

**MEASURING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE:
THE APPLICATION OF TWO THEORETICAL MODELS
TO TWO SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to compare and assess two theoretical models of higher education institutional change: the policy response and the adaptational model. The policy response model is essentially a measurement of policy impact, and through the application of an indicator framework allows the evaluation of the extent to which a higher education institution has applied a government policy directive. The adaptational model is based on the idea that institutional change can be explained in terms of the categorisation of the strategic choices an institution makes in order to adapt to and survive in a constantly changing environment.

The application of the two models is demonstrated through case studies of two South African higher education institutions: the University of Port Elizabeth and Peninsula Technikon. Data sources for these studies include institutional documents, interviews and the formal record submissions of the two institutions to the national Department of Education. The transformation goals of the 1997 White Paper on higher education transformation are used to construct a set of indicators against which the policy responses of each institution could be measured. The set of data is then used to construct an analysis of strategic choice in terms of the adaptational model of change.

The findings of the study show that the policy response and adaptational models each contribute in a different way towards an understanding of transformative change in higher education institutions. The conclusion drawn is that the measurement of policy response is the most immediately useful and robust, and that although the analysis of adaptation in terms of strategic choice can be used as an enriching tool, it cannot stand on its own.

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| BDM | Broad Democratic Movement |
| BNF | Broad Negotiating Forum |
| CATE | College for Advanced Technical Education |
| CHE | Council on Higher Education |
| CHEPS | Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies |
| CHET | Centre for Higher Education Transformation |
| COSATU | Confederation of South African Trade Unions |
| DOE | Department of Education |
| HBT | Historically Black Technikon |
| HBU | Historically Black University |
| HE | Higher Education |
| HEMIS | Higher Education Management Information System |
| HSRC | Human Sciences Research Council |
| HWT | Historically White Technikon |
| HWU (A) | Historically White University (Afrikaans) |
| HWU (E) | Historically White University (English) |
| JAF | Joint Advisory Forum |
| MIT | Massachusetts Institute of Technology |
| NCHE | National Commission on Higher Education |
| NECC | National Education Crisis Committee |
| NEHAWU | National Education, Hospitals and Allied Workers Union |
| NEPI | National Education Policy Investigation |
| NQF | National Qualifications Framework |
| Pen Tech | Peninsula Technikon |
| PSE | Post Secondary Education |
| RDP | Reconstruction and Development Programme |
| SADTU | South African Democratic Teachers Union |
| SAPSE | South African Post Secondary Education |
| SAQA | South African Qualifications Authority |
| SASCO | South African Students Congress |
| SET | science/engineering/technology |
| TSER/HEINE | Targeted Socio-Economic Research/Higher Education Institutions and the National Economy |
| UDUSA | Union of Democratic Staff Associations |
| UPE | University of Port Elizabeth |

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1. AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to compare and assess two theoretical models of institutional change in higher education: the policy response model and the adaptational model. This is done through two case studies of separate South African higher education institutions: the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) and Peninsula Technikon (Pen Tech). Each theoretical model asks different questions and makes a different set of assumptions about the nature of change and the players involved. The explanations of institutional change which are derived from the application of the models are therefore diverse, and can be compared and contrasted with one another.

The policy response model is best described as a measurement of policy impact, and offers an evaluation of the extent to which higher education institutions accept or resist government policy initiatives. For the purposes of this study, the 1997 White Paper on higher education transformation has been chosen as a specific example of a policy document which required responsive action from South African institutions. The model allows for the construction of indicators by which institutional performance can be measured, thus making it possible to assess the extent to which specific institutional actions meet government policy goals. In the case of the White Paper, these goals centred around the key conditions of increased and broadened participation, responsiveness to societal interests and needs, and co-operation and partnerships in governance.

The adaptational model of institutional change focuses attention on managerial strategic choice, and the idea that institutions make a series of strategic choices in order to adapt to and survive in a constantly changing environment. These strategic choices can be categorised broadly in terms of how the open system of an organisation adjusts in order to maintain a state of equilibrium in the face of internal and external pressure.

Through various institutional data sources, this study extracts information about institutional performance and managerial strategy at UPE and Pen Tech. The

application of the policy response and adaptational models for assessing change at each institution is then demonstrated. On this basis the models are then compared and contrasted, and conclusions drawn about the efficacy of each.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Higher education is becoming an increasingly important part of development strategies for countries in the 21st century. In the widely acknowledged global trend towards societies which are information and knowledge-based, formal education, lifelong learning and fundamental research are all essential to socio-economic progress (Davenport, 2000). Given its traditional role in the handling, transfer and production of knowledge, it is inevitable that higher education should be one of the core social establishments in the expanding knowledge society (Maassen et al, 1999).

In the context of societal changes resulting from globalisation and new levels of global competitiveness, higher education also has to change. Owing, however, to traditional emphases on academic freedom and autonomy, any higher education system has to be viewed as a collection of autonomous institutions. In order to be far-reaching and pervasive, change must happen first and foremost at the institutional level. Therefore, if a government is to meet global demands for socio-economic change, it must understand what drives change in the institutions which constitute a system. It is further important that it be able to interrogate how its policies are being implemented at an institutional level.

The novelty of this study lies in its application and analysis of two specific models of institutional change. In constructing specific indicators for these models, it contributes to the set of tools available for assessing change from an institutional to a systemic level. The case studies contribute to the empirical policy database in South African higher education: in selecting an historically white bilingual university and an historically black technikon, two very different sectors of the system are represented. It is thus possible to demonstrate how the two models might be used to account for distinct instances of institutional change.

The discussion which follows situates the study in the context of the higher education policy changes which have occurred in South Africa from the apartheid era through to early 2002. This serves to elaborate both the point from which the government has been approaching change within the system, and the broader environment within which higher education institutions have been operating.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Changes in the higher education system in South Africa must be considered in the light of the country's shifting political context over the past several decades. Both UPE and Pen Tech were established at the height of the apartheid era. The section which follows describes the government higher education policy of the time, and follows the development of post-apartheid higher education policy through to 2002.

3.1 Apartheid-era policies

Beginning with the Bantu Education act of 1953 and the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, all South African higher education institutions were officially and legally divided along racial lines and placed under the control of different government departments. This racial divide was legally enforced until the election of the government of national unity in 1994.

The notion of separate education for separate groups was justified over time through reference to various purportedly scientific studies, including one undertaken in the early 1980's by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). In its findings, the HSRC reported that:

“(Education) has to be in harmony with the values of specific family homes and communities. It follows that there will be particular educational and teaching needs and problems, and to cater for these problems and needs appropriate educational and teaching objectives, policies, contents and systems will be needed.” (Department of Education, 1985:8)

It was further stated that:

“Because education does not involve merely the transfer of knowledge, but is also concerned with the transfer of values specific to certain cultures and groups, allowance must be made for each community to have self-determination over its own education.” (Department of Education, 1985:8)

The racial fragmentation of the South African education system culminated in the establishment of 15 education departments under the 1984 constitution. The tricameral parliament generated a fragmented and ineffective higher education system, with little co-ordination, few common goals and negligible systematic planning (NCHE, 1996).

3.2 The binary divide

The two institutions focused upon in this study represent a further characteristic of the South African higher education system: the binary divide. This was set in place from 1979, and was based upon the idea that a distinction could be drawn between scientific (or pure) knowledge on the one hand, and technical knowledge on the other. The division was thus traditionally between those institutions concerned with the pursuit of the broad sciences, and those concerned with education and training in technology. Those institutions in the second group were initially known as technical colleges, and were established in order to meet the need for technically trained people which arose out of the development of the country's mines and railways. In the 1960's these institutions were officially named Colleges for Advanced Technical Education (CATEs), with their primary purpose still considered to be to overcome the shortage of skilled, high-level personpower in South African commerce and industry (Department of Education, 1996).

After the adoption of the Advanced Technical Education Act of 1979 CATEs became known as technikons. With the passing of time the binary divide, which remained in place throughout the 1990's, has become a vocational/non-vocational one – technikons have become primarily vocational institutions, with more than one-third of their students undertaking studies in the fields of business/commerce.

3.3 Post-apartheid higher education policy

The first period of post-apartheid policy development includes the work of the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) between 1989 and 1992, the education policy desk of the ANC between 1990 and 1994, and the National Commission on Higher Education during 1995 and 1996.

NEPI was convened by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) and consisted mainly of persons from a range of historically English institutions. In covering a whole range of educational issues from early childhood education to adult basic education and training, NEPI aimed to produce a basis for national policy without focusing on the practicalities of implementation at a grassroots level (De Clerq, 1997). It was believed that this work was grounded in five principles: non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system, and redress. The NEPI report on post-secondary education (PSE) expressed the belief that both this set of principles and PSE should play a pivotal role in national development. The application of the five principles in the NEPI framework report was shown to reveal serious inequalities in terms of race and gender, governance structures that did not comply with the tenets of democracy and the notion of a unitary system, and the importance of the role of redress in correcting system-wide inequalities (NEPI, 1993).

The NCHE, established by President Mandela in 1995, was perhaps the most important precursor to the policy framework contained in the 1997 White Paper on higher education transformation in South Africa. The commission built its work on the notion that while South Africa's higher education system had capacity in terms of research, teaching and physical resources, it had deep-rooted inequities, imbalances and distortions derived from its history and structure. These deficiencies were said to include the perpetuation of an inequitable degree of access and opportunity for students and staff based upon race, gender, class and geographic distribution. It was stated that there were:

“gross discrepancies in the participation rates by students from different population groups and indefensible imbalances in the ratios of black and female staff compared to whites and males. (Further there were) vast disparities between historically black and historically white institutions in

terms of facilities and capacities for teaching and research.” (NCHE, 1996:1-2)

The NCHE stated that ultimately, given its tendency to replicate the ethnic, racial and gender divisions of the wider South African social context, the higher education system as a whole had simply not “contributed significantly to a democratic ethos and a sense of citizenship defined around commitment to a common good” (NCHE, 1996:1-2). It was stated that in order for higher education to fulfil its potential as a pivotal player in the political, economic and cultural reconstruction and development of South Africa, the entire system needed to undergo a reshaping that would enable it to respond both to pressing national needs and to the new realities and opportunities of the changing South African context.

The transformed system which the NCHE envisaged was one which would be able to: ensure access to as wide a range as possible of the population, irrespective of race, colour, gender or age; meet, through responsive educational programmes, the needs of a national economy aspiring to compete in the international arena; through appropriate educational programmes, support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights that would foster a widespread commitment to a non-racist and non-sexist social order. (NCHE, 1996)

The three pillars of this transformed system were taken to be:

- increased participation;
- greater responsiveness;
- co-operative governance.

The commission used the pillar of increased participation to advocate a theory of massification. This policy of growth across the higher education system had as its core idea the notion that increased participation (in terms of both numbers and diversity) would have a positive effect on the process and outcome of transformation. The proposed multi-faceted strategy for planned and affordable growth was aimed at increasing the higher education participation rate to approximately 30%¹ over the decade to the year 2005. This ideal would entail a doubling of South African higher education students from approximately 600 000 in 1995 to about 1 200 000 in 2005.

¹ i.e. total head count enrolments as a proportion of the 20-24 year old population

The commission believed further that the radical growth of higher education in a constantly shifting national and global context would best be facilitated with the establishment of a single, co-ordinated system.

The pillar of responsiveness can best be described as a "shift from a closed to a more open and interactive higher education system, responsive to social, cultural, political and economic changes in its environment" (NCHE, 1996:6). In building this concept into its framework, the commission was expressing the belief that "higher education should take seriously the problems and challenges presented by the societal context in which it operates" (NCHE, 1996:79). In South Africa, this context was understood as being that of a country moving from a state of racial discrimination and oppression towards a society free and open to all.

The notion of co-operative governance espoused in the third pillar of transformation was built on a particular understanding of the relationship between government and higher education. The NCHE took the concept of structured state supervision, in which the national government dictates both the framework of operation and expected results, and built in the idea of interaction and co-operation with the components of the higher education system.

1996 saw the withdrawal of the National Party, which had been the sole bearer of power during the apartheid era, from the government of national unity. The Higher Education White Paper, produced in July 1997 as the culmination of the process of investigation and consultation initiated by the NCHE report, outlined the ANC government's framework for change. This held that the South African higher education system should be planned, governed and funded as a single national co-ordinated system. The government agreed with the NCHE's point of departure, viz. that despite the considerable capacity and potential of the South African higher education system, it had fundamental flaws deriving from its apartheid history and structure. There were, however, several points of difference between the White Paper and the NCHE Report, including the following:

- **Expansion and growth in a single co-ordinated system**

The White Paper acknowledged that the notion of systemic growth should be accepted, but a certain hesitancy was expressed with regard to the case made by the NCHE for massification. The Ministry of Education was not prepared to commit to the notion that the gross participation rate should be equivalent to 30% of the 20-24 year age cohort and instead asserted that growth in the higher education sector should be shaped by issues of affordability and skills needs. Hence it was suggested that the primary locus of growth should be in vocational programmes and in the fields of science, engineering and technology.

- **New governance proposals**

The White Paper endorsed the NCHE's notion of co-operative governance, but maintained that this model should be "grounded in the context of autonomous institutions working co-operatively with a proactive government and in a range of partnerships" (Department of Education, 1997). It was proposed that an independent advisory body, the Council on Higher Education, constituted of stakeholder representatives as well as members external to the higher education system, be created. Further, and indicative of the tighter control which the Ministry wished to exert, it was stated that a new branch of higher education in the national Department of Education would be responsible for the development of policy, fund allocation and national planning.

The White Paper imposed three particular conditions on the transformation of higher education, based upon the pillars of transformation described by the NCHE.

- i. **Increased and broadened participation:** Successful policy must overcome an historically determined pattern of fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency. (Department of Education:1997, 1.13)

A specific goal pertaining to this is that related to the size and shape of the higher education system. It is noted that the vision of the White Paper "is that of an expanded higher education system in which the patterns of participation change as do enrolments in the academic programmes offered within the system" (Cloete and Bunting, 2000:5). Hence, the total number of students enrolled in the system should

increase and the participation rates of currently under-represented students improve so that over time the entire system begins to be truly reflective of the broader South African society.

- ii. **Responsiveness to societal interests and needs:** The higher education system must be restructured to meet the needs of an increasingly technologically oriented economy, which will enable South Africa to compete in the rapidly changing global context (Cloete and Bunting, 2000:5).

Performance measures pertaining to this are concerned with the growth and development of basic research which is both applications-driven and meets critical national needs. Ultimately, it is said, the graduate and knowledge outputs of higher education must fulfil the needs of a modernising economy.

- iii. **Co-operation and partnerships in governance:** Successful policy must reconceptualise the relationship between higher education and the state, civil society, and stakeholders, and among institutions (Cloete and Bunting, 2000:5).

This can be articulated as implying that there must be an enabling environment in institutions, which is sensitive to and affirms diversity, and ultimately "must reflect and strengthen the values and practices of South Africa's new democracy" (Cloete and Bunting, 2000:5).

The expectations of system growth contained in the White Paper should be seen in the context of the growth assumptions which existed at the time it was written. It was the general expectation of the South African higher education community that the post 1994 years would see a rapid growth in the demand for university and technikon places. The NCHE in particular typified this, with the idea that this demand would be such that South Africa would be able to move rapidly to a mass higher education system. The projection of a 30% participation rate was based on the assumption that the number of school-leavers obtaining matriculation exemption would increase at an average annual rate of 10% from the 1994 total, and that this would result in a

corresponding increase in the overall number of university plus technikon enrolments.

The major concern subsequent to the publishing of the White Paper was how to go about implementing its core requirement of changing the apartheid landscape of higher education. The implementation process was intended to take place on both a funding and a planning level. A new funding framework was circulated for discussion in 2001, but this process has come to a halt in the light of the developments in the planning sector.

The planning process was initiated with the requirement that each higher education institution submit a three-year rolling plan to the Department of Education at the end of 1998 and again at the end of 1999. These were analysed by the department, which finally published a National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) in February 2001. The National Plan aimed to establish "indicative targets for the size and shape of the higher education system, including overall growth and participation rates, institutional and programme mixes and equity and efficiency goals" (Department of Education, 2001:2). It further aimed to provide a framework and outline the "processes and mechanisms for the restructuring of the institutional landscape of the higher education system" (Department of Education, 2001:2).

In parallel with the work of the national department, the Council for Higher Education (CHE) was asked by the Minister to prepare an advisory report on the size and shape of the higher education system. This proved controversial, and the Minister subsequently did not accept the report, focusing instead on the production of the national plan and the appointment of a National Working Group (NWG) on the restructuring of the system. The basic brief of the NWG was to report on the operationalisation of the notion of a single national co-ordinated higher education system which has overcome the inequalities and inefficiencies of the apartheid era (Department of Education, 2001).

The primary significance of the NWG lay in the fact that it represented the first attempt of a ministerial body to contend with a specific policy implementation issue. Although the NCHE and the White Paper proposed the foundations for higher

education transformation in South Africa, neither moved beyond the level of intention and value prescription to focus on the actual operationalisation of change. The period from 1997 has been referred to as an "implementation vacuum" (Department of Education, 2001:8), which had the potential to threaten the development of a transformed higher education system.

Outside the government sector, moves were made towards developing a framework for understanding how change was occurring without the benefit of a set of explicit implementation directives. Research in some areas began to lay the foundation for the analysis of trends South African higher education (Cooper and Subotzky, 2001). The work of Cloete and Bunting (2000) demonstrated the application of a set of systemic performance indicators derived from the White Paper, thus providing an analysis of the extent the higher education system as a whole could be said to have met a particular set of policy goals.

The questions which remain, however, pertain to how individual institutions change, and how it is possible to ascertain when change has occurred. Neither the NCHE nor the White Paper had a firm and specific grip on actual institutional behaviour, and it was only with the setting up of the NWG that attention began to be paid to this issue. This study examines possibilities around how an account of the change trajectory of individual higher education institutions can be developed, and evaluates the strengths and limitations of focusing purely on policy response on the one hand, or on institutional strategy issues on the other.

4. CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This study aims to compare and contrast two theoretical models of higher education institutional change: the policy response model, which measures change in terms of reaction to government policy initiatives, and the adaptational model, which ascribes change to institutional strategic choice processes. The rationale for this lies in the current environment of rapid global socio-economic change, and the fact that it is crucial that there be an understanding of how and why change processes occur within a national higher education system. The study is situated in the context of the

higher education policy changes which have taken place in South Africa from the apartheid era through to early 2002.

CHAPTER TWO: TWO THEORIES OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

1. INTRODUCTION

It is important to contextualise the issue of higher education change and establish the relevance of conducting research into this area. This chapter first gives an indication of some of the broad trends in analysis in this area, and then outlines the theoretical underpinnings of the current study. The foundations of both the policy response and the adaptational model of institutional change are described.

2. EXPLANATIONS OF CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES

Maassen et al (1999) draw attention to a growing international interest in organisational adaptation, indicating that a possible explanation for this may be found in the fact that modern society is increasingly information- and knowledge-based. The notion of a "knowledge economy" is described by Davenport as something "in which the ability to discover and manage knowledge is becoming the key determinant of the competitive position of individuals and organisations" (2000:23). Drucker (1993) states that the knowledge society is one in which "the basic economic resource... is no longer capital, nor natural resources... It is and will be knowledge" (quoted in Davenport, 2000:23). According to Davenport, this state of affairs has required scholars "to change their approach to the traditional production function, based on labour, land and capital" (2000:23).

Maassen et al (1999) note that "given its traditional role in the handling, transfer and production of knowledge, it is obvious that higher education is (or at least should be) a core social institution in our expanding knowledge and information society" (1999:3). The UNESCO World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century states that in this new age, "there is an unprecedented demand for and a great diversification in higher education, as well as an increased awareness of its vital importance for sociocultural and economic development" (1998:preamble), and further that "the solution of the problems faced (in the) twenty-first century will be determined ... by the role that is assigned to education in general and to higher education in particular" (1998:preamble).

Linked directly to this is a particular thesis on a new and emerging mode of knowledge production, which Scott (1995) and Gibbons (1998) founded on international literature and theories on the forces of globalisation. A key aspect of this could be said to be the demise of Fordism, with its narrow nationalist concerns and views of production, and the rise of post-Fordism, with its emphasis on global skilling, exports and flexibility in production. The internal language of post-Fordism is built upon a particular conceptualisation of the international economy and labour market. According to Avis (1996:75), post-Fordist economies are characterised by factors such as global competition, flatter and more flexible organisational structures, and organisations which compete through innovation and diversification. The labour market in such an economy demands *inter alia* flexible specialisation and multi-skilled workers, and is largely unpredictable due to rapid technological change and the economic uncertainty which frequently accompanies this. Cameron and Tschirhart state that this era is characterised by “high degrees of turbulent change, competitiveness, information overload, organizational decline and uncertainty” (1996:87).

Kraak notes that “innovation is at the heart of this new system – the ability to continuously reinvent products and add value to existing designs through reconfiguring new information and knowledge about products and process” (2000:2). Hence, says Kraak, a “fundamental transition has taken place in the functioning and structure of higher education institutions worldwide. This has entailed a shift away from elite and insular institutions toward more open and responsive systems of teaching and learning.” (2000:2)

A key aspect of this is the claim that there has been a change in knowledge production involving a shift from discipline-based thinking and research (commonly referred to as “mode one” knowledge production) towards a framework that is transdisciplinary and generated in a context of application (“mode two”) (Scott, 1995). This particular set of beliefs on the function of higher education consequently incorporates what Braun and Merrien refer to as a more “utilitarian and service orientated view of public institutions” (1999:13). The authors further cite a growing demand from political decision-makers that higher education institutions “visibly present useful and applicable results linked to concrete social, political and economic

goals and that they submit to an assessment procedure regarding their efficiency in terms of money input and output" (Braun and Merrien, 1999:13). This raises the issue of institutional accountability in the higher education system, a point that is also expressed by Weber:

"(U)niversities should sharpen their sense of responsibility towards society. ... (They) should not, as they were too long inclined to do, pretend that they are above the crowd and not accountable to anyone. Universities, public or private, belong to society and therefore have to be both transparent and accountable." (1999:6)

Davenport (2000) cites Ajayi, Goma and Johnson (1996), who note that institutional autonomy cannot be absolute in a public higher education system, as its functioning is dependent upon frequently scarce public resources. Hence, says Davenport, universities "must demonstrate their contribution, in the context of academic freedom and university autonomy, to the overall goals of the society which supports them" (2000:30).

There are, however, alternate views on how the current state of international higher education research might best be described. Weingart (1997) disputes both the claims of uniqueness and power ascribed to the "mode two" school of thought. A further view is that posited by Clark (1996), who says that there were three primary areas of concern in higher education literature over the last three decades of the 20th century:

- (a) the shift from elite to mass higher education
- (b) the changing relationship between higher education institutions and governments, particularly in terms of university authority and governance
- (c) the integration and differentiation of higher education systems.

Clark says that the agenda defined by these three issues has several downsides, including that it is defined too heavily by the interests of the national government. Further, too much attention is paid to *macro*-level political events, with the common thesis being that the primary driving force in higher education change is massification. Scott (1995:12) expresses the opinion that higher education

institutions in the 20th century were essentially moulded by the same three shifts that occurred during the 19th century: the move towards democracy, the industrial revolution, and the rise of organised professions with the accompanying growth of a bureaucratic state. These, says Scott, have been translated into a move towards mass entitlement, new forms of commercialism and collectivism, and a more pervasive but less coherent professional society (1995:12). Clark states, however, that these assumptions in particular “lead research away from a host of critical features. Much of the essential story about the development of higher education is left out.” (1996:148)

No matter how the research is framed, it remains important to examine and understand how and why higher education institutions undergo change. Maassen et al (1999) identify both deliberately designed and gradually or generally emerging organisational adaptation processes. The former pertain to decisions (both academic and administrative) which are made by institutional leaders and designed to adapt specifically to a changing external environment, while the latter refer to changes occurring as a result of the internal dynamics of an institution. Organisational adaptation is understood as referring specifically to the “deliberate attempts of a university or college to change any aspects of its organisational structure as a reaction to or in anticipation of external developments” (Maassen et al, 1999:5).

Broader trends and changing national and international imperatives cannot in themselves explain how and why individual higher education institutions might go through a process of change which is apparently in synch with shifting environmental demands. Maassen and Gornitzka (1999), then of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) in the Netherlands, make reference to an international comparative research project² which sought to examine how government policies and programmes act as the impetus for change in a higher education system. The focus here was not restricted to the tracking of any specific government policy, but rather on public policy initiatives and developments as possible inputs into change processes at an institutional level. It was further intended that the project examine organisational change in various areas, including the relationship between higher

² Referred to as the “TSER/HEINE” project: Targeted Socio-Economic Research/Higher Education Institutions and the National Economy.

education institutions and the economy and “deliberate attempts to link external stakeholders to internal structural change processes as part of the adaptation of institutional governance structures” (Maassen and Gornitzka, 1996:296).

A major contribution of this CHEPS project was the step taken towards the development of the theory behind institutional change processes in the higher education sector. The work was rooted in the idea that both assumptions of perfect inertia and those of perfect flexibility do not have great explanatory value when accounting for change, and that two key theories – resource dependency and neo-institutional theory – can compensate for this. Dooris (1989) refers to these theories as having open system, natural models as their basis, with resource dependency focusing on “economic rationality” (1989:23), and neo-institutionalism seeing change as having roots in issues around political power and the legitimacy of institutional culture.

The working assumption of CHEPS researchers subsequent to the completion of this international project was that “establishments of higher education can survive – and function effectively – only if they can act on changes that occur in their environment” (CHEPS, 2001:13). An important finding of the project was that government policies do in fact have an effect upon the change processes of organisations, but that the nature of this response will vary significantly from one institution to the next. It is noted that this does not entail a deterministic position in which organisational action is seen to be prescribed by environmental conditioning – it should rather be recognised that there is a certain degree of reciprocity in which organisations can and do influence their environment.

The notion of the ‘adaptive organisation’ is thus introduced. According to the CHEPS research described in its most recent five-year plan, the rational or resource dependency theory would characterise this as one which “monitors its environment; identifies trends and key actors with whom to relate (stakeholders); has sufficient intra-organisational flexibility to allow for necessary changes in its primary processes and support processes to fulfil the needs of its constituents and stakeholders” (CHEPS 2001:14). On the other hand, the neo-institutional perspective would maintain that: “environments are in the eye of the beholder – that is, interpretations of

the environment are as important as the 'objective environment'; identifying key actors is not based solely on their importance in terms of reaching objectives, but is also rooted historically ...; intra-organisational flexibility is determined both by power constellations and by routine assumptions within specific strategies and behaviour" (CHEPS, 2001:14).

Ultimately then, both structures and actors are of relevance in the analysis of the relationship between organisations and the stakeholders in environments, and the role played by both in change processes. Important questions posed by the CHEPS team here include:

"What roles do stakeholders, such as students, government actors, other higher education organisations, private businesses, labour unions, local and regional politicians, etc, play in the development and implementation of organisational change strategies?

Concerning the internal organisational actors, how do they perceive their organisational environment...?

What role do these perceptions play in the development, implementation and effects of change strategies?" (CHEPS, 2001:14-15)

The relevance of these questions is rooted in the fact that the CHEPS project focused primarily upon external factors and did not go into sufficient detail on the role of individual actors and the internal norms and values of the higher education institutions under examination.

The following comment by Scott succinctly expresses the multifaceted issues confronting higher education institutions in the 21st century:

"The twenty-first century institution, therefore, will have to be an adaptable institution – in the double sense that it must be able to accommodate within it apparently incommensurable but actually synergistic activities, and must also be able to adapt flexibly to new configurations or knowledge by establishing novel alliances with other 'knowledgeable' institutions. ... It must also be a resilient institution, because it has to provide a sufficiently

stable environment to enable new researchers to be trained and cultural-scientific norms to be maintained.” (2000:205)

These are the fundamental issues which contribute to the complexity of the task of researchers seeking to understand institutional change processes. The status quo is added to by the dearth of research focusing on the change processes within individual institutions. The framework which follows describes two models which can be employed to this end.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The policy response model of institutional change

This model is best described as a measurement of policy impact, and is intended to evaluate the extent to which higher education institutions accept or resist government policy initiatives. It is assumed that change within an institution can be explained in terms of the following linear account (after Cloete, et al, 2002)

- (a) government develops policy
- (b) government applies policy instruments to system
- (c) institutions in system change in this way:

vision and mission → institutional strategy and policy → implementation → output

The policy response model allows for the development of indicators by which institutional performance in the higher education system can be measured. It is thus possible to evaluate the extent to which specific institutional actions meet government policy goals.

The model assumes that each institution will implement government policy from the level of its vision and mission through to the derivation of formal institutional policy and the implementation thereof. The focus of the performance measures is on the **outcomes** of this process – if the performance measures are poor, an unsuccessful attempt to implement policy is evident, or if no discernible attempt is evident, then the institution is deemed to have failed in meeting the transformation condition. No account is taken of institutional intentions towards taking a particular step towards

change. The principal emphasis of the model is on establishing empirical indicators of performance.

3.2 The adaptational model of institutional change

An alternative way to explain institutional change is one that brings into play the notion that institutions make a series of strategic choices in order to adapt to and survive in a constantly shifting environment. **Resource dependency** and **neo-institutional** theory are the two key theoretical perspectives here, and share the following basic tenets:

1. organisational choice and action are necessarily constrained by internal and external pressures and demands
2. organisations must be responsive in order to survive

Resource dependency theory

The theory of resource dependency is constructed around the notion that organisations do not exist in a vacuum and will necessarily be affected by their social context in the pursuit of their goals. This involves a degree of interdependence among organisations: in that one will control resources that another needs, the context will inevitably become one of influence and countervailing power. Accordingly, the survival of an institution is understood as being dependent upon the extent to which it responds to the external environment in an active and volitional manner (Maassen and Gornitzka, 1999). Successful organisations are those which are able to manage and manipulate their dependencies on the environment in a strategic fashion.

Neo-institutional theory

The neo-institutional perspective rests on an understanding of the organisational environment as one that is "dominated by rules, requirements, understandings and taken-for-granted assumptions about what constitutes appropriate or acceptable organisational forms and behaviour" (Gornitzka, 1999:9). The emphasis here is on the role that an organisation's conformity to the environment plays in its survival, and it is maintained that change can only occur within the context of these particular taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions. It is further critical that that there be a

fundamental degree of coherence between the norms and value systems of the external environment and those comprising the internal identify or value of the organisation. According to Gornitzka, "well-developed institutions with stable values interests, perceptions and resources (will) exhibit inertia or friction when faced with efforts at reform" (1999:9-10).

Synthesising the theories: adaptation as strategic choice

The **adaptational model** of change takes into account the fact that the frames of reference provided by the resource dependency and neo-institutional theoretical approaches are not mutually exclusive. As higher education institutions essentially function as open systems which are highly engaged with their environments, processes of change are best understood as involving choices based on strategies designed both to enhance access to resources and to ensure compliance with shifting norms in the socio-political environment. These strategically-based choices can be categorised broadly in terms of how the open system of the organisation adjusts in order to maintain a state of equilibrium in the face of internal and external pressure. The following typology, constructed by Oliver (1991) presents one way of characterising strategic choice:

- (a) **Acquiescence** – an extreme degree of conformity to pressures, in which institutions ensure legitimacy through complete compliance.
- (b) **Compromise** – a process of balancing, pacifying or bargaining with external institutional stakeholders, primarily in a situation in which an inconsistency exists between external expectations and internal objectives, with the aim of maintaining legitimacy of core institutional activities..
- (c) **Avoidance** – an attempt to disguise non-compliance and create a buffer from external pressures and expectations.
- (d) **Defiance** – an open and public resistance of external pressures which conflict with institutional norms and values.
- (e) **Manipulation** – a proactive response to the environment, with the ultimate goals of influence and control.

The adaptive organisation can be said to be one that has made a series of specific strategically-based choices in order to survive. In doing so it is either overtly or

covertly monitoring its environment and selecting ways to identify, relate and respond to key trends and stakeholders. Of critical significance here is the point that no two organisations will adapt to internal or external change in the same way. While institutions within a system operate in the same macro environment, and are ultimately subject to identical sets of government policy directives, each operates in a different locale and has a different set of core values and assumptions about the nature of its identity. It is this fact that makes inter-institutional comparison interesting and a worthwhile contribution to the process of demonstrating how different theories of change might be applied in different contexts.

At this point it must be noted that there is a potential difficulty arising from the focus on institutional strategy, in that the adaptational model assumes that it is possible to treat entire institutions as actors or agents capable of choice and independent behaviour. The problem here becomes clear when one understands that strategies can only be ascertained through empirical research (Wallace, 2002). The "institution" cannot be interrogated as an entity, and the intentions of the whole must be assumed through information gathered from individuals within it. A certain homogenisation thus takes place, and the real nuances of the components of the institution are not taken into account. Any conclusions drawn are consequently inductive (based on probability) rather than deductive (based on certainty). This said, however, it is still useful to assume institutional agency, if only because it allows for a particular and different kind of analysis to be conducted.

4. CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

There is a growing international interest in change processes in higher education. Various theories have been posited in this area, each of which focuses in a slightly different way on how higher education systems are affected by global and local societal trends. There has not, however been a great degree of focus on change processes within the individual institutions comprising these systems. Two explanatory models which can be applied to this end are the policy response and adaptational models, each of which is founded on different theoretical principles. The policy response model assumes a linear account of change, and focuses on establishing empirical indicators of institutional performance. No cognisance is taken

of intentions or attempts towards change on the part of an individual institution. The adaptational model is based on the notion that as higher education institutions function as open systems, processes of change are best understood as involving strategic choices designed both to enhance access to resources and to ensure compliance with shifting norms in the environment. While the model allows for a particular kind of analysis to be made, it must be noted that a potential problem arises with the assumption of institutional agency.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

This work seeks to draw inferences from institutional performance information and managerial strategic judgement in order to assess the policy response and the adaptational models for explaining change. The specific application of the models is demonstrated through case studies of two South African higher education institutions.

2. CASE STUDIES

The University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) and Peninsula Technikon (Pen Tech) were selected on the basis of their having been a part of a major project conducted by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET)³. This project had as its primary aim the analysis of how South African higher education institutions operationalised the framework for transformation contained in the 1997 White Paper, and did so through the construction and application of a set of transformation indicators. Although the initial intention of the project team was to focus on seven institutions across the higher education system, the constraints of time, available data and the degree of institutional co-operation resulted in the decision to focus on the first two institutions which the team had been able to visit: the University of Port Elizabeth and Peninsula Technikon.

Each institution is representative of a different sector of the South African higher education system: UPE is an historically white university, and Pen Tech is an historically black technikon. The two institutions are not, however, as dissimilar as one might assume: both were established in the latter half of the 20th century as part of the last modernisation effort of the apartheid government.

³ The author was a senior member of the team conducting this research project.

3. DATA SOURCES

3.1 Institutional Documents

This set of information includes each institution's mission and vision statement, strategic plan, the three-year rolling plans submitted to the national department of Education in 1998 and 1999, and various institutional policy documents dealing with issues such as student admissions and staff employment practices. Use was also made of informal institutional documents, such as papers or articles produced by key players in each institution. Appendix A contains a full list of the material acquired from UPE and Pen Tech.

3.2 Interviews

Once UPE and Pen Tech had agreed to participate in the project to derive transformation indicators for South African higher education institutions, each was approached with a list of possible key informants/interview subjects in the areas of student, staff and governance issues (see Appendix B). Interviews were then conducted in November 1998, with a second visit in May 1999 to broaden the group of sources. Second interviews were conducted with some individuals in each institution (UPE: Vice Chancellor, Professor in Arts Faculty and Admissions Officer; Pen Tech: Vice Chancellor, Dean of Engineering and Dean of Science) in order to further expand on certain aspects of the institutional profile.

Table One which follows lists the positions held by each person interviewed in UPE and Pen Tech.

Table One
Interview sources at UPE and Pen Tech

| |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UNIVERSITY OF PORT ELIZABETH Vice Chancellor Chair of Council Dean of Arts Dean of Health Sciences Dean of Science Director of Student Services Admissions Officer Transformation Officer Director, Centre for Organisational and Academic Development Professor of Law Arts Faculty Professor Staff Association Representative |
| Total Interviews Conducted: 15 |
| PENINSULA TECHNIKON Vice Chancellor Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Affairs) Chair of Council Members of Council (2) Dean of Engineering Dean of Science Head of Strategic Planning and Management Information Head of Academic Development Centre Human Resources Manager Chair of Equity Committee Staff Equity Officer NEHAWU Representative SRC President |
| Total Interviews Conducted: 18 |

Each interview was taped and then transcribed by an agency contracted to CHET.

3.3 SAPSE and HEMIS submissions

The following categories of data were extracted from the SAPSE and HEMIS submissions⁴ of UPE and Pen Tech to the national Department of Education for the period 1993-2000:

⁴ SAPSE (South African Post Secondary Education) was until 1999 the information system through which institutions submitted print files of data under set categories to the national Department of Education. Since 1999 institutions have submitted electronic unit records to the Department under the new HEMIS (Higher Education Management Information System) arrangement. The basic data categories and definitions remain the same for each.

- Total head count enrolments by population group and gender
- Total head count enrolments by intended major
- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)⁵ enrolments by major and course level
- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) degree credit students by major and course level
- Postgraduate head count enrolments by population group and gender
- Graduates/diplomates by major
- Full-time academic, administrative/support and service staff by population group and gender
- New staff appointments by population group and gender
- Staff leaving institution by population group and gender

4. ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

4.1 Construction of Indicators

In addition to the data derived from the categories described above, the further categories of undergraduate success rates and throughput rates were extracted. Success rates were calculated by expressing FTE degree credit students as a proportion of total undergraduate FTE enrolments. As no formal institutional cohort analyses are submitted to the Department of Education, the calculation of total graduates as a proportion of total enrolments is accepted as a proxy for an institutional throughput rate.

The total sets of institutional performance data were analysed in terms of an indicator framework which was constructed from the transformation goals of the 1997 Higher Education White Paper. Indicators are tools used to describe or evaluate the state of a system at a particular point in time (Cloete and Bunting, 2000). As a government policy specifies a set of properties which the target system ought to display, the state of that system – or an individual institution – at any one time can be measured by the extent to which it has these properties at that point. Indicators are in effect proxies for these properties, and so can be used to signal whether an institution or the system as a whole has met national government policy goals.

⁵ A student completing the full courseload designated for a particular qualification is considered to be 1 FTE student. Hence, a student completing, for example, 25% of a full designated courseload is included as 0.25 in the FTE calculation.

The three key conditions which the White Paper placed on the transformation of the national higher education system were increased and broadened participation, responsiveness to societal interests and needs, and co-operation and partnerships in governance (White Paper, 1997:1.13). From these conditions a set of policy goals were derived, and in turn a set of indicators established. These are listed in Table 2 which follows.

**TABLE TWO
NATIONAL POLICY GOALS AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION INDICATORS**

| WHITE PAPER | | INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION INDICATORS | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Source | Transformation Goal | INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION GOALS | INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION INDICATORS |
| 2.24 | <p>Equity through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring that the composition of the student body reflects the demographic realities of society. Expansion and equity strategies must be focused on increasing participation and success rates of black students in general, and African, coloured and women students in particular. expanding career-orientated programmes, particularly in science, engineering and technology programmes. expanding enrolments in postgraduate programmes to address high-level skills necessary for social and economic development. | <p>Student equity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The access of historically disadvantaged and under-represented groups must be increased, particularly to professional fields of study in science, engineering and technology (SET) and business, commerce and management. The success and graduation rates of historically disadvantaged and under-represented groups at institutions of higher education must improve. No significant differences should exist between the success and graduation rates of advantaged and disadvantaged students. The numbers of historically disadvantaged students at postgraduate level must increase. The institutional climate must be improved to ensure the retention of historically disadvantaged students, particularly in the SET and business/commerce fields. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head count enrolments of black and of women students must have increased over time. Enrolments of black and of women students in SET and business/commerce programmes must have increased over time. Enrolments of black and of women students in postgraduate programmes must have increased over time. The retention and graduation rates of black and of women students must have improved over time. No significant differences must exist between the success and graduation rates of white and black students and of male and female students. |
| 2.94 | <p>Human resource development for the higher education system, given that the composition of staff in higher education fails to reflect demographic realities, with blacks and women being severely under-represented.</p> | <p>Staff equity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The access and retention rates of historically disadvantaged and under-represented groups (including women) to the staff of the institution must be improved. Staff development programmes must be implemented. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The numbers and proportions of women and black staff members employed by the institution must have increased over time. The numbers and proportions of women and black staff members leaving the institution must have dropped over time. |
| 2.82 | <p>The production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge are core functions of the higher education system. Research is the principal tool for creating new knowledge.</p> | <p>Responsiveness:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Qualifications, programmes and courses must be restructured in response to broader changes in teaching and learning paradigms. The graduates/diplomates produced by the institution must satisfy societal needs. Research outputs must increase. Partnerships and other collaborative ventures must be formed with industry, communities and other tertiary institutions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualifications, programmes and courses must be restructured in a way which takes account of broader changes in teaching and learning paradigms. Qualifications must meet the current needs of the labour market, and particular growth in the areas of SET and business/commerce must be seen. The production of research units approved for government subsidy purposes must increase. Formal partnerships and agreements must be formed with industry, communities and other tertiary institutions. |
| 3 | <p>The transformation of the structures, values and culture of governance is a necessity for the system. The Ministry adopts a model of co-operative governance, which assumes a co-operative relationship between the state and higher education institutions, and institutional governance based on the meaningful involvement of all stakeholders in permanent institutional governance structures.</p> | <p>Governance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The composition of all governance structures must be representative with regard to race and gender, and must reflect the communities and constituencies which the institution serve. New governance structures must conform to the principles of co-operative governance. An effective leadership committed to effectiveness and efficiency must be part of the new governance structures. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be visible and substantive involvement by stakeholders in the composition of council, senate, transformation forum and other senior management structures. Participatory and devolved management structures which are both non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical must be introduced. The executive leadership must ensure the achieving of effectiveness and efficiency. |

4.2 Application of indicators

The analysis of institutional performance data in terms of the transformation indicators was conducted in the following way:

- Step 1:** This involved determining whether aspects of the transformation statements were included in the vision and mission of the institution. This was interpreted fairly broadly and was considered to be satisfied if reference to the transformation conditions was made in one or more of the following: formal mission and vision statements; strategic or 3-year rolling plans; published speeches or papers prepared by the institutional leadership.
- Step 2:** Here it was asked whether aspects of the vision and mission had been converted into institutional policies formally approved by the senate and council of the institution.
- Step 3:** The third step involved determining whether or not these formally approved policies had actually been implemented by the relevant parties in the institution.
- Step 4:** At this point an overall assessment was made of the institutional performance in meeting transformation goals which gave rise to the indicator framework. The evaluation was conducted with reference to the institutional performance data extracted from the SAPSE/HEMIS submissions for the period 1993-2000.
- Step 5:** Finally, an analysis was made of institutional performance against the sets of indicators and conclusions were drawn about the extent to which each institution could be said to have met the transformation goals of the White Paper.

5. ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC CHOICE

In terms of the adaptational model, processes of change are best understood as involving strategic choices designed both to enhance access to resources and to

ensure compliance with shifting norms in the socio-political environment. The analysis of the institutional strategies of UPE and Pen Tech was conducted in the following way:

Step 1: Data were derived from the transcribed interviews and the full set of institutional documents supplied by UPE and Pen Tech (See Appendix A).

Step 2: Although there are various ways in which strategic choices might be classified, for the purposes of this dissertation it was necessary to select just one classification set. The strategies proposed by Oliver (1991) were selected as an appropriate means of showing how strategic choices made by an institution can be categorised in terms of how the open system of the organisation adjusts in order to maintain a state of equilibrium in the face of internal and external pressure. These are as follows:

- (f) **Acquiescence** – an extreme degree of conformity to pressures, in which institutions ensure legitimacy through complete compliance.
- (g) **Compromise** – a process of balancing, pacifying or bargaining with external institutional stakeholders, primarily in a situation in which an inconsistency exists between external expectations and internal objectives, with the aim of maintaining legitimacy of core institutional activities.
- (h) **Avoidance** – an attempt to disguise non-compliance and create a buffer from external pressures and expectations.
- (i) **Defiance** – an open and public resistance of external pressures which conflict with institutional norms and values.
- (j) **Manipulation** – a proactive response to the environment, with the ultimate goals of influence and control.

Step 3: An analytical narrative of each institution was constructed and categorised according to the 5 groups of strategic choices listed above.

Step 4: Conclusions were drawn about the extent to which the managerial strategies of UPE and Pen Tech have contributed to change processes within each institution.

6. METHODOLOGICAL SHORTCOMINGS

The quality of the performance data which were extracted was dependent upon the accuracy and availability of the SAPSE and HEMIS submissions of UPE and Pen Tech. Where incomplete or no data were available for specific years, that for alternative years had to be employed. This affects the direct comparability of the conclusions drawn about the performance of each institution.

Particular methodological issues arise with regard to the sets of interviews employed in the analyses of institutional strategies. The choice of subjects was steered by a research framework which sought categories of informants best placed to discuss the institution's policy and strategy. It was further dictated by individual institutional response: each was presented with a list of possible key informants/interviewees (see Appendix B) and the management invited to select those it deemed available and appropriate. There is therefore no direct one-to-one comparability in the categories of interviewees of UPE and Pen Tech.

The quality of the actual interview transcripts was extremely variable, with significant gaps or misinterpretations evident in several cases. As a result, it was not possible to reference interview quotes directly: where statements have been drawn from transcripts, these are referred to as extracts from the two sets of interviews conducted by the research team at UPE and Pen Tech in 1998 and 1999.

There is a particular degree of limitation with regard to the use of perspectival data. As the interviewees were typically individuals with a vested interest in presenting the best possible picture of each institution. No attempt was made to account for the veracity of the narratives recorded. This has a particular impact on the application of the adaptational model in this context: the categorisation of strategic choice and the broad transformation 'story' of each institution could only be made on the basis of these limited accounts. It is thus possible that certain pertinent aspects of institutional activity may have been suppressed. The judgements made as to the selection of information and to the categorisation of this may well have been different had an alternative set of data been available.

7. CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

The assessment of the policy response and adaptational models of change was conducted via case studies of the University of Port Elizabeth and Peninsula Technikon. These institutions were selected on the basis of their having been the focus of a larger research project designed to measure institutional transformation in terms of the 1997 higher education White Paper. Sources of data were institutional documents, interviews and institutional SAPSE/HEMIS submissions. Institutional performance data were analysed in terms of a set of indicators derived from the transformation goals of the White Paper. Conclusions were drawn about institutional strategic choices with the use of analytical narratives constructed from the data sources.

CHAPTER FOUR: INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT ELIZABETH

1. BRIEF INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY⁶

UPE was founded by the apartheid government in 1964 with a dual purpose: to provide an ideological home for white Afrikaners in the Eastern Cape, while at the same time incorporating English speakers into a more liberal form of Afrikaner nationalism. The 'experiment' of the institution, then, was to attempt to bring white Afrikaans and English speakers together, with no thought being given to granting access to South Africans of other population groups. Admitting students who were not white would in the 1960's have clashed in fundamental ways with the ideological underpinnings of the institution.

During much of the first three decades of its existence, UPE remained a small university which failed to fulfil a vision of rapid growth and development. Its relatively small student body, and the strong relationship which existed at the time between enrolments and government funding, contributed to the belief that the institution's continued survival was dependent upon continued government approval of its mission and actions. It was accepted that if UPE acted in an 'anti-government' manner, then it would not be able to maintain access to funding. The university accepted further that there was little chance of the apartheid government not remaining in power, and as such being its chief 'sponsor' for many years.

Hence the path that UPE chose to follow demanded acquiescence to the views and policies of the apartheid government on the nature and functions of higher education. The four essential features of these policies can be summed up in the following way:

- Higher education institutions were not perceived as having rights or powers other than those directly prescribed by the State.
- The nature and function of higher education institutions were strictly limited to activities pertaining to the advancement of learning, the preparation of students for a vocation or profession, and the instilling in them of values particular to their cultural backgrounds.
- The State had the power to stipulate which groups of students a higher education institution was or was not permitted to admit to courses of study.

- Institutions were not allowed the space to object to the ideological framework of the State, and were in particular not supposed to articulate any political standpoint.

UPE committed itself to these broad apartheid principles throughout the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's, with its central vision being to provide an intellectual home for a brand of Afrikaner nationalism which was open to integration with white English-speaking South Africans. A major consequence of UPE's acceptance of the apartheid ideology was that by the end of the 1980's, only 8% of its students were coloured or Indian and only 2% African. The black⁷ students enrolled at UPE at this time would have been those admitted in terms of specific concessions made by the apartheid government – viz. that black students could enrol at a white university only if their intended programme of studies was not available at a black institution. Throughout this period UPE understood its key academic function to be that of preparing white students for professions and careers. It offered just the diplomas and discipline-based general formative, professional and postgraduate degrees prescribed by formal government policy.

During this period UPE's staff complement – at governance, administrative and teaching levels- also remained overwhelmingly white. The university council was made up of senior institutional executives and academics, prominent white Afrikaans-speaking Port Elizabeth businessmen, representatives from local white high schools and government nominees. The senate was comprised predominantly of white Afrikaans males. Members of local community organisations, representatives from low-level staff groups, and students were not included in either of these bodies.

The contrast between the status quo on the UPE campus during the 1980's and that in the wider Eastern Cape community was sharp. During this time one of the most militant and organised campaigns against apartheid was carried out in the region, while at the university flourished a white Afrikaner Broederbond⁸ leadership committed to apartheid. This state of affairs began to shift as previously banned organisations gradually came to the fore through the work of pressure groups such as the Broad Democratic Movement (BDM). By 1990 the presence of powerful democratic forces were making it increasingly difficult for UPE to ignore the broad changes underway in South African society.

⁶ The story of UPE is based in part on a 1997 account by Deon Pretorius, entitled 'An Insider's View on the Transformation of the University of Port Elizabeth'.

⁷ African + coloured + Indian

⁸ "Brotherhood"

Within the university itself a group of staff members at this time began to question and ultimately to challenge the dominant ideology of the institution. Several of these staff members were part of the Union of Democratic Staff Associations (UDUSA), which had an important role in the wider anti-apartheid movement. A key tenet of UDUSA was that political democratisation should be inextricably linked to the democratisation of higher education. By the early 1990's, at an earlier point than the institution's executive and council, this progressive grouping of staff had come to believe that the survival of UPE was entirely dependent on its ability to adapt to wider socio-political change.

With time, the view of this group on the need for specific institutional change came to be shared by other sectors in the university. The first key response by members of the executive management was the joint hosting in 1992 by UPE and the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) of a conference entitled "Tertiary Education in a Changing Society". It was here that the debate about the role of the Afrikaner Broederbond in UPE's management surfaced publicly for the first time, and as a direct result of this the university leadership began to consider a more strategic focus on change. However, early moves in this direction were made without any real consultation within the institution, and on the whole these first attempts at change were not successful. A true course of negotiated transformation at UPE can only be said to have commenced formally in 1993, when the university council made a commitment in principle to this process.

By 1997 UPE's founding vision of white unity had been replaced by a new mission and strategic direction which the university believed clearly set it apart from other South African higher education institutions. The new mission statement stressed that the university's services and functions would be informed by its social context in the first place, and in the second would reflect its commitment to be a major provider of cutting-edge knowledge and well-equipped leaders.

At her installation as chancellor of UPE in April 2000, Dr Brigalia Bam said the following of the university:

"UPE came into being during a very repressive period in South Africa. The new university was immediately cast in the mould imposed by the apartheid system – the principle of separate development – and was thus compelled to provide support to the heresy that apartheid was. Its entire orientation was towards the needs of white students and the white community. Today we are looking at a

new scenario: transformation for the University of Port Elizabeth that would serve the whole population of its region. It would itself therefore become a democratic and multicultural university – a university for all...”

The new goals and direction of UPE are reflected in its core strategic plan. This places emphasis on an education approach which is responsive to the national higher education system, a research culture, staff and student empowerment, and the development of a culture which enhances equity and diversity throughout the university community.

2. POLICY RESPONSE: MEASURING UPE's PERFORMANCE

As described in the methodology, the policy response model of institutional change aims to evaluate the extent to which institutions respond to government policy: here, the 1997 white paper on higher education transformation. The indicators developed in terms of the model were applied to UPE's performance in each of the following areas: student equity, staff equity, responsiveness and governance.

2.1 STUDENT EQUITY AT UPE

The apartheid system in South Africa was characterised by the unequal distribution of social and economic resources. These inequalities were racially based, with the major allocations going to whites, the wielders of exclusive political power in the country. In the higher education system the sense of inequity was exacerbated by the dominance whites had of student places in both the university and technikon sectors, and in particular in what were regarded as the better institutions. White students also had a greater chance than black students of gaining access to programmes which produced high levels of benefit, as well as of successfully completing these programmes. Owing to this state of affairs, a heavy emphasis was placed in the White Paper on the need to achieve an equitable distribution of the benefits of higher education. The indicators extracted from the White Paper's requirements for attaining this goal are as follows:

- Head count enrolments of black and of women students must have increased over time.
- Enrolments of black and of women students in science/engineering/technology and business/commerce programmes must have increased over time.
- The retention and graduation rates of black and of women students must have improved over time.

- No significant differences must exist between the success and graduation rates of white and black students and of male and female students.

According to the policy response model, the development of student equity at UPE in terms of the government policy must be traced through from the level of vision, mission and strategy documents, to formal institutional policies, to the implementation thereof.

(a) Vision, mission and institutional strategy

Although a specific equity commitment is not evident in UPE's vision and mission statements, there is evidence in this regard in the institution's three-year rolling plan for 1999-2001. This states that access equity is an institutional priority to be achieved both through differentiated growth and through a policy of providing access to historically disadvantaged students (UPE, 1998d).

(b) Formal institutional policies

In 1998 UPE published an affirmative action document, which defined how the institution viewed affirmative action, and named specific policies on admissions and development with regard to its student body. These include alternative paths to admission for historically disadvantaged students with potential, financial assistance for needy students, and internal diversification (UPE, 1998c).

(c) Implementation of formal institutional policies

The available evidence suggests that UPE has made an effort to implement policies with regard to improving student equity. Specific practices introduced include alternative admissions testing and a special science/pharmacy access programme for applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds (Cloete et al, 2002).

(d) Performance against indicators

- **Head count enrolments of black and of women students must have increased over time.**

The enrolments of black and of women students at UPE increased substantially over the period 1997-2000. This can clearly be seen in the tables which follow:

Table Three
Head count enrolments of UPE students by population group
(thousands)

| Population Group | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | Change: 2000 compared to 1997 | |
|------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| African | 3.5 | 7.2 | 13.0 | 18.1 | +14.6 | 417% |
| Coloured | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.9 | +0.2 | 29% |
| Indian | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | +0.1 | 50% |
| White | 3.2 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.8 | -0.4 | -13% |
| Total | 7.6 | 11.2 | 17.1 | 22.1 | +14.5 | 191% |

Table Four
Head count enrolments of UPE students by gender
(thousands)

| Gender | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | Change: 2000 compared to 1997 | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Female | 4.4 | 6.9 | 10.5 | 13.7 | +9.3 | 211% |
| Male | 3.2 | 4.3 | 6.6 | 8.4 | +5.2 | 163% |
| Total | 7.6 | 11.2 | 17.1 | 22.1 | +14.5 | 191% |

Table One shows that the number of African students enrolled at UPE increased from 3500 in 1997 to 18100 in 2000: an increase of 14600. The total number of black (African + coloured + Indian) students at the university grew from 4400 to 19300 over the four year period.

In Table Two it can be seen that the number of female students enrolled at the university grew from 4400 in 1997 to 13700 in 2000: an increase of 9300.

- **Enrolments of black and of women students in science/ engineering/technology and business/commerce programmes must have increased over time.**

Tables Three which follows shows that although there has been a slight improvement over time, black students remain under-represented in science/engineering/technology programmes at UPE. Table Four, in contrast, indicates an improvement in the proportion of black students following programmes in business/commerce at the university over the period 1996-2000.

Table Five
Proportions of SET majors in each population group category at UPE
(thousands)

| POPULATION GROUP | 1996 | 1998 | 2000 |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| African | 17% | 27% | 33% |
| Coloured | 11% | 11% | 10% |
| Indian | 4% | 6% | 5% |
| White | 68% | 56% | 52% |
| Total | 1.6 | 2.1 | 2.1 |

Table Six
Proportions of business/commerce majors in each population group category at UPE
(thousands)

| POPULATION GROUP | 1996 | 1998 | 2000 |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| African | 8% | 21% | 30% |
| Coloured | 11% | 12% | 10% |
| Indian | 3% | 3% | 10% |
| White | 78% | 64% | 50% |
| Total | 0.6 | 0.8 | 1.0 |

Tables Five and Six indicate that there has been an improvement in the proportion of women following programmes in both science/engineering/technology and business/commerce at UPE over the period 1996-2000.

Table Seven
Proportions of SET majors in each gender category at UPE
(thousands)

| GENDER | 1996 | 1998 | 2000 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Female | 48% | 50% | 57% |
| Male | 52% | 50% | 43% |
| Total | 1.6 | 2.1 | 2.1 |

Table Eight
Proportions of business/commerce majors in each gender category at UPE
(thousands)

| GENDER | 1996 | 1998 | 2000 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Female | 35% | 41% | 50% |
| Male | 65% | 59% | 50% |
| Total | 0.6 | 0.8 | 1.0 |

A particular problem at UPE is that students in the university's distance tuition programme are pursuing qualifications exclusively in education, and so have contributed to the institution as a whole being predominantly humanities-based. The institution's contact +

distance enrolment data for 2000 show that 86% of the students registered were following programmes in the humanities.

- **The retention and graduation rates of black and of women students must have improved over time.**

There was no substantial change in the retention and graduation rates of either of these groups in the period up to 2000. The average success rates of African undergraduates (excluding those involved in distance programmes at UPE) was just 67% - this is below the average of 75% normally considered acceptable for a South African university. Success rates by gender also declined: the average success rate for female undergraduates fell from 73% in 1994 to 70% in 1998⁹.

- **No significant differences must exist between the success and throughput rates of black and white students and of male and female students.**

Table Seven below shows that there were substantial differences up until 2000 in the success rates of black and of white students at UPE. As no data were available, it was not possible to calculate and comment on similar changes by gender.

Table Nine
Average UPE contact undergraduate success rates by population group

| POPULATION GROUP | 1998 | 2000 | National university average for 2000 |
|------------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| African | 64% | 67% | 72% |
| Coloured | 70% | 66% | 72% |
| Indian | 70% | 68% | 74% |
| White | 84% | 81% | 84% |
| Total | 70% | 73% | 77% |

(e) Conclusion

There is at the level of UPE's vision and mission a strong commitment to the achievement of equity in its student body. The specific emphasis has been on equity of access, or ensuring that applicants from previously disadvantaged background are admitted to the university. It must be noted, however, that the institution has not paid attention to issues around equity of outcome: although improvements in the composition of the student body can be seen, these are not carried through to the graduation and success rates of historically disadvantaged groups.

2.2 STAFF EQUITY AT UPE

Concerns for the achieving of equity in the higher education system extend to staffing issues. The indicators derived from the White Paper for this area are as follows:

- The numbers and proportions of black and of women staff members employed by the institution must have increased over time.
- The numbers and proportions of black and of women staff members leaving the institution must have dropped over time.

As with student equity, the assessment of UPE's performance against these indicators must be followed through from the level of institutional vision, mission and strategic direction statements, to the implementation of any formal institutional policy in this regard.

(a) Vision, mission and institutional strategy

Specific objectives for attaining employment equity are spelled out in UPE's three-year rolling plan for 2000-2002. These include eliminating any unfair discrimination in employment policies, practices and procedures, ensuring the implementation of affirmative action to redress past discrimination, and promoting diversity and respect for all cultural groups (UPE, 1999).

(b) Formal institutional policies

UPE has devised a comprehensive set of formal institutional policies for operationalising the strategic goal of staff equity. These include the appointment a diversity task group, the designation of specific staff recruitment procedures, and the delineation of specific requirements for staff development.

(c) Implementation of formal institutional policies

UPE has implemented a number of staff development policies, including a 'grow our own timber' project for black postgraduates showing a particular interest in academic careers, a literacy project for black workers in unskilled posts, and training programmes in understanding diversity for all non-academic staff members. The weight of evidence does, however, suggest that the university has *not* been able to implement the full range of policies which derive from the need to achieve staff equity.

⁹ 2000 data not available

(d) Performance against indicators

- The numbers and proportions of black and of women staff members employed by the institution must have increased over time.

Tables Eight and Nine list black and women staff as proportions of full-time staff at UPE in each of the following categories:

Instruction/research professionals – staff members who spends at least 50% of his/her time on formal teaching and research activities;

Executive/support professionals – staff in posts which require at least a four-year higher education qualification as a minimum entry requirement and which are involved either with the high-level management of the institution or with the provision of high-level support;

Non-professional administrative staff – staff in administrative posts which do not require a professional qualification, but which require skills above those of service workers;

Service staff – unskilled staff.

Table Ten
Black staff as a proportion of full-time staff at UPE

| Staff category | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Instruction/research | 8% | 9% | 14% |
| Executive/support | 9% | 13% | 13% |
| Non-professional admin | 18% | 20% | 24% |
| Service | 89% | 90% | 92% |
| AVERAGE | 32% | 33% | 36% |

Table Eleven
Female staff as a proportion of full-time staff at UPE

| Staff category | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Instruction/research | 37% | 40% | 41% |
| Executive/support | 31% | 34% | 38% |
| Non-professional admin | 71% | 71% | 71% |
| Service | 36% | 37% | 40% |
| AVERAGE | 47% | 48% | 50% |

The tables show that the staff complement at UPE remained overwhelmingly white and male in 1999, and further that the majority of black staff members held posts in the unskilled category.

- **The numbers and proportions of black and of women staff members leaving the institution must have dropped over time.**

The available data suggest that UPE probably does not have any problem with the retention of black staff. As there was no available information on the numbers of female staff leaving the institution, a full analysis of this transformation requirement was not possible.

(e) Conclusion

The evidence suggests that while UPE has in place the policy vision and commitments necessary to meet the requirements of transformation in its staffing body, actual change in this area is occurring at what may be an unacceptably slow pace.

2.3 RESPONSIVENESS AT UPE

The White Paper identified responsiveness to societal interests and needs as a critical condition of the transformation of the higher education system. The primary means of meeting this goal were said to rest upon the delivery of the research and knowledge outputs needed in order for South Africa to become competitive in a rapidly changing national and global context.

The indicators derived from White Paper policy in this area are as follows:

- Qualifications, programmes and courses must be restructured in a way which takes account of broader changes in teaching and learning paradigms.
- Qualifications must meet the current needs of the labour market, and particular growth in the areas of science/engineering/technology and business/commerce must be seen.
- The production of research units approved for government subsidy purposes must increase.
- Formal partnerships and agreements must be formed with industry, communities and other tertiary institutions.

(a) Vision, mission and institutional strategy

UPE's vision and mission statements reflect a strong institutional commitment to the principles of responsiveness. With regard to transformation in the academic sector, the following is said:

“An essential part of our core function is realise the potential of our students whose learning will be programme-based and focused on development. We believe that new programmes and ways of learning are required to meet the needs of our students and of society.” (UPE, 1997a)

With regard to transformation in research, the university’s strategic direction statement says:

“UPE regards high quality research as another essential part of its core function. Learning programmes and research that are in line with the development focus of the University will be actively promoted.... UPE will develop a research culture and research practices in keeping with its commitment to respond to SA’s developmental needs, and will participate creatively in the global research community. Multi- and trans-disciplinary collaboration will be supported, and internal and external partnerships encouraged.” (UPE, 1997b)

(b) Formal institutional policies

Although no formal institutional policy documents were available when research into this area at UPE was conducted, there is evidence that the university has been implementing transformation policies concerned with the restructuring of its academic activities and with the employability of its graduates. Particular restructuring took place in the Faculty of Arts, which introduced new programme designs in 1998.

At the time of writing, no formal institutional policies on research or academic partnerships had been approved at UPE.

(c) Implementation of formal institutional policies

The restructuring in the Faculty of Arts is the main point of focus in policy implementation in the area of academic responsiveness at UPE. Ensor (2001) made the following comments on this process:

“The Arts Faculty took on the ‘radical’ programme approach from 1998, very explicitly in response to what were perceived to be government higher education policy imperatives. The NCHE report and the subsequent White Paper were interpreted as calling for an interdisciplinary approach based on relevance to the world of work. ...

In addition to pressures from government, the Arts Faculty responded also to more local pressures for economic efficiency and institutional transformation. In the Dean's view, the faculty had too many staff, too many departments and too few students for long-term economic sustainability. In a matter of months, the Faculty abolished departments, established three schools and a number of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes around agreed key strengths in the faculty." (Ensor, 2001:91)

It must be noted, however, that curriculum restructuring has not occurred in any other faculty at UPE. There is an apparent lack of consensus within the institution on the nature of academic programmes and the necessity to reformulate existing curricula to this end (Ensor, 2001).

In keeping with the lack of formal institutional policy in this regard, there is an apparent imbalance in transformation in teaching and transformation in research at UPE. It is further clear that no detailed policy on inter-institutional collaboration and partnerships is being implemented at the university: in its three-year plan for 2000-2002, it is stated that "co-operation is fairly ad hoc" (UPE, 1999).

(d) Performance against indicators

- **Qualifications, programmes and courses must be restructured in a way which takes account of broader changes in teaching and learning paradigms.**

The academic programme approach adopted by UPE is in line with the government's vision of a national qualifications framework (NQF). This is underpinned by notions of relevance and market-relatedness, and is driven by the restructuring of departments and disciplines and by curriculum development. There is, however, no common understanding within the university of the meaning of the term 'programme' (Ensor, 2001). Change has therefore been controversial and remains limited to two faculties at most.

- **Qualifications must meet the current needs of the labour market, and particular growth in the areas of science/engineering/technology and business/commerce must be seen.**

As has already been noted, UPE's entry into distance education resulted in the skewing of its qualification profile towards the humanities. This has defeated its declared intention to

increase the number and proportion of science students, make postgraduate studies more accessible and work relevant, and develop market-related undergraduate programmes.

- **The production of research units approved for government subsidy purposes must increase.**

UPE's research output in the form of research publication units remained static between 1996 (102 units) and 2000 (103 units).

(c) Conclusion

Although there is evidence that UPE has in place the overall policy and value structures required in order to attain transformation in the area of responsiveness, this has not been translated into specific sets of formal policies or implementation plans. It cannot be concluded that successful academic restructuring has taken place, due to the lack of internal consensus and co-operative activity in this regard.

2.4 GOVERNANCE AT UPE

Both the report of the NCHE and the 1997 White Paper refer to the democratisation of the higher education sector in terms of 'co-operative governance'. According to this notion, both individual institutions and the system as a whole would be democratised only once co-operative structures and practices were fully in place. The governance model presupposes at a system level that civil society and government should work together to overcome the problems of higher education's apartheid past. At an institutional level, on the other hand, it implied that executive and academic bodies, student and staff organisations, and external stakeholder groups should work together to transform each institution.

The specific indicators derived from the White Paper's directives in this area are as follows:

- There must be visible and substantive involvement by stakeholders in the composition of council, senate, the transformation forum and other senior management structures.
- Participatory and devolved management structures which are both non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical must be introduced.
- The executive leadership must ensure that the institution functions efficiently and effectively.

(a) Vision, mission and institutional strategy

The principles of co-operative governance have been incorporated into UPE's vision, mission and strategic direction statements. In its Core Strategic Plan for 1998-2001, the university declares a commitment to "representative and meaningful participation in decision making" (UPE, 1997c), and further makes reference to a 'flat' management structure, devolved management authority and decision-making, and participative and one management practices (UPE, 1997c). There are further general, but not as clearly-defined, commitments to effectiveness and efficiency in leadership.

(b) Formal institutional policies

Formal institutional policies with regard to representative and participative governance have not been established to any great extent at UPE. At an early stage in the transformation process, a detailed agreement was drawn up with regard to the establishment of a Broad Negotiating Forum (BNF) in 1994. This contained information on the participants, internal structure, functioning, rules of procedure and action steps of the body. However, given its timing, the formation and work of this group obviously cannot be said to have derived directly from government policy. There is further no evidence of formal institutional policies concerned with efficiency and leadership.

(c) Implementation of formal institutional policies

The evidence available suggests that the BNF, which operated between 1994 and 1997, laid down the foundations for the development of co-operative governance at UPE. The forum had a wide degree of stakeholder representation, and was responsible for revisions of the university council incorporated in its private act of 1996. After 1997 an institutional forum with 54 members across the spectrum of stakeholders was established in accordance with the requirements of the 1997 Higher Education Act.

(d) Performance against indicators

- **There must be visible and substantive involvement by stakeholders in the composition of council, senate, the transformation forum and other senior management structures.**

UPE's new council took up office in 1997, and had a far broader degree of stakeholder representation than its predecessor. Specific provision was made for representation by students, UPE staff members and members of the local business community. The

university's senate was revised during the same period, with a broad grouping of stakeholders being involved in the process. UPE's senior academic staff structures, however, remain predominantly white and male.

- **Participatory and devolved management structures which are both non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical must be introduced.**

In the early stages of its transformation process UPE formulated policy commitments to creating management structures which fulfil the co-operative governance requirements of being participatory and devolved, and non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical. An institution-wide commitment to the implementation of these principles appears to have begun to wane during 1998 and 1999, with a more explicitly managerial style of governance being adopted. It is thus not possible to make a full assessment of the fulfilment of this performance measure.

- **The executive leadership of the institution must ensure that the institution functions efficiently and effectively.**

A strong executive leadership emerged at UPE from 1997 onwards. A particular focus on efficiency concerns arose during 1998 and 1999, with the application of business principles to management styles and the use of a costing model to determine the location of reductions in staffing expenditure. There appears to be a tension between efficiency and effectiveness as a result of this strong commitment to the former: a view expressed within the institution was that UPE was ignoring its broader policy commitments in order to ensure high levels of financial efficiency. A firm evaluation of the institution in terms of this performance measure can therefore not be made.

(e) Conclusion

The process of negotiated transformation which UPE underwent could be said to be fairly unique in the South African higher education system. On the whole it can be concluded that the institution fulfilled many of the requirements of co-operative governance, but it is not possible to make a substantiated conclusion of its current state of affairs in this regard.

3. INSTITUTIONAL ADAPTATION: ANALYSING STRATEGIC CHOICE AT UPE

As indicated in Chapter Three, the adaptational model of change focuses on the notion that change processes are best understood as involving sets of strategic choice intended both to enhance access to resources and to ensure compliance with shifting environmental norms. The model focuses on the ways in which these strategic choices can be categorised, and draws from a wide range of sources (institutional documents and interviews) in order to construct a particular analytical narrative of change within a particular institution. A narrative for UPE follows, based upon the strategic categories described in the methodology chapter.

3.1 ACQUIESCENCE (Pre 1990)

UPE was founded by the apartheid government, and was in the first decades of its existence an institution whose leadership believed firmly that survival depended upon continued government approval of its mission and actions. This was to a large extent due to its heavy reliance on government subsidy, with the perception being that ongoing resourcing of the institution depended on its maintaining its relationship with the government as its key source of funding.

In these early years, therefore, UPE acquiesced to the views and policies of the apartheid government on the nature and function of higher education, and focused on what it perceived to be its primary academic function: to prepare white students for professional careers. No attempt was made to offer qualifications beyond those specified by formal government policy. A member of the university states that as a result,

“the institution turned out to be a rather dull and ideational homogenous ‘glorified high school’. This was the result of a ‘no-politics on campus’ policy for students and staff, and the fact that both the administrative and academic staff were, almost without exception, products of the same socio-political mould.”
(Pretorius, 1997:41)

By 1990 the major governance structures of UPE were still dominated by a white male leadership committed to the perpetuation of apartheid values and principles across the university. Few moves had been made towards transformation on any level, and no cognisance was taken of issues of inequity in the staff and student bodies. Ultimately the

chief concerns of the university leadership were to ensure a continued flow of resources from traditional sources, and to maintain its own position of power and privilege.

3.2 COMPROMISE (Early 1990's)

In the early 1990's the unbanning of the liberation movement contributed towards the development of a dichotomy between outside pressures and the overriding internal status quo at UPE. Further internal pressure was generated from the conflicting ideologies of the staff and leadership bodies – it was around this time that a group of UPE staff members began to promote the notion that the internal structures of the university were illegitimate, and needed to be transformed in order to be part of broader democratisation processes.

Thus began a period of compromise on the part of UPE's leadership. It was clearly recognised that moves had to be made towards developing a dialogue about transformation, but this could be said to be largely a case of attempting to deal with internal inconsistencies without relinquishing the core institutional ideology. The early gains of legitimacy were consequently slow. Although a Joint Advisory Forum (JAF) was established with the intention of facilitating discussion among institutional stakeholders both on and off campus, this collapsed after it was unable to resolve the controversy which arose over the involvement of a right wing political group on campus. It was clear that the JAF had no real power to negotiate change at a leadership level.

By late 1993 the Broad Democratic Movement had embarked on a series of campaigns which called for the acceleration of transformation processes, and at the end of the year – in this context of concerns about the legitimacy of institutional power structures and power relations – UPE's council finally committed itself in principle to a course of negotiated transformation.

Perceptions about the legitimacy of UPE's governance structures were directly linked to the institution's long term adherence to the ideology of the apartheid government, and it was therefore not surprising that this became a first point of focus for those arguing for change. Given a choice between attempting a radical overthrow of existing structures on the one hand, and entering into a process which would require the nature, pace and extent of transformation to be negotiated by all interested parties on the other, UPE's activists for change elected a negotiated transformation.

The acceptance of the notion of transformation by negotiation signalled the first substantive move away from UPE's strategy of compromising in order to protect the status quo. Ultimately this can be attributed to the strength of the dissonance between the status quo and the rapid and powerful changes underway in South Africa at the time. It was clearly problematic for UPE to base its survival on following the ideology of a government whose days were clearly numbered.

3.3 MANIPULATION (Late 1990's)

By the late 1990's, UPE still believed that in order to maintain access to its supply of resources, it needed to cohere to the policies and beliefs of the national government. It had moved, however, towards making active strategic decisions about how to attain this. The first point of focus was on attaining political legitimacy, and it achieved this through a process of negotiated transformation. A member of the institution commented that there was a "specific choice for inclusive negotiated transformation which ensured legitimacy for the appointment of a new VC and a restructuring of representative bodies" (Naude, 1991:1). The process of appointing a new vice chancellor at the university serves as a particular example of the first steps towards democratisation. This is borne out in the following comment by a member of the university:

"For the first time in SA all relevant stakeholders, from the traditional establishment interest groups to the variety of internal and external groups who were excluded in the past, participated in the process of electing a Vice Chancellor. The proposal on which the eventual process was based, the criteria according to which the nominated candidates were evaluated, were drafted by the BDM and tabled in a UPE/BDM joint committee. ... (The) process was designed and the criteria drafted with compromise, inclusivity and reciprocal interaction in mind." (CHET, 1999a)

After focusing on political transformation, attention was directed more towards UPE's core academic business, coinciding with the work of the NCHE. It was around this point that a process of curriculum restructuring took place in the Faculty of Arts, and humanities departments and courses were redesigned in terms of a particular understanding of the notion of an academic programme. Specific strategies for improving equity in the student body were devised, built around the setting of differentiated (in terms of race and gender) targets for growth in student enrolments. The university then made a conscious and strategic choice to develop its influence and activities in the areas of public/private

partnerships and distance education, and a decision was made to enter into a collaborative agreement with a private teaching training institution in Gauteng. In terms of this agreement, students at the teaching college would register for UPE diplomas and certificates, and could thus be reflected on UPE's head count enrolment totals, despite the lack of direct contact with academic staff of the university. As a result of the expansion into distance programmes, UPE's student enrolment increased nearly threefold between 1997 and 2000, and by 2000 its equity profile had shifted to just 13% white and 82% African.

Although this is a clear example of UPE's moves towards actively increasing its sphere of influence, it must be said that the change has not been uncontroversial. Given that the vast proportion of the increased enrolments reported were participating in distance programmes offered by the Faculty of Education, a question arises as to how students registered in the first place with a private education provider can be considered students of UPE – particularly for government subsidy purposes.

Attention then shifted towards improving the financial efficiency of UPE. At the same time that the institution was confronted with its first deficit budget, the national government announced its new macroeconomic policy (GEAR). GEAR emphasised financial discipline and efficiency gains in order to nurture a climate attractive to foreign investors, and so was essentially South Africa's plan for entry into the global economy. The university then turned its strategy towards effecting efficiency improvements and increasing income generation.

It was at this time (after 1997) that the sense of stakeholder ownership fostered at UPE began to dissipate. A first example of this is the discord which arose during negotiations on service worker salaries, as a result of which the trade union involved backed away from substantive involvement in institutional governance structures. The evidence suggests that by this stage it had been realised that co-operative partnerships between sectors such as the executive management of a university and a trade union are in reality difficult to maintain. By 1998 the role of the executive management of the university had grown and strengthened to the extent that there was a decline in the general emphasis on transparency and stakeholder participation.

One possible account of this state of affairs is the growing demand for efficiency within the institution, and the apparent decision that the associated pressures could not be relieved through a high degree of stakeholder involvement. This move can be interpreted as a direct reaction to an increasingly competitive and market-driven environment. In order to maintain an optimum level of access to the flow of resources necessary for its survival, the leadership of UPE had to focus on attaining a greater degree of control of all the sectors of the university. It was believed that the new strategy would not succeed in an environment committed to the slow ways in which the mechanisms of co-operative governance operate.

4. CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This chapter described UPE's background as a white institution established at the height of the apartheid era. It then demonstrated in the first place how UPE's performance in terms of the transformation goals of the White Paper might be measured, showing specifically what judgements can be made according to the sets of indicators in the areas of student equity, staff equity, responsiveness and governance. The discussion then indicated how the strategies employed by the institution can be categorised in terms of the classification of the adaptational model of change. In terms of the narrative data collected, UPE was shown to have progressed through the stages of acquiescence, compromise and manipulation.

CHAPTER FIVE: INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AT PENSINSULA TECHNIKON

1. BRIEF INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY¹⁰

Peninsula Technikon (Pen Tech) was established as a direct result of the apartheid government's decision to create separate technical training facilities for coloured students. The institution was later elevated in status from a technical college to a College for Advanced Technical Education (CATE), and designated as an institution which offered either advanced technical education or teacher training. The CATE was situated in a building originally intended to be a technical high school, and was ill-equipped to offer training at this level. Hence, in the first decade of its existence the institution was forced to function with inferior facilities and inadequate equipment.

The first rector of the CATE was a white male who implemented strictly the broad apartheid ideology of the government, and in particular enforced the directive that the institution enrol only coloured students. His replacement, also a white male, was appointed to establish stability on the campus after student unrest in 1976, and was in turn replaced in 1978 by Franklin Sonn. Sonn was the first coloured person to head a South African higher education institution, and assumed his post shortly before the Advanced Technical Education Act officially awarded the CATE the status of technikon.

In terms of the national policy decisions of the late 1970's Pen Tech became an institution concerned exclusively with higher level training of a practical or vocational kind. The equal-but-separate relationship between universities and technikons was most notably signalled by the differences in their qualification structures. In the period between 1978 and 1993, these were basically as follows:

¹⁰ The primary source for this historical account was the 1999 inaugural lecture of Professor Johan Tromp.

| University Qualification | Equivalent Technikon Qualification |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Doctorate | Laureatus in Technology |
| Masters Degree | National Diploma in Technology |
| Honours Degree | National Higher Diploma |
| Postgraduate Diploma | Postdiploma Diploma |
| Undergraduate Bachelors Degree | First National Diploma |

In terms of the policy of the apartheid government, Pen Tech was between 1978 and 1984 administered by the Department of Coloured Affairs. The white minister overseeing this department exercised substantial control over the technikon, and held the power to dictate the composition of the student body, the kinds of programmes and courses which were offered at the institution, and appointment of senior members of staff.

The national constitution which was adopted in 1984 dictated that education should become an 'own affair' as far as white, coloured and Indian citizens were concerned. Pen Tech's status as a technikon for coloureds only was thus reaffirmed, and in terms of the constitution became the responsibility of the Department of Education in the House of Representatives. This was comprised of coloured persons elected by coloured voters. Only two of South Africa's 36 higher education institutions fell under the responsibility of this department: Pen Tech and the University of the Western Cape.

After this entrenchment of white political power followed a period of deep political unrest throughout the country. Pen Tech played a particular role in the anti-apartheid struggle in the Western Cape, beginning the process of implementing fundamental transformative change. Among these moves towards transformation were the appointment of coloured staff in order to reflect better the composition of the student body, the acceptance of all students irrespective of their race, and the reformation of governance bodies to incorporate a greater degree of stakeholder representation (Tromp, 1999).

During this period several significant higher education policy changes had an impact on the functioning of Pen Tech. These included the establishment in 1986 of a certification council for technikon education, which was specifically intended to

oversee the design and management of the programmes and courses offered in these institution. Further, in 1988 technikons were awarded financial autonomy and began to receive funding in terms of a government subsidy formula specifically designed for this sector of the higher education system. This was an important break from the previous state of affairs, which had required that technikon funding be drawn directly from the budget of the government department responsible for their control. Finally, in 1993 the promulgation of a new Technikon Act afforded all technikons the right to award degrees at bachelors, masters and doctoral levels.

In 1995 Dr Franklin Sonn was replaced by one of his vice-rectors: Professor Brian Figaji. The transition in management was described as both seamless and straightforward by members of the technikon staff, and the phase that has transpired since as a 'take off' period for this institution. Particular features of this period include the forging of international linkages and a corresponding increase in financial support for technikon faculties. The six schools of the institution were restructured into the Business, Engineering and Science faculties, allowing for a more efficient degree of academic management. Further, the technikon set five strategic objectives: student success and development, staff development, quality, science and technology, and research.

2. POLICY RESPONSE: MEASURING PEN TECH'S PERFORMANCE

As with UPE, the measurement of Pen Tech's performance in the key White Paper areas of equity, responsiveness and governance is conducted in terms of the steps dictated by the policy response model. This traces institutional performance from the level of vision, mission and strategic direction, through to formal policies and the implementation thereof.

2.1 STUDENT EQUITY AT PEN TECH

The indicators extracted from the White Paper's requirements for attaining the goal of improving equity in higher education enrolments are as follows:

- Head count enrolments of black and of women students must have increased over time.

- Enrolments of black and of women students in science/engineering/technology and business/commerce programmes must have increased over time.
- The retention and graduation rates of black and of women students must have improved over time.
- No significant differences must exist between the success and graduation rates of white and black students and of male and female students.

(a) Vision, mission and institutional strategy

There is evidence that Pen Tech has made a broad commitment to student equity. The institution's mission statement specifically mentions a commitment to offering programmes for disadvantaged students. In the objectives listed in its 1999 admissions policy, the institution states:

"The Technikon recognises that questions of access to tertiary education in South Africa are complicated by a legacy of inequality in primary and secondary schooling, and that it is unfair to expect that students from disadvantaged backgrounds would be able to display the same level of ability as their more advantaged peers... (The Technikon) will admit those students who are able to demonstrate the potential to succeed. At the same time it commits itself to providing academic support to those students who are admitted but who, due to educational disadvantage, require extra support. It recognises that its ability to admit underprepared students is therefore dependent upon its capacity to provide support, and that it would be irresponsible to admit students on the basis of potential, rather than manifest ability, without being able to assist them to realise their potential." (Pen Tech, 1999a)

(b) Formal institutional policies

A key document here is Pen Tech's 1999 admissions policy, which indicates clearly that the technikon has made formal moves towards establishing specific direction for attaining the goal of student equity. The policy sets a number of broad admissions objectives for Pen Tech, including the following:

- selecting those candidates who will best benefit from the technikon's programmes;

- a commitment towards flexible access and student mobility, allowing, for example, the recognition of prior learning;
- ensuring the employability of students (Pen Tech, 1999a).

(c) Implementation of formal policies

It is clear that Pen Tech has for some time been implementing formal institutional policy with regard to equity in its student body. It must be said, however, that these moves cannot necessarily be said to be related directly to the directives of the 1997 White Paper: Pen Tech was at an early stage defying apartheid law in order to admit African students.

(d) Performance against indicators

- **Head count enrolments of black and of women students must have increased over time.**

Tables Ten and Eleven which follow show that Pen Tech has satisfied this measure of performance. This is particularly so if the focus is placed on African as opposed to black (African + coloured + Indian) students, bearing in mind that the technikon was originally designated for coloured enrolments only.

Table Twelve
Head count enrolments of Pen Tech students by population group (thousands)

| Population Group | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | Change: 2000 compared to 1998 | |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| African | 4.8 | 5.4 | 5.7 | +0.9 | 19% |
| Coloured | 3.3 | 3.1 | 2.9 | -0.4 | -12% |
| Indian | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0 | 0% |
| White | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 8.4 | 8.8 | 8.9 | +0.5 | 6% |

Table Thirteen
Head count enrolments of Pen Tech students by gender (thousands)

| Gender | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | Change: 2000 compared to 1998 | |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Female | 4.3 | 4.6 | 4.9 | +0.6 | 14% |
| Male | 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.0 | -0.1 | -2% |
| Total | 8.4 | 8.8 | 8.9 | +0.5 | 6% |

The tables show that Pen Tech's total enrolments of African students grew from 4800 in 1998 to 5700 in 2000: an increase of 19%, while those of women students changed from 4300 in 1998 to 4900 in 2000.

- **Enrolments of black and of women students in science/engineering/technology and business/commerce programmes must have increased over time¹¹.**

Tables Twelve and Thirteen show that this transformation measure has been partially satisfied by Pen Tech. While the proportion of African students undertaking programmes in SET did not change substantially between 1996 and 1999, that in business/commerce programmes increased from 53% to 65% over the same period.

Table Fourteen
Proportions of SET majors in each population group category at Pen Tech (thousands)

| POPULATION GROUP | 1996 | 1999 |
|------------------|------|------|
| African | 54% | 51% |
| Coloured | 42% | 44% |
| Indian | 1% | 1% |
| White | 3% | 4% |
| Total | 3.7 | 3.9 |

Table Fifteen
Proportions of business/commerce majors in each population group category at Pen Tech (thousands)

| POPULATION GROUP | 1996 | 1999 |
|------------------|------|------|
| African | 53% | 65% |
| Coloured | 45% | 35% |
| Indian | 1% | 0% |
| White | 1% | 0% |
| Total | 1.9 | 2.3 |

Tables Fourteen and Fifteen show that while there was no improvement in the proportion of women following SET majors at Pen Tech between 1996 and 1999, there was an increase in those pursuing programmes in business/commerce fields.

¹¹ Institutional data in these categories were not available for the year 2000.

Table Sixteen
Proportions of SET majors in each gender category at Pen Tech
(thousands)

| GENDER | 1996 | 1999 |
|--------|------|------|
| Female | 41% | 41% |
| Male | 59% | 59% |
| Total | 3.7 | 3.9 |

Table Seventeen
Proportions of business/commerce majors in each gender category at Pen Tech
(thousands)

| GENDER | 1996 | 1999 |
|--------|------|------|
| Female | 51% | 60% |
| Male | 49% | 40% |
| Total | 1.9 | 2.3 |

- **The retention and graduation rates of black and of women students must have improved over time.**

The average undergraduate success rate of African students at Pen Tech increased from 70% in 1993 to 74% in 2000: 10% higher than the national average for technikon. As the relevant data were not available, it was not possible calculate and comment on the corresponding changes by gender.

- **No significant differences must exist between the success and throughput rates of coloured and African students and of male and female students.**

Table Sixteen which follows shows that although an improvement has been seen, there was still a 4% difference in the average undergraduate success rate of African students and coloured students at Pen Tech in 2000.

Table Eighteen
Average Pen Tech contact undergraduate success rates by population group

| POPULATION GROUP | 1996 | 2000 | National technikon average for 2000 |
|------------------|------|------|-------------------------------------|
| African | 64% | 74% | 64% |
| Coloured | 66% | 78% | 72% |
| Indian | 82% | 85% | 72% |
| White | 77% | 92% | 79% |
| Total | 65% | 76% | 67% |

(e) Conclusion

The evidence suggests that Pen Tech has at the level of its vision and mission a strong commitment to attaining equity in the access of all students to the benefits of higher education. Issues of equity in terms of outcome remain, however, problematic.

2.2 STAFF EQUITY AT PEN TECH

The indicators for attaining staff equity are as follows:

- The numbers and proportions of black and of women staff members employed by the institution must have increased over time.
- The numbers and proportions of black and of women staff members leaving the institution must have dropped over time.

As with student equity, the assessment of Pen Tech's performance against these indicators must be followed through from the level of institutional vision, mission and strategic direction statements, to the implementation of any formal institutional policy in this regard.

(a) Vision, mission and institutional strategy

Pen Tech's vision and mission statements contain commitments to the values underpinning the notion of staff equity, stating that the technikon shall be "non-racial, non-sexist and democratic", and promote an "environment conducive to human development".

The technikon's three-year plan for the period 2000-2002 offers further detail on these equity commitments:

"The central tenet informing the equity initiative is that diversity and representivity constitute the foundation of a non-racist, non-sexist and democratic institution. ... Promoting diversity efforts that foster racial and gender equity, as well as programmes that meet the needs of people with disabilities, different sexual orientations or diverse religious and socio-economic backgrounds, will enable the institution to derive the benefit of

the broader perspective that a more diverse staff brings to the workplace.”
(Pen Tech, 1999b)

With regard to staff development, the same plan states that the institution recognises the importance of “growing its own” staff members in order to enable persons from previously disadvantaged groups to take advantage of development and advancement opportunities.

(b) Formal institutional policies

Although a draft of an employment equity document was published in 1999, it appears that Pen Tech has not put in place any formal staff equity policies. Policies with regard to staff development, however, were in place by 1998/99, with the three-year plan for 1999-2001 describing the institution setting aside specific funds for assisting permanent staff to improve their qualifications, and stating that it:

“sees staff development as a deliberate, systematic and continuous process intended to improve the competence of staff in order to maintain and increase their effectiveness in their current posts; to assist staff to identify and pursue an agreed career path within the needs of the technikon; to prepare staff for changing responsibilities as these may occur; and to assist staff who have skills, without formal qualifications, to obtain the relevant qualification.” (Pen Tech, 1999b)

(c) Implementation of formal institutional policies

The evidence in this area is mixed. It can be concluded that Pen Tech has been rigorous in its implementation of staff development policies, but it is not clear what progress has been made with regard to staff equity. A student leader expressed the opinion that although the student body of the technikon reflects to a large extent the demographic of the region, the staff body still bears the imprint of the old apartheid government (CHET, 1999b). In contrast, a member of the institutional executive argued that the issue of transformation in this area *is* being addressed at Pen Tech (CHET, 1999b).

(d) Performance against indicators

- **The numbers and proportions of black and of women staff members employed by the institution must have increased over time.**

Table Seventeen lists African staff as proportions of full-time staff at UPE in each of the following categories:

Instruction/research professionals – staff members who spends at least 50% of his/her time on formal teaching and research activities;

Executive/support professionals – staff in posts which require at least a four-year higher education qualification as a minimum entry requirement and which are involved either with the high-level management of the institution or with the provision of high-level support;

Non-professional administrative staff – staff in administrative posts which do not require a professional qualification, but which require skills above those of service workers;

Service staff – unskilled staff.

**Table Nineteen
African staff as a proportion of full-time staff at Pen Tech**

| Staff category | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Instruction/research | 3% | 3% | 9% |
| Executive/support | 4% | 4% | 7% |
| Non-professional admin | 9% | 9% | 10% |
| Service | 6% | 6% | 7% |
| AVERAGE | 6% | 6% | 9% |

The focus here is specifically on African staff members, as Pen Tech's staff body is overwhelmingly coloured. The data show that the total of African staff members is increasing at a particularly slow pace. Female staff remain seriously under-represented in all but the non-professional staffing category.

- **The numbers and proportions of women and African staff members leaving the institution must drop over time.**

The data suggest that although change in this area is occurring at a slow pace, Pen Tech does not have a problem with the actual retention of African and women staff members.

(e) Conclusion

Although Pen Tech has in place a broad policy commitment to attaining equity in its staff body, the performance data indicates that any change that is occurring is doing so only at a very slow pace.

2.3 RESPONSIVENESS AT PEN TECH

The indicators derived from the White Paper in the area of higher education's responsiveness to societal interests and needs are as follows:

- Qualifications, programmes and courses must be restructured in a way which takes account of broader changes in teaching and learning paradigms.
- Qualifications must meet the current needs of the labour market, and particular growth in the areas of science/engineering/technology and business/commerce must be seen.
- The production of research units approved for government subsidy purposes must increase.
- Formal partnerships and agreements must be formed with industry, communities and other tertiary institutions.

(a) Vision, mission and institutional strategy

The vision and mission statements of Pen Tech bear evidence of a commitment to responding to societal interests and needs. It is stated that:

“The Technikon shall be recognised by the community, commerce and industry as well as the public sector as being responsive to the needs of society.”

(Technikon Vision Statement)

“We develop academically, socially and technologically competent students who are responsive to the broader needs and challenges of society.”

(Technikon Mission Statement)

Mention of research outputs and collaborative ventures is made in Pen Tech's strategic plan and in the three-year rolling plans which it submitted to the national Department of Education. The long-term vision of the institution is to equate itself with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States. MIT is identified as an institution which nurtures strong links in industry through a culture of research and technological education.

The overall goals of the institution are expressed as follows:

- “ 1. To provide nationally co-ordinated, career and technology higher education to meet the developmental needs of the nation.
2. To ensure that the Technikon students possess the essential depth of knowledge, skills and values in order to be productive in their fields.
3. To remain at the forefront of technological development.
4. To provide educational structures that will promote life-long learning and research aimed at meeting the needs of the nation.” (Tromp, 1999)

(b) Formal institutional policies

A particular characteristic of Pen Tech – a shortage of formally approved policies – comes to the fore in this instance. The basis for this is expressed by a member of the institutional executive, who stated that the leadership of Pen Tech is “not always driven by policies... (but rather) more by our own conviction – what is right and what we should do” (CHET, 1999b). There is, however, collateral evidence of policy decisions in the area of responsiveness.

In the area of academic programmes and their outputs, transformation at the technikon must be understood in the light of the strict set of regulations governing technikon curricula in South Africa. There is a national core curriculum for each subject area, and although a degree of institutional autonomy exists, this is only within the parameters of national guidelines. In 1999 Pen Tech published a policy document on the recognition of prior learning (RPL), on the basis that RPL is something that has come to the fore with the onset of outcomes-based education and the nationally recognised standards for qualifications within the NQF.

Research transformation is recognised as an area of importance within Pen Tech, and the institution published a formal research policy in 1999. This states that the technikon:

“subscribes to the view that a well developed research capacity is a necessary feature of an institution of higher education, in order that it may maintain an atmosphere of inquiry and scholarship and keep its teaching staff at the forefront of knowledge production. Furthermore, the technikon strives to be responsive to the needs of society by providing the industrial and commercial sectors, as well as communities, with an excellent service in terms of applied research and development work.” (Pen Tech, 1999c)

The research policy describes specific goals with regard to the participation of students and teaching staff in institutional research, and indicates further a commitment to “maintain and increasing its links in the tertiary sphere” (Pen Tech, 1999c).

(c) Implementation of formal institutional policies

It proved difficult to assess the degree to which institutional policy in the area of academic programmes has been implemented at Pen Tech. This is due in part to the rigidity of the technikon curriculum structure, but also more obviously to the lack of formal direction statements in this area.

Research at Pen Tech is conducted primarily in the area of SET, with specific areas of focus located in the faculties of science and engineering. Up until 2001 regional co-operation in the Western Cape region was expressed through the Western Cape Tertiary Institutions Trust¹². Pen Tech has participated in specific projects administered by the Trust, including a cluster aimed at improving local science and technology education.

(d) Performance against indicators

- **Qualifications, programmes and courses must be restructured in a way which takes account of broader changes in teaching and learning paradigms.**

It was not possible to make a clear assessment of Pen Tech's performance in this area. Although there has been no specific restructuring of qualifications, programmes and course at the institution, this must be understood in the context of the national curriculum.

- **Qualifications must meet the current needs of the labour market, and particular growth in the areas of SET and business/commerce must be seen.**

Pen Tech appears to recognise the need to align its teaching and research activities with societal needs as expressed by industry, but it is not clear whether or not its graduates and qualifications are in fact meeting this need. The number of technikon graduates in SET and business/commerce has not increased over time.

- **The production of research units approved for government subsidy purposes must increase.**

Pen Tech has not met the requirements of this transformation measure. In 1996 the research publication unit total for the institution was just 3.3, and in 2000 6.6.

- **Formal partnerships and agreements must be formed with industry, communities and other tertiary institutions.**

While Pen Tech reports a series of collaborative and partnership agreements with industry, local communities and other higher education institutions nationwide, it is not clear whether these were initiated in direct response to the directives of the White Paper.

(e) Conclusion

Pen Tech has in place the broad values and structures required in order to fulfil the demands of transformation in terms of responsiveness. The performance data,

¹² Operating as the Adamastor Trust.

however, show that actual change in outcomes in this area has been slow or non-existent.

2.4 GOVERNANCE AT PEN TECH

The specific indicators derived from the White Paper's directives in the area of governance are as follows:

- There must be visible and substantive involvement by stakeholders in the composition of council, senate, the transformation forum and other senior management structures.
- Participatory and devolved management structures which are both non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical must be introduced.
- The executive leadership must ensure that the institution functions efficiently and effectively.

(a) Vision, mission and institutional strategy

No specific commitments to the principles of representivity and co-operative governance are contained in Pen Tech's formal vision, mission and strategic documents. Although the technikon does list in its mission statement the intent to be a "non-racial, non-sexist and democratic community", there is no indication of an attempt to derive formal governance transformation commitments from this.

There is, however, evidence of an institutional commitment to efficiency, with the three-year rolling plan for 1999-2001 stating that "the improvement of the internal efficiency of the institution is a central concern of Peninsula Technikon".

(b) Formal institutional policies

The attitude that Pen Tech is an institution driven by a common sense of what is 'right' rather than by published policy is again in evidence with regard to issues of institutional leadership and governance. There are, however, formal policies concerned with the achieving of institutional efficiency, covering the areas of financial efficiency, staff capacity, and the improvement of student success and throughput rates.

(c) Implementation of formal institutional policies

Again, a proper assessment of policy implementation in this area at Pen Tech is not possible. With regard to the principles of co-operative governance, it appears that the importance of stakeholder involvement was recognised some years before the notion was incorporated in national higher education policy documents. An early stakeholders forum evolved into a (currently operational) transformation forum, and has a membership which includes representatives from the institutional executive, council, unions, student body and non-academic staff.

(d) Performance against indicators

- **There must be visible and substantive involvement by stakeholders in the composition of council, senate, transformation forum and other senior management structures.**

Pen Tech made a particular strategic effort to transform the composition of its council with regard to race and gender representation. Originally predominantly white and 100% male, the council had by 1999 shifted to one whose composition was predominantly coloured, with a small female membership. The institutional transformation forum encompasses representatives from a fairly broad range of sectors.

- **Participatory and devolved management structures which are both non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical must be introduced.**

A process of management devolution does not appear to have taken place at Pen Tech. The institution has a particularly well-entrenched executive leadership – a fact which has created tension with the ongoing application of the principles of co-operative governance.

- **The executive leadership must ensure the achievement of institutional effectiveness and efficiency.**

Pen Tech has in place an executive leadership which is concerned with issues of effectiveness and efficiency at the institution. The extent to which these commitments have in fact been operationalised is not entirely clear.

(e) Conclusion

The evidence suggests that Pen Tech has implemented a number of the co-operative governance requirements of the White Paper, including a transformed council, an active forum and directive leadership with consultation.

3. INSTITUTIONAL ADAPTATION: ANALYSING STRATEGIC CHOICE AT PEN TECH

As was explained in Chapter Three, the adaptational model of institutional change assumes that a higher education institution's dependence on the supplier of resources and the strength and nature of its internal norms and value systems will affect its behaviour and ability to change at any one time. This dependence is managed through a set of strategic choices, which can be determined through the analysis of institutional documents and personal accounts. A narrative for Pen Tech follows, based upon the strategic categories described in the methodology chapter.

3.1 COMPROMISE (Pre 1984)

The period to 1984 at Pen Tech is difficult to categorise in terms of the adaptational model's sets of strategic choice. During this time the national department exerted considerable control over the institution, and so it was heavily dependent upon the apartheid government for the ongoing supply of funding and other resources. It is obvious that the high degree of control exerted on Pen Tech by the government did not leave a great deal of room for dissenting strategies to be devised by the leadership body – indeed, there is no reason to suppose that the early leadership of the technikon *wanted* to develop an ideology contrary to that of the State. Given the institution's later overt connections with the national liberation movement, however, it must be concluded that even in this early period there was a sense of its internal value system not coinciding directly with what was expected of it. The tentative classification which must therefore be made is that of compromise: despite a certain inconsistency between external expectations and internal objectives, Pen Tech had to maintain the legitimacy of its core activities in order to ensure its continued survival.

3.2 DEFIANCE (1984-1994)

Following the ratification of the 1984 national constitution and the entrenchment of white political power, many South African universities and technikons became major sites of political struggle. Pen Tech was naturally affected by the volatile political climate, and became under Franklin Sonn the first higher education institution in the country to begin implementing fundamental change of a transformative kind.

Some of the notable early moves towards transformation at the technikon pertained to the reconfiguration of governance structures to incorporate institutional stakeholders, and the decision to begin appointing coloured staff in order to reflect more accurately the composition of the student body. This was accompanied by the resignation of several white members of staff, who did not wish to work under a coloured rector. Further, a major contribution to the process of involving stakeholders in governance structures was made with the gradual inclusion of students in management decision-making bodies.

A more specific aspect of Pen Tech's activities during this period was its defiance of national higher education access laws. A member of the executive said the following in this regard:

"Pen Tech has a history of being progressive in terms of the struggle ... (When) this institution was declared a coloured institution, (Franklin Sonn) broke those barriers and decided that he was going to admit students not on the basis of colour or race or creed. And that was well-known and accepted. ... (He) was fighting the principle of segregation, so for him it was access to all and no institution (being) declared black or white."
(CHET, 1999b)

It was dictated by the government that the institution was only permitted to enrol coloured students. In order to be allowed to enrol African students, it had to prove that in each case the African student in question could not pursue his/her chosen course of study at one of the institutions designated for this race group. Pen Tech claims to have overcome this through sending the government department more applications than it could process, so that ultimately it was not able to stop Pen Tech from following this course of action. The effect of this can clearly be seen in its enrolment figures: by 1988 10% of Pen Tech's total student body was African – a significant proportion at a time at which national legislation demanded that the institution admit only coloured students. Through following this particular path the technikon could maintain access to government resources while following its path of transformation.

Events at the institution before 1994 were further driven by the emergence of the issue of the language of instruction, which at Pen Tech was traditionally Afrikaans. It was recognised by the institutional leadership that if the technikon was to follow through on its strategy to admit students of other population groups, then it had to be taken into account that many African applicants would not cope with instruction in Afrikaans.

By the early 1990's and the unbanning of the liberation movement, Pen Tech had established a set of institutional values which were firmly in opposition to those of the apartheid government. The institution's overall adaptive strategies during this period were, however, tempered by the knowledge that it was dependent on the apartheid government for the bulk of its financial resources. Its strategy in changing from a coloured to a non-racial institution therefore had to be one which did not alienate the apartheid government to an extent which jeopardised its funding.

3.3 MANIPULATION (late 1990's)

There is strong evidence in the Pen Tech documentation of a belief that fundamental issues of equity and democratisation at the institution had largely been dealt with by 1994. Thus, at a time during which most historically white institutions were undergoing a major struggle to re-align themselves with the new national political environment, Pen Tech began to focus inwards on making strategic choices primarily geared at redefining and strengthening its operating domain and core institutional business.

Perhaps due to its having aligned itself so closely with the anti-apartheid struggle, a particular sentiment upheld by the institutional leadership has been that it is driven by what is "right" rather than by formal institutional policy. Here the strength of the governance structures and the decision to focus on transformation with an internal rather than an external point of origin is particularly evident. The following comment by a member of the technikon council reflects this:

"Through strong and visionary leadership, the institution embarked on an imaginative transformation process. The council played a pivotal role in the transformation of the institution by striking a balance between the interests of the institution on the one hand, and the interests of society on

the other. This assisted Peninsula Technikon, despite its disadvantaged past, to take its rightful place as an equal among tertiary institutions, many of which came from a background of privilege and boasted many resources." (CHET, 1999b)

The categorisation of Pen Tech's strategic choices during this period rests largely on the role played by a strong executive leadership. A direct link can be drawn between the executive body and the sense of ownership fostered among the different sectors of the institution. The areas of stakeholder involvement and ownership are particular areas in which Pen Tech claims to have pre-empted national transformation drives, with the evidence being that the importance of these issues was recognised long before it was built into formal transformation requirements. This is reflected in the following comment by a senior member of the executive:

"(We) started talking about transformation of the institution and it was not a buzz word at the time, and there were certain things at the institution that drove and enlightened our discussion. ... So we started Saturday morning meetings (with) students, staff and the management around the issues, and then we started formalising that sort of discussion thing (before) the start of the NCHE." (CHET, 1999b)

A pivotal point of post-1994 transformation at Pen Tech pertains to the institution's long term vision to become the "MIT of Africa". This is a clear strategic choice which could be articulated as a desire to attain excellence in the field of technology education, and appears to have been absorbed into institutional culture and thinking with relative ease. A senior member of the technikon executive had the following comments to make about the attractiveness of the MIT concept:

"MIT has certainly got a very strong reputation for research and education – engineering education. They're very firmly hooked in industry. It's actually amazing the amount of consultancy work that they do, both on the graduate level as well as the staff – the projects just come streaming in. They've got a very well-developed industrial liaison programme and companies all over the world... are linked into the programme, simply to enable them to visit the institution, make presentations, be privy to the

work that MIT is engaged in and help affect transfer of technology. ...If I think of MIT, I think of excellence in research ...". (CHET, 1999b)

Subsequent to the entrenchment of this vision, the institution claimed new levels of societal responsiveness, and actively began building links with industry and developing national and international partnerships. The overall emphasis on transformation during this period can be said to be on the entrenchment of a particular institutional culture and vision by the leadership body, with the ultimate purpose of improving the core academic business and the overall influence of the institution.

4. CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This chapter gave a brief historical account of Pen Tech's origins as a technical training facility for coloured students, and its subsequent elevation to CATE and technikon status. It then showed how the institution's performance against the transformation goals of the 1997 White Paper can be measured, offering specific judgements in the areas of student equity, staff equity, responsiveness and governance. The discussion then moved to a demonstration of the application of the categorisation of strategic choice, suggesting in terms of the narrative data collected that Pen Tech moved through stages of compromise, defiance and manipulation.

CHAPTER SIX: COMPARING THE POLICY RESPONSE AND ADAPTATIONAL MODELS OF CHANGE

This study aimed to compare and assess the policy response and adaptational models of institutional change through the application of each to case studies of two South African higher education institutions. The conclusions which can be drawn about the two models are outlined in the discussion which follows.

1. THE POLICY RESPONSE MODEL

The policy response model of change is purely concerned with ascertaining the extent to which a government policy directive has been implemented by a particular institution. The case studies on UPE and Pen Tech used the particular example of the 1997 higher education White Paper, and demonstrated how each institution could be said to have operationalised aspects of the government policy in the key areas of equity, responsiveness, and governance. The findings of the model are summarised in the table which follows.

TABLE TWENTY: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE POLICY RESPONSE MODEL

| INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION INDICATOR | UNIVERSITY OF PORT ELIZABETH | PENINSULA TECHNIKON |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| STUDENT EQUITY | | |
| ➤ Head count enrolments of black and women students must have increased over time. | Totals and proportions of black and women students increased rapidly between 1995 and 2000. | Totals and proportions of black and women students increased between 1995 and 2000. |
| ➤ Enrolments of black and of women students in SET and business/commerce programmes must have increased over time. | Black and women students remained under-represented in SET and business/commerce programmes. | Enrolments of African and women students in SET and business/commerce improved in the period up to 2000. |
| ➤ Enrolments of black and of women students in postgraduate programmes must have increased over time. | No significant change occurred in the composition of UPE's contact postgraduate enrolments in the period to 2000. The proportion of African students in its distance postgraduate programmes was 70% in 2000. | This transformation condition was not met by Pen Tech. |
| ➤ The retention and graduation rates of black and of women students must have improved over time. | There was no substantial change in the retention and graduation of either of these groups at UPE in the period up to 2000. | The average undergraduate success rate of African students at Pen Tech improved to 74% in 2000; 10% higher than the national average for technikons. Equivalent calculations for change by gender could not be made. |
| ➤ No significant differences must exist between the success and graduate rates of white and black students and of male and female students. | There were substantial differences up until 2000 in the success rates of black and white students at UPE. No calculations could be made for change by gender. | There was still a significant difference between the undergraduate success rates of African students and other race groups at Pen Tech in 2000. Changes for gender could not be measured. |
| STAFF EQUITY | | |
| ➤ The numbers and proportions of women and black staff members employed by the institution | UPE has not satisfied this transformation condition: by 2000 its permanent academic staff body remained overwhelmingly white and male. | African and women remain in the minority in Pen Tech's staffing body. |
| ➤ The numbers and proportions of women and black staff members leaving the institution must have dropped over time. | It was not possible to make a full assessment of this transformation condition at UPE. | Pen Tech does not have a problem with the actual retention of African and women staff members. |
| RESPONSIVENESS | | |
| ➤ Qualifications, programmes and courses must be restructured in a way which takes account of broader changes in teaching and learning paradigms. | Although the Faculty of Arts has restructured programmes and qualifications, no other UPE faculties have implemented innovative practices with regard to new teaching and learning paradigms. | No restructuring of academic programmes or curricula took place at Pen Tech in response to the White Paper's policy requirements in this area. |
| ➤ Qualifications must meet the current needs of the labour market, and particular growth in the areas of SET and business/commerce must be seen. | The number and proportion of SET and business/commerce students at UPE has not increased significantly. It is not clear whether qualifications are meeting the current needs of the labour market. | The number of Pen Tech graduates in SET and business/commerce has not increased over time. It is not clear whether graduates and qualifications are meeting the needs of the labour market. |
| ➤ The production of research units approved for government subsidy purposes must increase. | Research outputs at UPE remain low. | Research outputs of all kinds at Pen Tech remain low. |
| ➤ Formal partnerships and agreements must be formed with industry, communities and other tertiary institutions. | This transformation condition has not been met: UPE has no clear policies and has not reported any systemic data on partnerships or collaborative agreements. | Pen Tech reports a series of collaborative and partnership agreements, but it is not clear whether these were initiated in response to the directives of the White Paper. |
| GOVERNANCE | | |
| ➤ There must be visible and substantive involvement by stakeholders in the composition of council, senate, the transformation forum and other senior management structures. | UPE's revised council and senate incorporate a broad degree of stakeholder representation. Senior academic staff structures remain predominantly white and male. | Although a degree of representivity has been achieved in the composition of Pen Tech's council, senior governance structures at the institution remain predominantly male. |
| ➤ Participatory and devolved management structures which are both non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical must be introduced. | UPE met this condition in the period prior to the publication of the White Paper. An institution-wide commitment to these principles waned in response to pressures to fulfil efficiency demands during 1998 and 1999. | It is not clear whether a process of management devolution has taken place at Pen Tech. The well-entrenched executive leadership has generated a tension with the application of co-operative governance principles. |
| ➤ The executive leadership must ensure the achievement of effectiveness and efficiency. | A strong executive leadership at the institution began to meet efficiency demands from 1998, with the application of business principles and costing models to management and general expenditure. | Although Pen Tech's executive leadership expresses a commitment to the principles of efficiency and effectiveness, the extent to which these commitments have been operationalised is not entirely clear. |

The gains and losses in each of the key White Paper areas are indicated below.

1.1 EQUITY

The indicator framework of the model allows for the measurement of specific, quantitative change in the areas of head count enrolments, student success and graduation rates, and staff composition and retention. The use of time series data enables a clear picture to be drawn of change (or the lack thereof) over the periods preceding and following the publication of a particular government policy. With regard to the UPE and Pen Tech case studies, it was thus possible to draw conclusions about the moves of each institution to establish an equitable state of affairs in its student and staff bodies prior to and following the publication of the 1997 White Paper on higher education transformation.

On the downside, although the application of the policy response model follows the operationalisation of government equity directives through from the level institutional vision and mission, the primary emphasis on *output* in a particular sector. No attempt is made to interrogate the reasons behind a particular state of affairs, or to assign credit for institutional moves towards transformation that may not have led to a required output. Hence, where there was evidence that UPE and Pen Tech individually dealt with equity concerns, this was discounted if it did not play out into the required output of the particular set of indicators.

1.2 RESPONSIVENESS

The White Paper identified responsiveness to societal interests and needs as a critical condition of the transformation of the higher education system, but did not go into a great degree of explicit detail on what the fulfillment of this condition should entail. The policy response model allows for the application of a specific definition of institutional responsiveness: the focus on SET and business/commerce enrolments, research outputs and partnerships and collaborative agreements enables the extraction of specific data and the drawing of definite measurements and conclusions. The administration of the responsiveness indicators in the UPE and Pen Tech studies enabled particular conclusions to be drawn about the extent to which each institution is meeting the current needs of the labour market as defined in this context.

The difficulty here lies both in the lack of explicit direction in the White Paper policy document and in the fact that the policy response model requires the application of a set of specific indicators. In terms of the model, the goal of societal responsiveness had to be translated into particular measurable indicator statements. No account is taken of any attempts on the part of each to apply their own interpretation of these transformation requirements.

1.3 GOVERNANCE

Co-operative governance was one of the three pillars of higher education transformation proposed by the White Paper, with the idea being that democratisation could only be said to have occurred in the system once co-operative structures and practices were in place in individual institutions. The core characteristics of co-operative governance revolved around stakeholder involvement and participatory and devolved management structures, with further legitimisation being dependent on institutional commitments to efficiency and effectiveness. The application of the policy response indicator framework allowed for the measurement of specific change in the composition and degree of stakeholder representivity in the governance structures of UPE and Pen Tech.

A point which must be noted is that although stakeholder involvement is largely quantifiable, an institutional commitment to the principles of efficiency and effectiveness is not. This particular indicator is therefore problematic: although evidence could be extrapolated from the institutional policy documents of UPE and Pen Tech, it was not possible to make a clearly defined conclusion in this regard.

2. THE ADAPTATIONAL MODEL

The adaptational model explains institutional change through the categorisation of strategic choice, with a wide range of sources being used to construct a particular analytical narrative for each institution. A summary of the analyses for UPE and Pen Tech can be found in Table Twenty which follows.

TABLE TWENTY-ONE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE ADAPTATIONAL MODEL

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>UNIVERSITY OF PORT ELIZABETH</p> | <p>Acquiescence</p> <p>Pre 1990</p> <p>UPE based its survival strategy upon government approval, and so was submissive to government views and policies. The primary focus of the institution was to prepare white students for entry into professions. There were no moves to transform governance structures, work towards attaining equity in the staff and student bodies, or to become responsive to the external environment.</p> <p>Compromise</p> <p>1990's</p> <p>Shifts in the external environment contributed towards a dichotomy between outside pressures and the internal status quo, with further internal pressures developing from conflicting ideologies in the staff and leadership bodies. Although a dialogue about change began to develop, the gains of legitimacy and shifts in public perception were initially slow. Eventually internal questions and debate, and external changes, led to substantial moves to establish legitimate governance structures at UPE.</p> <p>Manipulation</p> <p>Late 1990's</p> <p>By the late 1990's UPE still believed that in order to maintain access to the supply of resources, it needed to cohere to the policies and beliefs of the national government. It had moved, however, towards making active strategic decisions about how to attain this. Moves into distance education and private partnerships contributed towards a radical change in its student profile, and were ultimately geared at improving its government subsidy. However, focus has been on inputs (increasing enrolments and changing student profile) and not on outputs (improving success and throughput rates), to the detriment of the university.</p> |
| <p>PENINSULA TECHNIKON</p> | <p>Compromise</p> <p>Pre 1984</p> <p>The apartheid government exerted strict control over Pen Tech in its first years of existence. Although the institution had come to base its values on those of the national liberation movement, it still had to function within the boundaries of the state in order to survive.</p> <p>Defiance</p> <p>1984-1994</p> <p>By the mid to late 1980's Pen Tech had begun to redefine its institutional policies in defiance of the government. Moves were made to resist the national access laws which dictated that the technikon admit coloured students only. Further transformation was implemented with the decision to appoint coloured members of staff, change the designated language of instruction, and reconfigure governance structures to incorporate institutional stakeholders.</p> <p>Manipulation</p> <p>Late 1990's</p> <p>Pen Tech claimed that its internal transformation had anticipated the policy demands of the new national government. The active strategic moves made by the institution after 1994 were geared at redefining and strengthening its operating domain and core institutional business. With its vision to become the "MIT of Africa", it claimed new levels of societal responsiveness, and actively began building links with industry and developing national and international partnerships.</p> |

The particular strength of the adaptational model lies in the fact that it takes into account the interplay of a broad range of factors in institutional behaviour. The assignation of agency to each institution allows for the consideration that change – or the lack thereof – can be said to be about more than a set of quantifiable outputs. While, for example, the application of the indicators of the policy response model led in the conclusion that UPE's qualification structure fails to meet the needs of the labour market, the analysis of strategic choice uncovered the possible motivation behind this state of affairs. Similarly, the table of results for Pen Tech fails to tell the full story of its pre-White Paper activity and transformation. On the whole, the adaptational model generates a useful multi-levelled explanation for the shifts and changes which occurred at UPE and Pen Tech from their inception under the apartheid government, through to post-1994 legislation and the present day. It is never assumed that the actions of either can be taken out of the context of its understanding of its environment, both immediate and wider, and the unique set of norms and values comprising its institutional culture.

The model does, however, have significant shortcomings. Not only is it not able to take account of the full range of possible factors contributing to the status quo at an institution but it relies heavily on the use of perspectival (and therefore non-objective) data. Hence, while the application of the policy response indicator framework allowed for a series of comparable judgements to be made of UPE and Pen Tech, the analytical narratives constructed of the two institutions cannot be set against each other in the same way.

3. JUDGEMENTS ABOUT CHANGE: FINDING AN 'IDEAL' MODEL

The policy response and adaptational models each contribute in a different way towards an understanding of how and why higher education institutions undergo changing leading to transformation. A fuller picture could be gained through an appreciation of the importance of the role played by each: recognising the value of evaluating institutional response to specific government policy initiatives, while taking into account the interplay between the need to enhance and maintain access to resources and to establish coherence between institutional norms and those in the shifting socio-political environment.

In practical terms, however, the question which must be asked is: which model is most immediately useful and robust? The answer has to be the policy response model, in that it allows for instant, comparative judgement to be made about the outcomes of government policy directives. While the adaptational model can be used to enrich such judgements, its theoretical assumptions and weaknesses do not enable it to stand on its own.

4. CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This chapter summarised the findings and conclusions which can be drawn from the application of the policy response and adaptational models of higher education institutional change. The discussion showed that each model allowed particular inferences to be extrapolated about UPE and Pen Tech: on the one hand, judgements could be made about each institution's performance against the transformation goals of the 1997 White Paper, and on the other particular comments could be made about the strategic choices made by each in a process of self-report and self-evaluation. The final conclusion which had to be made was that although both models serve to illuminate an understanding of higher education change processes, the policy response framework offers a far more robust and comparable set of deductions.

APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

A. UNIVERSITY OF PORT ELIZABETH

CHET (1999a). *Transcripts of Interviews at UPE: November 1998 – May 1999.*

Naude, P. (1999) *Embracing a Neo-liberal Market Logic? A Critical Perspective on UPE's Transformation.* University of Port Elizabeth.

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UPE (1997c). 'Core Values'. In *Core Strategic Plan.*

UPE (1997d). 'Transformation Vision.' In *Core Strategic Plan.*

UPE (1997e). 'Strategic Priorities'. In *Core Strategic Plan.*

UPE (1997f). 'Goals and Actions'. In *Core Strategic Plan.*

UPE (1998a). *The Broad Transformation Process at the University of Port Elizabeth.*

UPE (1998b). 'Appointments Process: Affirmative Action Policy'. Appendix to *The Broad Transformation Process at the University of Port Elizabeth.*

UPE (1998c). 'Policy for Affirmative Action'. Appendix to *The Broad Transformation Process at the University of Port Elizabeth.*

UPE (1998d). *Three Year Rolling Plan: 1999-2001.*

UPE (1998e). *Vice-Chancellor's Account of the Flat Executive Structure at UPE.*

UPE (1999). *Second Phase Rolling Plan: 2000-2002.*

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B. PENINSULA TECHNIKON

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Pen Tech (1999c). *Personnel Policy Manual*.

Pen Tech (1999d). *Recruitment and Selection Policy (Draft)*.

Pen Tech (1999e). *Registration Policy and Procedure*.

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APPENDIX B: LIST OF POSSIBLE KEY INFORMANTS/ INTERVIEWEES SUBMITTED TO INSTITUTIONS

STUDENT ISSUES

- Admissions Officer
- Student Financial Aid Officer
- Academic Planning Officer
- Dean of Students/Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students)
- Director of Academic Development

STAFF ISSUES

- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
- Registrar or Human Resources Director or Finance Director
- Deans
- Staff Representatives/Members of Staff Organisations
- Equal Opportunities/Human Resources Officer

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- Vice Chancellor and Senior Management
- Registrars and Transformation Officers/Managers
- Student and Worker Leadership
- Council members – particularly lay representatives
- Academic and other stakeholder representatives on Council
- Senior academics or deans serving on Senate
- Campus Forums

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