation to allow for academic support, and to come in line with the state's policy to move to a Primary Health Care framework. The change to a co-governance structure could be hampered by the faculty 's partnership with the Provincial Government which has an overwhelmingly bureaucratic culture.

The Transformation Office engaged with the above change strategies and sought also to explore an awareness of cultural diversity and to reconcile past

injustices in the following ways: by the placement of trained employment equity representatives on selection committees; developing a database of black medical alumni to support active recruitment for registrars and staff; securing funding for succession posts; exploring a mentoring programme for new staff; auditing disability access and conducting an attitudinal survey regarding disability; providing diversity training for staff; identifying suitable names for buildings and spaces; exploring curricula interventions such as including diversity teaching, promoting student involvement in research; holding public events on days such as Human Rights Day, Women's Day, and International AIDS Day; and performing an ombudsman function for complaints related to racial and sexual forms of harassment.

In 2002 the Transformation Office hosted a Faculty Assembly, a day in which the faculty recognised past injustices and signed a new Faculty Health Charter which committed itself to transformation. The Transformation Office also undertook a number of research activities. The 2001 study was one such study. Another was a study by Erasmus in 2003 which examined student perceptions of race and racism. One of her conclusions was that medical students have limited interaction across 'race' boundaries. This finding sparked a whole process of reflection by heads of departments (HODs) and led to HODs effectively supporting diversity training. Thus the research prompted a set of activities which were important for changing culture. Within the wider university community and within the sectors which monitor transformation such as the Transformation Forum, it has been argued that part of the solution to the recruitment and retention of black staff lay in addressing institutional culture (Sutherland, 1994; Ismail, 2000; 2002; London, n.d.; 2001).

One of the limitations of the framework used in this paper is that it does not assess the change strategies *per se*, or question power relations, traditional hierarchies, and the status quo. It does not work in a framework of radical transformation. The discussion and analysis does not cover all the aspects of institutional change but is limited to three areas of cultural shifts. These are collegial and professional development, change in the composition of leadership and management style, and changes in the student profile.

Finally, it is important to note that the struggles to transform higher education to be democratic and inclusive predate the new democracy in South Africa in 1994 and the higher education legislation framework (Kulati

and Moja, 2002: 153). Debates and struggles to transform the education sector can be traced back to the 1950s and became more pronounced in the 1980s.

General description of the institutional culture in the HSF

The institutional culture in the HSF fits the archetypes described by Kezar and Eckel (2002) but there are further complexities which I now describe. The Faculty has a dual role as both academic and service provider in health facilities in the Western Cape region. This has provided the basis of the joint agreement between VCT and the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC). Therefore there are staff employed under joint conditions of service who are accountable to the policies and working conditions of both the PGWC and VCT (London, 1999).

In addition, teaching and research occur in academic and clinical contexts. Within this set of arrangements staff experience a mixture of complex cultures which are difficult to separate. The HSF is also infused with the hierarchical culture attributed to medical faculties and the medical profession. This is evident in the prestige and resources attached to the training of doctors and specialists in medicine as opposed to the Allied Health Sciences such as nursing and the rehabilitation therapies. Although in the recent restructuring the distribution of resources has changed, the above perception persists. In addition there are also hierarchies between disciplines, for example, Medicine and Surgery take priority over others.

Furthermore the HSF is not contained within one campus and is spread over a wide geographical area. The academic culture in the HSF is not singular and differs between schools, departments, and units within departments.

Due to the racialised, gendered history and culture of the profession the HSF staff profile is skewed towards being white and male in senior positions. The student profile was overwhelmingly white but this has changed since the 1990s.

Research design and methodology

Qualitative research methods were used to study the perceived experiences of institutional culture among 37 black and women staff members in 2001. Five years later a follow-up study of the same cohort was conducted to determine what changes had occurred. In both 2001 and 2006 the field

methods used were focus group interviews and individual interviews. Qualitative methods were used because it was felt these would provide more in-depth understanding of perceptions of institutional culture. In both studies the interviews were guided by an interview schedule

Ethics and procedures

In both studies I explained the aims, purpose, and outcomes of the research to all the participants and assured them of confidentiality. Care was taken to remain faithful to the expectations of confidentiality by not using quotations from participants that could easily identify them. Where quotations are sufficiently generic and cannot be linked to a particular participant, the comments have been included verbatim. I received ethical approval from the HSF Research Ethics Committee and each participant signed a consent form and read and gave feedback on pre-final reports and papers.

Data collection

Population

The population consisted of senior managers, academic, administrative, and technical support staff employed in the HSF. This included staff employed by the University itself and those on joint appointments i.e. employed by the Provincial Government of the Western Cape and the University.

Sample

In 2001 purposive sampling was used, stratified by gender and race. The sampling frame for staff from the designated categories was drawn from the Employment Equity database for the Faculty. The focus group interviews were set up in the following categories: all women staff, all black women, all white women, all black staff, and all black men and disabled staff. The senior staff interviewed followed similar categories.

In addition HODs and senior academics were invited to individual, semi-structured interviews and were selected for being key members of the faculty. Criteria for being 'key' was that they had many years of experience of the faculty, represented a missing category in the sampling frame, and had engaged in issues of transformation in the faculty.

Description of the interviews

In the 2001 study the total number of staff interviewed was 37. 22 staff members from the designated categories participated in the focus group interviews; nine senior staff including HODs and one disabled staff member participated in individual interviews. Three e-mail interviews and two informal conversations with senior staff were also held (see Table 1, Appendix 1).

In the 2006 study I followed up on the original 2001 sample by e-mail and telephonically. The follow-up itself presented an interesting result. Of the 21 black staff interviewed in 2001, only ten remained (47.6%) at the university," I traced nine of the black staff who had left the HSF. Of these one was employed elsewhere in the university, three had joined a neighbouring university in more senior academic positions, two were employed in government, one had gone overseas, another to the private sector, and another (in the administrative sector) was retrenched due to restructuring.

The total number of staff interviewed was 19. Ten designated staff participated in focus group interviews, five senior staff and one disabled staff member participated in individual interviews, and three e-mail interviews were conducted (Table 2 in Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of interviewees by gender and race).

Although the sample in the follow-up study constituted only 51% of the original sample the data collected indicate important and interesting institutional shifts within the HSF.

Validity

Validity in this type of research does not refer to the confidence with which one may generalise, but to the authenticity of the data in representing fully the perspectives of participants. The usefulness of the data is its illumination of perspectives, rather than in its generalisability. However, focus groups and individual groups were selected with particular reference groups in mind.

Research ethics as outlined above were strictly adhered to. All data gathering in 2001 and 2006 was conducted by me with administrative support from the Faculty in setting up the interviews. The interviews in 2001 and 2006 followed exactly the same research design and methodology, as I sought to minimise different experiences in the two sets of interviews which could have an impact on data collection.

Methodological issues

Although the set number of focus group interviews were held for each study (2001 and 2006), the number participating in each group was lower than anticipated and was often not the optimal number for focus group interviews. In the 2006 study the numbers for the all-black focus group and all-women groups had decreased further due to the decrease in the overall sample for these groups. In future equity research, in addition to the designated categories, social class needs to be considered as a descriptor to explain or to illuminate hidden power relations and the slow progress towards change in institutions.

Analysis and presentation of data

In both studies interviews were recorded and transcribed and the data was collated into different themes. Data from e-mail correspondence, telephone calls, and themes in the literature review were included in the coding process.

The constant comparative method (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) was used for inductive coding and to establish categories and themes which could be compared across different categories of staff in the first study and , in the second, themes that could be compared across time. This method was followed because it allowed for comparison of staff responses and identification of barriers and facilitative factors for change. In 2006 the method was used in order to assess whether change strategies implemented from 2002 to 2006 had any impact on work experience.

In the 2001 study the following themes were identified from the data : institutional culture; recruitment and retention of black staff; career progression; personal instances of discriminatory practices; reasons for black staff leaving; and perceptions of change.

In the second study I identified difficulties that the interviewees had spoken about in the 2001 study and asked them whether these were still obstacles or barriers for them. To evoke their memories I often quoted their words back to them. They would often reply with the exclamation, 'Did I say that?' I then asked them to talk about career changes and how this had impacted on their experiences of institutional culture as well as asking them to identify facilitative factors which had enhanced and encouraged

career advancement. In addition I asked them about their participation in and awareness or knowledge of each of the interventions made by the Transformation Office.

The results were then thematically organised around themes arising from the data and I have chosen to highlight three themes in this study. These are: changes in the collegial culture and professional development; changes to composition and style of leadership and management; and changes in the student profile.

In the presentation of the findings I have selected quotations which exemplify how staff experienced institutional culture in 2001 and their changing views in 2006. I have allowed the views of the participants to be dominant. This is in accordance with the participatory nature of the methodology and the aims of the study which asked for silent voices to be heard.

Abbreviations used in the presentation of results which follows are: wh = white, bl = black , admin = administrative/technical staff, acad = academic, sen = senior/management, w = woman, m = man.

Changes in institutional culture

Changes in the collegial culture and professional development

In 2001 black staff expressed general feelings of alienation and isolation. Staff in junior posts felt that there was no caring concern for them; there was no orientation or mentoring. White women expressed similar feelings and commented on the individualistic, competitive nature and the masculine work ethic of working an eighteen-hour day. Overall they felt that the academic culture eroded confidence and black staff felt scrutinised by white staff and students. All of them said that they hardly participated in meetings. Administrative staff spoke of the divide between themselves and academic staff which was undermining and often rude.

In 2001, white women felt that middle and top management structures were already filled and top-heavy and very few vacancies were forthcoming. Some white women felt that their schooling socialised them into passive stereotypical feminine roles, and therefore they did not think of taking on management functions.

Black staff felt that different criteria in terms of qualifications were required of them. They had to have higher qualifications at entry level and had to prove themselves all the time, and were given more work of lesser importance than their white colleagues. Historically white staff entered with lower qualifications and were also promoted faster once they were selected into the academy. Black and white women academic staff were cautious about their research capacity and their prospects of attracting research funding and of publishing.

If you going through a process of negation every day of your life here at VeT, it can erode your confidence. You get to a point where you say... must I open my room (office door) , I'll close it.. . I'm not going to be told that (what I say) is stupid or something. You get a lot of paternalism and you feel, why must I open my mouth. If you going through that on a daily basis, eventually your confidence erodes (bl, w, acad).

The academics don't have a good manner of approaching you. Just because you are an administrator, you don't have to accept rudeness. I mean to me it's like how can someone treat me like that , and expect me to accept.. . You have to accept their behaviour, not complain about it (bl, w, admin).

I think in most places in the world you need to have a PhD as a minimum requirement, but in the South African context you see the requirement is for you to have a PhD but not for somebody else, but somebody else is never another black person (bl, w, acad).

In 2006 all the categories of staff expressed a much more positive response to institutional culture and were more confident. Confidence was expressed in the following ways: staff said that they participated in meetings and gave their viewpoints, they spoke in their mother tongue with others who came from the same background, and they did not feel that they had to communicate with everyone. Administrative staff said that their relationships with academic staff had improved and they were slowly being informed and included in discussions relating to academic issues which impact on their work.

Some black staff felt that they were under less scrutiny whilst others felt that the terms of the scrutiny had changed and were less obvious . This time male staff also spoke of their extremely demanding workloads and the long hours that they spend at work , which for some have led to family conflict and ended marital relationships. Mothers in the academy found that there

was more emotional support if they excluded themselves from institutional activities after 5p.m. on the grounds that they needed time with their families.

In 2006 all the participants interviewed (black, white, and senior staff in academic and administrative posts) had progressed either into the next rank/category or horizontally into more prestigious management positions through an *ad hominem* process or, in the case of administrative staff, through applying for new positions. Their career progression had a positive impact on most of the staff's confidence and they felt more positive about working at the institution.

Whereas in the 2001 study black and women staff were apprehensive about *ad hominem* promotions, by 2006 many had progressed through this process and were less fearful of future applications. Their increased confidence and progression had also spurred them into joining an Emerging Researchers programme and to apply for funding and some of them had completed postgraduate degrees and published.

There is an appreciation that I do contribute and there is more of a confidence that I see. People are less likely to question my kind of existence (bl, m, acad).

I have been promoted and been on computer courses, office management course and an employer assistance programme. I am more confident and positive. I can express myself. I know how to deal with conflict in my department especially with the ladies (bl, m, admin).

When I was new, it was almost like, sorry that I'm here. Whereas now I will say whatever I need to say. And I think my relationships with everyone in the faculty, has changed, I actually talk to them (bl, w, acad).

However black staff expressed reservations about how white staff related to their promotion and contract black staff questioned their temporary status given their contribution and the university's commitment to retain black staff.

People say... maybe it's because you are black that you were promoted, when you actually deserved it. So it's not like it goes away, it just takes different forms, that is the culture. So maybe when you come in, the first thing that people see is your race, and then to that another level gets added

like language , and another level gets added and this is how it happens (bl, w, acad).

Changes to composition and style of leadership and management

In 2001 many interviewees spoke of an old guard that held power and had undermining forms of leadership and management styles and who favoured their own networks. In 2006 there was overwhelming support from both black and white interviewees for the changed leadership and the qualities demonstrated by leadership, such as an open door policy, more accountability, a friendlier, more supportive attitude where heads are interested in individuals and seen to be active in changing the staff profile and institutional culture in the organisation.

If you have a concern, she is open for a discussion. You can make an appointment; you can go in and go talk to her about it. So that for me is a difference. You don't have to brood about it and feel that you are left out (bl, w, admin).

I can say that having senior black leadership did make a change because certainly more black staff were hired . More black registrars were hired and there was a push, everyone understood to change the profile. That was said very clearly to us (bl, w, sen).

I think my new head is also more approachable than the previous head. So you just feel like you're valued but on a more professional level than in a patronising way. Also she is open to hear what you have to say though she might not agree with you. You know that she wants to know what your opinion is and that is good . That has been affirming for me (bl, w, acad).

Since the new professor took over there is a lot of consultation on a daily basis so I feel like I am part of the decision making and I mean something to the department. I must say, I am positive and good things have happened (bl, m, admin).

Also, if you look at the top people in the faculty at the moment there have been some changes. The head of medicine is now black, and that again makes it easier for more junior black people to be attracted or to stay in the department because it is different . Because there are lots of things that are changing, I don't know how to describe it. There is a different sort of mafia (bl, m, acad).

Although some staff expressed confidence in their departmental leadership they had some reservations about the overall governance and decision-making in the Faculty and argued that consultative processes were superficial and included staff in erratic ways.

Changes in student profile

In 2001 academics expressed the opinion that there were historical, financial, and institutional barriers that prohibited changes in the student composition and the academic progress of black students.

In 2006 there was a definite feeling that a significant contributor to change was the more diverse student and registrar population, and the increased academic progress of black students in the period 1997-2004. To some extent these changes can be explained by the differential admissions policy which set s targets for black students, a problem-based teaching curriculum, and increased academic support for black students (Sikakana, n.d. and Hall, n.d.),?

So now we are looking at a 50% black entry. And what we are also looking at, and I do believe we can lay this also at the door of the new curriculum; we are looking at success of those students. And we actually have scientific evidence now, that although those students have come in with low overall matric scores, by the time they get to the clinical years, fourth year in their studies, it's hardly possible to tell the student with the high matric score from the lower matric score. The other thing the curriculum change has done, and I really think it is true, is that it has engendered a confidence in all the students. They are working with each other, closely with tutors from day one. And they are meeting patient s in the early years of the course. And students have grown to own their learning. They are mutually supportive (wh, w, sen).

This whole cohort who lived in the apartheid era when the y were tiny children, never really saw the signs, the humiliation , the separations, they didn 't see that . They never experiences apartheid. So the students we have now, they are relaxed , happy, they are open. It is nice, it's a wonderful experience (wh, m, sen).

You still have and hear stories about racism, amongst the undergraduates and the postgraduates. Sometimes they are real, sometimes they are perception s and we try to take that into account. I think the really exciting

thing is the development of the undergraduate students and the way in which they have taken control and leadership of structures like the Health Students Science Council and the Rural Support Network. For example the Rural Support Network, they have gone and negotiated contracts with the Department of Health in the Eastern Cape. They run the mentoring programme through the Mpilo Student Society. And in fact I think that is where my hope lies, with the undergraduate students (bl, w, sen).

I can give you indirect evidence of success: you can go to a research day in any of the departments and be stunned by the success of young black researchers in terms of the presentation of their research. They are really achieving a great deal. So I think that has to mean that they are being successfully mentored (wh, rn, sen).

Impact on institutional culture

In 2001 there was lots of discussion on how change was defined, as different staff had different perceptions of change. Staff who had been associated with the HSF for more than 15 years were in agreement that there had been some change in terms of how the HSF presented itself, but felt there had been no fundamental change. Reasons given for this belief was that there had been no change in terms of attitudes and practices as control was still vested in a small group of people from the 'old boys' network' who dictated policy, and there was very little input from black staff.

Some of the data from the interviews confirmed this view. A HOD said that the university is an elitist institution and unegalitarian and one couldn't change this; that people confused broadening access with moves to a more egalitarian institution. This, he felt, was an incorrect perception, as the university was based on individual achievement and merit, on forming cliques and class determined that collegiality. He added that some changes could be made, like making appointment and promotion procedures more transparent and changing the institutional culture to be more representative of the different cultures.

In 2001 staff felt that people needed to understand what the end-product of transformation really had to be. They felt that there had been insufficient discussion of this vision and a strategic plan was urgently needed. In 2006 there was a clearer vision and firmer views were expressed on the purpose

of transformation and its link to the country's national economic and development goals.

I mean if the ambition, and surely it must be the ambition to have a number of graduates reflect the demography of the populace as a whole, then what we are doing, we have to do, we must do. And we are doing it well. And without any drop in standards. I know there are people who claim that is why we are succeeding; well it is not true (wh, w, sen).

In the last year, I can say there are definite changes in certain people. And in fact it shocked me that I would think , they can change you know. You can see the staff have gone through a change . And that for me was encouraging. Because if a certain person could do it then others could do it as well. The change s are people just being grateful and saying thank you or to greet a person and so on so there has been that changes . There have definitely been changes. Positive changes ! (bl, w, admin) .

In addition to the changes highlighted above some of the changes in perceptions were attributed to the Faculty Assembly, the awareness-raising workshops, the series of seminars on institutional culture and diversity workshops, and the renaming of spaces (although not much of this was done), and placement of plaques and donor boards. These interventions brought a particular awareness and tolerance of diverse cultures even though there was uneven attendance at seminars, awareness-raising and diversity workshops, and some critique that the workshops were sometimes stereotyping people, were unfocussed, and were out of sync with new developments.

Discussion and analysis

In the 2001 study the overall response from designated staff to institutional culture was negative and they expressed real concerns about the faculty's commitment to recruit and retain black staff. The findings in 2006 suggest some shifts and it is important to note that no staff member described experiences of personal racial discrimination as in the 2001 study. The findings also suggest that changes in one area can result in a multiplier effect. For example changes in increased self-confidence as a result of career progression builds trust in the institutional processes and thereafter staff become more involved in Faculty structures and decision-making. Ironically

these features of success conformed to the existing culture and affirmed their status within the traditional culture (Heward, 1996; De La Rey, n.d.).

However some black staff experienced unease at how white staff viewed their promotion and progress and this could detract from building a collegial culture. This view has been expressed in similar studies (Steyn and Van Zyl, n.d.(a); Ismail, 2000) and in student selection interviews for postgraduate study (Christian et al., 2002). In these instances employment equity policies have negative impacts for black staff, place them under suspicion, and fuel feelings of discomfort amongst them.

Staff who progress are then also invited to participate in curriculum development, selection committees, and institutional work. Participation in this institutional work enhances their own understanding of institutional politics, structures, policies, and procedures. They are then better able to discern when discrimination is based on racial or other prejudices. However this does not necessarily mean that more trust is built in institutional processes as race is a constant feature and part of planned change. Staff also experience the uneven and negative effects of institutional processes and policy making and the contradictory nature of implementing equity policies e.g. when Faculty has recruited black staff and then is informed that no funds are available for existing or new posts, or when one particular programme is perceived to be favoured with resources at the expense of another one. Thus changes in both the collegial and managerial cultures need to be consistent with transformation interventions and goals.

A change in leadership which is actively seen to be engaged with transformation and is seen to be working towards a collective approach allows staff to witness transformation. Recognition and accommodation of flexible working hours addressed a barrier experienced by many women and implies support for equality and equity (Subotzky, 2003). These changes in the management culture brought about trust and eased relationships between management and staff as well as amongst staff and were positive for building a collegial culture and confidence in management. This, as suggested by Kezar and Eckel (2002: 441), was important for building momentum for change within the institution.

Changes in the gendered and racial composition of the leadership also brought forth more reflective and participative managerial cultures and helped to develop channels for communication and to work through troubled

relations on campus. The women leaders appear to act as change agents in defining their work beyond scholarship to a range of supportive responses to colleagues and students (Subotzky, 2003). In addition their responses show that they are effective within the confines of the prevailing institutional culture and also understand the nature of academic work (Kulati and Moja, 2002: 161). Sometimes the optimism expressed around the new leadership is cautious as the leadership is held accountable for transformation and it has not always been true that women or black leaders support transformation.

Factors which may derail the positive efforts of managerial change are the bureaucratic culture of the PGWC, the increased preoccupation with managerialism to measuring each aspect of academic work against rigid criteria, and the imperatives of globalisation. The findings bring to the fore the tension between agency and structure and this tension will be ongoing as leaders respond to the demands of the market and transformation. In addition other constraints outlined in the paper such as the low numbers of designated staff in the faculty and the small pool from which to employ designated staff, the high turnover of black staff, and persistent racist attitudes reduce the possibilities for a transformative culture.

The increased confidence in the diverse student body enabled teaching staff across disciplines to participate in the debates about, and implementation of, the changed admissions policy, curricula changes, and to generally be more receptive of other transformative interventions. The commitment to change the student profile and the country's professional demographics made academic staff reflect on teaching styles, curricula, and new ways to nurture and mentor medical professionals and scientists. These developments may then encourage students to think of future careers in the Faculty. Thus the collegial culture was strengthened by these interactions and challenges to traditional practices, norms, and values were debated, accommodated, and when there was sufficient positive evidence, the changes were endorsed. Thus confidence was built in new developments and negotiating cultures.

Conclusion

Drawing on this analysis it appears that there is evidence that change strategies can contribute to institutional change. The analysis also indicates that if the change strategies are linked to broader goals such as national development and do not violate the institutional cultural norms, standards, and values,

then they will be regarded as appropriate and not stifle the change process. Thus there is evidence that working within the culture of a university can facilitate change (Kezar and Eckel, 2002: 457). Muller (2003: 117-19) shares this view and he asserts that internal forces or endogenous forces for change can be more successful than external forces such as government policies especially if the innovations are nuanced, differentiated, and reward-based.

This paper confirms, along with the literature surveyed (Muller, 2003; Cloete *et al.*, 2002b) that senior managers have to function within the context of competing policies such as co-operative governance and managerialism, and to balance these is complex. This may partly explain resistance to transformation, and why it takes such a long time to build trust, to understand the subtle dimensions of cultural change. It is also necessary to be cautious as change may not be linear or continuous since institutions are part of wider social, political, and economic environments which impinge on change strategies. Nevertheless, this paper has demonstrated how change strategies can influence institutional culture and be linked to positive work experiences for black and women staff.

APPENDIX 1: COMPOSITION OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS 2001 AND 2006

Table 1: Summary of composition of the persons interviewed 2001

	Academic	Technical and support	Admin.	Academic Senior	HOD/Manager	Junior Researchers	Disabled
White Women	2	1					
All Black Women	2						
All Black Staff	2(female)		2(female)			1(male)	
All Black Male	1	1	1				
All Women	3	1	4				
Individual				2(female)	2(female)		1(female)
Individual				2(male)	3(male)		
E-mail	1(female)		1(female)		1(male)		
Informal Conversations				2(male)			

Total: 22 staff members from designated categories, five focus group interviews, ten individual interviews, three e-mail interviews, two informal conversations

Table 2: Summary of composition of the persons interviewed 2006

	Academic	Administrative	Academic Senior	HOD/Manager	Disabled
White Women	2				
All Black Women	2				
All Black Staff	1(female)	1(female)			
All Black Male	1	1			
All Women	1 (e-mail)	1 (e-mail)			
Individual				2 (female)	1 (female)
Individual			1 (male)	(males plus 1 bye-mail)	

Total: ten staff members from designated categories, five focus group interviews, four individual interviews, three e-mail interviews

Notes

I wish to express my thanks and acknowledgement to: the interviewees who participated in the two studies for their time and patience ; Professor Leslie London for his commitment, enthusiasm, and encouragement to pursue transformation interventions and research; to the National Research Foundation and the University of Cape Town for funding to support this research.

- 2 The report of this study was completed in March 2002 and can be accessed at the following website address: <http://www.health.uct.ac.za/transformation/pdfs/rec.ch6.pdf>.
- 3 'Designated' is a term used by employment equity legislation . This term includes all black, female, and disabled staff.
- 4 The terms African, Black, White, Coloured and Indian are used without intending negative inference. Black is used here as in the anti-apartheid struggle to include Indian, Coloured, and African , all those who were disenfranchised under apartheid. African refers to black South Africans descended from isiXhosa, Sesotho, isiZulu, or other indigenous cultures. White refers to those who had the franchise under apartheid . The author is aware that these descriptions of race are continuously changing.
- 5 In South Africa , it is common for most academics of any race or gender classification not to reach professorial level. Concentration of professorships in relation to total number of academic staff is relatively small.
- 6 The EE figures for 2002-2006 suggest that no significant quantitative shift has occurred in the employment of black staff and targets set for the next three years are set at a modest 3-6% movement. See HSF Employment Equity Plan <http://health.uct.ac.za/transformation/pdfs>
- 7 Cynthia Sikakana's (n.d.) longitudinal study of black students on the MBChB programme shows the gradual increase of progress amongst black students who joined the academic support programme. Martin Hall used her study in his argument for a differential admissions policy based on racial categories (see Hall, n.d.).

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