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**STAFF SATISFACTION IN**

**A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY**

**UNDERGOING TRANSFORMATION**

**LITEBOHO E. M. MONNAPULA-MAPESELA**

Universiteit van die  
Oranje-Vrystaat  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
18 AUG 2003  
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**STAFF SATISFACTION IN  
A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY  
UNDERGOING TRANSFORMATION**

*by*

**LITEBOHO E. M. MONNAPULA-MAPESELA**

(B.Sc. Ed., B.Ed., M.Ed.)

*Thesis submitted in fulfilment for the degree*

**Philosophiae Doctor**

in the

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND  
COMPARATIVE EDUCATION**

**FACULTY OF THE HUMANITIES**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE  
BLOEMFONTEIN**

**PROMOTER: PROF. H. HAY (PH.D.)**

**CO-PROMOTER: PROF. M. FOURIE (PH.D.)**

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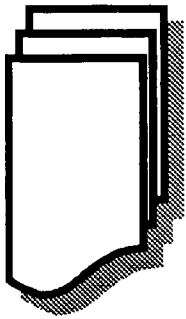


## **Dedication**

**I dedicate this thesis to my family**

**My husband, Joseph  
My two sons, Bokang and Tumi  
My mother, 'Mathabiso  
My father, Khahlanyetso  
My sisters, Limphe, 'Madikeledi and Bophelo  
My brother, Abbah  
My niece, Dikeledi  
My late brother, Thabiso**





---

## DECLARATION

I, Liteboho 'Mabokang Ednah Monnapula-Mapesela, declare that the thesis hereby submitted is my own independent work and that it has not been previously submitted by me or anyone else for evaluation at any other university, faculty or department. I furthermore cede copyright of the thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

.....  
**M.L.E. MONNAPULA-MAPESELA**

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The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and should not be attributed to the National Research Foundation or the Quality Assurance Unit of the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development at the University of the Free State.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

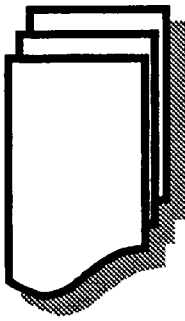
*Above all else is God Almighty who saw me through hard times to complete this study.*

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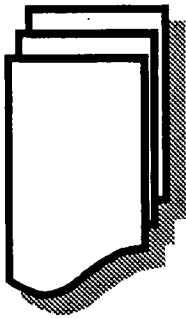
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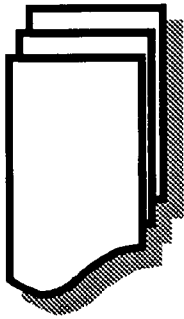
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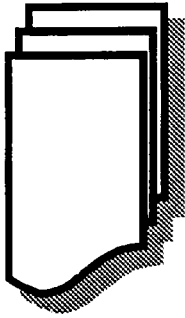
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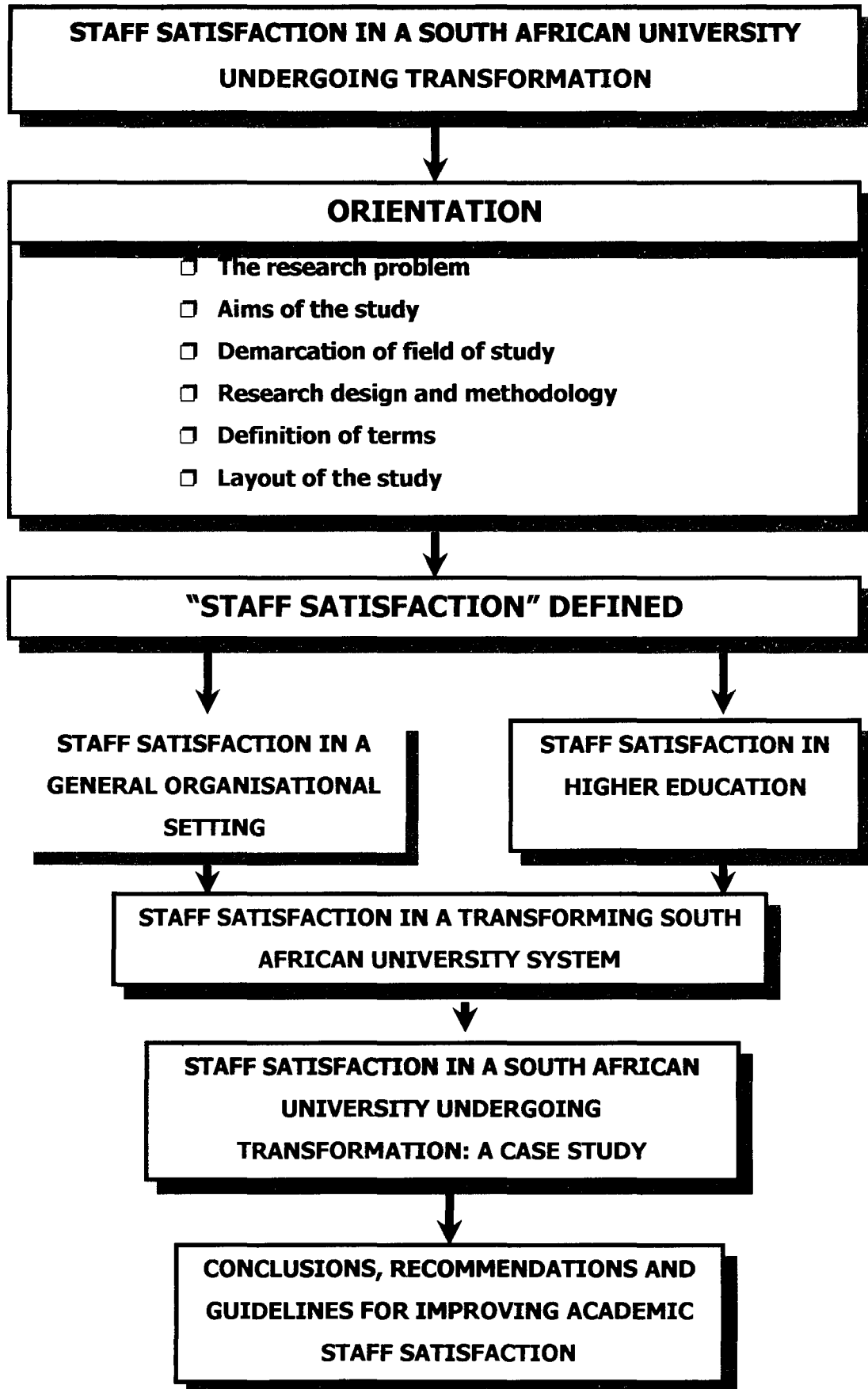
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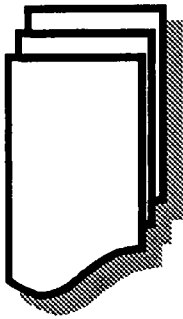
## LIST OF ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
EAPs	Employment Assistance Programmes
GUC	Grey University College
HAUs	Historically Advantaged Universities
HDUs	Historically Disadvantaged Universities
HBUs	Historically Black Universities
HBIIs	Historically Black Institutions
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
HWAUs	Historically White Afrikaans-speaking Universities
HWEUs	Historically White English-speaking Universities
HWIs	Historically White Institutions
HWUs	Historically White Universities
MEDUNSA	Medical University of South Africa
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAUVCA	South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association
SETAs	Sector Education Training Authorities
UCOFS	University College of the Orange Free State
UFS	University of the Free State
UK	United Kingdom
UNISA	University of South Africa
UV	Universiteit van die Vrystaat
UVPERSU	Personnel Union of the University of the Free State
UOFS	University of the Orange Free State
UOVS	Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat
USA	United States of America



# STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY





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## ABSTRACT

**Key words:** Staff satisfaction, academic staff satisfaction, change, transformation, historically advantaged university, historically white Afrikaans-speaking university, traditional academic staff, non-traditional academic staff.

This study focuses on the impact of change and transformation on the satisfaction of academic staff in a transforming South African university. The University of the Free State, which is a historically white Afrikaans-speaking university, was used as a case study in this regard.

Theoretical perspectives of what staff satisfaction entails, as well as factors that influence staff satisfaction, are provided. A comparative perspective of the impact of change and transformation on staff in a general organisational setting and in higher education is drawn. This aims at presenting the fact that staff are affected by a variety of factors of internal and external origin, both in organisations generally and in higher education institutions.

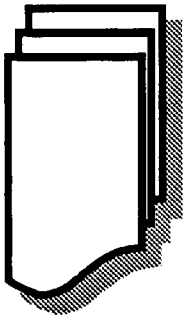
The historical development of universities from their conception to date is given with a view to establishing how change and transformation have affected academics. South African policies are also discussed to identify how they take cognisance of the needs of academics, as well as their impact on academic staff within a transforming university.

The case study approach is undertaken to provide an in-depth study of staff satisfaction in a unit case, namely the University of the Free State. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed to determine the implications of change and transformation on academics and their work satisfaction. Questionnaires

were used to reach out to more than 500 permanent lecturing academic staff at the UFS. The results of the questionnaire survey culminated in focus group discussions and personal interviews with selected academics and the UFS management. The focus group interviews presented an opportunity to probe further into the feelings, attitudes, perceptions and expectations of staff with regard to change and transformation. They furthermore presented an opportunity for academic staff to make recommendations about the enhancement and improvement of academic staff satisfaction at the UFS. Personal interviews with selected UFS managers aimed at bringing to the management an awareness of issues of concern among academic staff and to establish the kind of intervention strategies already in place at the UFS for the improvement of academic staff satisfaction.

The literature amassed served as a conceptual framework and as a point of departure for the empirical investigation. It unearthed the myriad of factors – of internal and external origin to the institutions - that impact on academic staff satisfaction during periods of change and transformation. The findings are congruent with the literature in that they unveil that institutional change and transformation do not occur unnoticed. These impact on all higher education stakeholders - academic staff included. For the case study university, a revelation was made that the academic environment at the University of the Free State must be made conducive for improved academic staff satisfaction.

This research undertaking is neither pursued for its own sake only, nor for the purposes of attaining a degree (qualification); it is not a case study that is aimed at benefiting the researcher/student alone. It is, however, an exercise firstly aimed at evaluating academic staff satisfaction at the UFS and, secondly, contributing meaningfully towards the improvement of academics' working conditions, their satisfaction, and the quality of higher education thereof. The guidelines and recommendations presented at the end serve as pillars that the UFS and other historically white Afrikaans universities with a history and context similar to that of the UFS can use for the improvement of academic staff satisfaction. This study reveals the adverse effects of change and transformation on academics, as well as the dire need to prepare staff for change.



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## ABSTRAK

**Sleutelwoorde:** personeeltevredenheid, tevredenheid van akademiese personeel, verandering, transformasie, histories bevoorreeelde universiteit, historiese blanke Afrikaanssprekende universiteit, tradisionele akademiese personeel, nie-tradisionele akademiese personeel.

**H**ierdie studie fokus op die impak van verandering en transformasie op die tevredenheid van akademiese personeel in 'n transformerende Suid-Afrikaanse universiteit. Die Universiteit van die Vrystaat, wat 'n historiese blanke Afrikaanssprekende universiteit is, is as 'n gevallestudie gebruik.

Teoretiese perspektiewe van wat personeeltevredenheid behels, asook faktore wat dit beïnvloed, word voorsien. 'n Vergelykende perspektief van die impak van verandering en transformasie op personeel in 'n algemene organisatoriese omgewing en in hoër onderwys word geskets. Die doel hiervan is om aan te dui dat personeel deur 'n verskeidenheid van faktore van interne en eksterne oorsprong beïnvloed word, beide in die algemeen en in hoër onderwysinstellings.

Die historiese ontwikkeling van universiteite vanaf hulle ontstaan tot op datum word geskets met die oog daarop om vas te stel hoe verandering en transformasie akademië tot op datum beïnvloed het. Suid-Afrikaanse beleide word ook bespreek om te identifiseer hoe hulle kennis neem van die behoeftes van die akademië, asook wat die invloed daarvan op die akademiese personeel binne 'n transformerende universiteit is.

Die gevallestudiebenadering word onderneem om 'n dieptestudie van personeeltevredenheid aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat (UV) te maak. Beide kwalitatiewe

en kwantitatiewe navorsingsmetodes is gebruik om die implikasies van verandering en transformasie op akademië en hulle tevredenheid te bepaal. Vraelyste is gebruik om uit te reik na meer as 500 permanente doserende akademiese personeel aan die UV. Die resultate van die vraelyste het gekulmineer in fokusgroepbesprekinge en persoonlike onderhoude met uitgesoekte akademië, asook met die UV-bestuur. Die fokusgroeponderhoude het die navorser die geleentheid gebied om die gevoelens, gesindhede, persepsies en verwagtinge van die personeel met betrekking tot verandering en transformasie nog meer grondig te ondersoek. Hierdie fokusgroepbesprekinge het akademiese personeel verder 'n geleentheid gebied om aanbevelings te maak betreffende die verhoging en verbetering van personeeltevredenheid. Persoonlike onderhoude met uitgesoekte UV-bestuurders was daarop gemik om die aandag van die bestuur op sake te vestig wat vir akademiese personeel kommerwekkend is, asook om te bepaal watter soort intervensiestrategieë reeds by die UV bestaan met die oog op die verbetering van akademiese personeeltevredenheid.

Die versamelde literatuur het gedien as 'n konseptuele raamwerk, asook as 'n vertrekpunt vir die empiriese ondersoek. Dit het die magdom faktore – intern en ekstern van aard tot die instellings – aan die lig gebring wat 'n uitwerking het op akademiese personeeltevredenheid gedurende tye van verandering en transformasie. Die bevindinge stem met die literatuur ooreen in die sin dat dit die feit aan die lig bring dat institusionele verandering en transformasie nie ongemerk plaasvind nie. Dit oefen 'n invloed uit op alle hoërondewysbelanghebbendes – akademiese personeel ingesluit. Wat die gevallestudie-universiteit betref, is daar tot die openbaring gekom dat die akademiese omgewing gelyk gemaak moet word. Verder moet dit bevorderlik gemaak word vir verbeterde akademiese personeeltevredenheid.

Hierdie navorsing is nie bloot om die ontwil daarvan onderneem of met die doel om 'n graad of kwalifikasie te behaal nie. Verder is dit nie 'n gevallestudie met die oog daarop om slegs die navorser/student te bevoordeel nie. Dit is egter 'n oefening om in die eerste plek die mate van personeeltevredenheid aan die UV te bepaal en om in die tweede plek op 'n sinvolle wyse by te dra tot die verbetering van die akademiese werksomstandighede, hulle tevredenheid, asook die kwaliteit van die hoër onderwys daarvan. Die riglyne en aanbevelinge aan die einde sal as steunpilare dien

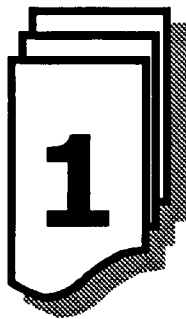
vir die verbetering van die akademiese personeeltevredenheid aan die UV en aan ander historiese blanke Afrikaanse universiteite met 'n geskiedenis en konteks gelyksoortig aan dié van die UV. Hierdie studie openbaar die ongunstige uitwerking van verandering en transformasie op akademici, asook die dringende noodsaaklikheid daarvan om personeel op verandering voor te berei.

**"Experienced staff within universities are becoming increasingly frustrated, annoyed and angry about the demands for change that are put upon them"**

(Evans & Nation 2000:1).



## Chapter



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# ORIENTATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

**H**igher education institutions worldwide are in a flux of dynamic change and transformation due to - amongst other things - trends such as the massification of higher education, widened access, response to new demands of technology, globalisation, internationalisation, increased accountability, the use of new modes of delivery and materials, as well as dwindling higher education resources (Green & Hayward 1997; Harvey 2001; Van der Wende 2001). Most of these changes have direct implications for academic staff in higher education. Not only are traditional academic roles changing, but - in certain instances - working conditions have become unfavourable and unsupportive of staff's efforts to pursue the mission of higher education (Weber 1999).

The competitive higher education environment that emerges with change affects all institutional structures and it is for this reason that institutions must engage in periodic evaluations of all their internal processes, structures and products (RSA DoE 1997:5). This assessment should be done with a view to



identifying flaws, as well as improving the quality of higher education. The issue of academic staff satisfaction then emerges as one aspect that institutions must evaluate periodically, because envisaged quality in higher education worldwide depends not only on a higher education environment that is stable and supportive, but also on the excellence of the academic staff employed (Winter, Taylor & Sarros 2000).

An investigation into the issue of staff satisfaction in higher education internationally shows that it is an aspect that has received recognition for nearly half a century. This is evidenced by a wealth of literature compiled by renowned scholars (Vroom 1967; Strauss & Sayles 1972; Walters 1975; Kahn 1977; Sell 1979; Verhaegen 1979; Davis & Newstrom 1985; Vecchio 1988, Cranton & Knoop 1991; Middlehurst 1993; Harvey 1996), who have been engaged with studies of staff satisfaction in the field of industrial psychology. Nonetheless, in the field of higher education, particularly in the South African context, there is stark evidence that not much has been done concerning the issue of staff satisfaction. The higher education sector has only recently started paying attention to the concerns of staff and their satisfaction, mainly as a part of transformation.

The continued negation of academic staff welfare - especially during periods of transformation - leaves the envisaged quality of teaching, research and service to chance (Brown 2000:513), whilst it is known to all stakeholders that good teaching in higher education is too important to be left to chance. Since change and the transformation of the higher education sector, coupled with the varied global, international and other stakeholders' needs, are proving to have enormous implications for academic staff (*vide* Chapter 4), it is critically important that higher education institutions accustom themselves to the impact that these forces that drive change have on academic staff and on their satisfaction. The rationale for this familiarisation is to create an awareness amongst managers in higher education institutions about the importance of positioning staff so that they can embrace and cope with

change, otherwise staff are oftentimes disillusioned, frustrated and fatigued by the myriad of changes taking place in the workplace (Wegerle 2001:30).

## **1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Since change and transformation are worldwide phenomena, the South African higher education is also challenged by trends found elsewhere in the world. However, the higher education sector in South Africa emerges amongst the higher education systems of many countries of the world as a unique and super complex system, because - in addition to the universal change driving forces affecting it - a different impetus for change does exist. Its historical background, together with the apartheid legacy, acts as the main reason why the system must commit to restructuring so that it becomes a single, unified and responsive higher education system accommodative of all the people of this country regardless of colour (RSA DoE 1997; Badsha 2000). The pressure for universities in South Africa to restructure has therefore gained significant momentum through the advancement of the formulation of several government policies since the democratic government came to power in 1994.

### **1.2.1 The impact of policy on academic staff satisfaction**

Whilst policy has placed South Africa at the thrust of transforming the entire higher education system, it has also placed emphasis on the need for higher education institutions to respond to change without giving cognisance of what impact this will have on academic staff. Some strategic issues in this regard are learner access, redress, massification, the quality of higher education, diversity, institutional mergers, amalgamations and academic programme cooperation, the need for increased accountability, rapidly changing technologies, widening focus on internationalisation and globalisation. These

issues have dominated discussions on higher education transformation without paying much attention to how the demands may influence staff - the people who are, according to Kogan, Moses and El-Khawas (1994:9), higher education's most important asset. Universities are already responding to certain issues, but no concomitant efforts are made to prepare staff for the challenges (*vide* Chapters 4 and 5). This has therefore created a situation in which staff must struggle to stay afloat on the flood tide of transformation, with their roles changing and their workloads expanding daily (Bourgeois, Duke, Guyot & Merrill 1999; Winter, Taylor & Sarros 2000).

This "mill-like approach" (Winter *et al.* 2000:279) wherein all stakeholders are treated obliviously taking little if any recognition at all of their diverse and specific needs, is proving to be unsustainable. Such an approach does not award relevant and specific attention to different organisational structures - hence, some aspects such as staff and their issues remain unattended to. Subsequently, if such encumbrances are left to take their toll and no search for flaws is entered into by universities, then the overall quality of the academics' lives as well as the institutional performance is left fragile and unsustainable.

Some of the main forces mentioned in the second paragraph (*vide* Section 1.2) need to be explicated upon to establish precisely how they may impact on academic staff satisfaction. Firstly it should be noted that, although the step taken by the democratic government to formulate several transformational policies upon the realisation that the higher education sector was fraught with problems was heralded by educationists nationally and internationally (Schonfield 1996; McFarlane 2001), policy itself has become a major source of dissatisfaction amongst academics. Because of the varying and oftentimes enormous demands put forth by different policies, policies are usually viewed subjectively by academics, as the former inevitably have implications for them, their ability to function effectively and to remain

contented (*vide* Chapter 5). Policy implementation also has implications for the managers in higher education. According to a publication of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) on leading change and managing transformation in higher education (CHET 2001), a complicating factor for managers is that they face a challenge to implement the strategic issues stipulated by policy all at the same time, whilst they still need to accustom themselves to its requirements. Moreover, managers are caught up in a phase where they need to understand the whole legislative framework that surrounds policy practices so that they are able to use and apply it proactively in the interests of employees and the institutions. On account of this and of the fact that several other systemic dysfunctions still characterise the higher education system, policy implementation may pose a threat to the academics who are customarily expected to adapt their traditional roles and play a leading role in implementing different higher education policies institutionally (*vide* Chapter 5).

### **1.2.2 Institutional mergers and incorporations**

The issue of higher education restructuring that the government strongly advocates in the new National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001), seems to have brought both benefits and problems to the higher education sector (Kakai 2000). The institutional mergers and incorporations that the government encourages are, for example, intended to close the gap between historically advantaged and disadvantaged institutions through the rationalisation and redistribution of the physical, financial and human resource base in higher education. Regardless of these good intentions, however, mergers and incorporations have raised numerous fears and negative attitudes amongst academic staff in both types of institutions. On the one hand, academics in historically white universities (HWUs) have fears that the quality of their programmes will deteriorate if they merge with historically black universities (HBUs). On the other hand, academics in HBUs have fears

that they will lose their jobs as their stronger historically white counterparts "swallow" them (Hay, Fourie & Hay 2001).

### **1.2.3 Staff access and redress**

A different scenario is that some academics (Blacks) who, in the past dispensation, were denied access and opportunities to quality higher education and academic jobs, are now able to enjoy the benefits of restructuring as they can now take job appointments in historically white universities. Unfortunately, for the traditional academics in these universities, this step involves having to engage in drastic change in attitudes and institutional cultures so that they become accommodative to the non-traditional staff (Blacks, Indians and Coloureds) (Silver & Hannan 2000). In many cases, however, institutional cultures in historically white institutions (HWIs) are still thought to be hostile and unwelcoming to non-traditional academics (*Business Day* of 25 May 2000; Badsha 2000).

Mention must be made that issues other than those already mentioned and which oftentimes cause dissatisfaction amongst staff, do exist. One such example is the need to widen learner access and create opportunities for all learners regardless of race, gender, age and ability.

### **1.2.4 Learner access and redress**

The new cohort of learners, i.e. Blacks, adults and the disabled that are accessing all higher education institutions regardless of status (Smith & Schonfeld 2000:17) has not only brought an interesting and beneficial variance in attitudes, expectations, experiences and cultures (Kakai 2000), but is also presenting various challenges for academic staff. Academics are now obliged to diversify their teaching methods, restructure the curriculum, use parallel media of instruction, learn to cope with large classes and

appreciate different cultures, handle and assist the disabled in mainstream education, as well as assess the knowledge bases of the adult learners efficiently. For academics to face all these challenges mentioned as well as the new demands for global and international participation effectively - though without receiving appropriate support and preparation (training and retraining) - is a far-fetched expectation and an obvious cause for magnifying staff roles, consequently leading to staff dissatisfaction.

### **1.2.5 Widening focus on globalisation and internationalisation**

Other key trends and megatrends which impact the higher education sector, causing mixed feelings amongst academic staff, are the rapidly changing technologies and the widening focus on globalisation and internationalisation which institutions must respond to, and do so in haste (Van der Wende 2001). These important forces are, on the one hand, meant to revolutionise the higher education sector, making it increasingly fitting and competitive in the international arena. On the other hand, they render the already unstable higher education institutions in South Africa even more complex (*vide* Chapter 4). Academics must now effectively deal with local, global and international higher education issues. On the contrary, the sector with its inability to prepare its personnel to respond to these challenges finds itself held ransom within the "transitional crisis" which seems to affect the academics negatively (Diez-Hochleitner as cited in Holtzhausen 1999:20). Since involvement in new technologies, globalisation and internationalisation are a *fait accompli* and since academics do not emerge from the situation unaffected, there is a dire need for a study of academic staff satisfaction within transforming South African universities.

### **1.2.6 Demands for quality and quality assurance**

Also embedded in change and transformation in higher education today are issues of quality and quality assurance. These are not novel issues in higher education. In today's world no region or country has its higher education untouched by pressures to increase attention on quality and quality assurance (Lategan 1996; Cox 2001). The issue of quality assurance must, according to Shippey (1995:3), Lategan (1996:15) and Meade (1997), be approached from as many points of view as possible. Furthermore, as many appropriate and evaluative criteria as possible must be used, identifying indicators such as student throughput rates, employment of graduates, student satisfaction and staff satisfaction (Sofija 1994:161). Academic staff satisfaction undoubtedly emerges amongst a mass of strategic indicators of quality as a crucial quality performance indicator, demanding great consideration. In the South African context efforts for improvement of quality have in the last two years been directed at learners and the evaluation of university structures (Hay 2001). All higher education institutions had to rethink, rewrite and redesign all their qualifications, curricula and modules. This compelled academics to do the ground or spade work of engaging in cumbersome administrative procedures, processes and bureaucracies whilst at the same time grappling with knowledge production and other academic roles such as research, service and teaching.

### **1.2.7 Concluding remarks**

This study will establish exactly what academics need to face up to the challenges such as those deliberated upon in the foregoing paragraphs. After all, universities will have nothing to lose, but more to gain from their engagement in a regular evaluation of academic staff satisfaction, as currently there is not a single strategy for response to change and quality improvement that has been proven to be self-sufficient in higher education.

The views expounded above and the accompanying scarcity of literature specifically related to academic staff satisfaction in South African higher education, are adequate evidence that an evaluation of staff satisfaction is a valid area for research. It is against this given background that the questions in the ensuing section were formulated.

### 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The entire study attempted to provide answers to the following research questions:

- What does staff satisfaction entail (*vide* Chapter 2)?
- Which factors influence staff satisfaction in a general organisational set-up (*vide* Chapter 3)?
- What are the different external and internal factors which influence the satisfaction of staff in higher education (*vide* Chapter 4)?
- What are the different factors that affect academic staff satisfaction at transforming South African universities (*vide* Chapter 5)?
- What are the implications of fluctuating academic staff satisfaction in transforming South African universities (*vide* Chapters 5 and 6)?
- Are academics working at the University of the Free State (UFS) as a transforming South African university satisfied with their jobs (*vide* Chapter 6)?
- What recommendations can be made to create an environment that is conducive to the improvement of academic staff satisfaction at the UFS during times of transformation (*vide* Chapter 7)?

### 1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The **overarching aim** of this study is to investigate the impact of the transformation on staff satisfaction of academics working in a transforming



South African university. In order to accomplish this aim, the researcher undertook the following steps:

- A theoretical background of what staff satisfaction entails is provided, to serve as a point of departure (*vide* Chapters 1 to 5).
- The different internal and external factors which influence staff satisfaction in a general organisational setting are identified to provide a comparative perspective and to enhance the level of awareness and sensitivity to factors found in organisations in general and in higher education institutions in particular (*vide* Chapters 3 and 4).
- A quantitative investigation, which commenced with the design of an instrument, namely a questionnaire, which was disseminated to academic staff at the UFS was undertaken. The purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate both the internal and external factors which affect the satisfaction of academic staff in a transforming university of South Africa, their impact on their satisfaction and, furthermore, to find out from academics how factors causing dissatisfaction can be addressed (*vide* Chapters 6 and 7).
- Focus group discussions with selected academic staff at the case study university (the UFS) were organised and held. These discussions were done as a follow-up on the issues that academic staff regarded as causing their dissatisfaction.
- Personal interviews with selected members of the UFS management, a representative of one of the workers' unions (UVPERSU), as well a representative of one of the interest groups (the Black Staff Forum) were arranged and held, still as a follow-up on issues that were regarded as causing staff dissatisfaction.
- Guidelines and recommendations for the improvement of academic staff satisfaction were designed and suggested (*vide* Chapter 7).

## 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The scarcity of documentation concerning academic staff satisfaction in South Africa shows that, although academics have since the inception of the university been an integral and indispensable part of higher education, their concerns have not been entrenched in most research undertakings. Hence this study is relevant for the South African higher education system. Oshagbemi (1999), in support of this assertion, says that very few research studies involving university teachers have been done and that more studies on academic staff satisfaction are not only justified, but are long overdue.

The study also becomes relevant because all the intensified state initiatives and legislative frameworks on staff welfare profiled in different policy documents, for example, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (NEPI 1992), the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE 1996), the Green Paper (RSA DoE 1996), the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997), the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997), the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998a) and the Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998b) also contribute additional evidence that efforts to deal with issues of staff satisfaction have only gained significant momentum at the end of the last millennium, creating some hope that staff affairs will receive recognition.

Most importantly, this study is done to reveal the *status quo* with regard to academic staff satisfaction and inform those in positions of power in higher education of the diverse factors – both external and internal - which affect staff satisfaction and so the quality of work of academic staff in a transforming South African university. Besides all these, it is contemplated that it will also contribute to, and expand existing corpuses of knowledge on academic staff satisfaction and factors impacting on staff satisfaction, particularly in South African universities. Van der Westhuizen and Smit (2001:75) concur on the need for research into staff satisfaction. They remark: "at the present time it has become an urgent necessity to place the

concept of job satisfaction in the spotlight especially with regard to the teaching profession in the Republic of South Africa”.

Last but not least, the study further holds the potential to assist university management at different levels and staff developers to support their staff, orient them and situate them accordingly in the rapidly changing and emerging higher education landscape. The researcher will propose guidelines for the improvement of academic staff satisfaction based on the outcomes of the questionnaire survey, focus group discussions with selected academic staff, and personal interviews with some people in positions of authority at the case study university. The freshly uncovered facts will serve as a research base which is always a prerequisite for the development and improvement of practice at work, as it gives both the managers and the workers the opportunity to address fundamental questions about their work and working conditions (Orme 1997:112). Moreover, instead of the university functioning according to prescriptions from - among others - stakeholders and the government to address transformation issues, staff and managers will suggest ways in which these issues may be addressed.

## **1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY**

In order for the researcher to manage the research and pursue an investigation into the research problem as outlined, it was deemed imperative to draw precise confines in terms of the field of study, the context, the area to be researched and time specifications.

### **1.6.1 Higher education as a field of study**

The scientific field of study of this research is higher education, a field which, according to Dressel and Mayhew as cited in Fourie (1996:9) deals with post-

school education as offered at higher education institutions – universities, technikons, colleges, etc. This field has as its mission to pursue the triad roles of teaching, research (*vide* Chapter 4) and service to the community, roles which are performed and realised by academic staff – the people for whom this study is intended.

Although the mission of higher education as a field of study has not changed much throughout its historical development but has transcended time and place (*vide* Chapter 4), the higher education sector both internationally and nationally currently exists amidst unstable external environments which influence the institutions drastically. Hence the focus of this study is to investigate the effect of acceleration and the persistence of change and transformation of South African higher education institutions, in particular universities, on academic staff satisfaction. This is aimed at enhancing an understanding of the change and effect nexus in terms of the entire period of higher education transition in general and in South Africa in particular.

Given this illumination and based on the assumption that academic staff satisfaction serves as a quality indicator in higher education, academic staff satisfaction emerges amongst other complex higher education issues as a deserving issue and hence the demarcation holds.

### **1.6.2 Educational management**

Educational management as a field of study also has its own individual onticity (Van der Westhuizen 1991a:12). It is from this pre-scientific ontic point that all educational management tasks and subtasks must be transcended and upon which the current realities of education can be searched and researched, observed and evaluated. According to Van der Westhuizen (1991a) this origin is bound by rules and regulations which man, as one of the entities or creatures inhabiting education institutions, must put

to effective use to achieve the educational objectives of the institutions concerned.

Clearly, academic staff satisfaction as an area of study does not only typify higher education as a field of study, but as an interesting area which falls within the management process in any education institution, also relating strongly to the aspect of human resources, and their effective use. Since educational management as a subdiscipline of education is an extensive field which covers expansive tasks (Mapesela 1997:2) such as planning, organising, leading and exercising control, it becomes crucial to situate the area of staff satisfaction within this broad field. The tasks of planning, organising, leading and control are applied to various management areas, which include staff affairs, learner affairs, physical resources, etc. Academic staff satisfaction comes forth as a vital component of staff affairs and will in this study receive attention, especially in the context of transforming higher education. Its evaluation, therefore, is an obvious aspect which may be optimised as one of the institution's ways of responding to new demands on quality, change and transformation. Van Vught (1994) supports this foregoing submission by regarding the importance of institutional management as a factor amplified by the increasing internal and external demands on higher education.

### **1.6.3 Geographic delimitation of the study**

The research literary begins with a review of staff satisfaction in a general organisational setting (*vide* Chapter 3). This was purposively done by the researcher in order to provide a wider spectrum of factors influencing staff satisfaction and, furthermore, to compare the general organisational set-up and the higher education sector. The study then proceeds to delimit and narrow down its focus to factors impacting on staff satisfaction within the context of higher education (*vide* Chapter 4).

Finally, what transpires in the later chapter (Chapter 5) of the literature review is the preview of the concept of academic staff satisfaction at South African universities as constituted out of the context of transformation. There are currently 21 universities in South Africa with academic staff exceeding 10 000 (CHE 2001). An in-depth study on the impact of transformation on academic staff in South African universities cannot be effectively attained within the given scope. Hence the researcher saw it fit to narrow down the given figures. It was deemed crucial by the researcher to precisely demarcate and further reduce the boundaries for researching. In this investigation, one university, a historically white Afrikaans-speaking university, namely the UFS, was used as a case study.

Questionnaires were disseminated to all permanent lecturing academic staff at the University (469). This number, however, excluded those academics who had participated in the pilot survey (60 academics). One focus group of 10 academic staff was organised and a group interview conducted by the researcher. Personal interviews were also conducted with selected members of the university management, namely the Registrar: General and Strategic Planning, the Dean of Students, the Chief Officer for the UFS Personnel Union (UVPERSU) as well as the Manager Support Service for Higher Education Restructuring who also represented the Black Staff Forum, one of the interest groups at the UFS.

The UFS was regarded as an ideal or a typical example of a South African university in transformation, firstly because of its historical background (*vide* Chapter 6), and secondly because of the magnitude of transformation that it has experienced so far. This university was once a university for whites only with Afrikaans as the sole medium of instruction, but today many changes regarding both the numbers of students and staff from designated groups and the language of instruction are eminent. In addition to this, the UFS is

currently in the process of undergoing a major transformation, since it has to incorporate both Vista University (the Bloemfontein campus) and Uniqwa's branch of the University of the North. This giant transformation step is an issue that is bound to disrupt the normal functioning of the university as well as affect academics and their satisfaction in one way or the other. On the basis of this synopsis, the case study university (the UFS) is regarded as a fitting case for the research investigation.

#### **1.6.4 Historical delimitation**

The fact that the research problem is bound within the context of transformation - an issue which did not commence only recently, but which has been surfacing since the conception of the university - necessitated the clear delineation in the theoretical investigation of some of the historical developments of the university from the medieval order up to the present era (*vide* Chapter 4). Nevertheless, for the purposes of the empirical investigation, emphasis was placed on factors **currently** affecting academic staff in South African universities undergoing transformation. Those factors in higher education resulting from the events leading to and following the dawning of the democratic government in 1994 were taken into account.

#### **1.6.5 Sample delimitation**

Staff implies all staff - this study, however, only focuses on academic staff. This is because academic staff are affected by unique factors which are usually related to their core functions of teaching, research and community service.

## 1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research in all spheres of life involves finding out about the world and certainly making knowledge claims which stand to be justified by researchers (Usher 1997:2). Rossman (cited in Fourie 1996:7) moots that research is a process of trying to gain a better understanding of the complexities of human interactions, through information-gathering about the interactions, in order to reflect on their meaning, arrive at, and evaluate conclusions. In the same way, this study adopted a basic exploratory investigative approach which aimed at revealing the current situation of staff satisfaction, as well as gaining a better understanding of the complexities of human interactions within transforming universities of South Africa. This research can also be regarded as emancipatory in that the researcher together with the participants were engaged in identifying problems and solutions in an attempt to improve the current state of staff satisfaction.

The commonly used research methods are organised in the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies which have dominated the educational research scene for decades. However, current trends in research undertakings show a marked shift from these known domains and, according to Fourie (1996:246), growing numbers of educational researchers are turning away from these traditional approaches and are increasingly engaging in new research paradigms such as action/participatory research.

Nowadays researchers give more value to their research findings by exploring the strengths of different research methods and not dwelling on the use of a single method approach. It must be noted that, in research, there is no single fault-free method of investigation. Payne (1997:108) reiterates that, if research results are based on the use of one method, a complete picture of the problem and its solution is never attained. This implies that whatever



research method is employed, it is not an absolute (Sagor 2000:3), hence it must be used in collaboration with other methods of data collection to ensure its validity and reliability.

Therefore multiple research methods involving both qualitative and quantitative investigations were employed in the empirical investigation to gather evidence on the topic of academic staff satisfaction. The use of more than one method was deemed acceptable for this research, as in "social research there is no single correct practice and superordinate methodology" (Usher 1997:1). Furthermore, "multiple research methods can play many roles in strengthening a study" (Krathwohl 1998:621), in addition to enhancing the credibility of a study through a corroboration of the research findings. The use of multiple research methods (triangulation) is regarded meritorious for research. Any scientific study that involves both qualitative and quantitative methods stands to produce from the research a result which would otherwise be unattainable with a single method. Mouton (2001:138) states that, since it is difficult to produce scientific results that are infallible and absolutely true for all times and contexts, researchers should constantly strive to obtain the most truthful and valid results. Zuber-Skerritt (cited in Maharasoja 2001:9) following on this assumption advises that valid results can be achieved by employing different research methods in a scientific inquiry. She further highlights the ability of some methods to counteract the limitations of other methods, thereby limiting errors that oftentimes emerge from methodological shortcomings (vide 6.2.3).

The qualitative research method has been found suitable for this study since its purpose is not to prove any hypothesis, but to generate and analyse data, to uncover and understand the phenomenon under investigation, and to explore fresh insights into the expectations, perceptions and experiences of academics regarding staff satisfaction. The open-ended questions forming part of the research instrument (questionnaire) were intended to probe

further into the perceptions, expectations and experiences of academics. This would overcome one of the limitations of a questionnaire, namely that it would bar the researcher from probing further into the responses of the participants (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 1996). The focus group discussions with selected academics as well as personal interviews with selected managers and other stakeholders were also aimed at probing further into the expectations, perceptions, experiences and feelings of staff with regard to their satisfaction. Quantitative methods on the other hand, determined the size and helped describe the phenomenon of staff satisfaction in terms of finite numbers. These two approaches were therefore potentially compatible systems of investigation and had procedures which could be co-operatively employed to complement each other and serve the purpose of better research (Mouton 2001; Krathwohl 1998).

### **1.7.1 The literature review**

A comprehensive literature review (*vide* Chapters 2 to 5), which preceded the empirical investigation, was performed to gain a deeper insight into what staff satisfaction entails; what constitutes staff satisfaction in a general organisational set-up and in an academic milieu; as well as factors which influence staff satisfaction in universities, especially South African universities. This was a deliberate attempt by the researcher to provide a preliminary conceptual framework and a point from which the study would depart. A comparative perspective among a general organisational setting, higher education in general and higher education in transforming universities of South Africa was obtained by amassing specific literature on staff satisfaction within these three sectors (*vide* Chapters 3, 4 and 5).

The importance of a literature review for any scientific study must be emphasised. Literature presents bodies of knowledge or scholarship that were compiled by previous scholars and researchers on similar research

problems. An examination of literature therefore presents an opportunity for the researcher to discover how other scholars investigated the research problem (Mouton 2001:87); in the case studied in this thesis, academic staff satisfaction.

Coupled with the structured and unstructured questions presented to academic staff in a questionnaire, the focus group discussions and interviews, the insight gleaned from the information-rich theoretical literary review uncovered by the researcher ultimately led to the development of guidelines and recommendations on how to enhance academic staff satisfaction in a South African university that is undergoing transformation.

### **1.7.2 The case study technique/approach**

There is evidence to the fact that the use of the case study research technique is gaining popularity in scientific research and in educational research in particular for identifying, diagnosing and attempting to resolve identified problems (McKernan 1996). According to McKernan (1996), a case study is a formal collection of evidence presented as an interpretive position of a unique case. It includes a discussion of the data collected during the fieldwork and written up at the culmination of a cycle of action or involvement in the research. Merriam (2001:191) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon of a single entity or case unit within its real-life context. The eclectic nature of a case study which allows it to employ a variety of research methodologies and styles awards it the potential to bring into perspective the in-depth traits and characteristics of the case under scrutiny. It reaches for depth rather than breadth (McKernan 1996).

A case study approach to research has both merits and drawbacks. Firstly, case studies have been celebrated for their ability to represent and reproduce

the phenomenological world of participants through detailed descriptions of events. Secondly, in most instances case studies present credible and accurate accounts of the setting and action within the setting. Thirdly, they allow the researcher to employ a multimethod approach in order to authenticate and verify the results (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 1996:66). In this study the case was investigated through the use of questionnaires aimed at identifying factors of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among UFS academics. The questionnaires were complemented by focus group discussions with selected academics where identified factors of dissatisfaction were discussed, giving the academics concerned an opportunity to suggest ways in which such issues may be addressed. In addition, personal interviews with selected UFS managers were also conducted to bring to the attention of these managers those issues that need to be given attention. All these were aimed at creating a holistic and vivid picture of the *status quo* in a transforming South African university regarding academic staff satisfaction. Fourthly, case studies usually narrate in prose, the context and results of the case under investigation (McKernan 1996). "This illuminates the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam 2001:193). Last, but not least, the kind of data that are utilised in case studies are usually representative and this enhances the validity of the case (McKernan 1996).

While case studies, like all research techniques, may display such good traits, a case study approach is not an end in itself. Case studies possess several disadvantages. Firstly, the most obvious one is the amount of time that the researcher must spend before completing the entire research. Case studies are time-consuming (McKernan 1996). Secondly, the results of the case must be suspended before the action is completed. Results are not publicised piece-meal. Thirdly, the researcher may have a *priori* assumptions which may bias interpretations. It is also possible that the researcher can be "taken in" by the respondents and informants in the field. Moreover, case study results are not generalisable because of the uniqueness of the context of each case

unit studied at a given time, in this particular case the UFS. However, there is an argument that the results of a case study may be generalisable in as far as the readers find that the case is similar to theirs. Another important factor that tints the value of case studies, is the financial implications that are attached to the effective implementation of a case study. According to McKernan (1996) case studies are costly.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following terms need to be defined to clarify their meaning in the context of this study:

### **1.8.1 Academic staff satisfaction**

Staff satisfaction is a highly contested issue with many conceptualisations. As a frame of reference for this study, academic staff satisfaction is defined as positive and negative attitudes towards one's job, i.e. specific feelings that academics associate with their academic roles (Cranton & Knoop 1991). For the purpose of this research and to enable the researcher to make recommendations on how to improve academic staff satisfaction, academics will be regarded as satisfied if they feel positively about most aspects of their jobs. They will be seen as dissatisfied if they attach negative feelings to most aspects of their jobs.

### **1.8.2 Higher education transformation**

Higher education transformation in South Africa refers to *inter alia* the structural readjustment and redesign of the higher education sector (universities and technikons), guided by the higher education policy and aimed at correcting the inequities, imbalances and distortions of the system

as a result of the political history of the country (Badsha 2000). Transformation in South African universities is also seen as a consequence of a range of internal and external factors as outlined in Chapter 4.

### **1.8.3 Historically advantaged universities (HAUs)**

These are universities which are sometimes referred to as historically white English- and Afrikaans-speaking universities. They were established by the apartheid government to pursue the principle of divide and rule, catering for the needs of white communities of English and Afrikaans origin. Such universities were instituted mainly to serve the needs of the separate development policy which reinforced the dominance of the white rule by excluding blacks from quality education (CHE 2000a). Historically advantaged universities still enjoy the benefits of the legacy of apartheid, because they are still better endowed (Seepe 2001) in terms of accessibility, research, facilities, post-graduate capacity and staff.

### **1.8.4 Historically disadvantaged universities (HDUs)**

These universities are sometimes referred to as historically black universities (HBUs). They were also established by the apartheid rule to cater for Blacks, Indians and Coloureds (CHE 2000b). These universities, which had been set up in the rural areas of the country, provided education that was not only inferior, but that was aimed at advancing the same principle of divide and rule by producing black subordination (Badsha 2000).

### **1.8.5 Traditional academic staff**

These are academic staff in higher education institutions who were part of the historically advantaged universities before 1994. Currently this term is used to refer to the white academics within the historically advantaged universities.

### **1.8.6 Non-traditional academic staff**

Non-traditional academics are the new academics, especially of African (Blacks, Coloured and Indian) origin who, in the past dispensation, were not allowed to lecture within the whites only universities, namely historically advantaged universities.

## **1.9 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY**

In order to arrive at the desired outcome through an active research investigation, the following plan of action was followed:

**Chapter 1** explains the rationale and outlines the aims and the scope of the study. Furthermore it highlights the research design and methodology.

**Chapter 2** gives an extensive review of literature pertaining to staff satisfaction with an emphasis on the different definitions and notions of staff satisfaction. This is followed by a further elucidation of the concept of staff satisfaction in Chapter 3.

**Chapter 3** further focuses on staff satisfaction in a general organisational setting. This chapter closes by giving a synopsis of the different factors impacting on staff satisfaction in the workplace as well as the implications of these factors for staff.

**Chapter 4** commences with a thumbnail sketch of the history and theory of higher education and thereby provides an overview of the roles and the change in roles of academic staff as traced back to the conception of the university, illustrating how academic staff satisfaction was affected by these changes. The chapter furthermore provides a theoretical background of staff satisfaction and factors affecting staff satisfaction in higher education in particular. A comparative perspective was made between factors found within a general organisational set-up and higher education to enhance the reader's awareness of the different factors which characterise these two sectors.

In **Chapter 5** cognisance is taken of staff satisfaction and factors impacting on academic staff satisfaction in transforming universities of South Africa. The chapter provides the historical contexts which have shaped the current South African higher education system, outlining the different policies which have guided change and the transformation of the South African higher education landscape.

**Chapter 6** is devoted to the actual investigation which employs the case study approach involving a quantitative and qualitative empirical exploration, using a specially designed questionnaire, focus group discussions and personal interviews. An examination of the perceptions and experiences of academics was done. This chapter serves as a basis for the recommendations and guidelines advanced in **Chapter 7** for the improvement and enhancement of academic staff satisfaction at a transforming South African university. This last chapter also sets a platform for future studies by providing both the limitations of the study and possible areas of further probing in the field of staff satisfaction.



## **1.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented an illumination of the cause and effect of the issues that affect staff satisfaction. This commenced with a preview of the research problem, which portrayed the inevitability and salience of a research into issues pertaining to academic staff satisfaction in a transforming university of South Africa. It highlighted the crucial need and furnished a rationale for the evaluation of academic staff satisfaction as a quality indicator. The chapter highlighted a combination of literary review and the empirical research (quantitative and qualitative research) as a basis for a way forward in the entire study. These were utilised as a framework for drawing conclusions and ultimately making recommendations regarding the enhancement of academic staff satisfaction by universities facing and engaging in change and transformation relying on the premise that change and transformation are imperative in South African higher education.

The field and area of research was also clearly mapped out in this chapter and a vivid picture of what the ensuing chapters will advance, was painted. In Chapter 2 the concept of staff satisfaction will be defined.

## *Chapter*



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# **STAFF SATISFACTION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

**B**ased on the background given in the previous chapter on the necessity and purpose of a study on staff satisfaction in higher education and as a point of departure for this study, this chapter expands on and defines the concept of staff satisfaction in more detail. It also aims at drawing a broader picture of the different factors which affect the satisfaction of staff in their work places as well as their impact on staff motivation and, consequently, on the way staff conduct their institutional responsibilities.

## **2.2 "STAFF SATISFACTION" DEFINED**

The concept of staff satisfaction is a highly complex one, with numerous interpretations. On account of that, this chapter will commence by providing

a brief introduction to the various elements of the concept "staff satisfaction". These elements will be elaborated in more detail further on in the chapter.

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

Staff satisfaction is an important aspect of personnel management and a vital factor in any educational milieu. It is an aspect that can be used and which is used as an indicator of the quality of organisational performance in many organisations (Harvey 1994:3).

Staff satisfaction is a very broad concept lacking a single meaning, but which comprises several nuances of meaning (Kahn 1977; Davis & Newstrom 1985). A wide range of constructs which vary significantly are ascribed to the notion of staff satisfaction, since it is a complex concept which is open to numerous definitions and which does not lend itself to one straightforward interpretation. "Neither in common parlance nor in the literature on the subject is there a consensus" (Middlehurst 1993:7) about the true essence of staff satisfaction or the means by which it can be measured. Although its effects are indisputably observable among staff, the concept "remains an intangible and elusive notion, no more stable than quicksand" (Middlehurst 1993; Kreitner & Kinicki 1995; Evans & Abbott 1998).

It is a highly contested issue with many conceptualisations, each of which has an implication for the way staff perceive their work. Staff satisfaction expresses itself in a very dynamic manner. According to Evans and Abbott (1998:4) the observable disparity among the definitions lies both in the depths of analyses of the concept of staff satisfaction and its interpretation, whereas sometimes the consequences of staff satisfaction are merely described and characteristics listed in an attempt to define it. This does not render staff satisfaction a trivial issue, as even without a concise frame of

reference, it is always mandatory within organisations to unearth both the feelings and the reactions of staff towards their work.

Staff satisfaction is not a unitary but a multidimensional and multifaceted construct, capable of changing from time to time owing to the number of factors which affect it, as well as the instability of the same factors. The multi-dimensionality of staff satisfaction refers to the diversity of specific elements or variables which impact either positively or negatively on the feelings or attitudes of staff in their jobs in general, or only on certain aspects of their jobs (Davis & Newstrom 1985). Kahn (1977:109) supports this view, although he defines staff satisfaction as a set of favourable or unfavourable feelings which staff associate with their work. Mitchell and Larson (1987:116,122) as well as Oshagbemi (1999) define staff satisfaction as attitudes or affective reactions of staff towards their jobs, while Cranton and Knoop (1991:103) define it as a pleasurable feeling derived from the perception that one's job fulfils or allows for the fulfilment of one's important job values. Verhaegen (1979:86), in substantiation of this view, regards staff satisfaction as a complex function of the following:

- The degree to which different values are connected with work and the attainment of its concomitant results.
- The different opportunities perceived for the attainment of these values and the relative advantages and disadvantages of the work situation compared with that of other people.
- An employee's personality and cultural determinants.

From these definitions it becomes apparent that staff satisfaction emanates from an interaction of staff values, needs, expectations, wants, desires, attitudes and experiences with the work environment. All these factors may, on the one hand, contribute to positive and pleasant feelings in staff as well as the fulfilment of their personal and professional needs (Brazelle 2000;

Kirsten 2000; Du Toit 1994; Steyn & Van Wyk 1999; Griffioen 1999; Engelbrecht 1996), while, on the other hand, staff may not visualise their jobs as bearing any prospects for enhancement of satisfaction with both self- and the professional being. Van der Westhuizen and Smit (2001:76) are in accord with this foregoing submission and maintain that satisfaction can be experienced in different ways. According to them it oftentimes fluctuates between a feeling of the absence of unpalatable feelings to a feeling of tolerance towards unpleasant incidents and a feeling of delight at the work place.

It is apparent then that a periodic evaluation of staff satisfaction in higher education institutions is important as a way of identifying these aspects and as a strategy to determine the influence of this volatile nature of staff satisfaction on staff and their conduct in the work place.

### **2.2.2 The multifacetedness of staff satisfaction**

Staff satisfaction consists of several discrete elements which, in concord or independently, can be said to represent the whole notion of staff satisfaction. The satisfaction of staff is influenced by not one but several aspects of a person's job ranging from remuneration, the working environment, the leader, communication, change and people dynamics, to mention but only a few factors. Davis and Newstrom (1985) say that several specific elements within an organisation impact either positively or negatively on the feelings and attitudes of staff in their jobs in general or on specific aspects and areas of their jobs.

Kreitner and Kinicki (1995:159) in support advocate that the various ways in which staff show their affective and emotional responses to the many facets/dimensions/factors of their jobs depict their satisfaction. Mumford (1991:11) also joins in the concertion by adding that individuals are often

inclined to like all or only certain aspects of their jobs. According to this author a satisfied member of staff does not necessarily have to be content with all the aspects of the job, but a worker who is dissatisfied with most aspects may be classified as being dissatisfied.

Although staff may not necessarily be thrilled with all the factors surrounding their jobs, these different aspects of their jobs as named earlier, play a pivotal role in their lives at work by influencing not only their attitudes, but also their general outlook on their jobs - their satisfaction. Staff expectations and aspirations can for instance greatly determine the way the working conditions and work are perceived by staff. If a difference exists between the perceived situation and what was initially expected or aspired for, or the experienced situation in relation to the different aspects or a single aspect of the job, then staff attitudes and consequently their satisfaction follow a certain pattern. Satisfaction either becomes high or lower depending on the situation at hand. This may even happen to staff working in the same organisation, since such people may have varying perceptions.

Kahn (1977:109), in his definition of staff satisfaction, points out that different people at work can have different viewpoints which may favour or disfavour their work in general or only certain distinct dimensions of their jobs. In the same way different people working in one place and doing a similar job may be influenced differently by the same aspects of their job, because these aspects do not necessarily have the same impact or importance to different staff and to the same people at all times. From this foregoing discussions it becomes evident that staff satisfaction is an issue riddled with many factors and that it can be looked at from different perspectives, depending on individual staff. This multifacetedness of staff satisfaction should not, however, influence those in positions of power towards ignoring all or some of its facets. In brief, staff satisfaction is a part and parcel of all issues regarding personnel and their management.

### **2.2.3 Staff satisfaction as an element of personnel management**

According to Graham and Bennett (1992:157,158) personnel management is that kind of management concerned with people/employees at work and with their relationships within an institution. Personnel management is a science concerned not only with the recruitment of staff into organisations, but also with determining and satisfying their needs at work, further giving recognition to their well-being and enabling them to make their best contribution for the success of their organisations. Graham and Bennett (1992) ascertain that personnel management does not only aim at making effective use of the employees, but it is supposed to develop satisfactory relationships among them and motivate them by providing them with jobs which provide intrinsic satisfaction, financial and other rewards. Personnel management also seeks to integrate all human aspects of the organisation into a coherent whole as well as establishing high level employee goals (Graham & Bennett 1992; Bondesio & De Witt 1991).

In addition, staff satisfaction has a human aspect as well. A certain element of personnel management encompasses several important aspects which involve - amongst other things - an investigation of factors which have an influence on staff satisfaction, maintenance and the development of personnel/staff (Bondesio & De Witt 1991).

This science of personnel management is concerned with people in a wide variety of occupations and levels in different organisations (Inkeles & Barber 1971:8). It entails a constant and a periodic review of all organisational activities in order to overcome inadequacies and deficiencies which could result from the lack of congruency between the organisational activities and staff needs and expectations. This implies that, if the management makes no efforts to match organisational activities and demands with those of staff,

then staff dissatisfaction may develop. Staff dissatisfaction has a great potential to sabotage all the efforts that organisations may engage in trying to maintain the quality of performance that is highly sought in all organisations and by all stakeholders today whilst, in effect, staff satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a good indication of the quality of work that staff may produce.

#### **2.2.4 Staff satisfaction as a quality indicator**

The need for quality education in all higher education institutions is not a debatable issue and, indeed, current trends in all educational situations today show that rigorous efforts are underway to try and uphold and amend the quality of education. This is not an issue that institutions choose to pursue, but are enjoined, in terms of government legislation, the global and clientele demands to venture into and execute. Lategan (1996:15) regards quality in higher education institutions and systems as a worldwide phenomenon which has been awarded increased attention in the past decades.

Apart from being a governmental policy, quality assurance for higher education institutions also serves as a way for self-scrutiny for institutions and has become a moral obligation for institutions of higher learning (Wilcox & Ebbs 1992:1). This means that institutions are compelled to evaluate their activities and responsibilities to ensure their institutional effectiveness (Tannock & Burge 1999:280). Indeed higher education institutions are "becoming increasingly aware of the importance of quality considerations" (Dowling 1999:1) and are responding to these demands by putting in place formal but diverse quality assurance systems, which have also become preconditions for their increased autonomy and financial sustainability. Universities demonstrate the quality of all their services, programmes, staff and products through these formal systems. Academic staff in higher education play a decisive role as part of these formal quality assurance



systems; hence the need to evaluate their satisfaction (needs and problems) from time to time.

Quality teaching and effectiveness are conceived as the products of both the academic staff and learner initiatives. However, existing literature (Cranton & Knoop 1991:102; Fransman 2001) shows that studies of teaching effectiveness have focussed much attention on the learner and learner satisfaction and have negated this other important domain - academic staff and staff satisfaction. Some higher education institutions, in acknowledgement of the importance of staff satisfaction, have carried out staff satisfaction surveys in which the satisfaction of their academic staff was assessed. A good example is that of the University of Central England in Birmingham, in which staff perceptions with regard to all the aspects of their work were explored (Harvey, Blackwell, Bowes, Aston, Geall, Moon, Pratt & Plimmer 1997:iii). Staff's responses led the university to uncover areas of work that staff considered very important – areas of satisfaction, areas of concern and those of considerable dissatisfaction (Harvey *et al.* 1997).

Another example of a higher education institution which carried out a similar survey is the University of Auckland in New Zealand, an organisation that is currently "undergoing restructuring and devolution of managerial responsibility" (*Work and Family Report* 1999:3). As one of the strategies to monitor the implementation of new procedures and to determine if changing work patterns were making different demands on staff with family responsibilities, the university conducted a survey which was distributed to all staff. This was conducted with the premise that "work pressures can create stresses in family relationships, and problems in meeting family responsibilities can affect performance in the workplace" (*Work and Family Report* 1999:3). The rationale behind this form of investigation is based on the fact that a "little concern for individuals and their families goes a long way, and makes a big impression on staff" (Fontyn 2001a:40).

Even though only a few practical examples exist wherein staff satisfaction is investigated by higher education institutions, the importance of taking staff satisfaction as a quality indicator and the need to evaluate it regularly within institutions must be emphasised. Bohloko (1999:9), in support of this assumption, states that satisfaction must involve the assessment of both the human resources and the job itself in order to identify different areas of action or improvement in an organisation that can make work become more satisfying for the people who do it. Cope (cited in Bohloko 1999:9) suggests that this assessment should ensure that appropriate remedies are taken to guarantee compatibility (a "fit") between the individual and his/her job. Institutional assessment need not be carried out only as a matter of policy and to gather information that is usually kept in the archives. It should be done to advance the course for corrective action and to further close the gaps between what the job demands and expects from the employee and what the person expects from the job. Mumford (1991:13) regards the congruency that exists between a person and his job as a representation of a mutual benefit relationship where there is a link between:

- organisational expectations, requirements and personal interests; and
- staff performance and quality.

It is also important to note that the improvement of the quality of education in institutions can not be achieved by the evaluation of a single aspect but by venturing into a periodic and holistic evaluative approach of all structures, areas and activities of the institution concerned. Even staff satisfaction itself requires an investigation of not one specific factor, but diverse variables which - according to Davis and Newstrom (1985) - constitute satisfaction. These factors or variables may collectively or individually influence academic staff to have varying experiences and feelings about their jobs and therefore varying work input. Kahn (1977:110) and Oshagbemi (1999) reiterate that

staff satisfaction is representative and a reflection of a person's overall attitude towards his/her job which is usually expressed in the form of reactions.

### **2.2.5 Staff satisfaction as an expression of attitudes and affective reactions**

Staff satisfaction is an attitude or an internal state, which could be associated with a personal feeling of achievement, either quantitative or qualitative (Mullins 1999:630). Qualitatively a feeling of achievement is an expression of the internal feeling of having achieved a certain status or level of satisfaction, whereas quantitatively it is a feeling that arises once an individual has accomplished so much in terms of the organisational goals.

An attitude is an individual's characteristic way of responding to an object or a situation. It is based on a person's experience and leads to certain behaviour or the expression of certain opinions. "Attitudes provide a predetermined set of responses so that a person's behaviour or opinions can often be forecast in certain situations" (Graham & Bennett 1992:104). An attitude has a long-lasting nature and exists even when all aspirations of an individual have been met and satisfied.

Whilst Graham and Bennett (1992) place their emphasis on an individual's response to a situation and the behaviour that results, Rue and Byars (1989:381) regard attitudes as an individual's outlook towards colleagues and the job. Attitudes are reflected in the kind of outlook a person has towards co-workers and the way he or she relates with them. Sometimes attitude is a reflection of one's outlook on working conditions, the organisation, pay, management and leadership. This kind of outlook, positive or negative, directed at the different aspects of work and countless others found within an institution, depicts the state of satisfaction of the concerned staff members

and has an influence on their conduct and the way they provide their service to the institution. Negativeness means a clouded mindset and therefore clouded actions, while positiveness means a positive mindset and therefore positive actions.

The fact that employees are individual entities, a variety of individual attitudes commonly exist in the work place (Sell 1979:4). What is important to note, however, is that all organisations depend on positive staff attitudes to succeed.

Even though academic staff are expected to cherish and develop positive feelings about their jobs, the job situation itself has to be encouraging and supportive in assisting staff to develop positive mindsets. Many organisations, however, are unfortunately lagging behind in doing this, but are capable of producing and imposing strains and pressures on their members of staff either intentionally or unintentionally. These, in turn, produce negative attitudes and reactions among the employees, causing them to be dissatisfied with certain aspects of their jobs or their jobs in general (Inkeles & Barber 1971:10).

Attitudes of academic staff are also derived from the different values which they hold, as well as from their beliefs, needs, wants, desires, expectations and experiences. Vecchio (1988:117) says that staff may have favourable or unfavourable attitudes or feelings which they can associate with their work. Favourable feelings or attitudes in staff imply the ability of a job to meet their needs and consequently to increase their satisfaction, whereas, on the contrary, unfavourable attitudes or feelings denote failure to meet one's needs and results in dissatisfaction. Pleasurable feelings of contentment with work and the working environment emanate from perceptions that the institution gives cognisance to those values regarded highly significant by staff.

### 2.2.6 Staff satisfaction as a function of values

Whilst Kuh and Whitt (1988:23) define values as "widely held beliefs or sentiments about the importance of certain goals, activities, relationships, and feelings" or exhortation about what is right or wrong, what is encouraged or discouraged, what ought to be or what ought not to be, Locke (in Wagner and Hollenbeck 1995:206) defines values as whatever a person consciously or unconsciously desires to obtain. In the *Oxford Dictionary* Pollard and Liebeck (1994:887), in turn, define values as standards or principles which people consider as valuable or important in their lives.

In a work situation too, employees have their own beliefs, desires, standards and principles and great expectations for all these to be recognised by the employers. They may possess or may adopt very strong ideas and views about what they believe to be right or wrong, or what they regard as important. In most cases staff draw some degree of satisfaction from what they perceive to be right. They furthermore draw satisfaction from the realisation that their job is in line with their principles or meets their prescribed standards. Employees usually attach a great deal of importance to these principles, and more often than not they expect everyone else within the organisation to obey and follow them. "Some institutional values are conscious and explicitly articulated and they serve as a normative or a moral function by guiding members" (Kuh & Whitt 1988:25).

Verhaegen (1979:82) agrees with other authors (Kuh & Whitt 1988; Locke in Wagner & Hollenbeck 1995) in regarding values as that which a person wishes to acquire and suggests that staff satisfaction usually results from the acquisition of the aspired. Staff in educational institutions, as is the case elsewhere, hold their own expectations, which they always want to see fulfilled or realised. However, the situation in South African higher education

institutions, for example, is made complex by the changing mix of the work force, which inevitably brings new staff values into the system. This means that higher education institutions are composed of a collection of values and manifestations, which may even be contradictory. Institutions have "old" staff values and their own set of values which are meant to guide both institutional and staff actions. According to the *World Development Report*, a paradoxical situation exists, in which "values and norms may reinforce persistent inequalities" between formed cleavages of staff (World Bank 2001:117), especially when they are intentionally geared to pursue the thoughts of certain owning groups (Valenkamp 1999:15).

Fife (1992:xviii) maintains that these values need to be considered of prime importance to the future of organisations. An important point to consider is that individual staff values should be congruent with the organisational values to make it easy for staff to support and to pursue the mission of the institution whilst realising their own values. It is the lack of congruency, firstly, among staff and, secondly, between staff values and organisational values, that may lower or diminish staff satisfaction.

Human (1998:27) suggests that organisations, in their attempts to match staff values with their own, should avoid treating staff members as collectives of people and the sum total of their values, but rather as individual entities. Important institutional values and individual staff values need to be assessed regularly to see how they are reflected in the actions of staff in support of their institution. In addition, "great pains should be taken to design institutional systems in such a way that staff values are fulfilled" (Verhaegen 1979:86) because, otherwise, staff satisfaction is negatively influenced. Verhaegen further argues that satisfaction is not an impossible factor to attain as long as staff is given enough opportunities to experience and fulfil their needs and expectations.

### **2.2.7 Staff satisfaction as a derivative of needs, expectations and the experiences of staff**

The first experience for staff when they join organisations is undoubtedly one filled with anxiety. Staff join the workplace with uncountable needs and expectations and they usually have the urge to fulfil them. However, the manner in which these needs may be satisfied may differ greatly, since this is highly influenced by the differences in the way in which different people perceive their work and their work environment. These staff perceptions are usually rooted in people's beliefs, values, traditions, cultures and lifestyles and - in most cases - these perceptions may be due to peer pressures at work or the influence of different environmental factors on staff (Graham & Bennett 1992:16). In the same way staff needs are a culmination of these beliefs, values, traditions, cultures and lifestyles.

#### **2.2.7.1 *Staff and organisational needs***

Needs are objective requirements necessary for the survival and the well-being of an individual (Verhaegen 1979:82). They are satisfied through, amongst other things, having a happy, satisfying work environment (Strauss & Sayles 1972:7). Academic staff in higher education have their own requirements, for example, the need to have their wishes and expectations regarding work met; to be given recognition for their daily achievements; and to be rewarded accordingly with a competitive salary. Staff also possess a need to develop both personally and professionally, advancing their career wishes in the process. All these diverse requirements and needs necessitate the survival of these academics in their jobs, maintaining not only their professional well-being, but also good health. According to Verhaegen (1979) both the staff and the institution for which they work should realise that it is not only the needs of the staff that need to be fulfilled, but the institutional needs as well. Fisher (1999), in support of this observation, moots that

certain demands and expectations are made by the institution on its workers and that, if they comply, they should be recognised and rewarded accordingly.

The survival of academics in higher education does not only imply living within an organisation and merely working for it, but can be equated to a long, happy, fulfilling existence allowing them to pursue the mission of the institution and to do work efficiently. Survival can be ensured and satisfaction enhanced by the provision by the institution itself of the necessary requirements. It is important to note, however, that requirements are not only for the individual's survival, but they also indirectly ensure the survival of the institution. If an institution is for example able to provide its members with proper facilities, then work can be easily accomplished. Thus satisfaction is vital for the sustainability of institutions. Walters (1975:44), in support of these assertions, says institutions should motivate staff by continuously replenishing their needs.

Institutions that fail to replenish staff needs, either intentionally or unintentionally, or maybe because their interests and needs are not balanced against those of the organisation (Graham & Bennett 1992:168), only contribute to the failure of such staff to attain their need satisfying goals. Graham and Bennett (1992:16) see this as the cause for frustration and desperation, which may be maturely handled by some people so that they identify alternative routes for attaining their goals, or for solving their problems. However, some people lack the maturity to handle situations which fail to support them in their mission to attain their need satisfying goals and are therefore often faced with frustrating situations upon failure to attain initially intended objectives. The results of this frustration are negative attitudes and reactions which often show up in staff as aggression, apathy, withdrawal, stress, disappointment, irrational thinking and lack of satisfaction in general.



Sometimes ill health occurs when the organisation shows no concern for the employees by providing them with services of a welfare nature, e.g. a safe, healthy and congenial working environment. Feelings of dissatisfaction are also likely to arise from the mutual exclusiveness of the needs of the employee and the organisation. This normally results if the organisation shows no concern for its employees, in other words, if it does not provide them with the above-mentioned services of welfare nature. Unfortunately, it is this kind of situation that results in a conflict of needs (Graham & Bennett 1992). This conflict of needs and a lack of resolution unfortunately culminate in ill-health which is often accompanied by anxiety, irritability, headaches, stomach cramps, a lack of motivation and low satisfaction.

It is worth noting that staff satisfaction is not only vulnerable to unmet needs, but also to failure by the workplace to meet the expectations of the staff, whether reasonable or unreasonable.

#### **2.2.7.2 *Staff expectations***

Staff satisfaction is regarded as a personal experience which is heavily dependent on an employee's expectations and aspirations, for example, expectations that work will reward one accordingly (Fisher 1999:7) or that the environment will be favourable. This means that different staff members bring to the workplace a diversity of expectations, each needing to be recognised. The reason for this diversity is that people's perceptions are strongly influenced by attitudes, so that those who harbour negative feelings often perceive their work situation as unfavourable and dissatisfying, whereas those with positive attitudes mostly perceive their work situation as favourable. Such expectations and aspirations have a profound influence on a person's level of satisfaction too. Vecchio (1988) and Fisher (1999) give examples of new employees who join the workplace having certain expectations about

their jobs, and which may be too high, and who find that such expectations are not reached because of being unrealistic and unattainable. The tendency is that new staff members often fantasise about how rapidly they will gain promotion or how pleasant work conditions may be, only to discover that the realities do not portray the preconceived notions but are actually harsh and shocking. In such instances, these kinds of experiences only serve to evoke negative feelings on the part of the staff. Kahn (1977:109) supports the foregoing view when he says that employees join organisations with a set of wants, needs, desires, and past experiences that join to form job expectations. Their satisfaction is therefore an expression of the degree of compatibility between the emerging expectations and the rewards that the job provides.

However, as already mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, unrealistically high expectations have a negative impact on the feelings and attitudes of staff if they are not met; they also affect the way in which staff interpret and evaluate or perceive their work environment and all work-related experiences.

### **2.2.7.3 *Staff perceptions and experiences***

The employees' impression of the whole work set-up or organisation impacts strongly on their satisfaction. Vroom (1967:159), a renowned scholar in studies of staff satisfaction who laid down the groundwork for investigations of staff satisfaction, made an important discovery regarding this assertion. He believes that staff satisfaction is commonly caused by the environment and environmentally pioneered factors and not by the individual or his/her personality. Vroom (1967) and Fisher (1999) argue that negative attitudes and feelings towards the job are a reflection of an unhealthy work situation and they therefore suggest that, in order to improve satisfaction, both personal/individual therapy and improvement of work situation are essential. Attempts to solve job frustrations should typically involve effecting changes in

the general work situation with changing environments and job pressures rather than attempting to effect only personality changes in dissatisfied staff, since satisfaction emanates from staff's perceptions, expectations and experiences of their work environment.

Staff satisfaction is usually inferred from a combination of observed actions and behaviours of staff and recorded through their perceptions. It is highly dependent on the perceptions and experiences of staff. These perceptions and experiences are unfortunately hard to deal with exclusively and, because of their volatile nature, they change from time to time for a variety of reasons. Moreover, staff satisfaction "is prone to contamination" (Middlehurst 1993:7) by numerous variables which are difficult to research in isolation.

### **2.2.8 Staff satisfaction as a dynamic process**

As could be depicted from the discussion so far, staff satisfaction is a fluid and highly volatile aspect which is caused to change by a variety of factors. Indeed, it would be highly unrealistic to expect either staff in higher education or their satisfaction to remain static amidst the uncertain and changing higher education environment.

#### **2.2.8.1 *Dynamism in defining the concept of staff satisfaction***

The proponents of studies of staff satisfaction, namely Vroom (1967), Kahn (1977), Vecchio (1988) and other authors such as Mitchell and Larson (1987), Cranton and Knoop (1991), Mumford (1991) and Kreitner and Kinicki (1995) have not succeeded in defining this concept of staff satisfaction in one voice. Mullins (1999:630) says that staff satisfaction is a complex issue to define, because it means different things to different people. Its complexity emanates from the special, but widely differing ways in which people interpret their own satisfaction. People working in the same organisation or those

doing exactly the same job may or may not have the same level of satisfaction and may not even be content with the same aspects of their work, since work-related factors have different effects on different people. Some members may be satisfied with certain aspects of the institution or of their job, while being discontented with others. In higher education for instance, staff can be satisfied with the whole pedagogy (Hannan & Silver 2000:27), or they may be satisfied with only its teaching aspect and may not necessarily be thrilled by research and community work. Conversely, some staff members may find research work more stimulating and may loathe teaching and other institutional activities. Although several meanings are attached to this concept of staff satisfaction, their critical analysis leads one to realise that there is no real consensus on what staff satisfaction is. According to Evans and Abbott (1998:5) the reason for this lack of agreement lies with the hierarchical positions as determinants of satisfaction and because staff satisfaction has too many frames of reference. Evans and Abbott (1998) go on to explain that satisfaction of staff arises over a wide variety of aspects, for example needs, values, interests, perceptions, experiences, etc. which more often than not have a reciprocating influence on one another. Needs may, for instance, determine values and values may determine needs. A correlation must exist between one's needs and values to be able to guarantee satisfaction (Sell & Shipley 1979:82). Needs and values furthermore have an influence on one's attitude, work expectations, perceptions and experiences. In addition to being a factor which renders staff satisfaction dynamic, Evans and Abbott (1998) see this lack of stability and the changing nature of staff satisfaction as a major drawback in the studies on and investigations into staff satisfaction.

#### **2.2.8.2 *The changing nature of staff satisfaction***

Situations change, environmental factors change, and staff satisfaction changes as well. Staff satisfaction changes, whether for better or worse, to

improve or to deteriorate. In the previous sections staff satisfaction has been regarded as attitudes, feelings, expectations, perceptions, experiences, reactions and values. All these aspects are susceptible to change with time (Middlehurst 1993; Kreitner & Kinicki 1995; Evans & Abbott 1998). They are fluid and illusive aspects of an employee's life. Vroom (1967:100) regards the degree of satisfaction experienced by staff as a non-static aspect which varies from day to day, from week to week or even on an hourly basis. The changes in staff expectations, attitudes and experiences which result from their day-to-day encounters and interactions with their working environment, are usually inferred and detected from their verbal responses and their general work conduct.

The initial attitudes which staff normally harbour when they first start working often reflect dissatisfaction, but they are usually neutral or anxious about their new work. Yet such feelings sometimes change over time to expressions of a certain degree of dissatisfaction, depending on the influences of the environment in which they work. This kind of situation may arise if new staff are baffled by the way they are inducted into the new job or perhaps by the way things happen on the job. What is important, is that - even when their satisfaction has been lowered - staff may not harbour negative feelings forever. They may change their outlook on work when the environment becomes conducive, for example when certain changes in their environment occur and also when efforts and attempts to improve the situation and excavate demotivators are made at work. Thus individual staff satisfaction has a changing nature; it is not static, but dynamic; it varies from time to time, depending on the environmental changes. Kahn (1977:110) states that the reason for a change in the satisfaction of staff over time, especially when it becomes low, is that their needs are sometimes neglected and there is usually a lack of regular identification of areas which cause low or high levels of satisfaction within individual employees. In addition, staff

satisfaction differs from one staff member to another, since staff do not perceive their work in a similar manner.

### **2.2.8.3 *The impact of changing staff satisfaction on institutions***

The dynamic nature of staff satisfaction does not only relate to staff, but has a direct relationship and serious implications for the institution as well. An institution may start off with highly motivated, satisfied, cooperative and highly functional staff, but may - in time - end up with demotivated and idle staff. This may transpire if the institution concerned is not careful to maintain and sustain a high level of satisfaction at all times, perhaps through a proper identification and provision of needs or maybe by giving careful attention to some or most of staff's needs and feelings. If staff satisfaction is allowed to oscillate, this may have serious repercussions for the institution in general. Institutional activities as well as their general functioning may be affected negatively. This is because satisfaction impacts directly on the way staff are motivated to do work, to carry out their daily activities and subsequently the "productivity of the organisation is negatively impacted upon" (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998:112). Obviously the type of organisation will also influence the varying nature of staff satisfaction.

### **2.2.8.4 *The varying nature of staff satisfaction among organisations***

Staff working within two organisations could be pooled from a single training institution and be exposed to similar working conditions, but the level of satisfaction for such staff could never be the same. No two organisations can experience the same level of satisfaction, because staff respond differently to organisational factors. According to Leslie (2000:242) a practical example is that of Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland where, in the school milieu of these societies, the sources for teachers' job-related satisfaction and frustration differ considerably. On the one hand, the Chinese Mainland

teachers derive their satisfaction from good relations, appropriate application of teacher's knowledge, and skills in subject teaching. Staff satisfaction is furthermore derived from teachers feeling a sense of authority over students, the positive learning outcomes of students, fair assessment of their performance and recognition of their personal achievements, as well as relationships with students and colleagues. In Hong Kong, on the other hand, teachers attach more value to their relationships with their colleagues, prestige in their communities, job security, freedom to make decisions in the classroom and a sense of authority over students.

This practical example of the Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland teachers is a clear indication of two contexts where staff satisfaction is derived from different factors of the teaching and learning enterprise. This situation is also highly likely in higher education where some academics could be more learner-oriented, whilst others could be more inclined towards research-related issues (*vide* Section 2.2.7.2).

### **2.3 CONCLUSION**

The absence of a distinct definition of staff satisfaction and its oscillating nature should, however, not overrule the dire need for an investigation of staff satisfaction in higher education. This particular investigation/study adopted as its frame of reference the philosophy or school of thought of Davis and Newstrom (1985) who regard staff satisfaction as a multi-dimensional aspect comprising a diversity of specific elements or variables which affect the feelings and attitudes of staff either positively or negatively.

Rather than to attempt to measure the level of staff satisfaction, something that has proven difficult for many years and to many people - including the pioneers of studies of staff satisfaction - this study investigated staff

satisfaction as a multi-dimensional aspect with a variety of aspects which affect staff either negatively or positively.

In the following chapter different organisational factors which have an influence on the perceptions, experiences and the attitudes of staff and how they impact on staff satisfaction will be discussed.



*Chapter*



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## **STAFF SATISFACTION IN A GENERAL ORGANISATIONAL SETTING**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

**A**lthough this study is aimed at investigating the satisfaction of staff in the higher education context, attention will not only be focussed on factors found in higher education, but also those found in a general organisational setting. It is hoped that through such an investigation a comparative perspective may be achieved and an enhanced level of awareness of, as well as sensitivity to interrelated factors influencing the feelings and attitudes of staff regardless of any particular work organisation will be attained. The researcher agrees with the current speculations by people such as Cloete, Bunting and Kulati (2000) and Gultig (2000), that higher education will assume a more entrepreneurial direction in future, and that its collegial nature will increasingly be supported by managerialism. A comparison of this nature is therefore not out of context.

All organisations - regardless of their nature, service and clients - depend on staff/workforce for their functioning and success. They are characterised by the presence of people as servers and/or clients and exist mainly to pursue certain objectives through differentiated tasks allocated to groups of people or individuals (Basson, Van der Westhuizen & Niemann 1991:593).

It is for this reason that staff should be regarded as an important commodity for any workplace. Thus all issues which affect their satisfaction deserve to be investigated. Moreover, most organisations are failing in their mission because of staff-related problems such as strikes, employee turnover and sick leave, to name but a few. All these are consequences of staff dissatisfaction.

Manufacturing organisations are finding their ability to function well (to produce) hampered by, among other things, poor industrial relations and difficulties caused by minutiae. These organisations, whether in private or in public sectors, are frequently bogged down by problems in their own internal systems so that their staff members are unable to respond properly to the needs of the customers. This implies that a good deal of potential in staff is not being utilised or realised as work output, but rather culminates in frustration for staff. This suffering unfortunately extends to the customers/clients and other stakeholders who are not served or serviced well by the unhappy staff. Fortunately, in this millennium business enterprises are beginning to realise the dire need for them to pay attention to staff and staff welfare issues. The increasing numbers of businesses that are setting up Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) (*Business Times* of 10 June 2001) evidence this. These EAPs are an interesting intervention that aims at improving the welfare of staff and - by extension - the company's performance. They entail counselling and other support services which are aimed at assisting staff in solving their problems, particularly problems that distract them from carrying out their work. In the United States, for example, Employee Assistance professionals and psychologists are currently helping

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workers in America, particularly those who lost friends and family to the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, to cope with trauma (Bennet 2001).

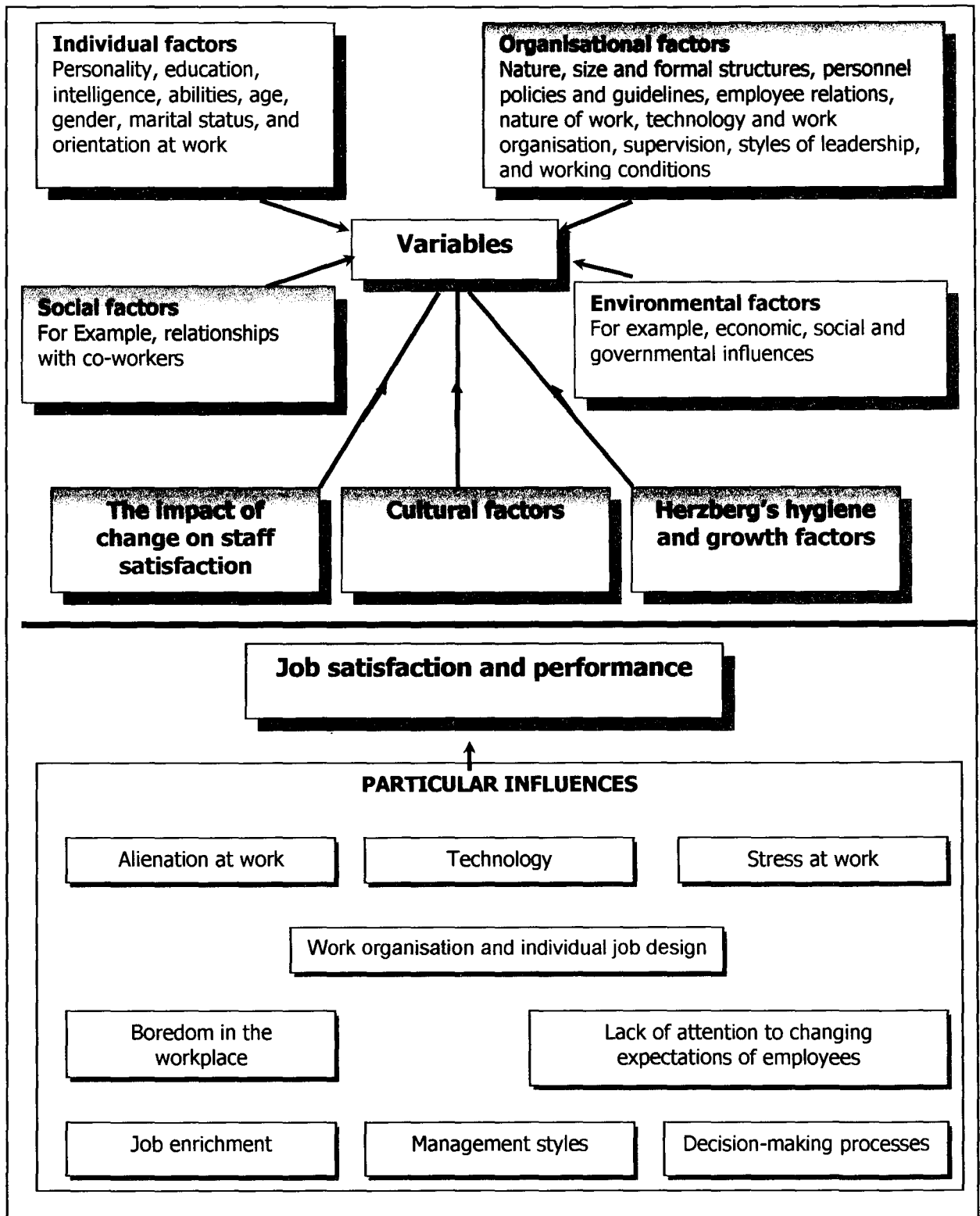
Higher education as a service organisation is not unlike other organisations. It is equally challenged by problems of low staff motivation, where staff lack a continuous but vital stream of recognition and support to stay inspired and content with their work (Joubert & Noah 2000:18), in addition to providing satisfactory service to the clients (customers and students). This kind of support has become imperative for the improvement of service that organisations and staff offer to the clients (customers and students). Furthermore it has become particularly necessary in the current problematic environments that transformation has created for organisations not to turn a blind eye to the myriad problems which undoubtedly distract them from focussing on their daily work.

With this in mind, it is therefore not out of context to dedicate the following sections to the different dimensions and variables of staff satisfaction, as well as factors related to staff satisfaction in organisations in general and in higher education, particularly in a time of higher education transformation in South Africa.

### **3.2 DIMENSIONS AND VARIABLES OF STAFF SATISFACTION**

As a point of departure in this chapter Mullins (1999)'s framework for the study of staff satisfaction was used. This framework shows different dimensions and variables of staff satisfaction. These aspects of the framework should, however, not be regarded as ends in themselves, since there are other perspectives from which this subject/concept of staff satisfaction may be approached. Other factors, which also influence staff satisfaction, will be discussed in depth in ensuing sections.

Figure 3.1 is an adapted framework for the study of staff satisfaction in a general organisational setup.



Source: Adapted from Mullins 1999:633

**Figure 3.1: A framework for the study of staff satisfaction**

From this figure it can be inferred that staff satisfaction is affected by a wide range of dimensions, namely individual, organisational, social, environmental and cultural factors and several particular influences above. The impact of these factors on staff satisfaction will be explicated in the ensuing deliberations.

### **3.2.1 Individual factors**

Any person's individual status or position within an organisation and in life in general is responsible for the way he/she feels about life in general, as well as about his/her work. His/her personality influences his/her general outlook on things and on work in particular (Mullins 1999). The absence of a fit/match between one's personality and one's career may work as a source of conflicts and therefore dissatisfaction. In addition to all these the level of education and intellect coupled with one's knowledge and competencies about the job plays an incisive role towards influencing one's ability to carry out the job at hand. This also applies to one's feelings, attitude and perceptions. Mullins (1999) furthermore asserts that the marital status or even the age of a staff member can play a significant role towards his/her work satisfaction within a given organisation.

### **3.2.2 Organisational factors**

All organisational types have several unique factors which are responsible for the way staff feel in the workplace. Firstly, the nature and formal structure of an organisation determine how open or closed organisations are to externally visioned change factors and they furthermore determine the extent to which the same organisations and their staff interact with these outside forces. Most organisations are never completely closed or completely open (Basson *et al.* 1991:599); hence the constant demands for accountability from stakeholders, clients, government and the servers. For most staff this

accountability is seen as a sign of infringement upon their sphere of functionality and thus arouses fears with regard to a loss of freedom, initiative and individualism.

Secondly, the size of an organisation is also meaningful to staff. Organisations that are too big often bestow equally huge demands upon their staff members, creating huge loads of work that staff can hardly finish efficiently (Boddy 2001:8). Sometimes staff find themselves working long hours because of the massive demands, and these in turn expose them to stress.

Thirdly, organisations furthermore pose challenges through their policies and policy guidelines with which staff must align. In some cases these may be unrealistic and insensitive to the needs and the capabilities of the staff concerned, creating feelings of despair, incompetence and animosity. It is these kinds of encumbrances that commonly render organisations fragile and unsustainable.

Lastly, the nature and demands of work are also important aspects within organisations that determine how staff perceive their jobs. Job demands that are congruent with staff capabilities and needs are easily accomplished. Some jobs, although congruent with staff needs and capabilities, are of such a nature that they pose danger and risk to staff. The high crime rate experienced in South Africa, for example, naturally has a negative effect on police and army officials who, against all odds, still struggle to execute their duties effectively (Van Niekerk & Prins 2000:145). Matters surrounding the police are aggravated by the common underresourcing, undertraining, ill-equipping and underpayment – factors likely to lower their satisfaction (*Sunday Times* of 1998:7). Nurses and mineworkers are another group of workers whose working conditions are likely to decrease their satisfaction. Nowadays nurses work in critical care units and must assist patients with life-

threatening diseases such as the Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (Tlaba 2000). Although only a few professions have been touched upon here, nearly all professionals have some risk attached to them.

Regardless of all these factors, it is always gratifying for staff to see that their leaders/managers monitor work and give recognition to staff's efforts. Good working conditions are in general prerequisites for harmonious working relationships and for sustainable staff motivation.

### **3.2.3 Social factors**

It is important for staff to develop relationships and establish particular social connections (Barnard 1991:415). To staff, these relationships are priceless, as they provide grounds within which they can conveniently function. Barnard (1991) argues that these group dynamics do not only provide comfort zones for staff, but they also provide special norms for determining their conduct in the work place.

### **3.2.4 Environmental factors**

A range of environmental factors of economic, social, technical and governmental origin have a certain impact on staff. Changes in an organisation's environment such as a decrease in resources or funding, changing social values and demands, and government intervention can act as major sources of organisational conflict. If staff for example must deliver their services in the absence of teaching equipment due to financial restrictions, such staff will undoubtedly become frustrated and demotivated to pursue their duties. Monyooe (1999:73) says it is impossible for staff to operate "in an environment devoid of adequate resources".

### 3.2.5 Cultural factors

Cultural satisfaction is underpinned in the ideologies and underlying beliefs, attitudes and values of different staff. This is a problematic factor, since people seldom have similar ideologies. In South Africa cultural problems are also likely to evolve from language barriers that could arise from the use of 11 official languages. The conflict only adds to the problems of staff and consequently of organisations involved. Although it is natural and acceptable for colleagues not to see eye to eye on all issues, differences of opinion sometimes become ground for conflict, especially if such differences give rise to ill feelings and grudges (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998:111).

Although the model according to Mullins (1999) (*vide* Figure 3.1) seems all-encompassing, it is worth noting that these foregoing aspects are not the only sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction at work. Other factors/forces such as change and its challenges also play an incisive role in this regard.

### 3.2.6 The impact of change on staff satisfaction

In recent years "radical changes have been occurring in all parts of commerce, industry and public services" (Graham & Bennett 1992:140), with an astoundingly rapid rate of technical innovation setting in to produce new materials, new methods and new products, particularly in commerce and industry. Clearly, organisations had to adapt more rapidly to the changing and the emerging environments (Weber 1999:17) at the advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in time to come. Change is seen as a serious threat (*vide* 2.2.7.2) in organisations for the following reasons, namely that it:

- increases the complexity of the work situation;
- causes redundancy of work for some staff;



- results in changing roles of employers from the known to the unknown, which may be overwhelming (Powell 2001; Fourie & Alt 2000);
- means demotion for some people;
- means redeployment or relocation for other staff members;
- means that some staff members are retrenched (De Ruyter & Burgess 2000:216);
- means there is a need for employees to acquire more and new skills (Powell 2001);
- means that staff is faced with new diverse situations; and
- increases fears and insecurities of workers.

All of these might be perceived by staff as sources for demotivation and hence dissatisfaction. This is because changing work situations are usually treated with animosity by staff who find it hard to notice the prospects brought about by novel situations, but who only judge change as a factor that complicates their normal work schedules. They see change as a burdensome aspect "distracting from the real business" (Gosling & D' Andrea 2001:10), involving a shift in roles, places of work and even shifts from old, obsolete, but maybe easier to execute skills, to the acquisition of more, new and maybe advanced ones. In McDougall's opinion (2000:243) staff often resist general education innovations, expressing such sentiments as: "If it ain't broke don't fix it". Such staff do not see the value of change and only regard it as a worthless endeavour intended to harass them. They find themselves bound within the mutant organisations, which function in the wake of change forces. The same forces which unfortunately add to the problems that the different organisations already have because of the kind of variance brought about by innovations. This modification further poses additional threats, insecurities, "unnerving uncertainty" (Henschel 2001:1; Knight & Trowler 2001:20-21) and burdensome challenges for staff.

Mullins (1999) in his school of thought adopted a more general outlook on staff satisfaction and the factors which have an influence on satisfaction. His theory of knowledge enfolds Howarth's (1984) and Graham and Bennett's (1992) speculations on factors which influence staff satisfaction. This implies that a similar line of thinking has influenced all these authors, although Mullins looks at the factors influencing satisfaction in a broader manner. He pinpoints individual, organisational, social, environmental and cultural factors as overarching factors, whereas the other authors deal with specific factors which are implied in Mullins's general factors.

It seems as if there is no one comprehensive theory which explains staff satisfaction (*vide* 2.2.7.1) and more so that a search for one theory of satisfaction is just another "endless quest for the 'Holy Grail' in organisational theory" (Handy as cited in Mullins 1999:414). The factors mentioned above are therefore not ends in themselves and other important schools of thought do indeed exist. Herzberg (1992) in his hygiene and motivation theory, for example, regards the presence of two types of factors, namely, the hygiene and the growth factors (motivators) as the most important dimensions of staff satisfaction.

### **3.2.7 Hygiene factors**

Herzberg's hygiene factors are those factors directly linked to the job context and the job environment - they are intrinsic to the job itself (Mullins 1999:421). Workers usually experience feelings of dissatisfaction if the conditions of work such as remuneration, job security, level and quality of supervision, company policy and administration, as well as interpersonal relationships among staff are not "conducive" (Henschel 2001:1). Among all these factors, staff usually regard remuneration and the rewarding system of an organisation as issues of high priority.

### 3.2.7.1 *Remuneration*

"Staff, especially talented young people, are attracted by significantly higher salaries offered by private or even state-owned industrial or business enterprises" (Krasniewski & Woznicki 2000:512). Although it is common nowadays that "people want to be paid – a lot – for anything that they do for an organisation" (Lakhani 2001:4), salary is seldom seen as a factor that improves staff satisfaction. Gellerman's view (1994:4) on this assertion is that money is not the best motivator, although employers sometimes use it for that purpose. According to Lakhani (2001:4) it is patently silly to equate human effort with monetary equivalents or to try and associate the meaning of work for employees with money. This author warns that money does not have meaning in and of itself, but work does. Thus it is important to note that staff seek meaning in their work; they want work that offers "satisfaction" (Lakhani 2001:4). However, even with this notion that money is not the best motivator, Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1994:148) reckon that "a proper allocation of rewards can influence both performance and satisfaction", with an increase in rewards implying increase in staff satisfaction. Mullins (1999:4) also advises that remuneration should as far as possible satisfy both the employer and the employee and that it should encourage keenness by rewarding well-directed effort, while exercising great caution.

Organisations are warned, however, not to overrate staff, thereby overpaying them in the process (Gellerman 1994:4). Van der Westhuizen (1991b:69), in support of Gellerman (1994), says that staff should as far as possible be rewarded only according to services they have rendered and that the rewarding system should take place in such a way as to satisfy both the employer and the employee. This same author warns, however, that rewards should take into account not only the cost of living, but should also serve to motivate and boost the morale of staff, who oftentimes regard a good

remuneration and rewarding system as factors awarding a certain degree of job security.

### **3.2.7.2 Job security**

It is unpleasant for academics to find themselves working in environments devoid of certainty, since they may "lose faith and confidence" (Monyooe 1999:73) in their workplace and only work for the sake of working. Unfortunately this present time - the time of major changes and transformation - is riddled with uncertainty, since change itself is an uncertain issue. Graham and Bennett (1992:140) endorse this allegation by adding that change "increases fears and insecurities for workers" (*vide* 3.4). Henschel (2001) and Knight and Trowler (2001) also maintain that today's organisations, which are in a state of constant evolution and mutation, vary greatly from the traditional organisations to which staff have become accustomed. As a result such organisations no longer provide a sense of "homeliness" and security for them. For example, "many organisations can no longer guarantee long-term employment" (Oss 2001:6) for staff, and therefore most staff have a perception that "jobs are becoming less secure" (De Ruyter & Burgess 2000:215).

Staff interpret their job security in many different ways, depending on circumstances that prevail in their working lives at different times. De Ruyter and Burgess (2000:216), moot that "job security can be interpreted at a number of different levels" as outlined below:

- The probability of a job loss.
- The probability of a loss of income.
- The probability of a loss of satisfaction.
- The probability of a successful job search and income/satisfaction maintenance.

It is the nature of changes that occur in organisations today that renders staff prey to such mixed feelings as expounded in the foregoing paragraph. Whilst some organisations are absorbed in the major reshuffling of staff, some are busy retrenching them and some go bankrupt for a variety of reasons. It would evidently be unrealistic to expect staff to feel secure under such circumstances. It would be equally unreasonable to expect their satisfaction to remain unchanged. In addition to lowering staff satisfaction, job insecurity "may be a cumulative stressor, increasing its effects over time" (Burchell 1999:437). In this way, too, job security becomes a dissatisfier, since it was explained in the preceding section (*vide* 2.4.2.6) that stress is one of the factors that influences staff satisfaction.

Since change and transformation seem inevitable for all organisations, these aspects (change and transformation) must not be observed as spelling doom for staff, but as necessary interventions which should form part and parcel of all organisational activities. Serious attempts should be made to assure staff of their job security and protection. The provision of permanent jobs as opposed to contract employment and temporary jobs which are becoming common world-wide, though "poorly compensated" (Benjamin 2000:8), could do the trick. The success of such intervention strategies will depend greatly on the supervisory acumen, the level, and the quality of supervision given by individual organisations.

### **3.2.7.3 Supervision**

The art of supervision is not at all different from that of management, as similar styles and approaches are often engaged in supervision and management. Supervisors can be autocratic, democratic or *laissez-faire* (Botes 1994:22) in their supervisory duties. The autocratic supervisor demands and expects obedience, applies sanctions, and instils fear. He/she

often has a high turnover of personnel since he/she is more of a slave-driver than a good supervisor. The democratic supervisor encourages participation by co-workers in planning and decision-making (Botes 1994) while the *laissez-faire* supervisor exercises little or no authority over his/her subordinates although he/she relies greatly on their capabilities for the organisation's success.

Staff satisfaction is greatly influenced by the kind of supervision that staff receive at the workplace. Whilst the democratic supervisor enhances staff's satisfaction through involving staff in both organisational and individual decisions, the autocratic and the *laissez-faire* supervisors are bound to have staff who are filled with fear or who are too relaxed. Such staff may experience dissatisfaction roused by fear or too much laxity. According to Botes (1994) the "surly, abrupt supervisor can cause his workers also to be grim and rigid, intolerant with each other, and both irritating and irritable". On the other hand, however, having a jovial eternal clown as a supervisor can be detrimental to the well-fare of the organisation as this might cause laziness, absenteeism, laxity and chat clubs in the workplace.

Since supervision entails taking care of staff, enabling them to function comfortably and effectively (Petters 1979:34), supervisors must be cautious not to follow in the steps of either the autocratic or the *laissez-faire* supervisors. They should, however, in addition to encouraging active participation, strive to create a favourable management climate and an environment for their staff to thrive in. Moreover, as part of their strategy they should on behalf of the staff strive for better remuneration, higher status for them, better qualifications and better goal achievement (Petters 1979:34; Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer 1999), as well as fair administration of and a clear company policy.

#### **3.2.7.4 Institutional policy for administration**

Although company policy has a guiding role to pursue (Van der Westhuizen 1991b:150), it is often viewed as a challenge by staff, who in most cases fail to see its development and implementation as interactive (Newton 2000:154), but as clearly defined endpoints. Newton (2000) upholds that staff perceive policy as a big challenge for the following reasons:

- It is usually developed without their involvement, hence the alienation and the detachment from it.
- Policy implementation and administration are always done at a different level from its development.
- A gap usually exists between what is designed into policy and the situational factors which prevent it from being achieved.

It has also become apparent that it is not only the planning and the implementation of a policy that can evoke feelings of dissatisfaction in the work place – commonly through disengagement of staff (Harvey & Knight 1996:109). Even the nature of policy that any particular organisation may adopt, can have detrimental effects on staff motivation, e.g. a lack of clarity on how staff should execute their work and a lack of relevance of policy are other factors which can frustrate staff (Syptak *et al.* 1999). Whilst it is vital for any organisation to set intervention strategies to support its staff by developing relevant policies for structuring, planning, organising and evaluating all staff activities at all levels, most companies lack such formalised structures (Katz 2001:5).

Sometimes company policy becomes a problem to staff because its demands are unclear (NRF 2001:6) and staff fail to attain company goals, missing out on self-fulfilment of their jobs.

These factors, in addition to acting as barriers for the implementation and administration of policy, also leave a negative imprint on staff whose support of policy is highly sought by all organisations.

Since it matters "how policy is received and decoded" (Newton 2000:154) by staff, it is imperative then to focus on what staff think and do, what meanings they attach to the different facets of policy and how they tackle these different facets of the policy, both as individuals and as a group (Trowler as cited in Newton 2000:162).

### **3.2.7.5 *Interpersonal relationships***

All organisations thrive on teamwork rather than on individual effort. Hall (1980:36) argues that a person's ability to demonstrate his competence and capabilities depends on other people. Syptak, Marsland and Ulmer (1999:27) allude to this argument by adding that social interaction among staff - even during lunch or at shorter breaks - can culminate in the development of good fellowship and teamwork. Even if this is the case, group dynamics and interpersonal relationships may sometimes prove detrimental (spoil the satisfaction of members) where the "group members may be in conflict" (Erasmus, Van Wyk & Schenk 1998:88) with one another. The problem in this regard is that "when colleagues who do not see eye to eye are forced to work together, the results can be damaging for all concerned. Generally the ensuing atmosphere is such that you can cut the tension with a knife, and nobody in the office is immune to its effects" (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998:114). Lack of cooperation and strained relationships result in a "mutinous atmosphere" whereby staff are not enthusiastic about their jobs. This situation has a crippling effect on the general morale and the satisfaction of staff. Undoubtedly, the other side of the coin should consist of staff who cooperate and who are keen on building healthy relationships. This situation should enhance staff morale and lead to improved staff satisfaction.



According to various authors (Truell, Price & Joyner 1998; Liacqua & Schumacher 1995; Maidani 1991; Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer 1999; Tuten & August 1998; James 1999) Herzberg's theory also includes, in addition to the above-mentioned hygiene factors, a range of growth factors or motivators which are responsible for bringing in feelings of satisfaction amongst staff.

### **3.2.8 Growth factors**

Herzberg's theory posits that staff draw a significant degree of satisfaction from the job itself - the nature of work that they are normally faced with as well as the degree of responsibility attached to the job. They are usually pleased by their ability to achieve and to accomplish allotted responsibilities with the realisation that their employers acknowledge their efforts, by giving recognition and proper remuneration. The underlying principle for this theory implies that a job that offers enough opportunities for growth and job advancement and that offers enough space for creativity and expression is a good source of satisfaction (Tuten & August 1998:553).

#### **3.2.8.1 *Career pathing and job advancement***

Staff in all organisations must follow certain "career trajectories to get to the top of their profession" (Birnbaum & Umbach 2001:203). Although the researcher does not set out to outline those paths in this study, it is still important to note the impact/influence that career pathing can have on staff satisfaction. "Since it sometimes involves job change, it may have both positive and negative effects" (Black & Loughhead 1990a:4-5) on the staff concerned and on the way they feel about their jobs.

On the positive side, career pathing presents "personal growth, satisfaction, innovation, enhanced overall well-being and greater economic returns" (Black

& Loughead 1990a) for staff and organisations respectively. It creates exciting opportunities and enhances professional growth as well. In addition, it improves self-esteem, personal fulfilment and intrinsic job satisfaction by lowering stress symptoms in staff. Whether arranged or fortuitous (Black & Loughead 1990b: 14), career opportunities are worthwhile aspects of the life of any employee. The importance of presenting opportunities for advancement to a hierarchically higher position, movement to a different department at the same hierarchical level or movement to a position of greater centrality within a department at the same hierarchical level (Carroll 1991:427) does not render career pathing free of prejudice. The job change entailed in it may be "tumultuous, [and] distressful" to staff, and may "adversely affect the quality" of their lives (Black & Loughead 1990a:4-5).

"Sometimes the career structure within organisations does not guarantee the transition" (Romanin & Over 1993:427) from lower to higher and better positions. Sometimes opportunities are available for a few people only and maybe for members of groups that have been traditionally marginalised (Birnbaum & Umbach 2001:214) or "barriers exist for career entry, retention and advancement" (Romanin & Over 1993:413). Sometimes it may also take too much time for one to realise his/her career dreams. Regardless of the good intentions, conflicts and alienation may result in cases where career opportunities are reserved for certain groups of workers only. Furthermore, if only a few opportunities exist, then staff may engage in negative competition and struggle for the few job opportunities. This negative competition has a great potential of spoiling relationships amongst staff, creating "a chilly climate" in the workplace. Sometimes this form of competition leads to increased staff turnover and most commonly the departing employees do not feel the work is contributing to their experience or career paths (Fontyn 2001a: 40).

The length of time spent on a particular job before there is any recognition of staff achievement and mobility yields a loss of career path certainties (Bourgeois, Duke, Guyot & Merrill 1999:14), hence it is also bound to frustrate staff. All in all, the negative effects of career pathing "cause great upheaval" among staff. They are disquieting, anxiety producing, disorientating and can lead to feelings of isolation and abandonment (Black & Loughhead 1990a: 4-5). An important caveat to take heed of is that other factors such as gender also play an incisive role in career pathing.

### **3.2.8.2 *Career pathing and gender stereotyping***

For women the career path is seldom a smooth one because of the different roles which often interfere with their careers, for example work and family roles. "Family responsibilities may disrupt the careers of many women during their advancement along the administrative career path" (Finkel & Olswang as cited in Birnbaum & Umbach 2001:214). Oftentimes women have to disrupt their own careers to raise children and to follow their husbands (Romanin & Over 1993) when they change jobs. In effect, they assist their spouses to realise their career dreams at the expense of their own.

Sometimes women's career pathing is made difficult by a range of discriminatory attitudes and practices (Alexander 2001:150) by the management, particularly in a male-dominated workplace. The "gentlemen's club" management style (Alexander 2001:150) common in most institutions exerts an invisible force which in the long run convinces female staff that they are not competent enough to go beyond the glass ceiling that most institutions create for women. According to Alexander (2001:150) this "glass ceiling is often used by management as a barrier to prevent women from gaining access to more senior roles in their organisations". It blocks women's aspirations, allowing them to visualise where they might go, but intentionally inhibiting them from reaching the intended destination. According to Takalo

(2001:1), there is an obvious lack of women in top decision-making and influential positions and structures in higher education. There is a massive gender imbalance in positions such as chancellors, vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors and even members of bodies such as the Council and the Senate.

It is important to note that even though men and women differ in career paths (Romanin & Over 1993:426), women sometimes have themselves to blame for their delayed progression. Romanin and Over (1993) moot that sometimes women have less confidence than men and as a result they do not utilise all their career opportunities maximally. In many instances, however, women are exposed to their "fiercest critics" (Alexander 2001:153) who turn out to be "other women". Alexander accuses women of blocking one another's career paths by not supporting one another in the workplace for fear of competition. This author calls this problem the "queen bee" syndrome, a case where the exceptional woman is content to remain the only female member of higher echelons. In a case like this, as well as others already expounded upon in the preceding expositions, the general staff satisfaction is affected adversely.

### **3.3 FACTORS RELATED TO STAFF SATISFACTION**

In addition to the dimensions and variables mentioned in the foregoing deliberation, there are other factors (*vide* Figure 3.1), which have an influence on staff in organisations generally. Although these factors are likely to be found as part of the dimensions already expounded earlier they will be discussed in more detail in this section.

For organisations to keep in step with the rapidly changing world in which they find themselves compelled to function, it is necessary that they take

cognisance of these different organisational factors - whether "social, economic, political and technological" (Howarth 1984:3) - surrounding them. This approach is inevitably imperative, as factors such as these affect the attitudes of the two most important groups of people upon which organisations rely for their advancement and sustainability, namely the workers and the clients.

### **3.3.1 Lack of attention to changing expectations of employees**

Organisations are also compelled to keep pace with the changing expectations of their employees. Contrary to this, however, there seems to be a good deal of silence within organisations, which do not seem to worry much about how change impacts on staff and their satisfaction. This silence does not at all imply tranquility for organisations which are subsequently experiencing grave problems with their staff about the way they feel about their work; how they are being managed; and therefore how they serve their clients or perform (Howarth 1984:3). Howarth (1984) posits that, in most cases, staff feel bored - particularly if they feel the job does not meet their needs, but rather that it carries less responsibility than they would like to manage and if work offers staff no sense of achievement, allowing very little scope for further development of skills, advancement or promotion.

### **3.3.2 Boredom in the workplace**

Most workers try to do their jobs well, especially if such jobs interest them and award them enough scope to use and develop their abilities and experiences; to meet challenges; as well as to take responsibility and advance their careers. Rees (1991:126-127) reiterates that if "academics are left to fill jobs that do not utilise their potential maximally, they often get bored and under-utilised with the more routine aspects of the job".

It is equally crucial to staff to see of how much value their own decisions are awarded by their managers, especially decisions of much importance, those driving important organisational changes and those concerning staff and their lives at the work place. Apart from this recognition for participation, workers often feel demotivated and lost if no one acknowledges their achievements (Fisher 1999). A lack of recognition denies staff an important opportunity to know whether they are achieving the goals of the organisation. It is this kind of environment that denies staff any opportunities for self-expression and that gives way to a waste of their abilities. Such staff then lack the zest to do their jobs particularly well and they choose to do only what is required by their jobs and nothing extra (Hay, Fourie & Hay 2001). In these instances satisfaction is denied for both staff and customers/clients. The managers/leaders who bear the responsibility for this kind of organisation, also fall prey to and experience dissatisfaction, since the goals which were set are either not achieved or productivity becomes minimal. Since such encounters are common at all levels of work and in all spheres of work, notwithstanding the form of the organisation, what remains the biggest dilemma for management is to put up strategies to rejuvenate the staff and thus prevent them from getting bored with their work.

A general saying by Howarth (1984:5) is that bored people build bad cars, make unhelpful shop assistants, as well as unresponsive local and central government officials. In the same way bored academics make bad facilitators who may not be keen to or may be unable to guide and respond to the needs of the learners.

Staff do not only signal boredom if no attention is given, but sometimes they harbour ill feelings and frustrations which, according to Howarth (1984), usually can be discerned as defiance, irrational pay claims, apathy, strikes and other forms of industrial actions. Ill feelings may also manifest themselves in passiveness on the part of staff who feel that no-one cares or appreciates

how they feel or think. Moreover, bored staff often opt for other means of dealing with their problems and adjusting to unpleasant work conditions. In most cases staff try to avoid these unfavourable conditions, whereas in other cases they avoid work itself (Strauss & Sayles 1972:36). Strauss and Sayles (1972) reiterate that boredom resulting from these unfavourable conditions results in absenteeism, stress, ill health, frequent visits to the doctor, excessive time spent in the washroom, alcoholism and even high turnover. These factors are a clear sign of staff dissatisfaction.

Feelings of dissatisfaction are not only associated with the job itself as espoused above, but also with the way people are managed. Many managers have a tendency of denying their staff the opportunities for involvement in decision-making, i.e. to take control over matters and actions that involve and affect them directly.

### **3.3.3 Decision-making processes**

It is common for employees to "feel aggrieved and frustrated if they are not represented in the decision-making process which directly affects them" (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998:112), especially when important organisational decisions have to be made. Monyooe (1999:26), in support of this assertion, warns that staff should not be "displaced or marginalised from [the] locus of decision-making". Vroom (1967:115) also believes that there is considerable evidence that the satisfaction of subordinates is positively associated with the degree to which they are permitted an opportunity to participate in making decisions.

Even for those organisations which do recognise the value of involving staff in decision-making, it oftentimes happens that decisions are top-down rather than bottom-up. Unfortunately, the perceptions of staff towards this managerialist top-down approach in decision-making are bound to result in

tensions across the institutions. This tendency often divides staff into those who support the management and acknowledge the need for imposed changes; into those who may set their faces against the management; and those regarded as instruments of management (Latchem & Morant as cited in Greyling 2001:6). Moreover, the tendency in most organisations is that, instead of decisions being "based on direct analysis and judgement of human need" (Winter 1995:131), they are usually based on the needs of the organisations concerned. Since this form of decision-making does not actively involve staff but excludes them from this important process and is focussed on organisational rather than staff needs, feelings of discontentment and dissatisfaction are usually triggered among staff (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998), sometimes even alienating them from their jobs (Mullins 1999:632).

### **3.3.4 Alienation at work**

Many organisations have become places for factors which cause staff to develop feelings of frustration and alienation. Mullins (1999:635) describes work alienation as detachment from one's work, resulting from the employer's selfish pursuit of profit whereby unfair labour practices and divisions, exploitation of workers and the general denial of workers to express themselves are employed. This is a major drawback at work and particularly to job performance, as it separates workers from their jobs and from the product of their work. For this reason jobs fail to provide staff with satisfying experiences.

Another perspective views work alienation as a source of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. These denote a lack of control, an inability to see the purpose of work, neither belonging to any group nor being guided by any group norms (Mullins 1999) and complete failure to see work as an end in itself. In the current changing higher



education picture where several change factors, for example technology and the demands of the labour market - to name but a few - place a major impact on institutions, there is a very high potential for staff to feel powerless, isolated and estranged from their core mission.

### **3.3.5 Technology**

Technology is seen as an important tool for revolutionising organisations. Mullins (1999:36) draws our attention to its nature as one important factor affecting the satisfaction of workers. This author relates technology to the physical aspects of machines, equipment, processes and work layout, as well as the actual methods, systems and procedures that staff must follow in carrying out their tasks. It is for these reasons that technology is perceived as a contributory factor towards modifying the general organisational climate and the behaviour of employees (Mitchell 1999).

A clear link is identified between technology and the satisfaction of people at work. Mullins (1999:636) says that "the impact of information technology can also have a significant influence on job satisfaction" through its numerous demands - demands of new work patterns, the nature and content of individual tasks, the function and structure of work groups, the nature of supervision, and many more. These demands may prove even more overwhelming (Powell 2001:3) for older staff who may feel threatened by the pressures to respond to technological change by acquiring new skills. This is because older staff may not have been exposed to the use of technology before and may for example feel threatened by this innovation because of their total "inability to interface with basic information technology systems" (Vinassa 2001:30).

In general, technology is a major force and a cause for radical changes and developments within an organisational setting. Inasmuch as it has countless

benefits, to embrace it without enough prior preparation, training and retraining for those who must engage in it may only result in "technophobic" (Hellmut as cited in Mokhethi 2001:7) and stressful staff.

### 3.3.6 Stress

It appears without a shadow of doubt that stress is also one of the major factors which influences staff satisfaction. In the work place "stress may be caused by the problems inherent in a particular job, or by a mismatch between [the] abilities of an individual and the requirements of a job or a combination of the two" (Rees 1991:139). Mullins (1999:637) supports this view through the results of a survey that was done in the mid-nineties in London into the attitudes of working people towards work. In this study a random sample of 1000 workers, not from any particular organisation, was asked to spell out the major cause of their problems at work. According to their responses, stress was rated second after remuneration. Coxon (2001) furnishes another example that can be used to portray the intensity of stress in places of work with findings from a research done at a university in the south-east of London where a certain employee - who is a second-year lecturer - reckons he works more than 60 hours a week and is stressed and overworked with administrative duties and meetings.

Stress is seen as a complex and dynamic aspect arising from a myriad of influences on a person's behaviour and also having the potential to evoke many behavioural reactions and problems. Even though many bad things can be associated with work-related stress, oftentimes stress can be a positive, creative and motivating force (Nienaber & Van den Berg 1991:185) and, to a certain degree, is regarded as essential, mainly for the enhancement and "promotion of high level performance" (Mullins 1999:636). On the other hand, feelings of disappointment, boredom, anxiety, depression, anger, hostility, inadequacy, frustration and low tolerance are some of the negative

manifestations of stress. Stress also "manifests itself in increased absenteeism, job turnover, lower productivity and mistakes" (Rue & Byars 1992:413). Its potential dangers to staff and to the work place in general should not be regarded as insignificant. Hence organisations should make efforts to re-organise and design the jobs of the staff in such a way that they do not exert too much pressure on them.

### **3.3.7 Work organisation and job design**

Job design is defined by Mullins (1999:640) as the relationship between workers and the nature and content of jobs, in addition to their task functions. Its role is to meet people's personal and social needs at the workplace through re-organisation and restructuring of their tasks. Carell, Elbert, Hatfield, Grobler, Marx and Van der Schyf (1999:109) reiterate that job design involves the "manipulation of the content, functions and relationships of jobs in a way that both accomplishes organisational purposes and satisfies personal needs of individual" staff members. Work re-organisation and job design are not simple activities to pursue; if misappropriated they can lead to a mismatch between the staff and the job (Rees 1991:125). This usually ends with failure by staff to deliver their services and, ultimately, this leads to anxiety and a loss of will to continue working.

Although it can be "quite disastrous to design a job and then assume that people will be available to fill vacancies" (Rees 1991), job design has the potential to enhance the personal satisfaction that staff draw from their work. It can also help organisations make the best use of people as a valuable human resource of the organisation by overcoming obstacles which function counter to effective performance. Individual job redesign involves rotating people within the organisation to different roles in an attempt to increase variety and avoid inertia. This rotation can contribute to the development of

an improved self-image (Marx, Van Rooyen, Bosch & Reynders 1998:498) as well as staff satisfaction. It relieves monotony and boredom. Furthermore it involves job enlargement, which implies that the scope of the job and the range of tasks that individuals are usually busy with, are increased, adding some variance and keeping staff more industrious.

Another important factor of job redesign is job enrichment, a form of staff development involving motivating, increasing responsibilities and involvement, giving recognition and availing opportunities for further development and advancement to the employees. Job enrichment is perceived as a means to titillate the intrinsic satisfaction of staff (Mullins 1999), especially if relevant programmes are used to support it.

### **3.3.8 Job enrichment**

This follows the same principle as the job enrichment in individual job redesign, although, in addition to improving intrinsic motivation, it deals with five core job dimensions which are essential for enrichment (Mullins 1999). These are skills variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, all of which are imperative for making work a meaningful endeavour that creates opportunities for staff to give value to and to know the outcomes of their work activities.

According to Mullins (1999:645) it appears that "restructuring the nature of work itself, and providing job enrichment by making it more interesting and challenging, does increase job satisfaction" immensely.

According to Marx *et al.* (1998:498) job enrichment should help prevent boredom, frustration, unnecessary mistakes and a high labour turnover by making employees more motivated. Even though job enrichment has such an impact on staff satisfaction, these authors warn organisations to take great

care not to overburden employees with activities which they cannot easily complete since this incorrect application can lead to adverse consequences for staff, their satisfaction and for the organisation and its viability. Fisher (1999:10), in support of this view, aptly observes that "reality has caught up to the rhetoric and is killing the spirit of workers who are given greater accountability with less power".

It is important to note that job enrichment is not the only factor that enhances staff satisfaction; several other factors affect the motivation of staff. These are related to job content: a sense of achievement; recognition and appraisal; authority and responsibility; growth; advancement and self-development; and the nature of work itself (Herzberg 1992). Other factors are contextual: organisational policy and administration; interpersonal relationships; security and effect on personal life; status; work conditions; salary; and supervision. The problem with these factors is that if they "are allowed to deteriorate in any way, a climate of dissatisfaction and tension, frustration and friction will prevail" (Mullins 1999). Unfortunately this may ultimately become the culture of an institution, creating further problems for institutional managers and leaders, demanding that they become dynamic in managing the different cultural prototypes that are likely to emerge within their organisations.

### **3.3.9 Management styles**

Another equally important and influential factor for staff satisfaction is the style that the organisational managers engage with in their organisations. Mullins (1999:649) suggests that, at the very core of improving the quality of work, should be a participative, open style of management involving employees in decisions that affect them, as it is possible that a lack of job satisfaction and unhappiness at work may also arise from problems connected with managers. This same author reckons it is imperative for managers to

develop relationships that are based on trust with all the members of their organisations. He advises that they should at all times strive to earn the respect of their subordinates, as this is bound to engender high worker satisfaction. Rees (1991: 87-88) advises that managers need to match their style of management to the situations at hand rather than to depend on "the autocratic styles of the past periods, which may often have been appropriate then," but "are often less acceptable today". In the same way managers need not adopt the *laissez-faire* style, since this could produce workers that are too relaxed and excessive relaxation can easily turn into demotivation and lowered satisfaction.

Both the autocratic and the *laissez-faire* management styles are sure to be met with animosity and alienation from contemporary staff who, because of the kind of transformation they find themselves faced with, need "transformational" (Middlehurst 1993:34; Monyooe 1999:70) and innovative leaders and managers. According to Middlehurst (1993) and Monyooe (1999) transformational leadership goes beyond meeting the basic needs of followers for security or recognition and beyond base emotions such as fear, jealousy or greed. Instead, it entails leaders and followers raising one another's motivation through change of individual behaviour and aspirations. It further entails that such leaders are futuristic, visionary, charismatic, perceptive, stimulating and empathetic.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

Although Mullins's work on staff issues has provided a framework for this chapter, it is not only from the works of a single theorist that studies of satisfaction may depart. Other theorists such as Maslow, Adefefer, McClelland, Porter, Howler, Adams, Locker, Heider and Kelly (in Mullins 1999:415) and Vroom (1967) also provided their own theories of work motivation which -

according to Mullins - are not conclusive, even though they provide a useful framework.

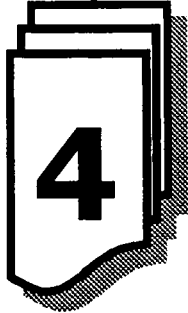
However, it does not matter whose theory is the best. What matters, is that if the factors which affect staff satisfaction are not taken seriously but are mismanaged, they can stand out like cataracts in the light of institutional progress and success. A general trend is that staff, in trying to cope with the demands imposed by unfulfilling job situations, tend to resort to the use of the biological "fight and flight" response caused by the oversecretion of certain bio-organic substances. This naturally assists man to defend him or herself by fighting or running away from problems in times of emergencies. This biological substance causes staff to react to challenging and awkward or situations perceived to be dangerous in ways in which they would otherwise not venture into in their state of sobriety. Rabichund and Cilliers (2001:29-30) allege that "fight" reactions manifest in aggression against self and colleagues, envy, jealousy, competition, elimination, boycotting, rivalry and sometimes fighting, whereas "flight" reactions manifest in avoidance of others, own work, threatening and challenging situations, negative feelings and irrationality - all of which are certainly reactions symbolising dissatisfaction.

In the next section the researcher establishes through an extensive literature review whether the inferences espoused in this chapter can remain valid in the ever-evolving field of higher education. This thought was provoked by the fact that organisations, regardless of nature, have some important resemblances. They function on the basis of objectives and are marked by the existence of people (staff) who execute certain activities for the welfare of consumers (clients). The Centre for Science Development (CSD) (as cited in Fourie 1996:114) illuminates that this resemblance exists in the assimilation and use by institutions of higher education, of industrial and business concepts like strategic planning, quality control, performance indicators and

management by objectives. Although commonalties are identifiable in all organisations, great caution will be exercised not to make generalisations but to take heed of the fact that virtually every organisational context has its own unique attributes and follows its own patterns of organisation.



*Chapter*



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## **FACTORS INFLUENCING STAFF SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focussed on the factors existing within a general organisational setting and how such factors impact on employee satisfaction. In this chapter, the researcher engages in an extensive literature review to identify specific factors influencing the satisfaction of academic staff in higher education. As she progresses through the literature the researcher takes a conscious decision as to whether the inferences made in the previous chapter remain valid for the higher education sector.

In order to determine the satisfaction of academics working in radically and perpetually changing work environments, particularly higher education, a careful examination and a critical analysis of the factors that have been responsible for influencing and shaping the roles of academic staff will be

made. The conditions of work, as well as the perceptions and attitudes of academics, will also be examined. The argument will involve tracing the trends as far back as the genesis of universities. Then a critical analysis of both the external and internal factors that are believed to have an influence on the working lives of academics is made.

## **4.2 THE TRADITIONAL AND THE CONTEMPORARY STAFF'S RESPONSE TO CHANGE**

In the early society of the 1800s changes were very rare. People's behaviour was controlled more by tradition than by change. There was no need to tell man what to do, since all that man had to do was to follow patterns laid down by his ancestors (Strauss & Sayles 1972:6). This meant that man had the liberty to do things out of his own initiative and terms of conduct were never formally dictated to staff. Hence they had a certain degree of satisfaction. The academic world appropriately terms this academic freedom and autonomy (Perkin 1997). This is unlike today's higher education institutions where - even with a list of set ground rules, regulations and supervision - managers still have to follow workers around very closely to motivate them to do work. This drift has turned and still continues to turn change into a challenge for all organisations and a threat for personnel (Kerr 2000). Higher education is no exception to this trend, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is because contemporary changes in higher education are more complex than they were decades ago and, unfortunately, they constantly and violently mould the roles of academics, thereby gradually diminishing their academic freedom as well.

Historical perspectives that outline the development of the university form the basis of the discussions that follow. This approach is deemed relevant for this study because "the resolution of tensions and conflicts between the orthodox patterns of university organisation and demands for innovation impinge

directly" (Meek 2001:6) on all current university structures – staff and students included.

### **4.3 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITIES AND THE EVOLVING ROLE OF ACADEMICS**

In this section the researcher sets out to delineate the chronological events, change driving forces, and the changing roles of academics from the genesis of universities to this post-modern period as factors which have presumably influenced staff satisfaction. Emphasis is placed on the effect of the historical developments on academic staff satisfaction.

In the beginning universities did not exist free of challenges; they were still highly troubled, but by changes of different nature from what is the norm today (Weber 1999:5). They developed in due course as a result of the forces demanding change. Barnett (1990) maintains that the entire idea of the university has undergone considerable development and transition.

Following below is an outline of some of the major stages of change through which universities have developed. Inherent to these stages are the reasons for the changes and the concomitant effect that these laid on academic staff and staff satisfaction.

- Medieval world order for the élite.
- The rise of the cosmopolitan European universities, which aimed at destroying the medieval world order university.
- The "nationalisation" of the university by the emerging nation states of the religious wars.
- Revival of the university after the French revolution and its increasingly important role in industrial society.

- The migration of the universities to the non-European World and its adaptation to the needs of developing societies and the anti-colonial reaction.
- The transition from élite to mass higher education (Higgs 1991:164), the land-grant idea of the university (Spanier 1999); and the role of the university and its off-shoots in post-industrial society, which still exists to the present day (Perkin 1997:1-4).

### **4.3.1 The medieval European university**

The medieval European university, a school of higher learning that combined teaching and scholarship, was highly characterised by its large measure of corporate autonomy and academic freedom for both learners and staff (Barnett 1990). These elements have lived through times and survived down to the present day amidst varied problems and challenges.

This university had as its main reason for existence serving the advanced civilisations of that time by training the bureaucracies of the church and the state, i.e. the priests, rulers, military and other service élite (Perkin 1997:3). This mode of university catered for insignificant numbers of élitist students; hence the problems of overcrowded lecture rooms such as those we experience today did not exist for the masters (academics). Delanty (2001:30) gives another important feature of medieval universities as places where people were grouped together for the pursuit of knowledge. Interestingly, in some universities the distinction between the teacher and the student did not exist. An example in this regard is the medieval university of Bologna. This meant that staff and students worked more as partners in education, having respect for each other's freedom and probably a reasonable degree of satisfaction.

In those days students would come to sit at the feet of great masters such as William of Champeaux, Hugh of St. Victor, John of Salisbury and Peter Abelard. These masters were highly regarded by their students. Abelard was the most pronounced of these, as he was responsible for transforming and increasing an understanding of the visible world of men, living and non-living things – the world of science into the academic field (Perkin 1997:5). However, the main role of the masters was to teach high culture, doctrine, literary and mathematical skills with little room for questioning or analysis (Perkin 1997) by their students. Presumably this factor awarded the masters absolute autonomy and authority over their students, a potential source for satisfaction for the masters but not for the students.

This form of pedagogy - which allowed little room for critique, however - lacked continuity and could not last long, as free "speculative thought and the challenge to authority" (Perkin 1997) became prevalent among students who felt they were oppressed. This resulted in the fragmentation of the university, which then rapidly spread to other parts of the world.

Paris and Bologna as the first fully-fledged universities in Europe also possessed unique attributes. Paris had its privileges determined by the Pope and, at a later stage, by the French King. This "royal and papal patronage was an essential element that protected the scholars from the overbearing Cathedral Chancellor and the hostile citizenry of Paris" (Perkin 1997:6). It is clearly reflected in this foregoing assertion that this university of Paris was not at peace. How then could the masters be satisfied under such circumstances?

The Paris University changed and began to take corporate forms. During this period masters and students organised themselves against the clergy, citizens and sometimes against one another. Later on, these groups elected a single rector (a young master) who became the head of the university. This young

master had multiple roles to pursue - the role of managing/leading, that of teaching and that of learning, as he was also a student at the same time. Even in universities today, academics still face the problems of multiple roles, role conflict and even role overload – aspects which leave most academics stressed and dissatisfied.

The University of Bologna had its main reason of existence as addressing the demand for state lawyers and administrators. Like Paris, Bologna had a plethora of problems with its townsfolk and, as a result, this impelled students to organise themselves into “guilds” to offer one another mutual protection and to oppose their professors (Perkin 1997:7). It is evident then that academics in this Bolognian university age functioned in conditions that were far from being ideal for the pursuance of truth and knowledge - hence it is very unlikely that they were content with their jobs.

Another complicating factor that evolved in this university was the concession of powers and equal rights to the students by the city authorities. Although this was a well-meant endeavour, it became a powerful tool that students used to impose “draconian discipline” upon their teachers, fining them for not adhering to certain expectations, for example, arriving late to lectures, finishing late, not finishing the syllabi and even leaving the city without their permission. Undoubtedly, this remarkable situation denied the professors not only their academic freedom, but also their human rights (Perkin 1997).

Although the medieval university seemed to possess a certain degree of autonomy and freedom, Altbach (2001a:2) argues that this academic freedom has always been a contested terrain. He claims that professors sought, with limited success, to carve out a sphere of academic freedom, struggling against both the church and the state from time to time. Altbach (2001a) further moots that struggles for academic freedom ensued, following the Protestant Reformation. Academics in Germany stood up against Hitler, who

ultimately destroyed academic freedom by closing down universities during the revolution and the Nazi period (Delanty 2001:30). It was around the same time that Lenin and Stalin also interfered with and destroyed the academic freedom of the professorate in universities of the Soviet Union, whilst in the United States, academic freedom was profoundly jeopardised by the First World War. The fact that in the modern university academic freedom still lives, shows that academics in these countries were not satisfied with its abolishment; the reason why they incessantly struggled to have it installed back in the university.

According to Perkin (1997) the two ancient collegiate universities – the Oxford and Cambridge - were established in 1167 and 1209 respectively in emulation of the Bolognian University. Although students in Bologna and Paris were assumed to enjoy the scholastic approach of these universities which invoked judgemental and critical analytical skills, unrests in France forced fragmentations and a migration of those English students who wanted peace and tranquility to the newly formed Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

Although Oxford and Cambridge are still considered the world's best universities, they have - just like other universities - been affected by change and transformation (Delanty 2001). At the beginning their main mission was to develop the intellectual character of the élite, encouraging disputes between realism and nominalism, scholasticism and humanism. However, as time passed, these universities had to accommodate the research component with the emergence of the research university. The role of the academic cadre expanded with the introduction of the research component in the mission of these two European universities. Undoubtedly this approach to engage in research brought benefits to the universities by making them leading universities in science and technology. The stakeholders also stood to benefit in this arrangement, even though for academics it meant more work.

At the beginning academics at Oxford and Cambridge enjoyed the benefits and reputation of being the world-class universities, since these universities embodied their traditional ideals as selective élite institutions with close teacher-student contact monopolising higher education for more than seven decades (Hostaker 2001). Palfreyman (2001) points out that this status has since changed and that it is now becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff because of deteriorating working conditions, as well as insufficient academic remuneration and benefits.

### **4.3.2 The Humboldtian University**

The German model of professional organisation (university) founded by Willem Von Humboldt focussed solely on research and training (Thorens 1996:268) in response to the needs of the societies, mainly those that arose from the impact of the industrial revolution (Mitchell 1999:19). It included in its curriculum the vocational aspect, which the academics of the time or (masters as they were called) did not receive with joy, as they felt this was against the principles of liberal education and required that they acquire a different nature of skills to educate the learners.

The university had as its basis the "idea of autonomy of knowledge" (Delanty 2001:22). It also functioned on the basis of the ideal of the unity of teaching and research, which encouraged the distribution of opportunities and duties evenly among academic staff, expecting all academics to contribute to the development of their institutions by engaging in research (Askling cited in Hostaker 2001). Altbach (2001a: 2) asserts that academic freedom in this university "meant the freedom of the professor to teach, do research, and publish without fetters in his field of expertise" – which he could only exercise in the classroom and the laboratory. This freedom was not absolute, as the professors could neither extend it to the public terrain, nor could they speak out freely and give critique on topics outside their scholarly fields.



### 4.3.3 The land-grant university

Change and transformation are factors which seem to have existed since the inception of the university, surviving generations. According to Pister (1999:230) universities changed form and mission and were compelled to modify their ways in line with the changing nature of societal needs and objectives. The various problems impacting on the society impelled institutions to redirect their focus towards helping the masses of the people (Spanier 1999). The land-grant university was then born, and this is a particular manifestation of universities in the United States of America today.

Change driving forces of the post-revolution period included broadening access for the masses, nationalisation, adaptation to societal needs and anti-colonialism reactions, as well as demands of the industrial world for the expansion of university service by "establishing schools of engineering" (Mitchell 1999:19). Some of these factors which became possible through the vision of a renowned, self-taught but highly fore-sighted scholar, Senator Justin Morrill, were not received with joy by the then academe. Instead they raised questions about the purpose of higher education as provided by universities. The élitists worried about the changing identity of universities and the possible loss of autonomy. In addition, these new demands invoked resistance among and "disputation in many societies" (Bourgeois *et al.* 1999:20) as well as by people who saw too much variance brought into higher education to interfere with the aims and methods of liberal education.

The fact that the land-grant university was committed to the development of economically diverse, open and intellectually strong societies by serving the educational needs of both the traditional resident élitist and non-traditional middle-class off-campus learners through resident instruction and cooperative extension and public service or outreach programmes, meant that academics

had to be prepared to teach in both formal and non-formal settings (Ellerbrock & Norton 2000). Another interesting scenario is that the university was no longer known as a teaching and learning enterprise only, but an integration of teaching/learning, research and service as was determined by the idea of the land-grant university. Even though this approach stood to benefit both the communities (by empowering them) and the institutions (by earning them respect and sustainability) it undoubtedly implied added responsibilities for academe who had to involve in research and service as well as focus on critical national problems. Another interesting perspective about service provision is that today it has brought universities closer to its stakeholders and for those academic staff who have identified ways to meaningfully interact with the communities, service provision has proven beneficial to both the people concerned and the academics.

#### **4.3.4 The colonialist and the post-colonialist universities**

The expansion of Europe through the conquest and colonisation of other countries had some benefits for the colonised continents and countries. In these colonies the idea of a university was initially a far-fetched one, but their colonisation by the Western World brought with it benefits such as the establishment of higher education. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the university spread into Spain, then from the 17<sup>th</sup> century it spread to English and French colonies in North America and later on to India, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, China, Japan and the Middle East (Perkin 1997). The evolution of the university in these colonies became an instrument of nationalisation and modernisation based on Western principles. Universities were, however, still accountable to the colonist countries who prescribed what needed to be taught and how it was supposed to be taught.

Unquestionably this domination, which is still reflected by the presence in the English colonies of huge stone buildings such as those found in Cambridge

and Oxford today, was not received with joy by the academics. The fact that universities such as London played a mother-hen role where colonial universities were concerned - particularly in Africa, India and the West Indies - denied institutions and academic staff the free pursuit of truth and knowledge which, according to Thorens (1996), requires independence of mind, autonomy and freedom. These factors could be singled out as possible sources of dissatisfaction among academics of that time. Not only was the academic cadre dissatisfied, but students also expressed actions of dissatisfaction. This was reflected in students' unrest and anti-colonial reactions that emerged within the colonial universities against the Western domination. This state of affairs could also have acted as a source for dissatisfaction among academics who had to work in institutions that were in constant turmoil.

The post-colonisation period in the different countries was marked by a major shift in the history of higher education, which entailed that different countries - even the Third World countries - had to control their own universities. According to Thorens (1996) they had to be cautious in adapting the so-called "western university" to fit the local, cultural and social, and the economic contexts of their countries. Academic staff had to see their universities through this development. This was never an easy task for the then academe, since the idea of a university is in itself a "Western idea". In addition, the developing countries suffered limitations of resources and large numbers of students to mention only a few drawbacks. For academics to try and uphold the high level of research and teaching as was, and still is the case in the European universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, was a mammoth task. Thorens (1996) claims that this expectation overburdened academic staff with work that they could not effectively achieve. Surely this frustrated staff, leading to their dissatisfaction.

When one looks at the way universities have changed over time it is not surprising then that our present higher education is subject to a legion of change elements, some of which are just an inherited tradition which has lasted from the commencement of the university to the present day. Several authors accede to this statement. Casazza (2002) claims that "universities have witnessed a period of development and growth, and these landmarks erected a climate for change which expanded the earlier purpose of higher education". James (cited in Fourie 1996:106) in support of the same posit names the following three sets of forces as additional factors that have, over the years, contributed to the revolutionary change in higher education. They are namely the uncontrollable explosion of knowledge which, according to Fourie (1996:113), has been "gaining momentum since the middle of the past century"; increasing technological complexity; and the realisation by governments that higher education should contribute to the economic, political and social development of countries. In addition to these forces, universities were shaped by their own responses to the problems that they found themselves forced to confront.

Notwithstanding the cause for these above-mentioned changes, it must be noted that, as the change forces mercilessly rocked the universities in different parts of the world, academic staff in these universities, who during the origin of the university belonged to the élite, were eventually forced to do away with their past élitist ways and adopt roles which had a more people-oriented approach. Kogan *et al.* (1994:13) give a practical example of the German professorate who had firmly belonged to the élite, upper middle class and who had preserved privileges and status until only recently, when they were forced to change. They had to change because their system, which had for a long time been striving to retain its traditional forms, eventually changed as drastically as any other university in the world.

The historical exposition made in the foregoing deliberation illuminates that the predicaments of staff started way back during the genesis of universities.

The Carnegie Council on Higher Education, cited in Pister (1999:229) explicitly sums up the foregoing perspectives by saying: "Universities in the past have been remarkable for their historic continuity, and we expect the same characteristic in the future. They have experienced wars, revolutions, depressions and industrial transformations, and have come out less changed than almost any other segment of their societies".

The same motion could be adopted by academics to stay motivated amidst the torrential course of change in higher education today. Academics need to take a more creative approach to redefine their work roles (McInnis 2000:151) and smoothly fit them within the activity of change to find solutions that sustain the primary sources of work satisfaction that best promote quality amidst the current higher education imperatives posed by change.

#### **4.4 CURRENT CHALLENGES AND REFORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The challenges for higher education institutions are now more varied and intense than in the past as became clear in the preceding discussions (*vide* 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4) and the stakes seem to be higher. Although higher education has had much to preserve, much has changed in terms of the roles of academics and the role of the university. Change has been and continues to be highly complicated to the working lives of the academics, although higher education is dependent on their impetus to propel it forward and in the right direction (Green & Hayward 1997:50). Staff as an important component within transforming higher education institutions are trusted to possess this

impetus to propel higher education in the right direction amidst the rapidly accelerating rhythm of change. The following questions therefore need to be asked: Are academics truly on top of what is happening regarding change (Katz 2001:1)? Are they still able to pursue their duties with certainty? Can they cope within the social, psychological, ecological, economic, geographic and political and intellectual arenas in these times of turbulence?

It is worth noting that the issue of the transformation of higher education is not peculiar to any one country. Nearly all countries of the world have experienced the wave of change as they developed new forms of higher education to keep in step with the changing economic, social and educational needs in particular and to offer access to a wider range of students as well as teachers (Pratt 2000:1).

Higher education institutions find themselves in a situation where they are forced to change owing to several and diverse factors which may originate from both their external and internal environments. Innovation ranks very high and more firmly on the higher education agenda (Hannan & Silver 2000:6). According to Pister (1999:232) universities need to be sensitive to external factors such as the global economy, post-industrial society, the information age and many other factors if they are to continue to meet the needs of the society. These change elements seemingly continue to change both in form and scope, forcing these institutions to be more versatile.

According to Graham and Bennett (1992:140) there is usually a widespread tendency for university staff to resist change, for the simple reason that change can prove to be both an interesting and a scary factor (Karlin 2000). Maybe it is because change as a lived experience is usually strongly embedded in history; it is strongly attached to the indelible ways and methods of dealing with one's work and all these are part of the troubles which counter the well-meant efforts for change. For humankind to break

such tightly secured ties which are known by heart, deeply rooted in their selfhood, and easily recited, for purposes of replacement with the unknown future is not always an easy practice, unless carefully pre-thought and refined ways of introducing change have been implemented. People need to be made to realise that no disequilibrium will arise in their working lives as a result of new developments. Green and Hayward (1997:6) refer to this factor as the principle of fear of the unknown according to which people are always jubilantly talking about the "*status quo*" of things, i.e. the way things are and not the way they will be in the future that is dreaded so much.

One must realise that the pervasiveness of change impels higher education leaders not to impose it, but to introduce it in such a way that people appreciate its necessity, "embrace it and share the vision of the appropriateness of the change" (Green & Hayward 1997:50). This suggests that people at whom change is aimed, should undergo a major reform in their beliefs and values so that they themselves become the supporters, drivers and implementers of change and not passive victims, opposers and recipients of changing policies and pressures.

It is regarded vital to understand the constraints within different work situations and how these may affect staff, rather than being under the disguise of pursuing own agendas, ideas and values. It is equally important that leaders are not blinded by the need to see their organisations revolutionise in the shortest span of time, at the same time performing maximally by using of subtle pressures. This approach in effect manipulates the feelings of the staff concerned and instead turns them into anti-change agents.

Moreover, it is important to appreciate that change is not always desirable, regardless of the benefits it may be rich with. Green and Hayward (1997:6) warn the pioneers of change of the dangers of pursuing change for its own

sake, as this can be as harmful as resisting it. Green and Hayward (1997:6) argue that "stasis is not possible" in the era that we now live in, as institutions cannot insulate themselves against the forces of change that bear down powerfully on them.

In the following sections the researcher will take a closer look at the different factors brought about by change (both external and internal) which have an impact on academic staff satisfaction.

#### **4.5 THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL FACTORS ON ACADEMIC STAFF SATISFACTION**

Most of what goes on within many institutions is a culmination of externally visioned factors. Likewise academic staff satisfaction in higher education is to a great extent also a culmination of externally engineered factors. The following are some of the important factors permeating the open structure of higher education institutions from the outside world which have a profound impact on the way academics perceive their academic roles:

- Government policy imperatives (Green & Hayward 1997; Winter 1995).
- The labour market demands (Meade 1997).
- The demands of the parents and the students (Green & Hayward 1997).
- Demands for improved quality and development of institutional quality assurance structures and systems (Harvey & Green 1993; Weller & McElwee 1997).
- Technological demands (McClenney 2001; Mitchell 1999).
- Global and international demands (Van Damme 2001; Dahlberg, Connell & Landrum 2001).
- Research – a shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge production (Nowotny, Scott & Gibbons 2001; Jacob 2000b).



The resultant influence radiated by these factors does not make things any easier for higher education institutions. The varied demands they have are turning organisational change and transformation into an unnerving, unsettling, traumatic and overwhelming endeavour to all stakeholders in higher education, leaders and staff alike. Perhaps it is the entire scope and the parameters (Eckel *et al.* 2001:5), the reforms that institutions must engage in, the intensity (force) of change, the demands (depth and breadth), and the acceleration with which they must be met which scare both the employers and the employees. Perhaps it is probably just the persistent nature of change and its lack of predictability that affect the attitudes of these people.

The enormity of these aspects and their unimaginable effects (Eckel *et al.* 2001; Green & Hayward 1997) cause one to wonder how academics can cope with these outrageous demands. It is not surprising that, in trying to live up to such demands, staff often identify or develop several coping mechanisms – resistance, compliance, etc. However, the initial reactions are usually those of fear, rebellion and then maybe with time, some understanding.

One of the commonest change factors that affect the satisfaction of staff is the government policy and, although it may be viewed by universities as “intrusive”, it is imperative for them to remember their original mission and to preserve it as they have managed over the years. It has become apparent that universities cannot manage this idea unwatched and unguided, hence the many policies which place upon higher education institutions an impelling need for them to adapt as well as to become more relevant and responsive.

### 4.5.1 Government policy imperatives

In the previous chapter (*vide* 3.2.7.4) policy was dealt with in the context of its guiding role and its administration within companies. Even higher education institutions have their activities guided by policy - they have institutional policy which is developed in alignment with the national policy. Higher education systems in different countries of the world have enjoyed analogous histories in as far as policy reconstruction is concerned and have witnessed university autonomy being eroded by government intervention and interference (Mitchell 1999:21) as some academics may wish to call it. Political leaders have challenged higher education institutions "with a wide range of demands for change - to be accountable, increase access, lower costs, meet national needs, and respond to technological challenges" (Green & Hayward 1997:18). Although some higher education staff may feel antagonised when government introduce accounts of its higher education initiatives by announcing these concerns (Winter 1995:130), governments have a regulative role to play in higher education and, as main actors, they must shape and determine their fate through policy imperatives. The constant demands that governments table with higher education institutions are only tools for ensuring that they engage in accountable activities; that they do not overuse and misuse their autonomies; and celebrate their own satisfaction at the expense of the other stakeholders.

Governments are not only main actors (Enders 2000; Green & Hayward 1997) and policy developers, but also the main funding bodies of higher education. Together with others who pay for education (students and parents) their role is to determine how their money is spent (Altbach 2000a:9). Altbach is, however, of the opinion that this factor interferes with the institutional autonomy regarding decisions about how and where to spend the money. Academics feel that this entailed donor hegemony denies them the

opportunity to prioritise their academic activities, since money is allocated for specific activities from which specific results are expected.

Apart from this streamlining, universities worldwide are facing financial stringencies following cutbacks in government subsidy for higher education. The impact of this on academics is so powerful that they now find themselves faced with a range of challenges of a wider scope. These include:

- A deterioration of academic staff salaries and working conditions (Altbach 2000a:10).
- A change in the roles of academics and the creation of ample time for their primary activities of teaching, research and service.
- An obligation to involve in fund-raising activities and to identify and plan workable turning strategies for their institutions, e.g. to engage in consulting and entrepreneurial activities (Bjarnason 1998:463), as well as to develop proposals to be presented to different donor agencies.

These harsh realities are making it increasingly difficult for academics to see the government for the role that it actually intends playing through policy, namely that of an overseer. Instead it is seen as an adversary of higher education, concerned with limiting autonomy and academic freedom, preventing experimentation through highly centralised rules, and weakening institutions through budgetary cuts (Green & Hayward 1997:18). One other policy initiative, which most governments have over the years been advocating for, is the need for widened access and the massification of higher education. This advocacy has unfortunately sparked fire in higher education and has been met by unsupportive questions such as: "How can restricted, élitist higher education be extended to become open access higher education available to the mass of citizenry without loss in quality" (Ball as cited in Winter 1995:130).

#### 4.5.2 Access and massification

The shift from élite to mass education is one of the factors which governments worldwide have struggled to achieve through policy initiatives. According to Kogan *et al.* (1994:15) government initiatives have indeed attempted to redress and bring the underrepresented groups - women, members of minority groups, and particularly ethnic minorities - into higher education. These authors claim that this initiative has been notable in the USA, in Australia and in some Scandinavian countries where special admission rules, support systems and scholarships aim to address the imbalance in tertiary participation.

It is not rhetoric to assert that the expansion of universities is one marked feature of the present age. Mitchell (1999:22) regards this present status of higher education as a blessing to all those who have stakes in higher education. He is, however, baffled by the fact that people are never enthusiastic about the "gifts of good fortune" such as the growth of universities, in number and size, as well as the internal complexity of the organisation in general. The efforts of higher education to increase access are perceived as a God-given, by Toffler and Wang (2001:4), who regard it as a "great step forward for human race". In contradiction, however, Hauptman (2000:10) has a totally different perspective. He fears that access and mass education have serious implications for the quality of higher education. He alludes to the fact that, "as countries move to a massified system of higher education they will see a decline in both the overall persistence and the quality of the average student as more students enroll than in more élite systems". Undoubtedly, the fall in the quality of higher education will impact negatively on the academic staff whose efforts in the pedagogy will just be a dream.

Moreover, given the massive figures of learners now studying in higher education, the issues of access and massification are no longer viewed as "gifts of grace", as the working horizons of the academic staff in higher education have invariably been remodelled, abruptly changing their roles as well. In the 1960s there were 13 million students in higher education worldwide, whereas in 1991 the figure increased to 65 million and estimates were that in 2000 there would be in the range of 80 million students (Turnerman 1996:20).

These principles of access and mass education have - in addition to evolving unmanageable, overcrowded lecture rooms for staff - further entailed "an increase in the number of higher education students from non-traditional groups" (Milliken & Colohan 2000:540), bringing to higher education a mix of learners with a paramount variance of needs, values, attitudes, learning abilities, cultures and many other aspects. These unfortunately all require the undivided expert attention of the academics, because they magnify their work. "Many academics feel that increase in workloads have [*sic*] generated more stress" on their part whilst at the same time "driving academic quality down" (Milliken & Colohan 2000:545). In addition, increase in the workloads due to access and massification has placed pressures on higher education staff to identify a "new way of mastering the changing conditions" (Teichler 2001:5).

It is necessary not only to look at the one side of the coin that denounces access and massification. It is equally important to also acknowledge the enrichment that both higher education institutions and their academe draw from the new mix and the increasing numbers of students.

For higher education institutions it means more income and therefore a certain degree of financial sustainability. This does not only benefit the institutions concerned, but academics, too, have their gains. The financial

stability of their institutions is in some way a guarantee for their jobs, meaning that staff will draw some satisfaction from this.

The kaleidoscope of students is also a cause for increased variance in the ideas (Goodford 2001:1), thinking and cognitive abilities of students, which should be seen by academic staff as a pedagogic asset, since it enlarges the intellectual pool of ideas, turning their classrooms into rich reservoirs of knowledge.

Although discernable milestones in the implementation of the policy for access and massification are obvious in higher education worldwide, thus far no breakthrough has been made as regards staff access. "In many countries access to higher education has become more equal between genders but the upper reaches of academic appointments remain largely male" (Kogan *et al.* 1994:15) and these elements are still denying higher education the opportunity to fully exploit the skills and talents of all staff, regardless of creed. This inability of higher education to take advantage of the diversity of skills and talents in staff works counter to the recent and intensifying calls by all stakeholders for the improved quality of higher education.

#### **4.5.3 Quality and quality assurance expectations**

In recent years, expressions of dissatisfaction regarding the quality of higher education have become very common (Dunkin & Precians 1992), with some authors such as Lecouteur and Delfabbro (2001:205) blaming this state of affairs on funding cuts, staff reductions and growing emphasis on research, to mention but only a few factors. Regardless of the reasons that may be put forward or the concerns that may be raised as reasonable causes for deteriorating quality, the demands for quality and quality assurance practices and enhancement (SAUVCA 2001:1) have emerged as factors of high priority to all higher education stakeholders. Nearly all South African policies make a

clear reference to the crucial need to enhance, improve and maintain the quality of higher education (RSA DoE 1997; NCHE 1996; CHE 2000a; RSA 1995a; RSA MoE 2001). The need for quality is in effect a government prerogative. This implies that staff have no choice but to comply with the demands for quality.

The pressures exerted on academics for improved quality seem to mount with every passing day, despite the fact that quality itself is open to many controversies. Firstly, quality is an "elusive" (Haworth & Conrad 1997:1) idea which has involved scholars trying hard to conceptualise, improve and evaluate for more than a century. Evidence is displayed by the many publications, papers, books, reports, etc. by many known academics in the field of higher education (Harvey & Green 1993; Weller & McElwee 1997; Meade 1997; Freeland 1991; Becher 1994; Haworth & Conrad 1997; Strydom 1997; Lategan 1997; Muller 1997) and many more.

Secondly, it is still very difficult to define quality and difficult to achieve it. Meade (1997:viii) says quality is a journey. Harvey and Green (1993:9-34) regard quality as the following:

- Excellence.
- Fitness for purpose.
- Transformation.
- A threshold to the attainment of set goals.
- Enhancement of academic ethos in a given situation.
- Fulfilment of the demands and expectations of the stakeholders.

Pirsig, cited in Haworth and Conrad (1997), says: "quality... you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is...[I]f you can't say what quality is, how do you know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes it doesn't exist at all. But for

all practical purposes it does exist... what the hell is quality?" And how are staff expected to achieve it if nobody knows what it is? How are academics expected to travel the journey if nobody knows where its destination lies or whether it exists at all? How do we expect academics to achieve quality when a "common definition" of quality can not be reached (CHE 2000a)? This controversy about what quality is, certainly is a factor of concern for academics who are expected to be at the forefront of all quality and quality assurance activities.

Thirdly, another important question to ask is whose quality should staff consider as their main focus and how. Whose benchmarking standards should academics align their efforts with? These questions become relevant in a sector that is in transition and prone to demands and pressures of different stakeholders and forces. As mentioned in the following sections of this chapter (*vide* 3.5.2.4), higher education is forced to confront globalisation (Eckel 2001:103), internationalisation, technological innovation, and "changing expectations" (Meade 1997:4) and needs of the learners as well as of the labour market. This wide spectrum of stakeholders and pressures as well as the obvious "lack of benchmarking standards" (Toffler & Wang 2001:4) undoubtedly leave academics in a frustrating position. Another interesting factor is the likely tension that might emerge between staff and the demanders of quality education. Academic staff may perceive all the demands for quality as attempts to nullify as well as dissolve their academic freedom.

Quality demands are not only difficult, but are also diverse. Several areas of concern demanding quality exist in higher education, e.g. "quality in curriculum and curriculum design, teaching delivery, learning outcomes" (Meade 1997:3) and the general institutional performance. Moreover, institutions are required to "establish explicit procedures to assure quality of, make improvement to, their education and training programmes" (Williams



2000:524). Under all these circumstances this issue of quality is bound to magnify the workloads of academics.

It is also worth noting that the realities of the "massification of university education" (Hämäläinen & Jakku-Sihvonen 2000:3) already dealt with in section 4.5.1 can not be implemented without "new conceptualisations" (Eckel 2001:104) of quality and the required quality assurance mechanisms, structures and procedures. According to Meade (1997:4), "university teaching and learning need to be transformed in order to accommodate massification". This transformation should include "a stronger emphasis on providing a variety of student learning experiences" (Haworth & Conrad 1997:129) and the development of personalised systems of instruction to enable students of varying abilities to achieve mastery of their subjects through "self-pacing and proctoring". In addition, this transformation must be accompanied by the provision of relevant and adequate resources. Meade (1997) maintains that this transformation must also integrate new technology into the curriculum through the development of innovative teaching strategies. The implications of this kind of paradigm shift on academics are that academics and their institutions must radically revise their traditional understanding of what constitutes quality curriculum design and quality teaching envisaged both internationally and in South Africa today.

Another interesting perspective about quality and quality assurance demands is that, although quality seems to be central to the agendas of practitioners and academics, it brings about a considerable culture change to institutions (Atkinson, McBeeth & Meacham, cited in Tait 1997:1). According to Atkinson, McBeeth and Meacham (cited in Tait 1997), unreasonable demands for quality assurance may diminish certain areas of professional autonomy in the following ways:

- Students being regarded to have an enhanced status as primary consumers.
- Academics being forced to account for all their actions and activities.
- Putting up quality assurance structures and mechanisms is time-consuming, bureaucratic and stifling.
- It can, if abused, be employed as a management weapon to enforce subservience and have the effect of reducing creativity and independent thought, which is thought to be particularly damaging in the educational sphere.

Attempts by higher education institutions to respond to the stakeholder calls for improved quality are becoming increasingly complex. This is because the calls for quality and quality assurance come at a time when higher education institutions must also respond to other change forces such as the rapid acceleration of technological innovations which higher education institutions are impelled to embrace.

#### **4.5.4 Technological impetus**

In the previous chapter (*vide* Section 3.3.5) technology was described both as an important factor for revolutionising organisations, and also as a factor capable of inducing feelings of fear, incompetence and dissatisfaction among workers. Higher education institutions are not an exception in this regard. In the same way, as in business and commercial organisations, technology brings to higher education new, massive and threatening demands for staff. McClenney (2001:27) views technology as an aspect that literally transforms the learning and teaching enterprise.

Technology is neither a young nor a novel concept in higher education. During the last three decades a knowledge revolution that centred on dramatic technological advances that are a reason for the current and vastly

accelerated change in higher education (Mitchell 1999:20) was experienced. According to Mitchell (1999) this was preceded by the introduction of vocational courses into universities, a factor which the 19<sup>th</sup> century provosts would never have dreamt, was feasible. The introduction of this vocational aspect did not happen as a matter of choice for universities, but because universities of that particular epoch had to respond to the voracious appetite that the nations had for technologically oriented skills.

This breakthrough has, however, manifested in an ironic situation in which people are heirs to the fine benefits of technology whilst at the same time they must deal with the complications which technology sometimes bears. For academic staff in higher education, technological innovation has provided solutions to some of their pedagogic problems by making worlds of information easily accessible. It is also responsible for splitting the attention of the academics into different roles, for example learning how to appropriately harness information and technology for effective utilisation in teaching and learning (Kaburise 2000:16). In addition, a shift in the role of academics must also be made towards advisory activities, towards being animators, feedback providers and controllers (Teichler 2001:3-4) of machinery.

As the first step into embracing the technological revolution, some academics need to satisfy their need for basic technological literacy by striving to learn new skills for accessing and processing information. Adelman (2001) maintains that there is an enormous amount of knowledge to be unearthed and wisdom to be gained through amassing the available guilds of information technology. On the one hand, some academics need to advance their skills by creating new areas of professional and technical specialisation related to technology itself. In the developing countries an additional trauma for academics is closely related to the obvious massification coupled with underresourcing that institutions face. Higher education faces multifarious

problems in the new age and these problems are more intense in the Third World countries than anywhere else in the world. This is because the growth of higher education is taking place concurrently with the decline in state funding and, at the time, when the challenges of technology, access and the maintenance of quality loom ever larger (Altbach 2000b:4).

This means that it becomes difficult for academics to maximise the use of technology, since facilitation of lessons in overcrowded classes and with limited tools is practically impossible. It is not as simple then as it appears, to fall into the tune of the technological tempo and to keep in step with it - it seems higher education institutions, particularly those in developing countries, together with their staff (academics), must jump several hurdles along this path of innovation. This task is not a simple one for academics to accomplish, since technological innovations are not only voluminous, but they also advance at an alarming pace. For academics to keep in step with this pace whilst at the same time striving to gain mastery of the field of technology and maintain pedagogic effectiveness, will undoubtedly lower their responsiveness to their call as well as their zest to perform their duties (teaching, research and community service).

In addition to all these, academics also encounter problems that are created by their students. Internet, for example - having unlocked a world of information to university students - is sometimes used as a weapon against the well-intended efforts of teachers when, instead of using it to get information, they plagiarise (Tribble 2001:11). This feature frustrates academics who, at the present moment, are not in possession of suitable tools for intervention. The affective impact of these circumstances is without doubt igniting feelings of despair and failure, even to the most innovative, dynamic and competent academics.

Furthermore it is feared that if the demands and possibilities of technology are absolutised as an overarching cultural paradigm, the presence of a technocratic (Mitchell 1999:22) ideology can be established, reducing all human needs and problems into technological needs and problems (Coetzee 1999:37). It is therefore only sensible to propose that technology should not be used as an end to every aspect of life, demeaning the brain powers of academics, but rather "as a means of utilising formative power in the execution of man's cultural mandate" (Lategan as cited in Coetzee 1999).

It is inescapable, however, to cite some attention to the "fruits of joy" which technology bears for academics. This rationale is driven by the truth that staff satisfaction does not only imply dissatisfaction, but could also insinuate increased levels of satisfaction. It is proper then to ask a question like: "How may technological innovation increase the satisfaction of academic staff in higher education?" It is "as plain as day" that it has and will continue to have a profound positive effect both for the staff and the learners even in years to come.

Davidson and Rees-Mogg (cited in De Beer 1999:61) envisage that, at the turn of this young century and in moving towards a holistic approach towards globalisation, the advent of telematics could have a salient impact on the improvement of quality and the lowering of the costs of university education. Obviously this will benefit both the students and the academics whose struggle for quality education has just begun. This struggle will not only ensure learners' employability, but also make them acceptable in the society.

#### **4.5.5 Labour market demands**

There has been a major change in the demands of the labour market on universities. These demands do not only force universities to train learners that are employable. This follows from the premise that universities exist to

train learners for employability, but in addition academics will in the long run be forced to transgress from their traditional utilisation of Mode 1 knowledge production in their research to adopt Mode 2 knowledge production (*vide* 4.5.2). This is because the labour market depends and thrives on knowledge produced in the context of application and is highly shaped by social demands (Gibbons 1994 *et al.*). "The new demand for knowledge in the corporate and other spheres is seen by science policy and education administrators as evidence that universities need to be more oriented towards meeting these challenges" (Jacob 2000b: 140). It is for that reason that the labour market cannot stop making its presence felt in matters of higher education. Employers as stakeholders in higher education possess rights which entitle them to demand that higher education graduates not only have technical, professional or discipline-specific know-how, but that they also have generic and transferable skills (Kogan *et al.* 1994:17). Nowadays employees are challenged to apply reason, answer questions and explore.

It is a paradox though that control over higher education institutions seems to be effectively shifting away academic oligarchy toward greater market and state control, emphasising market concepts like competitiveness, increased productivity, search for market trends and so forth (Enders 2000:6). These are some of the aspects that signal market trends and market-like behaviour that are placing a tremendous impact on academic staff. Although it is inevitable that academics perceive the burning need to create new knowledge and find innovative ways to apply it to the society and the world (Dowling 2001:1), it is equally important that they also make a reorientation of the knowledge production towards comparability with the corporate world, as this could ease the burden of the university on the public purse (Jacob 2000a). Moreover, institutions are becoming more like corporations complete with products and services (Abeles 2001:3). Hence it is even more important for staff to make rapid paradigm shifts. This is, however, a huge demand, particularly as far as academics are concerned, as it entails a major shake up

in their roles, a possible redistribution of responsibilities, workload and role confusion. These are symptoms of change in the work environment in higher education (Johnson 1999:32).

The demands of the markets are inadvertently and rapidly shifting in this information and knowledge era (Clarke & Clegg 1998:31). There is a shift towards situations where a "knowledge base" that provides people with multiple competencies, creative thinking and an increased level of cognitive logic is imperative for producing higher education graduates who are more proactive and less reactive. This may sound an unconstrained activity and yet it demands that those charged with the responsibility to nurture the required workmanship possess the kind of pedagogical adroitness fit to steer these interventions in the right descent. Faced with such enormous challenges and demands, academics are likely to enter into conflict with the labour market.

Luckily, to higher education this demand, namely to train employable learners, is not a burden, since the demand supposedly measures well with its capacity – the fact that higher education is a known pool of intellectuals (academic staff). Thus it has the potency to train the kind of graduates that markets need. Nevertheless, the demands for such training should, of course, prove overwhelming to academic staff, taking into account the kind of paradigm shifts that they must vigorously engage in to keep in step with the changing needs and demands. What makes the new roles of academics rather overwhelming, is the fact that they must adapt from the use of traditional methods of teaching and become accustomed to lecture rooms that are typified by unmanageable and diverse crowds of students, making sure to provide the students with the relevant skills that the world of employment so seek. These skills include cultivating in learners the power to think, communicate, imagine, create things, innovate, criticise and reason, to mention but a few examples (Mitchell 1999:18). On account of this it is

important and imperative for academics to make certain adjustments so as to face these emerging challenges.

According to Kogan *et al.* (1994) and Fourie and Alt (2000), one of the responses towards this challenge will be for staff to engage in a complete reorientation of teaching focus. This implies that academics must acquire appropriate skills and knowledge to deal with complex subject-matter and the professional context in which students will work upon the completion of their studies. This, according to Fourie and Alt's (2000) contentions, must involve mastery of the discourses of conceptualising, planning, and implementing programmes that are market-driven and relevant. For academics in higher education to make such major shifts in the shortest possible time and yet without any form of training or support, is a topsy-turvy process. Winter *et al.* (2000) also fear that once a commercial approach to universities is embarked upon, the true "idea of university" (Barnett 1990:19), the entire pedagogy and the whole concept of the university as the site of learning will be ignored and undermined. These authors further moot that this will endanger the development of the calibre and intellect of students sought. This is not a problem only to the learners and the market place, but it is also a problem to academics who may be expected to make mind shifts in what the university sets out to do.

The whole situation in higher education institutions is proving to be even more complicated, because it is not only clouded with local problems, but also with problems of global qualification.

#### **4.5.6 Globalisation and internationalisation**

Countries are moving from a regulated, monopolistic environment toward an environment that is more open and competitive. They are "changing from a smaller, regional organisation to a much larger, global organisation"



(Dahlberg *et al.* 2001:359). This form of orientation is, however, characterised by serious challenges which, in some cases, yield instability and which carry a wider scope of risks and more inconceivable opportunities for local institutions and staff. Educationists have "come to a point in the historical development of the global university system where universities get more and more into conflict with the consequences and the challenges of internationalisation and globalisation. This conflict manifests itself in various issues and problems" (Van Damme 2001:416).

When it is well managed, globalisation has the potential to create new wealth and opportunity, as well as to pull millions of the world's poorest people out of their poverty and grief (United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development 2000). But, when it is badly managed, it could lead to their further impoverishment. A concern in this regard is whether these poor countries have the capacity to drive globalisation matters into the future. The management of globalisation in higher education is entrusted to academic staff, who must train well-educated graduates who can function successfully in the new global economy. This certainly is a mammoth expectation, taking into consideration that this problem constitutes just a fraction of issues that academics and higher education must simultaneously respond to.

Toffler and Wang (2001:4) cast light onto a different perspective, a factor which also adds to the troubles of higher education academic staff in the global era. They envision globalisation as posing a problem to the work of academics in that it is becoming arduous for them to implement quality control measures, for they lack global educational norms and standards with which to benchmark. Besides the lack of educational norms and standards, academics are confronted with a lack of explicit and coherent strategies both at the national and the institutional level (Van Damme 2001:429) which they can use to ensure the quality of globally accepted standards. To expect academics to design and devise ways in which to measure quality, is certainly

an expansion of the work of academics (Winter *et al.* 2000:291). This renders most of the well-meant efforts of academics in their teaching futile.

It is also worth noting that higher education institutions, being active participants in this field of globalisation, are also shifting their focus from providing a more localised service to becoming more global, and are widening their functional spheres by becoming more glocal (global and local). International trends show that university academics are under increasing pressure to respond to patterns of globalisation and to the changes in the local labour market (Clegg, Konrad & Tan 2000:138). For academics, this pressure implies the introduction of uncertainty, as plentiful risks - enough to make academics "breathless" (Champy 2001:13) - are usually attached to the shift from local to global. It is also true, however, that the whole package of globalisation comprises benefits which are a righteous cause for higher education to celebrate.

It is through globalisation that the flow of technology, knowledge, researchers (Van Damme 2001:421), staff and research findings, people from different spheres of life, values and ideas across boundaries have increased, orchestrating into the function of neoteric teaching some profitable and worthwhile universal notions (Mapesela 2002:13). This aspect enhances the richness of higher education by introducing diversity, although it also has the potential to generate feelings of uncertainty and anxiety among some people who conceive diversity as a "threat" (Mcburnie 2001:12). International students and staff bring into higher education institutions of other countries a cultural mix of values (Goodford 2001), norms and ideologies. Academics are obliged to learn and appreciate the benefits of internationalisation and the new mix of students, regardless of the common negative talks about diversity in higher education which are only filled with contradiction and paradox (Smith & Schonfeld 2000:16). Apparently this factor presents an opportunity

for staff to accrue benefits on the one hand, but, on the other hand, it magnifies the pedagogical scope which academics must deal with.

Since the globalisation of higher education also involves the mobility of professionals across boundaries (Kwiek 2001), the new higher education landscape remains with staff profiles comprising both local and foreign academics. However, given the current status of the economy for most countries and the rate of unemployment, this open boundary concept could easily become a cause for locals to be "globally xenophobic", thereby forcing them to conceive of globalisation as a "threat and a juggernaut rolling inexorably over traditional and local ways" (Mcburnie 2001:12) of doing things.

An interesting argument about global ventures is that they prove to be more worthwhile for the highly developed countries and less worthwhile for the underdeveloped and the developing which still have "pockets full" of local problems (Mapesela 2002). Tait (1997:2) concurs that those wishing to engage in global matters should ensure that "the developments must be home grown, recognising the context" of their application. This means that before academics can think of addressing global matters, they must deal with their rightful responsibility of solving local problems. For some countries it is imperative that higher education uses its power and potential to pursue this important process. It can further be argued that academics, especially those in developing countries, are under the impression that if they do not rush into global matters and join in the global race, they will lag behind and will never catch up with the rest of the world.

It is obvious to all that the future of developing countries, particularly those of Africa, is still densely clouded by problems; hence the impelling need for higher education to focus its undivided attention to the needs of the local inhabitants, the parents and the learners.

#### **4.5.7 The demands of parents and students**

In this new dispensation students and parents, together with the government, are presumably the most important parties contributing to the existence of higher education institutions. This statement is not aimed at demeaning the importance of staff, since the teaching and learning nexus can only be complete with both the students and the academics in the picture. The motion is only made to highlight the need for higher education to satisfy its customers by supplying what meets their expressed preferences (Barrett 2000:203). "In the UK, USA, Continental Europe, Australia and Canada students from Asia exercise a customer's choice of courses, because education has modified to become more of an industry and educational market in an international competitive arena" (Kogan *et al.* 1994:17). Such students are more critical and highly demanding, they are not at all prepared to take less for more pay. They force higher education institutions to adhere without fail to the notions of quality that say quality is "value for money," quality is "excellence" and quality is "fitness for purpose". Students no longer make empty demands, but their views have proven highly valuable and are therefore influencing decision-making within institutions (Harvey & Green as cited in Rowley 1996:171) through students' representative committees.

The impact that this kind of demand has on academics is without question onerous, more so with academics in higher education not being accustomed to customers' critique because of the academic freedom that they have commanded over their duties since the birth of universities. This new form of impingement and dictatorial behaviour by students and parents is certainly a foreign aspect to academics in higher education and is therefore a serious cause for concern.

The market-oriented look on universities as described above, is not a particular feature for Asian students only, but is becoming common, especially in the new face of higher education, where emphasis is shifting towards universities that are becoming more entrepreneurial (*vide* 3.1) due to declines in government subsidies. Evidently, the idea of universities as business enterprises is no longer far-fetched. Thus it is not premature to start aligning our thinking, especially where students and parents are concerned, with the traditional notions of the corporate world which says that "the customer is always right" and the "customer must come first". Sander, Stevenson, King and Coates (2000:310) do not differ in their thinking; they also join in the same conception by suggesting that students must be treated as primary customers who are increasingly growing an awareness of the limitations of their rights to get first-class service. This is, however, regarded as a sorry state of affairs for staff, as it does not only steer accountability, but their academic freedom is also annulled (Kwiek 2001:27).

Another dilemma arises from the fact that the roles of the academics are diverse. Apart from the teaching and research functions, higher education also needs to strengthen, as one of its priorities, the "national identity" of the people of this country by strengthening the country's enterprises, services and infrastructure through the necessary skilling and reskilling (RSA DoE 1997:11) as well as through the provision of "service to the communities" (Higgs 1991:165). Moreover, it owes it to the public – parents and students - to provide quality teaching, geared towards rescuing their countries of the social burdens by solving problems associated with, among other things, the dwindling economies, increased unemployment, crime and disease. All these require that staff read extensively to comprehend the changing needs and also to adapt their teaching strategies and methods to be more responsive to national problems and challenges. The new dimension is forcing academics to make a "major redefinition of their general responsibilities" (Kwiek 2001:27) so that they can incorporate into their daily pedagogic activities

possible skills, processes and solutions. These skills, processes and solutions will presumably aid and enlighten learners on how to solve social problems on their own and how to become better citizens (Higgs 1991:168). For academics this means that they have to become open-minded and they have to envision both current and future societal challenges in order to therefore design and incorporate relevant structures which students can use for finding solutions to problems.

The ability of the academics to take charge of this diversity in their daily programmes without severely constraining and jeopardising their other job expectations, their attitudes and their satisfaction, is an essential element within an institution. Altbach (2000a:9), in substantiation of this perception, says that "the ability of the professorate to control the classroom, the curriculum, and the overall conditions of academic work is being severely constrained by accountability" that they owe to the parents, the learners and the other stakeholders. Even with this perception, accountability should not be seen or viewed by academics as a constraining element if they engage in relevant and adequate market research to identify the needs of their clients.

#### **4.5.8 Research - a shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge production**

As already depicted in Section 4.3.2, the research mission of the academic area has a great potential to solve most of the problems that universities and academic staff face today. Although so invaluable, this aspect (research) has been tampered with, as universities struggled to become responsive and innovative and make attempts to shift to new modes of knowledge production (RSA MoE 2001:56). The research role of academics has broadened profoundly, particularly because of the technological involvement that institutions have currently bought into, innovating most of the teaching and learning enterprise. The implications of this expansion for the workloads of

academic staff are indisputable, given the magnitude of the many tasks that they are confronted with in this innovating higher education dispensation. Academics now need to divide their time among a range of roles, sometimes experiencing a role conflict and ambiguity (Erikson 1999:81) between teaching, research and service, whilst at the same time flowing gracefully with the phenomenal tempo commanded by change.

The contemplation for universities to shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge production has raised questions among most academics. They wonder if the move will not affect their teaching roles by increasing their workload, or whether it will not divert most of their attention from their normal pedagogic activities to engagement in research outside their normal spheres of functionality. It is the nature of Mode 2 knowledge production, its transdisciplinary nature, heterogeneity, enhanced social accountability and demand, expanded quality control system and the knowledge production in the context of application (Gibbons 1998; Jacob 2000b:15-21) that raise questions about whether academics will be able to cope with the demands that it places on them or not.

According to Jacob (2000b), the transdisciplinary nature of Mode 2 knowledge is highly controversial in that it involves the working together of experts in teams to research a certain problem. It also involves an inquiry guided by a specifiable consensus. For academics, this form of involvement may prove tedious, since academics are used to function within a certain specified discipline and for them working independently is a common practice. The academic freedom that academics have enjoyed since the inception of universities, may seem threatened by the demand to work in larger groups and with people from different spheres of work or disciplines. Their freedom may further suffer if they have to depend on the teammates for guidance into research, since inquiries into problems are guided by a specifiable consensus by the team members. Academics have for long highly invested in individual

creativity (Gibbons, Limonges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scoth & Trav 1994:34) which seems to be at risk of eroding.

Another drawback with the transdisciplinary nature of Mode 2 knowledge is that, even though solutions are attained through team effort (by people from different disciplines), they "cannot be easily reduced to disciplinary parts" (Gibbons *et al.* 1994:34) to directly benefit the different disciplines from which the researchers were initially drawn. Although a certain degree of satisfaction may be derived from accomplishing a given research project or solving a certain research problem, academics may be denied satisfaction within their own working spheres. In addition, transdisciplinary knowledge develops its own distinct theoretical structures, research methods and modes of practice. This means that academics who wish to engage in Mode 2 knowledge must first make efforts to become well versed with structures, methods and practices to be employed at a particular time for particular problems. Although it is this dynamism that is sought in higher education today, such adaptability may prove overwhelming to academics who, for long, have been engaged in the more focussed Mode 1 knowledge production.

Unlike in Mode 1 knowledge production where the results of a research project are communicated through reports, articles, publications, or at conferences, Mode 2 results are "communicated to those who have participated as they participate" (Gibbons *et al.* 1994:28-29). This implies that academics will forfeit the publicity that they are used to enjoying through dissemination of research results to their peers in other disciplines, universities, or even other parts of the world. They might through this new approach be denied the satisfaction that they normally draw from research publications – a traditional way that academics have used to gain peer recognition (Weber 1999:10).



Another important factor that could add to the problems of academics is the question of quality control. Whilst quality in Mode 1 is determined mainly through peer review judgements and the number of publications (Gibbons 1998:9) that an individual puts forward, in Mode 2 "quality is determined by a wider set of criteria that reflect the broadening social composition of the review system" (Gibbons 1998). This, according to Gibbons, makes even the simplest sciences or disciplines very difficult because of the wide diversity of reviewers. Academics fear that the quality and control of research results are weakened and lowered. This could become a major drawback, especially with quality in higher education being a highly regarded aspect.

A major challenge for universities and academics is not even the nature of this new research – Mode 2 - but how to accommodate it and its new practices and requirements into the normal functioning of universities without disrupting it. The challenge is how to make Mode 2 knowledge production fit within the roles of the academics without affecting the quality of service they offer their clients – the learners. Gibbons *et al.* (1994) warn that, if academics engage in Mode 2 knowledge production, "they will be out of synch with the existing reward structure of universities" and will not be in line with the idea of "publish or perish" (Gourley as cited in Gibbons *et al.* 1994:34). For academics, an inability to publish could prove detrimental and this could become the source of job uncertainty, especially now that most universities are faced with declines in government funding (Meade 1998:1).

Although the researcher has dwelled on the negative implications of Mode 2 knowledge production, some benefits may be drawn by academics from this form of research. A tacit example is that Mode 2 knowledge is produced in the context of application (Gibbons *et al.* 1994:26; Jacob 2000a:16). This means that the best and most creative research may now be done in the contexts of application and implication in the public places where heterogeneity of knowledge production is exposed, rather than in

autonomous spaces from which all forms of contestation that do not conform to scholarly and scientific practice are usually excluded (Scott 2001:200). This aspect could be employed by academics to the benefit of teaching and the community to provide solutions entangled in these aspects, thus giving more meaning to teaching, to academic staff and to the learners. Academics also need the synergy that is provided by multidisciplinary teams of researchers (Meek 2001:3) - an added advantage towards solving complex problems.

Another benefit can be drawn from the heterogeneity and organisational diversity of participants involved in Mode 2 knowledge production. This feature increases the number of potential sites where knowledge can be created, other than universities and colleges. Moreover, "linking these in a variety of ways - electronically, organisationally, socially, informally" (Gibbons *et al.* 1994:29), as well as developing networks of communication, is bound to increase the morale of staff for networking, which is an invaluable factor in the academic world of work.

#### **4.5.9 Concluding remarks**

The degree of pressure imposed on individual academics by factors originating both in and outside their institutions differs and so does their ability to deal successfully with demands and pressures which are placed on them. A range of external factors, which keep academics disenchanted with their work, formed the theme of the foregoing discussions. The ensuing reflections will focus on factors internal to higher education institutions which also have an affective influence on the perceptions, attitudes and hence the satisfaction of academics. Both external and internal forces cause perturbations in higher education (Green & Hayward 1997).

## **4.6 THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL FACTORS ON ACADEMIC STAFF SATISFACTION**

The discussions thus far clearly indicate that a corpus of factors is responsible for the way staff feel and respond towards their work in higher education. In the previous section, literature that constructs the conceptual framework within which the issues of staff satisfaction in higher education institutions are embedded, was amassed. However, the section dealt specifically with influencing factors which originate from the external environment of higher education institutions.

Academic staff satisfaction is not only prone to influences originating outside the universities, but is also a consequence of factors emanating from within the ambient surroundings. Staff satisfaction is determined to some extent by the external factors and to a greater extent by various internal factors. These will be outlined in the following section and their impact on academics will form the core of the discussion.

### **4.6.1 Academic environment**

It is ironical that, to many academics, the ideal university is a community of scholars supported by a small, largely unseen staff who unobtrusively keep the institution and its services operating (Cardozier 1987:40). This kind of "romanticised" situation, however, never exists anywhere in the world. Modern universities are characterised in many different ways due to a variety of reasons, one reason being that universities are compelled to continuously change (Barnett 1990:33) in order to survive and maintain their continuity. According to Meade (1998:1) the "changing environment of higher education in recent years has produced new pressures and concerns for universities". Since university environments have become highly fluid and dynamic, they have forced people to use many metaphorical expressions to idealise them.

These include expressions such as a university being "a community of scholars", "a power house of society", "an emanation of the state", "a tanker", "the Titanic", as "united only in squabbling over car parking", "an ivory tower", "an assembly of competing tribes" or "a clutch of baronial fiefdoms" (Bourgeois *et al.* 1999:13).

It is not within the context of this study to define all these expressions, but what becomes apparent at first glance, is that the university environment is highly volatile and uncertain; hence the varied ways of reference. It is appropriate then to wonder how it becomes possible for academics to thrive in unstable habitats such as those specified above, particularly when their "evaluation of the work environment manifests" in either "organisational commitment or estrangement to the institution" (Winter *et al.* 2000:283).

Another important factor to ponder is that of quality and quality maintenance, particularly within the notion that university environments are uncertain and highly adaptable. "Nothing is more central to the quality of higher education than working conditions that make teaching and research on campuses a more satisfying career" (Patitu & Tack 1992:6). Any institution's ambience is a contributing factor towards ways in which staff feel towards their work roles. Academics often join institutions with their own expectations of the kind of environments which they hope to find and function within and yet they rarely find the ideal. Platt (2001) alludes to this perception by saying that "people entering the workforce today affirm that they are particularly more keen on the kind of work environment that they are provided with" than even the remuneration they receive. This contention explains why academics sometimes abscond from their jobs purely because their working environments are not ideal. Unwelcoming environments lack the kind of elements that can attract staff to stay in their institutions "as iron fillings are attracted to a magnet" (Middlehurst 1993:10).

In the words of Strydom, Hay and Strydom (2001:55), "people need physical work environments that are conducive to work". These authors argue that staff can be ineffective if financial, physical and learning resources are unavailable or inadequate in an institution. Staff may be rendered ineffective if their academic spheres are constantly challenged by change forces so that they are forced into changing and maybe into reorienting themselves. An example is that of the classical environment created within higher education institutions in response to government advocacy for access and massification (*vide* 4.5.2). This has reduced and continues to reduce the capacity of higher education institutions. Badsha (2000:21) adds: "...this rapid and unplanned growth of the system, without a major injection of additional resources, has sharpened a range of tensions both in the formal teaching and learning arena and in the broader environment of higher education institutions." Henschel (2001:1), in support of this foregoing assertion, maintains that environments need to be welcoming, saying it will be a futile exercise to try and promote the quality of work of academics if their institutions do not promote environments that are conducive for teaching and learning, research and service.

#### **4.6.2 The teaching-learning, research and service nexus**

One of the necessary attributes of higher education worldwide is a balanced teaching, research and service nexus. Education practitioners in higher education believe that, to be a good academic in higher education, one must actively involve in research and be able to discover new corpuses of knowledge, assisting learners to do likewise.

Although at the time of their conception universities prided themselves in the generally accepted notion which embodied the unity of knowledge (Altbach 2001a) wherein the enduring all-encompassing principle of the university was regarded as a unity of research, teaching and service, much has since

changed and controversies have been running in the set of the last millennium that research and community service lag behind in most universities (RSA DoE 1997). In an attempt to bridge the gap, academics have since focussed more attention on research and research output and have neglected or even - in other cases - separated teaching and research (Delanty 2001). This is particularly so in cases where academics have come to see themselves as specialists in research or specialists in teaching rather than specialists in higher education (teaching, researching and giving service). Some cases are not out of choice though, but in most instances it is because of the massive pressures acting on universities and academics that academic roles are changing rapidly. Academics find themselves impelled to do more teaching and teaching of expanded classes with fewer resources and are therefore left with little time to try and balance the teaching-research-service continuum. This imbalance has not only raised questions about the real meaning of higher education, but has also placed academics on a platform of disheartenment with their research being condemned for not being integrated in teaching and not rescuing the deteriorating quality of higher education (Delanty 2001).

Another dilemma for academics is that they are constantly reminded that if they do not publish, they spell doom for their institutions. This controversy undoubtedly serves as a drawback and a source for anxiety among university administrators and academics, particularly where funding is determined by research output and where countries are becoming highly dependent on the competence of academics in higher education to produce learners who can solve the boundless social problems.

Another interesting relationship causing concern in the higher education sphere is the interface between teaching and learning which also seems to be skewed. Again it was during its inception when the university could have lecturers and students collaborate, investigate the truth and generate

knowledge together (Delanty 2001). Then a holistic approach to pedagogy reigned. But today - even with the triad functions of the university having transcended time, history, change and transformation - universities seem to be inclined towards a student-centred praxis and not one that reflects compatibility between academic and learner activities (Kaburise 2000:16). This stance has complicated matters for academic staff by neglecting their concerns, needs and well-being; factors regarded as matters of priority for the development of a working culture at any workplace (Fransman 2001; Harrison 2000).

The calamity in this regard is that institutional atmospheres as well as cultures that are hostile to the academics and are insensitive to their needs and expectations, serve as barriers to efficiency and as sources for lowered staff morale, demotivation and dissatisfaction.

#### **4.6.3 Organisational culture**

In Chapter 3 (*vide* 3.2.5) the researcher highlighted the fact that cultural differences have a profound effect on the satisfaction of employees. Employees draw a certain measure of cultural satisfaction which is underpinned in ideologies and underlying beliefs, attitudes and values. This section will therefore expand on and deal with the organisational culture as a product of the different cultural factors already outlined in section 3.2.5.

Warner and Palfreyman (1996:20) define organisational culture as the way in which things are done within an organisation. Defined more succinctly, it is a conglomeration of rituals, routines, values, myths, artifacts, symbols and norms – the purpose of which is to deliver without question crystal-clear messages about what the traditional members of the organisation reckon acceptable and unacceptable. These presumably also “guide the actions in the organisation” (Beckhard & Pritchard, cited in Hannan & Silver 2000:77).

In order to gain a better understanding of the impact of cultural influences on staff satisfaction, it is imperative and important to look at culture from two different perspectives, namely "the 'etic' (universality) and the 'emic' (individuality) concepts" (Kakai 2000:113). The importance of these perspectives is highly regarded and routinely used by the cross-cultural researchers, who suggest that it is through the identification of these "emics" and "etics" that cultures can become beneficial to academics.

Preserved culture should be seen as an advantage in that it may be used by academics as a powerful tool to enhance the appreciation of history (Kakai 2000:113-114), thereby facilitating their functioning.

Institutions may only try to change their culture if its existence hinders institutional performance. It must be noted therefore that attempts to change culture, even if it is for a good cause "to effect deep and lasting change, is a long term [*sic*] effort" (Birnbaum, cited in Green & Hayward 1997) and for those faced with this task it becomes very laborious. Attempts to change the institutional culture require working within the framework of an already existing culture rather than going to war with it. A different approach may be employed if the existing organisational cultures are the kinds that are embedded in a history that acknowledges certain groups of people (staff or students) only, or if they exhibit what Hannan and Silver (2000:78) refer to as a "phylogenetic inertia". This is a symbol of precipitating from one generation to another and adamantly retaining the cultural heritage that is obtained from the tradition of one particular group. It would seem very much like undermining the potential of higher education if the actions of academics who selfishly want to hold on to their own culture regardless of its implications for the other members of the academe are allowed or justified. This is particularly detrimental if they cling to their own culture for the mere reason that their own culture is the only "coherently and logically built up" (Valenkamp 1999:15), as most academics may think.



Whereas intervention tactics may be well meant and hoped to revolutionise institutional cultures, the members of the different cultures may, on the one hand, receive such encumbrances with enthusiasm whilst, on the other hand, they may be viewed with hostility and skepticism by others. Silver and Hannan (2000:77) also recognise this factor and in response reiterate that culture may evoke mixed, sometimes positive and often strong negative, reactions among staff.

Nonetheless, cultural paradigms are essential components of all organisations; higher education institutions are not an exception in this regard. It is through varied cultural prototypes and "restoration of respect for divergent points of views" (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998:112) evolving from these cultures that institutions, particularly educational institutions, function. "Culture has a visible, practical effect upon organisational performance and individual satisfaction" (Whitehill 1991:41). Whitehill (1991) avers that organisational culture is also essential for organisational effectiveness because institutional members (academics) are intimately guided by the norms, rules and ideologies inherent to these models and, in addition, their perceptions and attitudes are modelled, channelled and expressed more accurately through them.

This synopsis only reveals the significance of culture in the lives of staff with diverse ideas, norms, values and cultures and as a factor salient to their satisfaction. This is supported by research that "heterogeneous groups outperform homogeneous groups on tasks requiring creativity because of the availability of a greater variety of ideas, perspectives, approaches to solving problems. However, holding unique or creative perspectives is not enough to improve solutions. Group members must also be willing to share their novel, controversial or unique ideas" (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade & Neale 1998:753).

Good cultural prototypes need not be tampered with but should be nurtured and allowed to seep through the whole institutional culture in order to be integrated with it. Perhaps this will propagate environments that are free of cultural prejudices and that will encapsulate and nurture the diversity that exists in higher education.

#### **4.6.4 Diversity**

Diversity in its broadest sense leaves higher education institutions with an interesting, but brain-stimulating array of diverse problems, needs, expectations, attitudes, values and cultures. This range of factors have both a direct and an indirect impact on academics. They furthermore influence people positively, enhancing their functionality, and sometimes negatively, hampering progress.

The phenomenon of diversity has won and continues to win attention in higher education institutions worldwide. This is exacerbated by shifts by institutions to become more global and internationalised. The free movement of both professionals and students across countries, which is now becoming common (Kwiek 2001:29), has brought to higher education and academics a rich blend of diverse ideas, knowledge base, values, norms, cultures and ideologies which could prove both highly valuable and challenging (vide 4.5.1.1 & 4.5.1.5). Goodford (2001:2), in support of this assertion, says that diversity in the workplace brings with it a wealth of culture, perspectives and values which could enrich business. If well managed, diversity can promote greater productivity as a result of employee satisfaction (Garell *et al.* Grobler, Marx & Van der Schyf 1999:55). Even so, one wonders if the academic populace is ready, both in mind and in skills, to competently put the benefits of diversity to meaningful use and to meet its complex challenges with dignity.

This section will deal with diversity in as far as it deals with or has a direct or an indirect influence on academic staff. There are various diversity issues that surround higher education institutions worldwide, for example:

- Race (staff and students).
- Language.
- Staff and student numbers.
- Gender.
- Status.
- Interpersonal relationships.
- Culture.
- Age.

Given this wide scope, it is clear that Musil (1997) is right in claiming that, to engage in diversity, is to uncover rather than suppress the massive individualities that exist among people. Paradoxically, it is through uncovering those differences that a new sense of what is held in common emerges. Instead of feigned homogeneity achieved by erasing differences, a far more complex and fluid understanding of areas of commonality is illuminated once differences are fully explored (Musil 1997:206).

The true value of diversity lies in the ability of those involved with it and affected by it to be aware of the unchallenged systems of privilege that each of us relies on and that so often leave others out of the picture (Mitchell 2001:28). It involves true openness and willingness to share positive attributes with other members of staff. Cherishing diversity means having the courage to change behaviours, policies and procedures in ourselves and in our institutions (Mitchell 2001). Platt (2001:315) concurs with this perception and reiterates that the change in demographics provides an important perspective underpinned in diversity, that is, a mix of attitudes and perceptions. However, the researcher believes that benefits can be drawn

from this relationship if academics are ready to quit their traditionally crafted sphere sovereignties and open up so that their counterparts can gain entry and share in their own individual blessings.

#### **4.6.4.1 Diversity of staff and students**

Many benefits can accrue from the diversity of both staff and students within the institution if those involved approach it delicately. This, according to Chatman *et al.* (1998:749) is an important trend because heterogeneity increases the variance in perspectives and approaches that the members of different groups can bring into their work. These authors further find that diversity is an important tool that staff members coming from different backgrounds can utilise to clarify, organise and further combine novel approaches to accomplish their own educational (academic), institutional and even departmental objectives. Moreover, such staff can as one of the benefits of being diverse, make contacts and incorporate new information into decisions, to increase commitment to choices and their responsiveness to the changing institutional environments.

The diversity that we see in all higher education institutions today has indeed opened up new avenues to follow in order to reach diverse storage tanks of knowledge; a new pathway to get to understand one another better; and for the students and the academic staff to benefit from each other. However, diversity has also been responsible for increasing and diversifying the roles (Kaburise 2000:16) of staff so that they must now deal with the diverse problems of students of different age groups and race and take up counselling and mediation roles, especially where cultural clashes arise.

Problems associated with diversity also arise among academics themselves and this is oftentimes reflected as "xenophobia" among local staff towards academics from foreign countries (vide Section 4.5.1.5). The National

Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) (RSA DoE 1996:173) regards this apprehension as a source of destructive conflict between expatriates and locals.

Another example relates to aversion that becomes conspicuous between female and male academic staff as a result of gender stereotyping.

#### **4.6.4.2 *Diversity and gender stereotyping***

Chapter 3 (*vide* Section 3.2.8.2) cast light on career pathing and gender stereotyping as well as conflicts which are often linked with career pathing for women employees. Some of the issues discussed remain valid for women academics in higher education institutions.

Sometimes conflict arises in higher education institutions because of a lack of mutual respect and trust that may exist between academics of different genders, races and ethnic groups. As regards gender, Harper, Baldwin, Gansdneder and Chronister (2001:254) moot that "women are usually slightly less satisfied than men," and, in addition to the problems which they encounter together with men, women are frequently exposed to factors which are unique to them. They are often made to feel undervalued, are underpaid and largely unrecognised for the same work done by their male counterparts (*vide* Section 3.2.8.2). In most cases women academics occupy lower level positions (Vecchio 1988:119). They are usually underrated by men; this possibly emanates from the tradition, especially in the African culture that the place of women is in the house and nowhere else. This is denoted by Naidu (2001:23), who remarks that "women in South Africa would be better off performing their traditional roles in the kitchen and having babies".

Another possibility is that, historically, there were lower expectations for female employment; hence they lacked opportunities. Now that such

opportunities exist for all people regardless of gender, women academics are usually torn between their academic roles and their family duties and, in some cases, they push themselves over the edge to prove to men that they are equally competent. This, in very few cases, pays off; in other cases it becomes a major source for stress, burnout, family conflicts, and sometimes divorce. According to Harper *et al.* (2001:252), many women academics are frustrated by what they see as dead end careers, which do not seem to pave any way for their progression into management positions. This was described in Chapter 3 (*vide* Section 3.2.8.2) as a "glass ceiling" that is usually created intentionally by men through their gentlemen's "club" management styles (Alexander 2001). It should be noted, however, that problems among diverse populations are not only a culmination of conflict in gender, but can also emanate from a wide variety of aspects. A virtuous example is the differences in the value systems of different staff members which often result in value conflicts and which are also a potential source of deteriorating staff satisfaction in higher education.

#### **4.6.4.3 *Conflicts of values in institutions***

In trying to define values in Chapter 2 (*vide* Section 2.2.6), the researcher realised that higher education institutions are characterised by values and expressions of these values which are usually incompatible and contradictory. This is likely to be more pronounced in transforming higher education institutions, resulting in a crisis of values either among staff members, or between staff and their institutions. Wilcox and Ebbs (1992:1), in substantiation of this view, say higher education has its own share of moral problems that prompt ethical analysis. These problems seem to exist among staff coming from different racial and ethnic groups (*vide* Section 2.2.6).

This state of affairs is brought about by the current heterogeneity of staff coupled with the multiplicity of their views and interests that is now common in higher education, especially in South Africa. Whilst diversity is such a great challenge to those faced with its realities, it brings with it differences in culture, values and ideologies characteristic to individuals who, in most cases, regard their own as being the most valuable. Academic staff values in transforming situations such as the one we have in our South African higher education institutions are not very different from light rays that originate from one source but which always become diverged as they go through a concave lens. The point that the researcher would like to make here is that all human beings are biologically of the same species (*Homo sapiens*), but it seems they seldom possess similar values. It is almost impossible, even with deliberate efforts, to have their values focussed at any one point but they rather always scatter like light rays going through a concave lens.

This incompatibility, unfortunately, is the cause for mayhem among all those confronted directly by the challenges of diversity. Each individual's actions and responses to his/her work environment are driven by his/her peculiar values. This may in some instances give rise to value conflicts, clashes, a lack of cooperation, a lack of team work, low morale, low satisfaction and sometimes stress and hatred, all of which bear a serious impact on the operations of the institution. Middlehurst (1993:53) says that the difference of people's values and interests almost inevitably leads to the possibility of conflicts. This consequently has a hindering effect on the pursuance of the mission of higher education.

In order to counteract this situation, which is caused by staff having diverse ideological values, Wilcox and Ebbs (1992:xviii) suggest that institutions should possess certain characteristics in order to maintain congruency of

values either among staff or between the staff and the institution. These conditions are:

- First, a conscious identification of values which are essential to the academy.
- Second, development of a consistent process of evaluation that will assess the extent to which these values are represented in the actions of the members of staff.
- Third, provision of an assurance that there is a reward system within an institution which will ensure the displeasure of the organisation when these important values are non-existent.

Higher education stands to benefit from a diversity of values. A possible way to reap the fruits that diversity nurtures, would entail that all the participants be open-minded, develop warm "working relationships" (De Jager & Crous 1991:187), and furthermore realise that the richness of diversity is located at the confluence of their differences rather than similarities. One way of bringing these values to one point (reaching an understanding) is through fostering warm working relationships among staff.

#### **4.6.5 People dynamics**

It is unquestionable that the success of higher education institutions, just like all other organisations (as elaborated in Chapter 3), is dependent on the cohesiveness of staff in the pursuit of the institutional mission and in the holistic organisational functionality. It is interesting to note that in the present milieu the value of relationships within institutions extend way beyond just the institution itself. This is so because institutions must forge links (networks) (Johnstone 2000:22) with, among others, business



organisations and international institutions for learning and an exchange of ideas. If institutions find it worthwhile to develop external relationships, then it means that good relationships internal to institutions are an imperative. Fragmentation of staff on organisational issues, norms and values only leads to a lack of unity, first in carrying out work itself and second in achieving organisational outcomes. It thus emerges of cardinal importance to emphasise the need for the development of "professional relationships" (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998:112) at the workplace, as it is through working in consort that academics will easily work out their differences, understand one another, and realise institutional goals.

Contrary to this tacit assumption, however, academics in higher education seem to exhibit some form of individualism, "with no strong sense of corporate identity either to the department or the university" (Middlehurst 1993:138) in general. This, according to the same author, could be an outcome of a system failing to promote the building of a corporate culture with shared values and common systems throughout the institution. This is true in most higher education institutions - especially those serving and served by multicultural students and staff respectively.

An obvious concern about this individualism is that it may be seen by some academics as an opportunity to isolate other members of staff, especially those who do not belong to the "right social bands". Although this may sound more a matter of rhetoric than reality to some people, it surely is an aspect which does not only frustrate the isolated groups, but also indirectly aborts the mission of higher education. Individualism is a cause for a possibility of a highly fragmented academic populace, for example "fragmentation" (Mitchell 1999:21) on issues of institutional importance, staff perceptions, values and norms. This fragmentation unfortunately works counter to the institutional cohesiveness and functionality. With this premise

in mind, successful organisational functionality must be entrusted to leadership and management of high quality.

#### **4.6.6 Leadership**

As stated in Chapter 3, the kind of leadership that organisations need during these tumultuous times is not the kind that is restrictive and domineering, since the innovativeness and the ability of academics to individually engage in critical thinking is highly sought. Institutions of higher education are in dire need of academics who may rejoice in change and its challenges and whose mindsets do not strive for stasis, but who can "support the unintentional reconfigurability" (Galbraith 2001:93) of institutions imposed by both internal and external factors.

This calibre of academics will hardly be achievable in environments that are led by narrow-minded leaders, but will be easy to attain where leaders "possess the ability to see beyond" (Hesselbein 2001:85) the confines of their institutions. Such leaders should possess the ability to use all their sights, i.e. insight, foresight and even hindsight to envision beyond that which is not immediately in front of their eyes. Bellis (2001:41) says that, "no matter how rich in resources it may be – financial, human or technical – if these are not well-managed and led with vision and clarity, an organisation will not achieve the success it should or could" attain.

Since leaders are leaders by leading people, it is important that they utilise their leadership expertise and wittiness to guide their people (staff). They are also to encourage their staff to look for challenges both within and beyond their institutions, as well as to engage with change and challenge rather than be terrified by them. A paradoxical situation, however, exists in some higher education institutions where managers/leaders put unreasonable and restrictive rules (Hesselbein 2001) before academics and harness them within

"cages like birds". This harnessing prevents staff from freely exercising their full creativity and potential for fear of crossing boundaries and, ultimately, such staff lose their missionary zeal.

Today's leadership needs to be as transformative as the higher education institutions themselves. In addition to being highly innovative and visionary, today's higher education leadership should also exhibit a degree of both versatility and flexibility that enable them to adapt their behaviour to changing and contradictory demands (Green & Hayward 1997) laid down by change and transformation. This attitude should pervade throughout the academic environment, so that even staff, like their leaders, exhibit the adaptability and dynamism that will enable them to judiciously respond and cope with the changing and contradictory demands of change and transformation. One could argue that it is this kind of proactive approach that will ensure that academic staff remain enthusiastic and motivated amidst the phenomenal tide of change rocking higher education.

In reality, however, what is implied above, is never a smooth task for higher education leaders, who are faced with issues of a complex nature that compel them to be highly vigilant of what happens outside their institutions (globally and internationally) as well. It is unfortunate though that, regardless of being vigilant, leaders still encounter difficulties with some of their staff members. Their efforts to try to "convince their teaching staff, who so far have not been tempted to jump on the innovation bandwagon of the desirability of the directions now advocated by senior managers" (Hannan & Silver 2000:141), are not rewarded. The test of the management then is to know how to eliminate impediments and obstacles (Miller 2001:125) that hinder the modelling and change of staff behaviours, attitudes and that give everyone an opportunity to buy into the change. In this way, leaders can make a boundless contribution towards the longevity of both their institutions and their academic staff.

It is critical that the university management and leadership carefully consider the role that staff satisfaction plays in the ability of an institution to attract, nurture, develop and retain top-quality academics that are diverse in race, gender, age and ethnicity (Patitu & Tack 1992).

Leaders are cautioned against using management as a tool that voraciously and carelessly turns institutions upside down. They should rather leave room for staff to explore themselves and their capabilities, creating a fluid, capable workforce that is also flexible (Dahlberg *et al.* 2001:362). It is the duty of the institutional leadership to ensure that the institutional workforce has its unwavering support and possesses competencies to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the workplace (Hall 1996:91); hence the dire need for the leaders to clearly map out the institutional *modus operandi* that will cater for staff development activities.

#### **4.6.7 Staff development**

The type of discourse needed for staff development in this changing higher education landscape must make a significant shift from the usual all-encompassing current focus, to one that will embrace and cater for the changed form of needs and problems.

Staff development is inevitable in higher education for the following reasons:

- Preparation of staff for their changing roles (Kaburise 2000:16) as a result of change and transformation.
- The need for enrichment (Mullins 1999; Marx *et al.* 1998), the acquisition of new skills and an enhancement of mastery of the field, e.g. Information and Communication Technology.

- To conscientiously open the way for greater engagement in issues of diversity (Smith & Schonfeld 2000:20).
- To assist academics to cope with the changing and magnifying demands of the learners and the labour market.
- To support and assist academics in embracing globalisation as a challenge, as well as cope with its demands.
- To aid academics in making meaningful paradigm shifts from traditional to new resource-based teaching and learning methods.
- To enable academics to contribute towards and to cope with the knowledge production and "explosion" (Mitchell 1999:20; Jacob & Hellstrom 2000:2), bearing in mind that the frontiers of knowledge are propelled towards academics at a speed and force which they cannot effectively deal with.

Staff development and training are the only fertile grounds that should form a basis to search the manifold flaws resulting from the foregoing elements. It should, in addition, form grounds for staff enrichment (Marx *et al.* 1998:498) and advancement of knowledge in these adaptive institutions. Because change and transformation have been so forceful and harsh to academic staff, staff development endeavours should also be geared towards improving their attitudes and morale (World Bank 2000:159).

However, change and transformation are not the main and sole reasons why rigorous staff development activities should become the centre-piece of institutional activities. Elton (2000:3) identifies a different cause. This author argues that staff development of academics in certain areas is a highly neglected aspect at the moment. These are areas such as initial training (induction) and continuing training and development which, he feels, are prerequisites for teaching excellence. All staff development efforts should be appropriately directed. They should be directed at those who show a need for particular competencies, to the novice, the non-traditional and the old,

traditional academics who need to change attitudes, to refresh ideas, to extend their knowledge or to even convert from their present routines (Morant, cited in Mapesela 1997:11).

Another salient reason that Elton (2000) gives for the need for staff development is that, for universities to succeed, they must build their excellence on that of individual academics; hence the serious need to liberate their academics from the fears of technological and global innovations. While these two important forces are meant to revolutionise higher education, making it more responsive to both global and local needs, they are unlikely to succeed with tangible and visible results unless they are steered through the proper resourcing of academic staff.

These are not the only factors to be awarded attention in the form of staff development. In this new order, staff development efforts have come to depend on multiple issues, which are closely linked to reform and transformation. These include aspects such as access and mass education; the changing demands of learners, parents and the labour market; and internationalisation. Academic staff need to be given some form of support so that they can competently and successfully deal with these enormous, mind-stimulating challenges. King (2001:57) says it is almost impossible to drive any form of change in the academic world without soliciting the support of academics. It therefore seems academics are an important commodity that can easily maintain the momentum of academic transformation, however measureless it may prove to be. This could work on condition that they – the academics – are given the support needed to propel change in the desired direction.

Institutions should enthusiastically engage in staff development endeavours as ways of establishing the initial support for change and, furthermore, to solicit as many avenues of support as is deemed possible for the reforms prior

to their execution. This is an important way of ensuring that academics do not lose their missionary zeal when confronted with the expansive and overwhelming needs and pressures already discussed above.

#### 4.6.8 Communication channels

Communication is highly complex, but of cardinal importance for the functionality of all organisations. It facilitates nearly all the other organisational activities. It plays a pivotal role in cascading information throughout the institution, giving instruction, establishing mechanisms and translating institutional information to staff and all other stakeholders (Smit 2000:128). It is also through putting this important tool to proper use that relationships between staff can best be developed and improved. Shockley-Zalabak (1991:xi) maintains that effective communication at any workplace is widely considered to be necessary for the attainment of organisational goals and for individual productivity and satisfaction.

Without proper communication channels the working environment is like a car trying to run on only three tyres – nothing runs smoothly (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998:112). Some academics may choose to openly ignore one another, or may pass on ambiguous, purposely misleading messages, or may forget to convey a given message. It does, however, not matter what the motive for the broken communication may be, the fact is whatever the *modus operandi*, the result of barbed, distorted or sarcastic messages is devastating in terms of the productivity and morale (The Travel Agency of Tourism Africa 1998) of staff.

Open communication is valuable in that it paves the way for academics to air their views to both the management and to colleagues, as well as making their feelings known. This approach becomes fruitful if follow-up interventions are made whenever necessary, but it can also lead to stressful

encounters if it is only used within an organisation for downward communication when staff members are required by the management to deal with issues which seem to be management related. Richardson and Turner (2001:8) assert that the lack of, or rather closed communication channels, only lead to the "fragmentation of academic staff", thereby further leading to feelings of isolation, neglect, and sometimes stressful working conditions.

#### **4.6.9 Stress**

It was pointed out in Chapter 3 (*vide* Section 3.3.6) that stress is one of the major factors currently affecting staff and staff satisfaction in business and commercial organisations. Stress is not only peculiar to those organisations, but it is also a common factor influencing the satisfaction of staff in higher education institutions. Although Rue and Byars (1992:413) regard stress as an integral part of organisational life, as a part of living that can contribute to personal growth, development and mental health, in its excessive and prolonged form it becomes highly negative and detrimental. According to Vecchio (1988:117) serious job dissatisfaction is manifested by stress and can have serious repercussions on staff. It can lead to a variety of physiological disorders, including ulcers and arterial disease, increasing absenteeism and turnover.

In many universities all over the world, the work roles of academics have become increasingly complex and demanding in the last millennium. According to McInnis (2000:143) this was marked in Australia by a dramatic decline in academic work conditions, levels of satisfaction and career outlooks. This assertion is reinforced by Winter *et al.* (2000:291) who sanction that role stress is indicated by the nature of academics' work role expectations and demands such as role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload, which are increasingly becoming common with the changing higher education landscape.



These aspects are, however, not the only cause for academic stress. Winter *et al.* (2000) identify institutional factors related to the nature of the academic's job tasks, the management, as well as the institutional structure as additional, potential factors causing stress.

Work-related stress is neither merely a cause for concern where academics are concerned, nor is it simply a factor affecting their health, but it is a critical issue pertaining to the quality of higher education. McInnis (2000:143) moots that the everyday pressures of work are turning out to be the most critical and inevitable threats to the quality of teaching and learning. He further exhorts that fundamental reforms to the everyday work realities of academics are an inescapable road and challenge to all those interested in enhancing and promoting the notions of quality, especially in institutions where change and transformation have taken the front page. Deliberate avoidance of this admonition has been found to be a possible cause for widening gaps between rhetoric and the reality of quality teaching and learning (McInnis 2000).

#### **4.6.10 Motivation**

Another - and maybe the most important - factor of staff satisfaction is motivation. This is an all-embracing factor, highly intertwined with all the other factors of satisfaction, sometimes mistakenly taken to mean satisfaction itself. Motivation is the influencing force that drives all the actions and the attitudes of human beings: "it is the spark which ignites and influences the course of human action" (Van der Westhuizen 1991b:194).

In the field of education, motivation does not only influence people to behave in a certain manner, but it has been found through research, to have a strong mutual relationship with the levels of institutional performance attainable (Barker 1998:16). The need for institutions to have mutual recognition of and

show respect for the motives of academic staff at all times is thus implied in this foregoing deliberation. Periodical evaluation of staff's motivation is an essential component of all institutions, since "motives cannot be assumed to be permanent, to dominate behaviour, nor to be set in a fixed priority list" (Iphofen 1998:37). Research shows that motives are dynamic, they change according to time, place and the task that one must accomplish - hence the need to make attempts to motivate staff (Iphofen 1998).

It may not prove an easy task to keep staff motivated at all times, for the reason that their motivation depends on several other factors and it may be difficult to separate motivation from these factors. This makes it an even more important institutional factor requiring the undivided attention of the management, lest its negation brews unhealthy and unproductive situations within the workplace. Managers/leaders should regard this aspect very highly and should strive to nurture and cultivate a motivational congruence (Iphofen 1998:37) between their staff, institutional and pedagogical activities.

It is a pity though, that, as change and transformation run their course, factors responsible for lowering the motivation of academics diversify both in character and scope. This means that both academics and the management will forever be challenged to identify what is going on around them and to deal proactively with changing situations. The lack of vigilance in identifying influencing factors will place both the staff's and the management's motivation and satisfaction at a disadvantage.

Another important dimension is that the staff and the management should be aware that sometimes the environment is so complex and dynamic and the situation changes so fast that there is also need for speed and flexibility for staff "to adjust personal motivation" (Johnson & Scholes 1999:480). This demand of rapid adaptability could become a cause for stressful, unfulfilled,

unhappy and maybe unhealthy academic staff, who may have their zest to engage in pedagogic discourse replaced by demotivation.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

This foregoing exposition has uncovered a plethora of factors of both external and internal origin, which characterise higher education institutions worldwide and which affect academic staff and their satisfaction. The South African higher education finds itself in a similar position, but, in addition, it is troubled by a spectrum of problems which are only peculiar to it, for the simple reason that it is still tethered to yesterday's political and apartheid happenings. At the same time higher education in South Africa is undergoing massive reforms in its path to become single, coordinated and inclusive of all people, regardless of status.

This unique nature of our system deserves to be given a critical look in order to detect the different forces which influence the satisfaction of academics working within South African higher education institutions, particularly universities. This will commence with a synopsis of the history of the South African universities. It is hoped that from this examination possible reasons for the presence in our current higher education system of unique factors of staff satisfaction will be unearthed. It should be noted, however, that the researcher cannot - given the scope of this study - exhaust and give rigorous discussions of all the factors that influence staff satisfaction. She will, however, in the ensuing chapter put emphasis on those that typify and underpin staff satisfaction in transforming South African universities.

## Chapter



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# STAFF SATISFACTION IN A TRANSFORMING SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an overview of the transforming South African higher education system and the various factors which are responsible for shaping the current taxonomy of South African universities. It discusses policy as an important factor in influencing academic staff and staff satisfaction in South African universities. Some of the most important South African policies and Acts paving the way for the transformation of South African higher education will also be discussed to examine how the challenges and imperatives posed by these policies for academics impact upon their satisfaction. Thereafter, the chapter analyses the factors which are responsible for affecting the satisfaction of academics, particularly in the context of dramatic transformation and change. The journey into the historical background of South African universities is aimed at highlighting key factors which have led to the current higher education structure. It is further intended to spur a better appreciation of the spectre of policy initiatives and

demands for change and transformation surrounding higher education today (Subotzky & Cooper 2001:3).

## **5.2 THE TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE REVOLUTION**

As depicted in the previous chapter, universities are among the oldest organisations worldwide and, although autonomous, they have for a long time proven resilient to socio-economic and political changes (Sporn 1999:6). South African universities are not an exception in this regard. The National Commission on Higher Education Report (NCHE 1996:1) views transformation as the only reasonable way to preserve the value of the South African higher education, as well as to remedy the defects born by the past inequities, imbalances and distortions deriving from its history. It must be noted, however, that South Africa cannot thrive on the kind of transformation and change that occur only for their own sake. This country needs the kind of transformation that will transform not only the perceptions of the students, but also the teachers' (academics') conceptions of their roles as teachers and the culture of their respective institutions (Biggs 2001:221). In fact, South Africa needs transformational change (Eckel 2001:104).

According to the Report of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) on higher education (CHE 1998/1999:36) change and transformation are currently major forces that are driving South African higher education towards the emergence of a new education landscape. Change has become an endemic factor in institutions, common both at the level of individual entities (staff and learners) and at all other levels; in effect to the entire system. Change heightens the expectations of all the stakeholders in higher education today. The problem, however, is that - as the individual entities (academic staff) incessantly struggle to clarify their existence and roles in the new nature of environment that they find themselves in - the situation keeps on evolving

and neoteric demands, problems and conflicts of interest crop up from time to time. The complexity of any mutating system is also observed by Howarth (1984:18) who says it is very difficult for staff in this ever-changing higher education landscape to comprehend the current situations with which they are faced, since such situations are still riddled with the past and its problems. This means that staff do not only deal with the current changed and changing situation, but also with the past from which they try to divorce themselves, and for them this kind of reconciliation proves immense and torturous. Indeed, the need for change and transformation in higher education must be clearly understood within the context of the far-reaching political changes (NCHE 1996:56) which have been taking place for more than half a century in South Africa. In South Africa, looking at the need for transformation, change has not progressed as smoothly as policy-makers must have anticipated. For this reason it may be easily met with passiveness and hostility by academic staff and sometimes by top management who harbour feelings of aversion (Greyling 2001:1).

Several factors other than change and transformation are responsible for the increased demands, the change in the roles of academic staff, and subsequently their attitudes and perceptions towards work. The multifacetedness of the academic role (teaching, research and service), coupled with the rapidly changing environment, makes staff satisfaction in South African universities complex. Although the South African situation may be complicated owing to its historical origin, the same factors that affect staff in higher education in general and maybe in any other organisation are applicable. However, because of the uniqueness of our higher education and its historical background, there are factors which are exclusive to it. These will be dealt with in more detail in the ensuing section. This is done in order to comprehend and appreciate how such factors paved the system and how they affected and continue to affect staff. Before delving into these factors, however, it is critical to give a brief historical background of South African

universities, as it has to a notable extent shaped the current revolutionary situation that permeates South African universities.

### **5.3 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

History is regarded by Asmal (2001a:27) as a memory of a system that shapes values and morality; as an avenue by means of which to reflect on human dreams, achievement, failures and possibilities, as a means that provides a rationale for the evolution of a new higher education system. Asmal (2001a) proposes that history should not be seen only as a reflection on the past, but also as a basis for future attempts and a hope for transformation. Barnett (1990:16) concedes to this idea and adds that, although the current higher education is largely buried in the past, higher education institutions need not remain in the past as well. He suggests that institutions should be reconstituted so that they give our current higher education sector a sense of being linked to its epistemological origin.

Higher education in South Africa has its present picture moulded by history, by the apartheid ideology. The South African higher education has most, if not all, its aspects shaped by centuries of internal colonialism and oppressive policies that were for a long time its hallmark (NCHE 1996:28). Badsha (2000:12) asserts that, for almost half a century, the apartheid ideology was responsible for the racial and ethnic divides and promoted social inequalities in student access and composition of academic staff. The higher education system of the apartheid era strongly reinforced the dominance of white rule, by excluding blacks from quality academic education (NCHE 1996:29). This was promulgated through the University Education Acts of 1953 and 1959. These Acts formally restricted entry to university according to race and ethnicity. It is during this time that universities existed mainly to serve the needs of the separate development policy, exclusively training the white

privileged on the one hand and, on the other hand, the black disadvantaged. This differentiation was accompanied by disadvantage and was used to maintain white domination and privilege (CHE 2000b:16). After the Bantu Education Act (RSA 1953) came the extension of the University Education Act of 1959 (Behr 1988:192; NCHE 1996:29). These established racially based universities. The University of the North and of Zululand were established for Sotho-, Venda-, Tsonga- and Zulu-speaking Africans respectively, while the University of the Western Cape and Durban-Westville were established for Coloureds and Indians respectively. Access to the University of Fort Hare (then the South African Native College) was restricted to Xhosa-speaking Africans (NCHE 1996:29). Vista University, a multicampus urban institution, was open for Blacks wishing to pursue education courses, whereas the Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA) was founded specifically to train black students with a potential to become doctors.

At this juncture it is worth noting that higher education development did not only follow this course of racial and ethnic divide, but it was also particularly sharply divided historically, culturally and linguistically (Subotszky & Cooper 2001:3-4). The language and medium of instruction that were used in HWUs became an important tool, which further promoted the schisms amongst students and universities.

It is this principle of "divide and rule" (Badat 1999:49) and the legacy of apartheid that ultimately resulted in the inheritance of the present university system that we now see. Whether we like it or not, tertiary institutions in South Africa continue to bear the ineradicable imprint of the apartheid South Africa (Seepe 2001:1). The country's 21 "public" universities are still differentiated on the basis of race and ethnicity; hence the common categories of "historically white Afrikaans-speaking", "historically white English-speaking" and "historically black universities". These universities indisputably still suffer the consequences of past experiences and are forced



to "confront the realities of the financial and human resources available to higher education to meet all claims" (CHE 2000b:10).

The different localities of these universities are also important. The placement of HWUs in urban areas and of the HBUs in rural areas did not occur by chance, but it was another strategy that was used to promote the same principle that divided white students and black students. The HWUs were and still are better endowed in terms of accessibility, research, facilities and post-graduate capacity and good staff, who are hardly attracted to the remotely placed HBUs (Badsha 2000:14).

The bitter effects of this past are so complex that it is difficult to untangle and eradicate them. It has been quite tedious for those in charge of education (the government) to implement change and to put the fragments back together even through the most rigorous efforts. It is also proving difficult for staff within these universities, who are expected to act as change agents, to cope with the mammoth task of doing away with the past. The situation presents an even bigger dilemma for black academics whose problems are exacerbated by the minority position which they occupy, but "who are expected to swim in the same boat" with their traditional white counterparts. McInnis (2000:15) strongly warns stakeholders against the adoption of the simplistic view that all academics are the same, when in actual fact they are not, and when they sometimes find themselves faced with challenges of varying nature.

The South African higher education history is unfolding with myriad, rapid and massive changes and transformation, which highly demand that all higher education stakeholders work in tandem and support one another to channel and propel change and transformation in the right direction. It is worth noting that change does not simply occur readily on its own. It depends - and greatly so - on relevant policy intervention, coupled with the effective

steering (CHE 2000b:24) of such policy because of its speed and the extent to which higher education evidences it. Active national and institutional policies are required to steer and propel change in the stipulated direction, although such policies are to act merely as guides rather than as aspects that take most of the teaching time of the academics to implement. Kinnear and Sutherland (2001:18) warn university leaders and managers against setting too much time aside for the development of "institutional policies, procedures, and detailed job descriptions" at the expense of their employees.

#### **5.4 RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT POLICY**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the change and transformation of higher education are not the only factors that affect university staff and how they feel about their jobs. There is a myriad of other factors responsible for change in the satisfaction of staff. Among these is policy – both at the national and the institutional levels.

"The victory over the apartheid state in 1994 set policy-makers in all spheres of public life the mammoth task of overhauling the social, political, economical and cultural institutions of South Africa to bring them in line with the imperatives of a new democratic order" (RSA MoE 2001:1). The real centre-piece of President Mandela's reign in the post-apartheid era was the development of several higher education policies which were mainly aimed at putting in place appropriate redress strategies for the past inequities of the apartheid era. This giant step was heralded by all educationists in higher education, both nationally and internationally, and was seen as a breakthrough towards meeting the needs of all South Africans regardless of race (Asmal 2001a:3). Since then, higher education has been existing in a realm of shock wherein it has annually been bombarded with new policy documents and plans. These are no doubt considered the best in the world

and are said to match internationally acclaimed standards. However, most of these policies have not been implemented effectively. It seems the idea that planning is not done for its own sake but to achieve results is becoming a farfetched one (Rose & Kirk 2001:51). New developments and requirements, which unfortunately leave higher education institutions with no time to think but to respond, have again recently erupted with the release of the new National Plan and its requirements for institutional plans. At the present moment, interested parties in the South African higher education are frustrated by policies that are developed and implemented very slowly. This could be even more frustrating where the idea of collaborative planning was ventured into with all stakeholders; academic staff included. Getting involved in the planning process and never experiencing the achievements can be devastating to the planners.

This policy implementation vacuum resulted in a common saying that South Africa has a surfeit of policies which are never put to good practice. Indeed, magnificent strides towards policy development are evident although only inconsiderable evidence is seen of concomitant changes. This state of affairs adds to the challenges that the South African higher education must still deal with. It is most unfortunate that the policy deadlock seems to exist not only at the national level, but also at the institutional level where the intellectual capacity of this country - the academics who are trusted to support policy initiatives - is highly concentrated. It is also important to note that, even though it has become common that too many policies are developed but slowly or never implemented, the intention of the policy developers is not to baffle the academics, but to advance transformation (*vide* 3.2.7.4). Policy development in the South African higher education sector is aimed at ensuring that higher education is made available to everybody throughout life and that its services benefit every individual (Dias 1998:371). It is furthermore aimed at guiding higher education institutions and guarding them

to ensure that prejudice against groups of colour does not occur (Garrell *et al.* 1999:55).

In addition, the institutional autonomy that higher education institutions have been blessed with (RSA MoE 2001:14), does not exempt them from being accountable to the government and to all their stakeholders. This is the main reason why the government through its Department of Education has issued many government policies and Acts to ensure this accountability.

Even though the post-apartheid era (post-1994) can be regarded as the hallmark of policy development in higher education, policy development was not a new factor of the epoch. The National Policy Investigation (NEPI) of the early 1990s started the transformation debate by proposing various policies influencing nearly all levels and aspects of higher education (Hay 2001:2).

#### **5.4.1 The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), 1992**

The main thrust of this investigation was to interrogate policy options in all areas of education within a value framework derived from the ideals of the broad democratic movement (NEPI 1992:vii). Staff issues also formed an integral part of the NEPI discussions. Issues such as equity and unequal employment opportunities for people of different race groups, gender inequality, and high student: teacher ratios in HDUs (NEPI 1992:31-33) were but a few of those aspects of higher education which - directly or indirectly - influenced the satisfaction of academic staff. The NEPI investigation recognised the need to take the needs of staff seriously. For this, it revealed the need to support staff in higher education through the improvement of their qualifications or by improving the skills that would enable them to deal with the changing institutional environments (NEPI 1992:114). The NCHE succeeded the NEPI investigation in 1996 and advanced the course of transformation by setting a framework for higher education transformation.

### **5.4.2 The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), 1996**

The NCHE responded to the transformation needs of the South African higher education by prescribing a workable framework and identifying some fundamental principles that should guide and direct the process of transformation in higher education (NCHE 1996:4). These are the principles of equity and redress, democratisation, diversity, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as well as public accountability. These guiding principles may, however, not be interpreted by all academics as an act of advancing transformation or ensuring accountability, but as one of interference in their own sphere of sovereignty. Since some of these prescribed principles do affect the satisfaction of academics, they will be discussed in more detail in later sections. The issue of access and massification is one example of a government policy which, though aimed at redressing the past inequities, made an immense impact on institutions and their academic staff and still continues to do so.

In addition to the set framework or a guide for transformation and the guiding principles, the NCHE - following on the results of the NEPI investigation - also realised that the human resource development of the higher education sector was a critical need. There was acceptance of the fact that staff in higher education needed to be equipped with skills and competencies, not only to improve the quality of higher education, but also to assist staff in dealing with the transformative situation that they were faced with. Besides developing the competence and confidence of staff, this factor could enhance their work satisfaction.

Following on the NCHE investigation new policy developments came to the fore. The Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation (RSA DoE 1996)

and subsequently the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation (RSA DoE 1997) were developed.

### **5.4.3 The Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation, 1996**

The work of the Green Paper was highly informed by the NCHE's report. This policy made comprehensive proposals for the transformation of higher education through new planning, governing and funding arrangements (RSA DOE 1996:3), bearing in mind the purpose, needs, deficiencies and challenges of higher education in a transforming country. The Green Paper has as its point of departure the framework and the guiding principles set by the NCHE. These are the same principles which, on the one hand, encapsulate and give cognisance to staff and staff issues in higher education. On the other hand, they may evoke feelings of fear in staff, particularly traditional members who may view the government's policy intervention as interference (NCHE 1996:175) and as efforts aimed at eroding both the academic freedom of academic staff and the autonomy of their institutions.

Nevertheless, the Green Paper had good intentions. What made this new policy development (the Green Paper) different from the preceding one (the NCHE) is that it actually identified relevant intervention strategies for the transformation of higher education. This same premise was followed in the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997).

### **5.4.4 The Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation, 1997**

As already mentioned, the Education White Paper 3 functions from a similar basis as the Green Paper and like it, has as its main role to identify the different intervention strategies necessary for higher education transformation. In addition, it also outlines and describes the challenges,

needs, purposes, goals, structure, growth, governance and funding mechanisms for higher education; aspects which have certain implications for academic staff.

One of the main challenges that the White Paper advocates is for the South African higher education to redress past inequities and to transform the higher education system through serving the social order, meeting the pressing needs of the country, and responding to new realities and opportunities (RSA DoE 1997:1). Academic staff also feature as people with needs that must be met.

The South African system of education is currently characterised by deficiencies, some of which have a direct implication for academic staff. The fact is that there is inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class and geography. The indefensible imbalances in the ratios of black and female staff compared to whites and males are but a few examples of such shortcomings.

The challenge then for this policy (the White Paper) is to ensure that the existing deficiencies and gaps are bridged. The White Paper hoped to achieve this by setting targets and outcomes. Some key targets and outcomes which could affect staff in many ways are laid down in the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997:6). They are the following:

- *To improve the quality of teaching and learning.*
- *To secure and advance high-level research capacity which can ensure both the continuation of self-initiated, open-ended intellectual inquiry, as well as the sustained application of research activities to the technological improvement and social development.*
- *To develop capacity-building measures to facilitate a more representative staff component which is sensitive to local, national and regional needs, in*

*addition to being committed to standards and ideals of creative and rigorous academic work.*

- *To promote human resource development through programmes that are responsive to the social, political, economic and cultural needs of the country and which meet the best standards of academic scholarship and professional training.*
- *To establish an academic climate characterised by free and open debate, critical questioning of prevailing orthodoxies and experimentation with new ideas.*
- *To encourage and build an institutional environment and culture based on tolerance and respect.*

These foregoing higher education goals as explicated by the White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation show a certain degree of concern for staff in higher education. For this reason they may work as motivators and subsequently as enhancers of academic staff satisfaction.

It must be noted that, in addition to these outlined key targets and outcomes, the White Paper also observes the need for the higher education landscape to become unfragmented and co-ordinated. It advocates a system of higher education that is planned, governed and funded as one, as a way of eradicating the deficiencies existing in the current higher education system in addition to overcoming the fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency which are the legacy of the past (RSA DoE 1997:7). A key feature of the contemplated system is the broadening of the social base of the higher education system in terms of race, class, gender, age and physical ability for a considerably more diverse body of learners and staff, making it representative of the demographic realities of South Africa.

Although a single and co-ordinated system of higher education would benefit all learners and staff regardless of stature, as well as all institutions regardless



of their historical background, to some people (academics), the unison may be seen as an added challenge for higher education, particularly if it involves the restructuring of the old system. This policy step may, on the one hand, increase feelings of fear of loss of jobs or even fears of loss of academic privacy and freedom but, on the other hand, could have a great potential to reduce or restructure the higher education landscape in such a way that it will be more beneficial to all its stakeholders (Patterson 2000:259).

#### **5.4.4.1 Restructuring and diversification**

In its mission to restructure higher education, the Ministry of Education through the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997:14) encourages "the development of regional consortia and partnerships involving a range of higher education institutions", offering collaboration in some of the following aspects:

- *Developing and delivering programmes, including the production of courseware.*
- *Reducing the overlap and duplication of programme provision.*
- *Refocusing the institutional culture and missions of both Historically Black and White Institutions within the national system.*
- *Helping build academic and administrative capacity where it is needed, especially in HBI's.*
- *Enhancing responsiveness to the regional and national needs, for academic programmes, research and community service.*

Although the higher education restructuring has, on the one hand, come to the fore as an aspect aimed at bringing all the people of South Africa on par by creating equal educational opportunities, pulling all higher education resources together, and building capacity where it is needed most, it has, on the other hand, not been received with jubilation by some parties. People who in the past dispensation enjoyed the benefits of the fragmented

education system view this step (restructuring of the higher education system) differently. Currently traditional academics find themselves compelled to work hand in hand with non-traditional academics (non-white academics) because of the restructuring and this move is perceived by HAUs as a factor that could impinge on the quality of higher education. Another problem arising from the restructuring of the system is believed to be associated with the fact that academics - in addition to their normal scholarly activities of teaching, research and service - must be involved in the development and delivery of new, relevant and responsive programmes. This in itself is a factor that consequentially magnifies staff workloads, demotivating staff.

It is also important to note that for those who were isolated in the apartheid era a new, restructured education system will not only bring joy, but the higher education sector will also be allowed to realise both its goals and the goals of the national government.

#### **5.4.4.2 *Capacity-building and human resource development***

In addition, the White Paper advocated for an expansion in enrolments in post-graduate programmes at the master's and doctorate levels as one way of addressing the high-level skills necessary for social and economic development and to provide for the needs of the academic labour market. This could have effects for academic staff who must cope with increasing numbers of students both in the undergraduate and the post-graduate levels. It seems, however, that the government is not blind to the needs of the academic staff and the challenges that they must face to support and propel change and transformation in the anticipated direction. Evidence to prove this assertion is gathered from the White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation (RSA DoE 1997:21), wherein mention is made that successful transformation "is critically dependent on building and enhancing capacity in all spheres - academic, management, governance and infrastructural".

Another factor in the White Paper 3 that points to the government's effort to care for staff and their development, is the requirement made to institutions to submit human resource development plans showing how the following aspects will be taken care of by institutions concerned. These are:

- Staff recruitment and promotions.
- Staff development activities such as academic development – qualifications, professional development and career pathing, instructional development, management skills, technological reskilling, and appropriate organisational environment and support.
- Remuneration policy and conditions of service.
- Reward systems for academics, including sabbaticals, conference attendance, academic and contact visits.
- The transformation of institutional cultures to support diversity.

Evidently this policy does not only place demands on higher education institutions, but it also deliberates ways in which the capacity of the institutions can be improved so that they meet these challenges successfully.

#### **5.4.4.3 Governance**

Concerning the governance of higher education, the White Paper senses a likely conflict to erupt among staff (RSA DoE 1997:24). According to this policy document, the governance of higher education is characterised by struggles for control, lack of consensus and even conflict over differing interpretations of higher education transformation. It is the wide spectrum of staff views and expectations as well as uncertainties about the outcome of the higher education transformation that results in tensions and sometimes turmoil. These factors spoil the working atmosphere of academics by making the working environment uninhabitable.

#### **5.4.4.4 Institutional culture**

The violent behaviour prevailing on most higher education campuses – racism, sexism and the like – has become a worrying factor to the government. Hence it saw the need to promote the development of institutional cultures which will embody values and facilitate behaviour aimed at peaceful assembly, reconciliation, respect for difference and the promotion of the common good (RSA DoE 1997:29). In its response to this formidable ideal which unquestionably affects staff and staff satisfaction, the Ministry proposed that all institutions of higher education should develop mechanisms which will:

- *Create a secure and safe campus environment that discourages harassment or any hostile behaviour directed towards persons or groups on any grounds, particularly on grounds of age, colour, creed, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, race, language or sexual orientation.*
- *Set standards of expected behaviour for the entire campus community, staff included.*
- *Promote a campus environment that is sensitive to racial and cultural diversity.*
- *Assign competent personnel to monitor progress in the areas mentioned (RSA DoE 1997:29).*

#### **5.4.5 The Higher Education Act, 1997**

Once the White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation had tabled its recommendations on possible intervention strategies for the realisation of transformation, the Higher Education Act No. 101 (RSA 1997) followed and continued the work of the White Paper through specifying its objectives as to:

- ensure proper regulation of higher education;
- provide for the establishment, composition and functions of a Council on Higher Education (CHE); and
- provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education.

The Higher Education Act had as its main aim to level the grounds for the regulation of higher education, allaying any possible fears among higher education academy that the government is taking over higher education by placing unreasonable demands on institutions. Rather the Act was intended through different forums to advise the CHE transformation on different issues affecting institutions and maybe academic staff as well. The following issues came to the forefront as issues of priority for the CHE. They are:

- To ensure the implementation of the Higher Education Act of 1997.
- To make sure that race and gender equity policies do exist and are implemented accordingly.
- To look into the issue of the selection of candidates for senior positions.
- Outlining codes of conduct, mediation and dispute resolution procedures.
- The fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning.

All these foregoing issues show that the government through policy shares in the concerns of staff in higher education. The guidelines in the Higher Education Act are meant to advance the implementation and institutionalisation of staff equity plans; to foster an all-inclusive institutional culture; to prescribe fair selection and promotion procedures for staff; as well as setting guiding principles for staff conduct, mediation and conflict resolution. These issues are sensitive, particularly in the education system of a country such as South Africa by virtue of its history and – on account of this

– if they are not managed well by institutions, they could lead to staff complaints, disruptions and dissatisfaction.

#### **5.4.6 The Council on Higher Education (CHE) Task Team Report, 2000**

This was established in February 2000 to advance the course of the White Paper on Higher Education Transformation, which had served as a point of departure for the Task Team. The CHE has followed and pursued the goals and purposes conceptualised in the White Paper – equity and redress, quality, development, effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, it has been committed to the transformation of higher education, so as to make it responsive to the needs of students of all ages and the intellectual challenges of this 21<sup>st</sup> century (CHE 2000b:2). The CHE actually identified ways of putting to action and institutionalising the principles and values of the White Paper. This implies that this policy development placed a direct demand on the institutions and on the academics to respond to policy and to engage in change and transformation by developing institutional plans in line with the national policy. This was and still is a challenge to academic staff who must now add administrative chores to their normal triad functions of teaching, research and service. Furthermore it is a challenge to the management of higher education, particularly universities which must, even though battling, respond to too many policies at a time.

#### **5.4.7 The South African Qualifications Authority Act (SAQA), 1995**

“One of the direct results of policy proposals was the promulgation of the South African Qualifications Authority Act (RSA 1995a) established by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as the body responsible for developing and implementing the rules of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)” (Hay 2001:3).

The implementation of SAQA has affected and will continue to affect both the institutions and the academic staff in higher education. Since its development the SAQA Act has resulted in a major shake-up, particularly of the curriculum. Hay (2001) in support of this assertion pronounces that, in the last two years, all higher education institutions have had to rethink, rewrite and redesign all their qualifications, curricula and modules compelling many institutions and academics to account for the what and how of their courses. During the same period academics have been obliged to shift to a programmes-based approach, implement modular systems and even rewrite programmes in outcomes-based format. This step did not only force academics to engage in sound curriculum practices, but it also deprived the university of time for actual teaching and learning while it had to increase focus on assessment procedures. This engagement in curriculum restructuring as advocated by the SAQA Act has also left a trail of cumbersome procedures and processes, excessive record-keeping generated by the model and the large bureaucratic structures that academics must follow in its implementation. This of course does not only demand most of the teaching time of the academics, but it also adds an extra load to their other pedagogic engagements. Obviously conditions such as those mentioned in the foregoing deliberations are bound to induce feelings of dissatisfaction that staff sometimes experience.

Indeed many "South African universities have approached the NQF with considerable apprehension, particularly with respect to the notion of NQF which achieves its objectives through the registration of a universe of national unit standards" (Cloete & Bunting 2000:44). In the eyes of many academics the introduction of the NQF was only observed as interference by the government in institutional autonomy.

Another equally daunting factor for academics and maybe for all higher education stakeholders that pertains to curriculum and curriculum

restructuring, has been the introduction and the actual implementation of Curriculum 2005 at primary and secondary school levels. This giant step - which envisaged for general education a move away from a racist, apartheid, rote learning model of learning and teaching to a liberating, nation-building and learner-centred outcomes-based one (Asmal 2001b:7) - has also raised fears and frustrations for those directly involved with its implementation. In addition, academic staff in higher education are faced with the formidable task to prepare for their first mass of incoming outcomes-based matriculants in a few years' time. What academics in higher education probably need to allay their fears and frustrations regarding this issue, is to be empowered and equipped with relevant skills to engage in curriculum development, restructuring and deliverance thereof. This and other developmental needs have been responded to by the national government through its promulgation of the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998a) and the Skills Development Levies Act (RSA 1999).

#### **5.4.8 The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 and the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999**

The government of South Africa realised the need for the development of policies that would specifically look into issues relating to staff, as well as the welfare of staff in higher education institutions. Two examples of such policies are the Skills Development Act of 1998 (RSA 1998a) and the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 (RSA 1999) through which the government hoped to pursue the following objectives:

- Provision of an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce.
- Integration of these strategies within the NQF contemplated in the SAQA Act of 1995.



- Provision of learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications.
- Financing of skills development by means of a levy-grant scheme and a National Skills Fund.
- Providing for and regulating employment services (RSA 1998a).

This Act hopes to develop the skills of the South African workforce in order to improve the quality of life of the workers, their prospects of work and labour mobility. In addition, the Act aims at improving productivity in the workplace as well as making the employers more competitive. Apart from these, the Act advocates the promotion of self-employment and the delivery of social services.

In addition to developing skills of the workforce, the Act hopes to encourage employers to use the workplace as an active learning environment; provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills; and provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience.

The Act also states that workers should be encouraged to participate in learnerships and other training programmes. According to Hay (2001:4) learnerships in higher education will, if implemented successfully, be extremely helpful to empower designated groups (such as young academics, women and Blacks) and prepare them for an academic career. However, learnerships have a potential to affect staff by adding more work to their normal functions. Hay (2001) also acknowledges this fact. She maintains that good learnerships must entail each learner having a mentor and if this policy is followed by institutions, it will indeed magnify the workload of those academics charged with the duty of mentoring.

The Skills Development Act furthermore states that employment prospects should be created for persons who were previously disadvantaged by unfair

discrimination and that attempts should be made to redress the disadvantages through training and education. The Skills Development Levies Act, like the Development Act, also has important benefits for academics. These benefits, however, become available to the academics only if their institutions abide by the requirements and demands of the Act. For example, if the employers submit workplace skills plans to their designated Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs), then they have access to the levies that had been paid, not only to the institutions' benefit, but also to the benefit of the employees (Blumenthal 2001:32). However, if employers fail to submit the necessary skills plans to their SETAs, they deny their employees any direct access to the levies paid; hence this prohibits employees from reaping the benefits of the Skills Development Levies Act. Blumenthal (2001) regards this denial as an unfair practice by employers. "The levy is not only accessible to the employers, but is also used to fund quality assurance system reviewing, measuring and analysing the quality of training and education" (Blumenthal 2001). This support for quality and quality assurance issues does not only have a direct implication as far as the higher education institutions are concerned, but also the staff.

The two Acts – the Skills Development Act of 1998 and Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 - both advocate for the assurance of the quality of education and training in and for the workforce. However, inasmuch as quality of higher education and quality assurance are factors highly regarded in higher education today, the demands for quality have far-reaching implications for academics in higher education, as was extrapolated in the previous chapter.

A complicating factor as regards the Skills Development Act is the massiveness of the work that must be done in response to it. Upon realising the magnitude of the task awaiting all higher education stakeholders, the

policy-makers deemed it necessary to establish an institutional and financial framework comprising several bodies. These bodies are:

- (i) The National Skills Authority.
- (ii) The National Skills Fund.
- (iii) A skills development levy-grant scheme.
- (iv) Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).
- (v) Labour centres.
- (vi) The Skills Development Planning Unit.

Although the development of so many bodies was aimed at advancing the work of the Skills Development Act, facilitating its functioning and increasing its efficiency, this large number of bodies which institutions and academic staff must work and consult with, may be threatening to those directly involved, i.e. the institutions and staff. Moreover, trying to understand while at the same time distinguishing between the role of each of these bodies may also be breathtaking for the parties concerned.

The researcher also realised that, although the Act was developed years ago in 1998, much institutional groundwork as regards its implementation by universities is just being done. Higher education institutions are expected to submit a sector skills plan which outlines the skills needed by employees as well as how the institutions will provide skills training.

Some universities, managers and academic staff are only now busy with the development of institutional policy plans for skills development.

#### **5.4.9 The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998**

The Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998b) in its preamble states that most workplaces remain with a lot of disparities because of apartheid and other discriminatory laws and practices. These disparities continue to create such

pronounced disadvantages for certain categories of people that they cannot be redressed simply by repealing discriminatory laws.

This policy (Employment Equity Act), hopes to respond to these issues for the benefit of staff, particularly the disadvantaged by:

- promoting the constitutional right of equality and exercising true democracy;
- eliminating unfair discrimination in employment;
- ensuring the implementation of employment equity to redress the effects of discrimination;
- achieving a diverse workforce broadly representative of our people;
- promoting economic development and efficiency in the workforce; and
- giving effect to the obligations of the Republic as a member of the International Labour Organisation.

These foregoing factors are bound to, on the one hand, interest and excite the group of academics who are from disadvantaged backgrounds who may perceive the advancement of equity and recruitment of black academics as a provision of colleagues who can share a common understanding with them. On the other hand, the group of visionary traditional academics who perceive diversity as necessary and beneficial to higher education may also get exhilarated. However, for the group of conservative traditional academics, staff equity may be received with hostility.

For South Africa in general and the UFS in particular, the magnitude of work that still lies ahead to be done with regard to staff equity and redress is quite immense. At the UFS the profiles of academic staff are currently (i.e. in 2002) 93% White and 7% Black staff. The statistics on the current academic staff profiles tabled below provide further evidence of the above allusion.

**Table 5.1: Black staff as a % of full-time staff: 1999**

	<b>ACADEMIC</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE/SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS</b>
Historically white (Afrikaans) universities	5%	6%
Historically white (English) universities	21%	27%
Historically black universities	60%	65%
Historically white technikons	11%	17%
Historically black technikons	67%	79%
UNISA and the Technikon SA	17%	35%

Source: RSA MoE 2001:33

**Table 5.2: Female staff as % of full-time staff: 1999**

	<b>ACADEMIC</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE/SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS</b>
Historically white (Afrikaans) universities	35%	44%
Historically white (English) universities	34%	57%
Historically black universities	38%	40%
Historically white technikons	38%	37%
Historically black technikons	38%	29%
Unisa and the Technikon SA	48%	51%

Source: RSA MoE 2001:33

In addition to insisting that higher education institutions bring the numbers of black staff on par with those of whites, the Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998b:8) ensures that appropriate affirmative action measures are taken by the institutions. This, according to the Employment Equity Act, is to ensure that qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the institutions. These affirmative action measures include:

- *Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination, which adversely affect people from designated groups.*
- *Measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect of all people.*
- *Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the workforce of a designated employer.*
- *To ensure the equitable representation of suitably qualified people from designated groups in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace.*
- *To retain and develop people from designated groups and to implement appropriate training measures, including measures in terms of an Act of Parliament providing for skills development (RSA 1998b:8).*

These foregoing factors are a clear indication of the well-intended efforts of the government through its policy to care for the welfare of academic staff from disadvantaged backgrounds. Although policy so much wishes for change in practices within higher education institutions as regards staff and their employment, and give recognition to the importance of increased access of staff coming from the previously sidelined backgrounds, the reality is portrayed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. The staff profiles in universities of South Africa are not yet reflective of all population groups.

The aspect of academic staff access and equity is at the present moment a highly neglected one in most universities of South Africa. The staff composition in higher education does not as yet reflect the demographic realities of the South African academic professionals (Cloete & Bunting 2000). The changes in the composition of the student profiles (to be discussed in depth in later sections), have generally not been accompanied by a similar trend in the staff profiles. Consequently black people and women still remain grossly underrepresented in the academic and professional positions, especially at senior levels (Cloete & Bunting 2000). This is the reason why government with its equity policy continually urges higher education institutions for a change in staff profiles to be reflective of all racial and gender groups (cf. White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation of 1997 and the Employment Equity Act of 1998). It must be realised that the "legacy of exclusion" in South Africa has resulted in "one of the most critical challenges" (CHE 2000b:16) that still demands to be addressed. Universities have a long way to go to change academic staff profiles by changing their numbers on the basis of race and gender, ensuring an equitable distribution across all professional levels and disciplines.

South African universities have for a long time been known to draw their academic staff from a pool of white only professionals. This was done to promote the previous fragmented higher education system that was aimed at a few chosen groups of people. Given the same legacy of exclusion (CHE 2000b:16) it remains a big challenge to change the picture of higher education to be representative of all South Africans. However, it has been difficult after 1994, as a result of the advances of change and transformation, to quickly fill in the gaps and recruit academics from other racial groups, especially Blacks, who - according to Badsha (2000:12) - were effectively excluded from quality academic education and technical training in the past. This consequently results in the current indefensible imbalances and embarrassing statistics of staff from the designated population groups in

nearly all the universities of South Africa. The staff composition within universities, particularly HWUs, continues to mirror the apartheid legacy. According to Cloete and Bunting (2000), the NCHE (1996) and the CHE (2000b:13) these universities are still dominated to an astounding extent by whites and in management positions by white males. Prestigious positions seem to be reserved for whites and males, whereas the less prestigious ones which "wield little influence" (NCHE 1996:38) are occupied by blacks and females.

This status is a cause for concern for all groups of academics. Firstly, this is the case for the group of female academics who - because of the common misogyny (hatred for women) within universities (Stalker 2001:288) - are struggling for promotional posts in the management and, secondly, for the group constituted by African academics who lead isolated and individual academic lives within their departments. Most departments lack a common basis for participation, as well as for sharing of ideas, experiences and knowledge, especially where parallel or dual (English-Afrikaans) medium of instruction is prevalent. Although universities have made good progress in promoting communication and encourage the use of Afrikaans and English, faculties and departments have not made an effort to accommodate staff members who are not Afrikaans-speaking. Faculty and department meetings are conducted in Afrikaans only and circulars are also in Afrikaans only. This has resulted in some staff members who are not fluent in Afrikaans not attending meetings, or if they are forced to attend, they remain passive. With Afrikaans as the only language of communication among staff members, those whose command of language is not good, feel alienated (Task Team at the University of the Free State 2001:7).

These problems associated with a lack of equity do not only affect the feelings of academics and impact negatively on their satisfaction, but they highlight discrepancies in policy implementation, furthermore giving an



indication that the government policy for equity is violated by universities in South Africa.

Universities are, however, advised in the NCHE Report (1996:38) to give priority to equity issues, firstly, for moral reasons and, secondly, for higher education to put all academic staff potential - whether black or white - to maximum use and to present to academics the benefits of diversity that different race groups bring to higher education.

#### **5.4.10 The Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995**

The purpose of this Act (RSA 1995b) is to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and the democratisation of the workplace by providing a framework within which employees and their trade unions, employers and employers' organisations can collectively bargain to determine wages, terms and conditions of employment and other matters of mutual interest as well as formulate industrial policy.

Furthermore, the aim is to ensure that the following conditions should exist:

- All workers have the right to fair labour practices.
- Both the workers and their employers shall have a right to form and join trade unions.
- Workers and employers shall have a right to organise and bargain collectively.
- Workers shall have a right to strike for the purpose of collective bargaining.
- Employers' recourse to the lockout for the purpose of collective bargaining shall not be impaired, subject to certain conditions stipulated by the Act, namely that:

- (i) collective bargaining is orderly;
- (ii) collective bargaining is carried out at the workplace and the sectorial level;
- (iii) to encourage employee participation in workplace decision-making through the establishment of forums; and
- (iv) there is effective resolution of labour disputes – statutory conciliation, mediation and arbitration.

The Labour Relations Act (RSA 1995b) has been the government's effort through the Department of Labour to extend its concern for all employees and employers in all spheres of work. The higher education sector and its employees – academic and support staff - is also a beneficiary in this regard. The main emphasis of the Labour Relations Act is to "advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and democratisation of the workplace" (RSA 1995:9), factors bearing a great potential to promote and enhance good working relationships and subsequently motivation and job satisfaction.

#### **5.4.11 The National Plan for Higher Education Transformation, 2001**

In March 2001 the National Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, launched the National Plan for Higher Education Transformation (RSA MoE 2001). This plan represents the most recent envisaged strategies for South African higher education transformation. For the purposes of this study, the plan will be analysed to establish how it fits in with academic staff satisfaction.

The National Plan for Higher Education gives effect to the vision for the transformation of the higher education system outlined in the Education

White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997). This it effects by providing an implementation framework and identifying strategic interventions and levers necessary for the transformation of the higher education system. In view of this factor and because the stipulations of the White Paper 3 were reflected upon in the earlier sections, only thumbnail deliberations on how the National Plan impacts on the satisfaction of academic staff in higher education will be made in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### **5.4.11.1 *Student equity and redress***

The main intent of the new National Plan – advocacy for equity and redress - has not deviated from the intentions of all other policies in all spheres of the South African landscape. This plan strongly supports all the other higher education policies that came prior to it. Equity and redress are not only regarded of “high priority” (Asmal 2001b: 21) by higher education beneficiaries, but are also placed very “high on the agenda of the National Plan” (Hay 2001:8).

The National Plan has proposed the following with regard to equity and redress, that:

- *The participation rate in higher education should be increased from 15% to 20% in the long-term, in about ten to fifteen years.*
- *There will be a shift in the balance of enrolments over the next five to ten years between the humanities, business and commerce and science, engineering and technology from the current ratio of 49%: 26%; 25% to 40%; 30%; 30% respectively.*
- *Institutions will be expected to establish student equity targets with the emphasis on the programmes in which Black and women students are under-represented and to develop strategies to ensure equity of outcomes.*

- *Institutions will be expected to develop employment equity plans with clear targets for rectifying race and gender inequities, and changing institutional cultures to be more accommodating to Black staff.*
- *Redress for Historically Black Institutions will be linked to agreed missions and programme profiles, including developmental strategies to build capacity (Asmal 2001b:2).*

These deliberated factors may have both a direct and an indirect impact on academic staff and academic staff satisfaction. The increase in participation rates of students by 5% in the long-term without an equally and accompanying increase in resources, both human and physical, seems to create problems for academic staff. Problems associated with this increase in participation will be looked into in more detail in the ensuing sections. In the case of widened access for all students, for example Blacks into other programmes such as the Humanities, Business and Commerce and Science, Engineering and Technology, problems may arise for those academics who are conservative. This is because these academics must now deal with a diversity of students in programmes in which the majority of students were initially white. Lack of enthusiasm may emanate from the fact that academics must deal with African students whose "knowledge base" (RSA MoE 2001:56) is supposedly different from that of white students. However, for the visionary, creative and outgoing academics this new situation may be looked upon as a challenge and as a source of satisfaction.

Another factor with the potential to frustrate universities is the government's expectation for universities to speed up the process of staff redress and equity when the pool from which to recruit black academics is virtually empty.

#### **5.4.11.2 *Steering mechanisms***

As mentioned in the previous section, the new National Plan identifies intervention strategies and levers through which the suggested framework for the higher education transformation may be implemented. "The planning process in conjunction with funding and an appropriate regulatory framework" (RSA MoE 2001:13) have been identified as the main levers through which the Ministry will ensure that the targets and goals of the plan are realised. In addition to assuming planning that goes on concurrently with funding, the Ministry also hopes to use various earmarked funds to realise particular policy objectives such as, for example, research capacity-building and increased access to higher education of poor students as well as the disabled.

According to the National Plan (RSA MoE 2001:13), "the combination of planning and funding levers to achieve policy objectives involves a model of implementation in which the Ministry will determine the overall goals for the higher education system and establish incentives and sanctions to steer the system towards those goals". However, these actions of the Ministry are on the one hand viewed as an infringement of academic freedom and institutional autonomy by staff. On the other hand, the Ministry views them as strategies to hasten the response of institutions towards policy prerogatives, making institutions accountable to their stakeholders. Hence it sees no need for staff and institutions to feel threatened.

It is indicated in the National Plan (RSA MoE 2001:14) that the Ministry anticipates that there are likely to be objections from some quarters on the grounds that it contravenes autonomy. Despite this kind of thinking, the government only perceives its role as a way to ensure that institutions are accountable to the masses of learners that higher education institutions must now deal with.

## 5.5 LEARNER ACCESS AND MASSIFICATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

As highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, the South African higher education system resembles the education systems of other countries of the world in many respects. Nevertheless, it also stands out uniquely because of the history of this country and the wide diversity of people that the education system must serve. On account of that, the researcher deemed it necessary to explore in greater depth how the issues of access and massification spur on feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction among academics in South African universities.

As one of the ways of remodelling the shape and restructuring the size of higher education, the new democratic government initiated several policies, one of which is the policy that demands increased access and massification of higher education. As mentioned in previous chapters, access and massification are not at all recent phenomena, but they were common even in the developmental stages of higher education itself. Kogan *et al.* (1994:12) refer to these phenomena of massification as a neologism denoting a shift from the élite medieval world order to mass and universal access for learners. They regard it as an important factor which higher education is compelled to respond to as indicated in the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997) and in the new National Plan (RSA MoE 2001). But mass education and increased access are still feared by élite conservationists to have brought varied and complex situations to the higher education sector. They aver that these factors have resulted in, *inter alia*, a shift in demographics (Sporn 1999:12) of students; change in student and staff profiles by gender, race, social status and physique; changes in the organisational structure and function. Instead of viewing massification as a channel for deepening opportunities for people of different groups to interact, enhancing critical thinking, problem-solving capabilities and cognitive complexity and furthermore changing attitudes

towards racial issues as well as increasing the overall satisfaction and involvement with the institution, some people see it as a potential source for dissatisfaction (Smith & Schonfeld 2000:19).

In earlier times student enrolments in higher education were to a large extent determined by the numbers of academics appointed to teach them (Kogan *et al.* 1994:13) and not by factors such as massification. These same authors allude that, even with this changing face of the university, the teaching-research nexus was carefully thought of and therefore did not in any way interfere with the other roles of the academics. However, in South Africa the need for access and mass education was envisaged by the government and through its policy initiatives it called for a new higher education system characterised by increased participation by all sectors of society and by increased institutional responsiveness to policy imperatives (NCHE 1996:1). The government with its recently released new National Plan for Higher Education Transformation still advances the same cause. It impels higher education institutions not only to provide access, but also to contribute to the creation of a learning society that draws on people of all ages, from all walks of life and gives them an opportunity to advance and develop themselves both intellectually and materially.

It is most worrying though that, as the pressure increases from government for universities to have increased numbers of learners from the designated group to make maximum utilisation of limited physical resources and capacities of fewer staff, this issue of massification is proving to be a paradox for higher education. This important venture is not at all problem-free; seemingly this is affecting several aspects of the process and outcome of transformation (NCHE 1996:77) because of the unanticipated numbers of learners involved as well as the growing diversity of the learner profiles.

Institutions have engaged in several institutionally-based strategies in response to government imperatives. One good example is the identification and availing of diverse access routes. This has also proven problematic in that it has, among other things, led to overcrowded lecture rooms and deteriorating student: staff ratios, which makes it difficult even for the most dedicated and adroit staff to facilitate lessons. In addition to all these factors, staff in certain universities - particularly the HWUs - now have to teach classes rich in diversity, e.g. the poor, the physically disabled, adults, Blacks and women.

Another important factor which also has implications for staff is language and the medium of instruction in some universities, particularly historically white Afrikaans-speaking ones. According to Tyler (2001:42) language has been the biggest help to human progress, but, ironically, language has also become a barrier and a source of trouble where students do not speak in one language. Because of this issue of language and other reasons already discussed previously, the whole idea of the university is paddling vigorously to stay afloat in the flood-tide of mass higher education systems (Bourgeois *et al.* 1999:15).

Firstly, there is the issue of the medium of instruction that staff must employ and the demand to comply with the policy of dual and parallel-medium instruction. This, when coupled with the demand to ensure that all language groups get equal opportunities in teaching and learning is a mammoth task. This endeavour is not only expensive to fund and to operate (Purser 2000:458), but it also means trouble for academics. For staff this means that lesson preparation must be realised in at least two languages, thereby duplicating their work. Undoubtedly, this magnifies their workloads (Winter *et al.* 2000: 291). This is further regarded as a limitation in that some staff conduct lectures in a language that is not their first language (*vide* Section 5.4.9). In historically white Afrikaans universities black academics are



expected to conduct lessons in two languages – English and Afrikaans, which are both foreign to them, whereas white academics of Afrikaans origin have to conduct their lectures in English as well. This is a drawback to both groups and to their students, since - according to Fourie and Alt (2000:117) - a large majority of white academics, particularly at historically white Afrikaans-speaking universities, have been using English minimally for professional purposes. It is also ironic for black academics to conduct lectures in Afrikaans, a language in which they lack proficiency. Altbach (2001 b:2) proposes that English should be used as the *lingua franca* for scientific communication and for teaching, especially in countries such as South Africa where people speak many tongues. This author sees this as the most feasible solution to overcoming problems that are language-related.

Secondly, the kaleidoscope of learners' needs which is a direct consequence of the admission of learners from different cultural, social and economic backgrounds, as well as the different school backgrounds from which higher education students are pooled, coupled with the dire need to recognise students' prior learning and experiences, especially for the adult learners, poses a huge challenge to academic staff. This is particularly so because the system which these learners come from was fragmented and divided along racial and ethnic lines in the past. In addition, South African universities currently lack appropriate structures and mechanisms to implement the recognition of prior learning (RPL). This problem is unfortunately not made any easier by the government policy for access, which stipulates that adult learners must be admitted into higher education through recognising their prior learning and experience. In reality, the levels of preparedness for these learners never reflect parity. This disparity between what academics expect in terms of learners' preparedness and what they experience is, according to Badsha (2000:21), a major cause for concern to staff. It is a daunting reality then that this kind of situation affects the attitudes and the willingness of the academics to efficiently engage in the academic enterprise (Pitts, White &

Harrison 1999:345). "This gulf has also contributed to poor throughput rates" (Badsha 2000:21), thereby demeaning the work performance of academic staff.

According to the NCHE Report (1996:2), an even bigger challenge for academics is in South African universities to adapt their teaching strategies and modes of delivery to those befitting the varying levels of preparedness and to be able to meet the diverse needs of the learners.

Thirdly, the internal picture of the lecture rooms presents to the academic staff a mix of cultures which also demands to be given recognition if the teaching and learning activity is to be efficaciously pursued. Since thorough knowledge and understanding of the different learner cultures could play an incisive role in the approaches that the academic may implement inside the lecture room (*vide* Section 4.5.2). However, the challenge in this respect is that the acceleration, the force and the massiveness of this whole issue of massification leave staff with few or no opportunities at all to learn from and to appreciate the value that can be borne by diverse cultures in the teaching and learning ground. Smith and Schonfeld (2000:21) envision diversity far beyond the social interactions observable outside lecture rooms, and suggest that it is an issue of crucial importance inside the class. They consider diversity as a way to enhance the thinking skills of learners, as well as a factor that exposes people to diverse viewpoints, prompting the re-examination of academic and scholarly topics and areas of inquiry. Besides this, they moot that diversity ripens the way for meaningful discussions for learning and an assessment of those elements of pedagogical practices most conducive to learning and the intellectual development among students of different cultures.

Another interesting feature is that universities are increasingly confronted with students who require specialised attention. It is a matter of policy that

institutions of higher learning provide access for the disabled (the blind, the deaf, etc.) and allow them into the mainstream education. This concept is, however, new in South Africa and has brought to higher education a variance that is not only special, but also quite delicate. The existence of this group of learners demands that all academics do not only possess special skills, but must also develop and use specialised modes of delivery to reach out to these learners. The current reality is that academics have not undergone any form of training or preparation to help them embrace this challenging situation. In addition, the current lack of infrastructure befitting the special needs of this group of learners makes it difficult for them to explore their full potential, since study places may be inaccessible for them. This means that these learners need to be given special support to cope with university life. This is the wish of the government expressed through the National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001). It is also a further dilemma to academics that find themselves faced with new roles as supporters and counsellors for such learners.

Access and massification of higher education indeed occur at a time when there are also calls for a shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred and "resource-based mode of instruction" (Baloro 2000:54) as well as learning and also at a time when major curriculum reforms have been launched. This is also proving problematic with the current numbers of students and the increased teacher-pupil ratios without any commensurate increases in staffing (Kogan *et al.* 1994:141). The current expected role of the teacher as the facilitator and not as the centre of attention and the sole provider of knowledge is proving to be onerous, even for the most respected and skilful staff. The general institutional functionality does not remain unaffected amidst these drastic changes.

Access and massification have serious implications for the quality of higher education that South African institutions envisage today. Hauptman

(2000:10) envisions "a decline in both the overall persistence and the quality of the average student as more students enroll" in higher education in response to government policies for massification. This may sound a trivial issue, especially as regards academic staff satisfaction. However, the researcher sees it as relevant, since the general performance and the quality of higher education that institutions produce, reflect very strongly upon the quality of the academics themselves.

One other major ailment of the South African higher education system that is also a result of increased access and massification is the evidence of low throughput rates and graduation rates and high dropout rates, in addition to student repetition and retention (CHE 2000b:12). These must be a major source of demotivation to staff, as they defeat their good and well-intended educational efforts to nurture and assist learners to progress into the workplace.

Another factor responsible for changing staff satisfaction in higher education is that increased access and massification policy, particularly access leading to the expansion of enrolments in post-graduate programmes at the master's and doctoral levels (RSA DoE 1997:11) (vide Section 5.4.4.2), has resulted in a notable increase in post-graduate students. Although the numbers of post-graduate students are still very low, the significant increase that has occurred has brought some problems to academic staff who, in addition to their undergraduate chores, now must do supervision work. This is a problem in that the pool from which these students come from, comprises students from diverse backgrounds (advantaged and disadvantaged). Hence it is unquestionable that such students differ in their "knowledge base" (RSA MoE 2001:56) of the "academic discourse" (Delanty 2001:32; Elton 2001) required in research (reading and writing). It is cases and limitations such as the ones discussed here that increase pressure on academics, placing on them an extra demand that they become dynamic and committed in their supervisory work.

The fact that the changes explicated are inevitable for this changing face of higher education, renders staff prey to the unfortunate situations as expounded above. Unfortunately, this state of affairs may cultivate a compliant academic cadre that only struggles incessantly with access and its associated demands to please the policy-makers even if they themselves are distressed. Staff may comply only on account of the fact that access to higher education is not a privilege, but a civic right (Kogan *et al.* 1994:15) for learners. In other cases they may comply because policy is imposed upon them and not because they appreciate the vast benefits that increased access and the accompanying diversity have brought into higher education.

## **5.6 DIVERSITY AND THE NEW INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE**

The issue of diversity has already been dealt with at length in Chapter 4. Nonetheless, the researcher wishes to discuss the factors already presented in that chapter in the South African higher education context. This decision is motivated by the fact that in South Africa issues of diversity (although highly eruptive and critical) have not received recognition for a long time. Therefore major resolutions in this regard must still be made. Diversity is a controversial aspect not only in South African universities, but also in higher education in general, especially where academics differ in race, status, gender, ethnicity, culture and values. Inasmuch as "diverse populations on campuses" (Smith & Schonfeld 2000:17) are invaluable, diversity has a great potential to present daunting challenges to these diverse groups.

It is reasonable to imagine that academics of different races, gender and ethnic groups have attained the level of maturity and intellectual adroitness that would enable them to function together harmoniously. Diversity would thus be supporting and propelling change and transformation of higher education, sustaining or even improving the quality of higher education

envisaged in South Africa today. However, the situation is not as simple as it is thought of; the reality is that many academics are losing the battle against change and transformation within their institutions as well as the quality of their work environments (McInnis 2000:51), for the simple reason that they cannot function in unison. "Affirmative action appointments" (Randell & Bitzer as cited in Greyling 2001:1) made by many universities in response to policy imperatives which, on the one hand, have a great potential to restore the balance in an unbalanced employment system have, on the other hand, great potential to lead to cultural problems. Undermining of culture is an aspect which is reflected strongly by most traditional structures and practices within universities which still do not seem supportive of diverse staff populace. Hence a "thorough examination" (NCHE 1996) of staff satisfaction is imperative.

Although the "cultural orientations of the institutions" are seen by many to "belong to a bygone era" (*Business Day* of 25 May 2000), institutional cultures and climates do contribute greatly as factors which do not promote unity in higher education. In contradiction, however, these are said to be hostile and unaccommodative, particularly to academics of diverse cultures, races and gender. Institutions have not as yet changed and prepared the "climatic conditions" to be inclusive of different people. This is also observed by the government through its National Plan on Higher Education that change of institutional cultures is an important strategy that institutions have largely ignored. This is the case especially in HWIs where it is suggested that the prevailing culture alienates rather than accommodates black academics, making it difficult for such institutions to recruit and retain black staff.

The institutional context for diversity is influenced by several interacting dimensions that include among other things, the historical legacy of the inclusion or exclusion of different groups of a campus, its structural diversity, the representation of racial/ethnic groups, the psychological climate

(individual perceptions and attitudes), and a behavioural dimension that includes intergroup relations and interactions that occur inside and outside the classroom (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson & Allen 2000:9). For the reason mentioned a thorough survey of diversity issues needs to form the core of every higher education institution in transition. Obviously, the opening up of opportunities for a greater diversity of race, gender and cultural groups should have been preceded by a reorientation in the attitudes and approach (NCHE 1996:65) of academic staff, both the traditional and the non-traditional staff. Otherwise, "if we do not dare broach this problem, we bury our heads in the sand" and the effects are well known to all the interested parties in higher education (Thorens 1996:273). Smith and Schonfeld (2000:17) support this foregoing assertion and moot that, "investigations into the benefits of diversity have the potential to further our understanding of the dimensions of diversity and their impact on our campuses. They also have the potential to instigate stronger, expanded, and more concerted diversity efforts on our campuses that can be linked to the needs and the well-being of society".

Although it may appear to the onlooker as though diversity is a problem localised only in certain institutions, that kind of thinking does not suffice in South Africa. Badsha (2000:22) claims that the ethos prevailing at many South African campuses has not been conducive to supporting increasingly diverse students and staff. Diversity turns out to be a problematic area in both historically black institutions (HBIs) and historically white institutions (HWIs) alike and these institutions struggle incessantly with the historical legacies of apartheid, even though a number of anti-discriminatory policies have been posted within institutions. It is a fact, however, that HWIs have a bigger chunk to swallow, as they strive to overcome their historical legacies of exclusion that resulted in the creation of HBIs (Hurtado *et al.* 2000:10).

The problems associated with this aspect of diversity should not, however, override the important benefits that academics, students and institutions can accrue from it. It has become common practice in South Africa that when reference is made to issues of diversity, only problems are highlighted, while the benefits are ignored. Although the word "diversity" means "different" or "variety", many people seldom think of the variety of benefits it carries, but rather think of the variety of problems it brings. For South Africa, problems of diversity are brought by the fact that black and white South Africans feel more comfortable looking at themselves as two sides of a coin, or the negative and positive poles of an electrode and rejoice in the false thinking that they are totally incompatible. Van Rooyen (2001:28) declares this dichotomy as a major problem for South Africans as regards diversity, since they usually "lock up" their minds only on to the problems and never on to the benefits of diversity. This behaviour is not unfounded, but is promoted by the everyday life of higher education academics in South Africa. According to Smith and Schonfeld (2000:16) discussions about diversity in higher education today are filled with contradiction and paradox. Many conservatives have fears that increased participation and diversity inexorably raise questions about and cause tensions among quality, efficiency and resources (NCHE 1996:65). This is, in any case, not totally true, because if handled and approached carefully and intelligently, diversity will bring important benefits and give meaning, not only to academic staff, but also to higher education beneficiaries.

### **5.6.1 The benefits of diversity and academic staff satisfaction**

The South African history should not obscure the immense contribution that a new differentiated and diverse higher education system can make to the socio-economic and educational objectives (CHE 2000b:16) of this country.



Since the South African higher education is complex and unique because of the form of transformation and change that it is constantly undergoing, it is imperative that all those entrusted with the responsibility to run it, are able to demonstrate academic adroitness in the subject matter they teach. In addition they need to be fully conversant with the issues of diversity (Mapesela 2002:1). As trustees they should be fully prepared to deal with the ever-increasing diversity of both students and staff profiles which has now become the norm within higher education, especially in HWUs.

Diversity is made even more important by the fact that it is policy driven. The policy imperatives for an open and a responsive higher education system [cf. The White Paper 3 on Higher Education (RSA DoE 1997) and the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997)] are rapidly bringing into the higher education landscape an interesting array of diverse student (Blight, Davis & Olsen 1999:16) and staff needs, attitudes and expectations. It is through giving cognisance to these needs, attitudes and expectations that universities can profit from the wealth of diversity located in staff and students. The insistence of different policy initiatives for universities to give recognition to diversity further evinces its importance. The Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998b) and the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998a) with their inherent punitive enforcement strategies for universities have also left universities with fewer options but to consider diversity issues as a matter of priority. Smith and Schonfeld (2000:17) in support of this factor say that diversity remains an imperative in which higher education has a major role to play. This is a role to ascertain the impact of diversity initiatives and the value of diverse populations on campuses. Diversity is not only an issue of paramount importance to higher education, but to academic staff too. Thus there is a burning need for such staff to show commitment; reconsider their outlook and approaches towards diversity issues; as well as to see diversity as an essential component for their success in their teaching and the survival of their universities in the new dispensation.

Diversity is seen as an important tool for enhancing and maintaining the viability and vitality of campuses (Smith & Schonfeld 2000:20). The presence in higher education of the critical mass of diverse people creates wider opportunities for social support, availability of role models and mentors, and opportunities for individual staff members to be seen as individuals. Furthermore it breaks down stereotypes (Smith & Schonfeld 2000), presenting learners especially from disadvantaged groups with mentors and role models, a factor that was non-existent for learners in universities in the past. This aspect creates an all-inclusive institutional climate, a quintessential factor for the enhancement of satisfaction of all the occupants of an institution. The above-mentioned authors do not refute the fact that diversity issues - particularly concerning race - can produce conflict, especially if they are not undertaken conscientiously. Despite all of that, they also see a great potential for diversity to open the way for increased satisfaction with the general institutional ambience.

Academics in higher education are sure to reap the palatable fruits that a diverse populace (staff or students) can bear. Nonetheless, for the South African context where diversity is unique owing to the racial fragmentation and the associated inequities in terms of student and staff access opportunities, institutional facilities and capacities (RSA MoE 2001:42), a careful approach towards diversity issues is imperative. Academics therefore must possess relevant skills and competencies to successfully glean and learn from the cultural heterogeneity which is responsible for the variance in perspectives and approaches that members of the different race, gender and cultural groups have towards their work. The challenge for academics is to find a common root from which to grow. Their important task is to highlight, exploit and rejoice in the richness of diversity which has as its focal point the intersection of heterogeneous ideas, values, cultures, norms, interests, attitudes and perceptions of different people, as mentioned in Chapter 4. Diversity must be celebrated by all within the system (Hobbs 1999:445).

Although this foregoing section has dwelled mainly on diversity as regards race, culture and gender, it is worth noting that diversity issues in South African universities are not only confined to these aspects. The fact that universities are also compelled to diversify even their programmes, courses, delivery modes and activities (De Wit 2000:8) is a lucid indication of the diversity of factors that universities must deal with. Engagement in higher education technological innovation is a good example of the diversification of delivery modes in higher education.

## **5.7 TECHNOLOGICAL IMPETUS**

As already pointed out in the previous chapters (*vide* Chapters 3 and 4) the pervasiveness of technology (Blimling 2000:6) has turned out to be an important factor influencing academic organisations (Sporn 1999:6). In recent years the impact of new technologies has become a major driving force for change in universities (Green & Hayward 1997:15). This is not the case in South Africa only, but in higher education worldwide as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. In South Africa the role of information and communications technology in advancing the reconstruction and development agenda has been recognised by the government through its National Plan for Higher Education. However, the revolution that this aspect will spawn and the impact it will have on the societies are likely to have far-reaching effects.

Technology has the potential to transform higher education towards the new knowledge by creating a new education model (Cloete & Moja 2001:252). Through the use of computers and information technology higher education's ability to carry out research and to deliver high quality, cost-effective education to students will be enhanced. In addition, information technology provides the possibility of extending classrooms to any part of the world,

increasing access to the previously disadvantaged learners and linking the higher education institutions of the world to one another. Besides, it makes information easily accessible and furthermore creates opportunities for the learners of the world to exchange information.

The benefits of technology to higher education should never turn us blind to its potential threats to staff in these institutions. Staff, especially black disadvantaged staff, view technology as a big challenge (Powell 2001:3). A greater challenge for these staff is knowing how to transfer it into a new context, as well as how to develop and articulate it into their own pedagogical requirements – an even bigger problem to those academics coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Most universities, even those that traditionally offered contact lessons, are shifting their focus towards systems of open learning and e-learning, utilising new technologies to reach out to their learners in different places. The expectations in this regard for academic and support staff are enormous. The multitude of skills that staff in the information field must learn as well as the routine tasks that they must perform, can prove to be overwhelming. This becomes a concern because technology as an externally and widely visioned change leaves staff with no choices to decide whether to participate or not. Even so, it is not mere participation that is demanded from staff, but rather one that is in tune with the pace of the new technological developments; otherwise the innovation may be left fragile and unsustainable. The problem in this regard is that academics are not like the bits and bytes of a computer (Rabichund & Cilliers 2001:29), they can only fall into the tune of change gradually. Therefore the number of megabytes that they download from their websites (Rabichund & Cilliers 2001; Adams 2000:7) should not necessarily judge efficiency as well as the value of technology to them. But note must be made of how efficiently they execute the core functions of the university, i.e. teaching, research and service to communities, as well as how efficiently they can use and integrate technological innovations into these triad functions. The whole idea of the

university becoming increasingly involved in technological innovations implies that lecturers should put their lecture notes on the web, so that they find ample time to concentrate on the more human needs in pedagogy, for example in encouraging and nurturing learners (Inayatullah & Gidley 2000:2).

Technology also poses another challenge for academics in that it represents a depersonalised form of teaching. Although it reduces teaching loads, it has the potential to undermine the true value of higher education (Green & Hayward 1997:4) and the capacity of staff, bringing an end to the traditional humanistic nature and dimensions of the original university (Inayatullah & Gidley 2000:4). The misappropriation and absolutisation of technology may therefore stifle "rather than stimulate the sublime mind, and producing technocrats rather than professionals, pendants not thinkers and specialists who as is commonly cliched know more and more about less and less and cannot communicate with each other" (Mitchell 1999:22).

It is for this reason and others to be presented in the following deliberations that most people, particularly those not accustomed to the merits of information technology, may be "technophobic", putting forth, on the one hand, unfounded allegations for their phobia and claiming the following about technology:

- It takes over a greater portion of their daily tasks that have for a long time been their responsibilities.
- It creates a bigger gap between developing and developed countries.
- It changes the composition of labour.
- It causes bodily harm.
- It denies workers their privacy (Helmut cited in Mokhethi 2001:7).

On the other hand, the same technophobic staff may be torn by the emergence of a technological university vision, which may result in staff

wondering and worrying about their future roles. They may contemplate whether they are already undergoing a metamorphosis from being academics and intellectuals, and will in the future assume a mentorship role to being "communicators, brokers, sages-on stage, information automatons or learning catalysts" (Inayatullah & Gidley 2000:5).

Some of these speculations are not unfounded, but emanate from observing the real academic life experiences of some academics. These will be true in cases where the introduction of technological innovations in institutions is not preceded by relevant preparation in the form of training and a reorientation of staff attitudes towards change, in this instance technological change.

Even for those academics already accustomed to the use of technology, a mere introduction without prior retraining may not be deemed sufficient in the new culture of communication and information technology that we now live in. The potency of innovations of this nature in higher education can, and will be realised sufficiently with new attempts to retrain staff. In contradiction, this is not a reality in higher education institutions, particularly in South Africa, where financial barriers stand in the way of such wishes and in the way of progress thereof.

An even greater challenge lies with staff pooled from the previously disadvantaged groups who, coming from the education system that gave them only the minimum, may not be conversant with the basic technological skills, not to mention the latest revolutions in the new culture of information technology. For them this new culture may prove overwhelming and unattainable.

This technological transformation and the other factors expounded above do not only have a devastating impact on staff satisfaction, but in South Africa

they have culminated in the emergence of a new educational landscape surrounded by a myriad of crises situations.

## **5.8 THE CHANGING HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE**

The South African higher education has been shaped to a great extent by some or even all of the factors described above. The system experienced significant changes in the 1990s. Most of these changes were engineered by the post-apartheid legislations (Gultig 2000:37) and have also resulted in a new taxonomy of institutions not characterised as being historically white or black or as having been crafted by the apartheid legacy. This new taxonomy was primarily designed on the basis of what currently goes on within them as a result of their response to change and change policies and transformation.

This idea is shared by Cloete, Bunting and Kulati (2000:8) who concur that a new differentiation of the institutional landscape is beginning to emerge, one which is less governed by the historical legacy but by a new set of challenges facing higher education institutions. This emerging classification of institutions has serious implications for the working lives of academic staff. It presents a different set of requirements and pressures on them.

According to Cloete *et al.* (2000) institutions are now labelled in the following manner:

### **5.8.1 Entrepreneurial-expanding institutions**

These institutions are the ones that have made a significant shift to explore and make efficient use of the offerings of the new market environment. They are now functioning more like businesses and less like service providers. These institutions have managed to diversify both their programme offerings,

mode of offering, and money-making strategies, overcoming the common financial problems that most universities are known for today. Gultig (2000:8) concurs with this foregoing deliberation by saying that the HWUs made a rapid move from cultural conservatism to adopt a new entrepreneurial nature. Academics in these institutions have probably also made a mindshift from the epistemological university thinking to be more entrepreneurial and innovative. If these institutions have managed to achieve a relatively stable environment, then it can be argued that academic staff are to some extent satisfied, particularly with the certainty of their positions. However, it is also important not to make generalisations, as some academics may be frightened by the fact that they must quit their traditional ways of carrying out their chores and must adopt a completely different approach to deal with new situations and work competently and with a different market.

### **5.8.2 Traditional élite institutions**

Gultig (2000:37) concurs with Cloete *et al.* (1999) that these institutions are the historically most prestigious, sometimes defined as white liberal English-speaking universities. These institutions are said to strive to maintain their pre-1994 character, whilst at the same time responding to the post-1994 policy of access to the minority groups. Such institutions struggle to retain their sense of traditional mission and culture (Gultig 2000), which traditional academics fear is eroding. These academics view the government with its myriad policies as an adversary rather than a rightful stakeholder in higher education. They regard it as an element of interference in what they claim to be their sphere of control and functionality. Although some institutions seem to rejoice in being traditional and resistant to change, others have proven resilient and have allowed themselves to mutate.



### 5.8.3 Stable emerging institutions

These are institutions that are emerging from a mix of HWUs and HBUs, both departing from a similar but less privileged point. They are trying hard to get firmly established in this new era (Cloete *et al.* 2000). Stakeholders in these institutions have a certain degree of stability, since - although they are faced with new emerging situations - they have been blessed by the presence of strong leaders who give them hope that they stand to succeed in the midst of these trying times.

One would think that academics working in these institutions would be the most comfortable. Nevertheless, this may not be the case, since today the more stable institutions are compelled by policy to merge with the more disadvantaged, to share their resources and uplift their status. This means that such staff now possess fresh fears, and are becoming increasingly uncertain about the emerging situation. They are apprehensive and anxious about the sustainability of their positions and their institutions in general (Brennan 1997:9).

### 5.8.4 Unstable/uncertain institutions

Cloete *et al.* (2000) regard these types of institutions as "contestations amongst different governance and stakeholder structures. Council vs. management, student/staff vs. management, and transformation forums vs. councils". The management and leadership of these institutions are shaky and volatile, hence the inability of the institutions to anchor themselves firmly, especially as regards finances. Matters such as this (financial instability) are conditions which are "widely perceived by academics to hinder the quality of their teaching" (McInnis 2000:143) to evoke feelings of uncertainty, fears of job loss through retrenchment and relocation, as well as loss of work enthusiasm in general. Champy (2001:15) says that such incidents lead staff

to encounter feelings of fear and cynicism which actually emanate from a possibility of loss or job change. Whilst some institutions may have unfounded feelings of uncertainty, some are truly crisis-ridden.

### **5.8.5 Crisis-ridden institutions**

These institutions have for most of their existence been rocked by problems of varying nature, for example losing students in great numbers, suffering dwindling financial assistance, student unrest, loss of key academics, declining academic standards, high student debt, alleged irrelevance of courses, and allegations of corruption by management (Gultig 2000:38). Their situation does not seem to improve, but rather it is deteriorating day by day so that these institutions have now become conflict-ridden and financially bankrupt. For these reasons they face closure or assimilation by the fully-fledged and more stable ones. In addition to these problems, staff and students have no confidence whatsoever in the leadership of these institutions. Problems of this nature leave staff in total despair, job uncertainty (Graham & Bennet 1992; Henschel 2001; Oss 2001) and also fears of loss of their academic freedom, the freedom which all academics in higher education cherish so much.

From the foregoing exposition that the new higher educational landscape and its impact on academic staff, it becomes apparent that the system is heavily crisis-ridden and that it is highly entangled in problems of varying nature and magnitude which seem to call for serious attention.

## **5.9 PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Universities in South Africa are surrounded by problems of a worrying nature - "a state of permanent crisis" as asserted by Dias (1998:368). Because of this,

universities have put forth efforts to pull out of the problems, although this does not seem to be an easy task to achieve. Some of these major crises that face universities (Barnett 1990:3) of South Africa today will be discussed briefly in the ensuing section and their implications for academic staff and staff satisfaction will also be examined.

### **5.9.1 Funding, mergers and rationalisation**

Many business enterprises have long reached a point where they can no longer rely and thrive on their own resources but must collaborate, network and form strategic alliances to develop and exploit upcoming innovations in technology and other crucial areas (Sizer 2001:229). Universities in South Africa are also facing an equally challenging situation wherein resources are vastly unbalanced across different institutions, particularly between the HWIs and the HBIs. This position is a major driving force behind the impelling need for universities in South Africa to merge and yet academics are divided in the way they feel about this move (institutional merging). Whist, on the one hand, some academics are triumphant about the idea owing to the benefits they may accrue from it, some, on the other hand, are in total despair, despondent and disheartened by the looming possibility of loss of their jobs.

Universities are not only compelled to collaborate to equitably share resources, but for some it is the lack of finances and financial stability that seem to be pressing for identification of ways to avoid extinction. Some of these universities have made acknowledgements (Eckel 2001) that they must identify and put to swift use some alternative measures and turning strategies to try and raise funds and rectify their dilapidated financial status, whereas some have only tried in vain to engage in such efforts.

Many varying reasons can be ascribed for this state of affairs, e.g. a "leadership crisis" (McClenney 2001:27); dwindling student enrolments (RSA

MoE 2001:11); mismanagement of funds; and - most importantly - the decline in government funding (Meade 1998; Nicolson 2001). It does not really matter what the reasons for this sorry financial state are, but what does matter, is that it is an aspect placing very serious implications on academic staff and their satisfaction. Most universities have had to downsize (Ashkenas 2001:103; Eckel 2001:106) the numbers of their staff. This means that some academic staff have had to leave their jobs through the rationalisation process (McFarlane 2001:1) which universities must implement as one of the turning strategies. Some universities have had to venture into institutional mergers (RSA DoE 1997:14), whilst some await disbundlement.

According to the CHE Report, the "CHE advises that the restructuring of the higher education system to ensure its sustainability, including in particular the efficient and effective use of resources, requires a reduction in the present number of institutions through combining them" (CHE 1998/1999:56-57). Whereas this argument is based on the fact that the current higher education landscape is fragmented and tethered in the apartheid past, it has the potential to unnerve academics. The thought of having institutions reduced in number may be wrongly interpreted by some staff to mean closure of institutions. This might happen regardless of the fact that the government through its National Plan clearly allays staff fears by pointing out that merging "does not imply that some institutions would be closed and discontinue offering higher education programmes" (RSA MoE 2001:67).

Rationalisation and retrenchment of staff do not only send chills and bring fears to the staff who are retrenched, but also send shock waves to the managers who are charged with the unpleasant task of implementing retrenchment decisions. Sometimes for these managers the toll is even greater (Paige 2001:15). They undergo severe pain and stress at being the people to bring the tidings of doom and many get depressed as a result of this process.

In addition, the people in a post-retrenchment culture encounter an erosion of trust, a devastation of morale and a general feeling of fear and paranoia. Their outside contact with retrenched staff, many of whom experience a classic mourning period and a time of traumatic recovery towards what may be perceived as management brutality, is a sad one. Paige (2001) regards this situation as ironic, as these above-mentioned factors are counter-productive to the efficacy which rationalisation aims to accomplish.

Whilst it is for a defined cause that universities engage in all these activities, academic staff oftentimes become excruciated by the mere thought of changes such as institutional mergers (RSA DoE 1997:14). This is because institutions do not choose merging partners, but they may have to link with those institutions that the government determines for them, because the government finds them logistically appropriate. Unfortunately the match-making may become a cause for concern, since institutions themselves may not trust one another, not to mention that they may be incompatible. This is one of the likely reasons why academic staff are filled with anxiety, feelings of frustration, depression, stress, fear of change (Hay, Fourie & Hay 2001:103), widespread academic demotivation and insecurity (McFarlane 2001:1). In most cases staff fear that "they may lose their jobs as well as their financial impact thereof" (Hay *et al.* 2001). Vista University is a good and recent example of an institution which faced a crisis situation similar to that deliberated above. This university was forced to retrench 20% of its staff as part of a downsizing plan (*Mail & Guardian* of 17 May 2001). This issue has already sparked fire among Vista's academics who felt they were "kept entirely in the dark, bewildered and demoralised" (*Mail & Guardian* of 17 May 2001) by all the controversies surrounding the future of their institution.

On the one hand, the National Plan (RSA MoE 2001) acknowledges the importance of mergers and the highly regarded merging of higher education

institutions as a global phenomenon driven by governments to enhance quality, produce economies of scale (Fielden & Markham 1997:2) and to strengthen national higher education systems in the context of declining resources. However, it also acknowledges how demanding and time-consuming the facilitation and management of mergers may prove to be for higher education institutions, especially with their already limited capacity at systemic and institutional levels. This means that staff need to be highly committed and dedicated to make mergers a success.

Tacit reasons are given for mergers. They may, for example, lead to "important differences" (Hannan & Silver 2000:53) depending on the institutions that are amalgamating. McFarlane (2001:1) mockingly supports this assertion and argues that the word "rationalisation" contains the word "rational", meaning there is some form of rationale behind the proposed rationalisations and institutional mergers. However, this same author also argues that rationalisation and mergers cannot be observed with any rationality for as long as they lead to substantial job losses, downsizing of the arts faculties and having conspiracies to close certain institutions. The truth is that the effects of mergers to academics extend way beyond the good intentions. For these academics, the important benefits that may be gleaned from mergers are seen as an excuse to interfere and as a symbol of infringement in their own sphere sovereignty - academic freedom and institutional autonomy. These benefits which include sharing of resources, expertise and ideas, as well as the limiting of duplication of activities (cf. NCHE 1996; White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation of 1997; Higher Education Act of 1997; CHE 2000b; and the new National Plan for Higher Education Transformation of 2001) are often overshadowed by anticipated disadvantages. Hay (2001:10), in support of these foregoing submissions, says that "the implications for merged staff are prevalent and even traumatic, namely working with different cultures, new organisational structures, new physical infrastructure, different students, etc". Fielden and

Markham (1997:2) also add that mergers may lead to the disruption and relocation of staff and students, different philosophies and priorities, as well as the poor quality of the junior partners' academic programmes. But, most importantly, staff fear that they will lose their academic freedom and autonomy.

### **5.9.2 Fear of loss of academic freedom and institutional autonomy**

Many institutional changes and transformations have occurred in the South African higher education system with the change of government and the introduction of several policy initiatives. Academic staff have not remained immune to these changes and have been affected in many ways already extrapolated in the preceding deliberations. Their traditional roles as teachers and researchers have changed dramatically and they (the academics) must indeed accept this reality that their roles are changing (Weber 1999:10). Academics now have to exercise some flexibility to accommodate the new demands and needs of the learners, parents, government, the labour market and all higher education stakeholders – both internal and external to the institutions (Harvey & Knight 1996:68). Their satisfaction may be affected if they perceive all these as an infringement of their academic freedom. The shift entailed in this trend away from the academic autonomy and freedom can lead to feelings of isolation and a decline in motivation (Schonfeld 1996:2) among academic staff. For staff a shift away from their freedom exemplifies a nightmare, regardless of the good intentions of the stakeholders to steer higher education and ensure accountability for all its actions (Harvey & Knight 1996:63). This then means that they (the academics) need to revisit what their academic freedom and institutional autonomy must now entail in this new higher education landscape. Maybe they need to recraft and redefine (Weber 1999:10) their freedom and autonomy for the present time, further putting behind them the large measure of autonomy they have enjoyed ever since the medieval origins of the university (Barnett 1990:11).

Even though academics' fears for the loss of academic freedom may be genuine, De Mouro and Levy (2001:5) warn that there is a tandem need for academics to make a clear distinction between shying away from accountability and responsibility, using autonomy as a weapon for unwanted defence against needed accountability.

It is not only the change in the roles of academics (Weber 1999:10) and the increasing demands that magnify their fears over loss of academic freedom and loss of control in their own sphere of functionality, but there are infinite other factors and deficiencies which threaten them. The current development of "policies and procedures and detailed job descriptions" (Kinnear & Sutherland 2001:18) that higher education in South Africa is involved in, with little or lack of practical application may also bother academics. The uncountable policies may on their own stifle the concerned academics who may not even be so well versed with the demands of such policies. Likewise, too tight and clear-cut procedures and detailed descriptions curtailed in these policies may only further serve to limit the academic freedom of the concerned academics, denying them the use of the power of critique and creativity - aspects that are highly sought in the knowledge workers of today.

Since change in the higher education landscape seems inevitable, institutions need to support, encourage and offer appropriate development for their academics. This should be done to assist staff not only to make the necessary mind-shifts for, but also to re-craft and redefine their activities as academics so that such fit with the changing demands of all stakeholders. Indeed, the new National Plan for Higher Education advocates for the development of relevant institutional policies, support and training programmes for academic staff in higher education to induce human behaviour (Joubert & Noah 2000:17) that befits institutions in transition.



### **5.9.3 Lack of development opportunities and performance management systems in universities**

The importance of staff development was discussed in the context of transforming higher education systems in Chapter 4 (*vide* Section 4.6.7). Since the discussion was, however, not exhaustive and specific, the researcher will engage in further deliberations, placing more emphasis on the need for staff development in the South African higher education.

Although staff development programmes are regarded as a hoax by some people, they are also regarded as a helpful tool in empowerment (Albertyn & Kapp 2001:32) for staff in higher education, who initially have feelings of dissatisfaction, lack of assertiveness, inability to cope, lack of control and fear of failure.

In effect, developmental programmes - whether in the form of induction, mentorship, ongoing training or as ways of managing performance - are no longer an option for higher education but have become essential, particularly in light of the radical changes facing South African higher education (Buchner & Hay 1998:25). Harvey and Knight (1996:178) reassure us that, if higher education is to be transformed, some common practices such as continuing professional learning are imperative. An antithesis, however, exists in many South African universities, especially those undergoing rigorous transformations. On the one hand, some universities are now starting to run ambitious training programmes for all their staff as well as management training for heads of departments, deans, etc. (Schonfeld 1996:3). On the other hand, many universities are only busy preparing and putting up skills development plans according to the demands of the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998a) and the National Plan for Higher Education Transformation (RSA MoE 2001). What this implies, is that the journey to a transformed and changed higher education has been entered into and will for a significant

period of time continue to happen with staff who received little or no relevant preparation to deal with the changing higher education landscape. This lack of preparedness for change and transformation may be a source for crises in both the lives of new staff needing induction and the traditional staff in need of continuous development. Harvey and Knight (1996:178) posit that without any development, it is difficult for academics to have both the freedom and ability to promote transformative or quality learning among students.

In the South African universities, the inevitable emerging situation which is a legacy of the past history and apartheid era, is also marked by the presence of diverse staff and students, differences in culture as well as attitudes and values. In many cases this situation gives rise to problems which cannot be solved through competence of academic staff in the academic discourse alone. It is therefore important and imperative that academics should be adequately trained to handle friction and disenchantment (Randell & Bitzer as cited in Greyling 2001:1) that is likely to erupt among new groups of staff and students and the traditional occupants in higher education. This will help them handle in a mature manner the issues of diversity that are brought into higher education by changing demographics (Chatman *et al.* 1998:749). The volatile nature of the new, emerging higher education landscape demands that institutions consider incorporating into their skills development plans some form of training geared towards equipping the multicultural academic populace with life skills for survival within a changing and a changed academic environment. Skills development should not only aim at increasing the productivity of the institutions concerned, but should benefit the academics as well.

The researcher believes that if only universities could follow in the premise that both initial and periodic pedagogical training for academic staff does not only boost educational quality (Kaburise 2000:17) but is also a prerequisite for staff enthusiasm (Teichler 2001:5), many problems associated with staff

dissatisfaction could be avoided. It is also worth noting that staff development must "come out differently depending on the individual, the situation in time and space and the nature of the relationship" (Webb 1996:57). For South Africa, staff development programmes and endeavours should indeed come out differently depending on individuals, as well as the situation within which individual staff are expected to function during this time of transformation and transition. In this way developmental programmes will be relevant and will aid staff to be assertive in facing any freshly emerging higher education challenges. In Chapter 4 (*vide* Section 4.6.7) it was mentioned that staff development in areas of induction and continuing training has been neglected, even though according to Elton (2000:3) these are prerequisites for teaching excellence.

#### **5.9.3.1 *Induction and mentorship***

Staff induction and the appointment of mentors are aspects which are rarely done in many institutions. Several reasons may be ascribed to this situation. Perhaps it is because of the academic freedom and autonomy that academics and their institutions like indulging in, or maybe a genuine lack of personpower (mentors) which forces institutions to leave new appointees to experience a good deal of awareness shocks (Haworth & Conrad 1997:131) as they come face to face with the work experiences. Seemingly these beginner academics are also left to visualise and swim (Glendhill 1996) their way through to success in the academic world. Buchner and Hay (1998) call this situation the practice shock, which they believe culminates in feelings of frustration, isolation, lowered self-concept, lowered aspirations and even lowered expectations of students.

Katz (2001:5) attaches great value to provision of induction or mentorship programmes to beginner staff and moots that this kind of support makes them feel valued and prevents them from defecting to competitive institutions.

It is important to note that the nature of the environment as well as the kind and reasons for transformation in South African universities dictate that development endeavours should not be directed only at the novice, but that there be some form of ongoing development, even for the rest of the academe.

### **5.9.3.2 *Ongoing staff development***

As already indicated above, staff development should not only be directed at new appointees, but should permeate all departments, levels and categories of staff and should be done regularly. In fact, staff development should become a lifelong professional activity (Brown 1985:25). Old, traditional/experienced staff need development for various reasons, namely:

- In-service training, for example, develops teaching skills more effectively than does initial training (Mingat & Suchout 2001:19).
- Extension (attainment of further academic qualifications or job specific study) (O'Sullivan, Ken & Ken 1988).
- Refreshment (avoidance of staleness and obsolescence in teaching).
- Conversion [needed when teaching a new subject (lateral) or when increasing managerial responsibilities after a promotion (vertical) conversion] (O'Sullivan, Ken & Ken 1988). This form of development is needed by academics to enhance and develop their skills in managing

pedagogy and further to equip them with administrative and management skills (Mingat & Suchout 2001:19).

- To assist academics to handle transformative teaching and learning (Harvey & Knight 1996:178).

The importance of continuing staff development is described by Dekker and Van Schalkwyk (cited in Mapesela 1997:9) as to ensure that teachers are acquainted with the use of the latest methods and aids of teaching and learning, as well as to advise them and orientate them with regard to new developments in the educational field. In addition, this form of development supports staff in the task of educating all types of learners in order to maintain the required level of education.

Another requisite for staff development emanates from the current situation involving academics in HBUs, particularly as regards research competence which - due to the legacy of the grossly unequal participation of various races in tertiary education (Baloro 2000:56) - is lagging far behind the research participation and output of HWUs. The research output of HBIs amounts to a disappointing 10% of all research outputs (RSA MoE 2001). Surely this must be frustrating for the academics working in these institutions, especially now that research funding for institutions will be based on research outputs (RSA MoE 2001:6).

The foregoing critique on staff development and the implications of its absence in South African higher education institutions has illuminated the importance of availing staff development opportunities, particularly in the context of transforming institutions. It is also equally important that proper performance management systems are used concurrently with the identified development programmes to keep track of the performance of staff and thus promote their career pathing and appraise them accordingly.

### **5.9.3.3 *Lack of performance management systems***

Performance management systems are a good way of enhancing the motivation of staff. Even though these systems may be foreign to higher education, their use in the business world can be traced back many years. However, since universities have now realised the need to shift to a more entrepreneurial nature (Kulati 2001:16), a similar approach is worth borrowing by higher education institutions. Great caution must be exercised though in borrowing ideas from the corporate world. It is important that whilst higher education adopts ideas and strategies from the business world, it must be cautious not to take that which was discarded by the business world decades ago, particularly now in the advent of the new millennium when high level innovations for change and transformation are highly sought (Joubert & Noah 2000).

Kinnear and Sutherland (2001:18) perceive performance management systems as important tools that may be used not only to motivate staff, but also to retain them at work. The acknowledgement of the value of performance management systems in enhancing staff satisfaction is made by Joubert and Noah (2000:18) who say that such systems can harness, direct, measure, evaluate and reward human effort, competence and talent for the realisation of the mission and vision of the organisation. These authors argue that this system is an important tool which not only the business world, but also the public enterprises can utilise to induce desired human behaviour, taking into consideration, however, not to encroach upon the passions and discretions (academic freedom) of individual staff members, since that could stifle motivation. A warning is, however, issued by Joubert and Noah (2000) that staff passions and discretions are essential elements in the lives of workers and must therefore be properly channelled to realise the desired institutional and individual outcomes lest staff indulge in them for their own selfish interests.

The obvious lack of performance management systems and opportunities for staff development could prove very detrimental to staff who must face new and emerging higher education challenges and changes. This lack of performance management systems is not only a drawback for academics, but can in this new dispensation spell doom for the envisaged quality of higher education and for higher education in general. This is because without proper performance management, institutions are likely to find themselves stuck with staff who do not perform according to the expectations.

The researcher is aware that the aspects discussed in this chapter – factors influencing staff satisfaction in transforming universities of South Africa - are not exhaustive. However, for the purposes of this study the factors highlighted are regarded as an ample basis for the empirical investigation to follow.

## **5.10 CONCLUSION**

The foregoing exposition is evidence that the problems and weaknesses of the South African higher education system are extensive and varied and they will not vanish "on their own or be overcome by institutions on their own" (CHE 2000b:15). There is also evidence of manifold factors of satisfaction, each with its own intense effects on academic staff, which obviously continue to challenge and threaten the sustainability of higher education in South Africa.

This means that loads of theory can do little to contribute towards the accomplishment of the apparent and massive transformation work that lies ahead. Theory alone is incapable of resolving those dilemmas linked to academic staff satisfaction that are produced by factors inherent to the higher

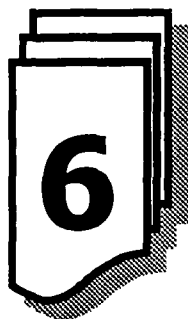
education institutions. For this reason, the theoretical perspectives on staff satisfaction explicated in this chapter and the preceding ones will only serve as a reasonable ground and as a point of departure for the empirical investigation to follow.

The actual investigation is aimed at identifying the *status quo* in a South African university in transformation as regards staff satisfaction and the driving forces behind its fluctuations. These are some of the things which must be confronted and addressed in a robust manner if outcries for quality higher education must receive attention from the academics.

The investigation involved the active participation of the academic staff concerned in completing questionnaires which were aimed at eliciting the expectations and gaining insight into their attitudes and experiences. This was followed by focus group discussions, and personal interviews with selected academics, selected UFS managers and representatives of selected workers unions and interest groups. It is hoped that this investigation will benefit the case study university (the UFS) and other higher education institutions with a history and context similar to that of the UFS in more ways than just one. This deduction is based on the assumption that these affective forces mentioned in the preceding deliberations impact on staff in all South African universities. The study is also deemed necessary since the turbulent environment of technology, globalisation, competition and the larger social needs that higher education must address, will leave no institution unchanged and unaffected in years to come (Eckel, Green & Hill 2001).



*Chapter*



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## **AN INVESTIGATION INTO ACADEMIC STAFF SATISFACTION IN A TRANSFORMING SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapters provided an exposition of the myriad of forces that drive change and that are responsible for the lack of stability in the higher education sector worldwide. There is evidence from the amassed corpuses of literature that these various change factors impact not only on the higher education environment, but also on the academic staff and their satisfaction. However, the assembly of literature in the foregoing chapters is not an end in itself. It exists to serve as a point of departure and a bridge to establish the cause and effect nexus between academic staff and factors impelling change in higher education, particularly in a transforming South African university. The empirical investigation to be undertaken is aimed at determining the exact implications of change and transformation on academic staff and academic staff satisfaction. The researcher hopes that this will avail

an opportunity to probe and gain insight into the feelings, attitudes and perceptions of academics.

This chapter therefore commences with the theoretical foundations of the study based on the ontological aspects of both the qualitative and the quantitative research methodologies. Aspects such as the nature of research, research methods and procedures, sampling, the aims and objectives, methods of data collection and analysis, piloting mechanisms and research ethics will be discussed as important factors from which any sound research must be grounded. This synopsis will be followed by the presentation and analysis of collected data.

## **6.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of this research survey has been aligned with the two paradigms which have dominated the broad discourse of social research in the field of education for decades. Both these paradigms contribute their benefits to the research investigation.

### **6.2.1 Qualitative research**

Implicit to the qualitative investigation is the assumption that participants are given adequate opportunity to voice their own thoughts and feelings. According to Imber (1997:14) the assumption is that participation gives adequate voice to diverse constituencies. This is possible because qualitative investigation lends itself to the description of opinions and attitudes; it tests theories, determines facts and statistical analyses, delineating any existing relationships between variables and assumptions (Garbers 1996:283).

In a qualitative investigation the human being is viewed as a "subject of knowledge principally capable of reflection, rationality, discursive communication and social interaction" (Kelchtermans & Schratz cited in Waghid 2000:27). In this investigation the researcher investigates academic staff satisfaction in a transforming South African university with an assumption that academic staff satisfaction is an issue highly affected by events, interactions and the context within which staff must function. With the qualitative aspect of this investigation, i.e. the open-ended questions, the focus group discussions and the personal interviews the researcher therefore hopes to arrive at an understanding and gain insight into how academics perceive their work life as determined by factors internal and external to their work environment. Academics are accorded an opportunity to reflect, discuss and become rational about the manifold factors found within their workplace and how these factors affect them. According to Waghid (2000:28), when a researcher employs qualitative rational research discourse, he or she involves both himself/herself and the participant in dynamic meaning-making within which both of them act as agents of change who suggest possibility for renewal and development. In this study the participants are requested to suggest ways in which factors that cause them dissatisfaction could be dealt with in their institution.

It must be noted, however, that the growing interest in the utilisation of the qualitative research techniques which arose from the realisation that there are fundamental differences between the study of natural objects and humankind (Fourie 1996), does not prevent researchers from continuing with the use of quantitative research techniques. This is because quantitative research methods do possess benefits of their own which cannot be overridden by those of the qualitative research methods (*vide* Section 1.7).

### 6.2.2 Quantitative research

Although growing numbers of researchers, particularly in the field of education, are turning away from the positivistic approach to research underlying the quantitative paradigm and are increasingly using an ethnographic research design incorporating phenomenological or qualitative research methodologies, quantitative research methodology still stands out as a trusted method in that it can emphasise empirical quantifiable observations (Mafisa 1999). The objective of the phenomenological research approach is to make investigators understand the exact meaning of events, interactions and relationships with and among people in specific situations and specific contexts (Garbers 1996). This furthermore allows the researcher to understand the behaviour of his or her target population in any given context, as human behaviour is usually shaped by what people experience within certain contexts.

The quantitative domain attempts to prove assumptions on the basis of statistical data inferences (Strydom 1997:86). In the case studied here, the quantitative research methodology afforded the researcher a chance to reach to all permanent, lecturing academic staff (more than 500) (*vide* Section 1.6.3), and this population could not be reached through a qualitative approach only. Fourie (1996:246) moots that a quantitative investigation emphasises empirically quantifiable observations which are analysed through the use of scientific tools. In this type of research opinions and attitudes are described and their effect is weighed in relation to events or other variables on a scale. Since measuring scales are used to fit the responses of a large population into predetermined response categories, the results of a quantitative survey can be generalised. This, however, depends on the careful development of the research instrument, its reliability and validity (Mouton 2001). Garbers (1996) postulates that quantitative research tests theories, as well as determines facts and statistical analysis in order to

illustrate relationships between variables and prediction. In his postulation Garbers (1996) asserts that quantitative research is based on the assumption that, if a person knows exactly what ailed mankind, then one could control and effectively combat and avert all evils and defects. The merits of the two approaches encourage researchers to opt for their collaborative usage.

### **6.2.3 Multi-method approach**

Although many researchers regard the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies as mutually exclusive and often view the qualitative approach as the antithesis of quantitative research (Waghid 2000:25), the methodology of this study combined both these types of research investigations (*vide* Section 1.7). This conscious decision to combine the methods was brought about by the fact that the qualitative-quantitative continuum can be transcended when the researcher does not view the two methods as competitive, mutually antagonistic and ideal (absolute types) (Waghid 2000) on their own. Data was therefore initially, i.e. in the pilot phase, drawn from a purposive range of participants who completed personally designed questionnaires on academic staff satisfaction in a transforming South African university. In the second phase, i.e. the actual survey, data was then collected from the rest of the permanent, lecturing academics. The qualitative component was catered for through open-ended questions in the research instrument, and through conducting focus group discussions as well as personal interviews with selected staff and the university management. The questions asked aimed at creating for the participants an opportunity to present factors that affect their satisfaction other than those included in the questionnaire. In addition, the participants were requested to explain how factors causing academic staff dissatisfaction can be dealt with. The objective of open-ended questions was to provide the respondents with the freedom to provide their own insight into the problem under investigation, revealing how they felt about their jobs (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister 1994; Mouton 2001).

It is worth noting that open-ended questions are popular for their ability to protect the participant from being forced to respond only to those issues that the researcher feels relate to the problem; they do not force words into the mouths of the respondents.

Despite the fundamental differences in the premises and the epistemological traditions of the quantitative and qualitative research approaches, the two methods should not be seen as opposing or mutually exclusive. Fourie (1996:247) and Waghid (2000) both allude to this foregoing contention. The fact that the basic premises for these two research methods and procedures cannot be reconciled because of the qualitative-quantitative divide which may not come out implicitly at first sight, the two methods cannot be rendered incompatible. In effect, it is the same invisible interface that renders them potentially compatible, implying that the two systems of investigation can be co-operatively employed in research undertakings to give them more credibility. Whilst Waghid (2000) claims that neither of these research methods is without its own contradictions and pitfalls, Krathwohl (1998:621) affirms their positive side by declaring that multiple research methods can strengthen research in a variety of ways. Once the researcher is able to transcend the qualitative-quantitative continuum, then the benefits of both approaches can be accrued. This approach according to which a variety of research methods are employed in a single research investigation is scientifically known as method triangulation. The value of this method is to enhance the interpretability of the research findings, to reduce uncertainty and to remove from the investigator the delusion that the solution or answer attained is absolutely correct (Mafisa 1999; Blaxter *et al.* 1996:77).

The employment of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods was not done only for the two methods to compensate each other, or for the sake of proving a hypothesis. It was also not done just to assess and identify the *status quo* regarding academic staff satisfaction at a transforming South

African university, or to test or create a new theory on academic staff satisfaction. The ultimate goal upon gaining knowledge into the feelings and experiences of staff was to make recommendations on how academic staff satisfaction can be improved. Waghid (2000) describes any research that employs both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to finally effect change or support the kind of reflection among participants that leads to emancipation during or after the research process as transformative research.

An opportunity to implement this study as a transformative research and to avoid it becoming an investigation that is only done for the sake of compiling facts into a thesis, availed itself to the researcher when the Unit for Quality Assurance and Management of the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development requested to adopt the study as a project of the unit. This meant that the unit could act as a link between the researcher and the management of the university in presenting the results of the survey to people who could benefit from them. Schlemmer (1996) in support of this posit, admonishes that the findings of any research should never be regarded as a mere assembly of information or data. Schlemmer advises researchers to try and communicate their findings to people by means of seminars and workshops; explanatory visits to the decision-makers; press releases; and/or presentation of the findings to the relevant institutions with the request that the content be incorporated into their policy documents. After all any research endeavour done for purposes of acquiring a degree or any other reason is arduous, time-consuming and often expensive, thus it should never be done without the ultimate goal of utilising it to change or solve the problem that initiated the research in the first instance.

### 6.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In the previous sections (Sections 2.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3) a theoretical frame of reference for the research design and methods used in this study was provided. The ensuing sections will, however, provide the practical component of the research (empirical), its purpose, the methods of data-gathering, development of the research tool, piloting the instrument, proving its validity and reliability, the case study technique, sampling techniques, dissemination of the questionnaire, data-processing and analysis.

#### 6.3.1 The purpose of the empirical research

The main objectives of the empirical investigation were to:

- obtain information on the main factors, both internal and external, which affect the satisfaction of academic staff in a transforming South African university (*vide* Sections 1.3 & 6.4);
- determine whether academics working in a transforming South African university are satisfied with their jobs (*vide* Sections 6.4 & 6.5);
- find out what the implications of fluctuating academic staff satisfaction among academics are (*vide* Sections 1.3 & 6.5);
- find out if the management of the UFS is aware of those factors that academics identified as factors of dissatisfaction and to furthermore establish whether any intervention strategies are in place to address these issues (*vide* Section 6.4);
- give an exposition of data collected by means of a questionnaire, focus group discussions and personal interviews (*vide* Section 6.4); and
- interpret the collected data in view of the corpuses of information gathered through amassing relevant literature and to give guidelines and recommendations on how to improve academic staff satisfaction in a



transforming South African university [e.g. the University of the Free State (UFS)] (*vide* Chapter 7).

### **6.3.2 Methods of gathering data**

As indicated in an earlier section (*vide* Section 6.2.2) the study integrated the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. This entailed the use of both closed and open-ended questions in a personally designed research questionnaire, holding focus group discussions and personal interviews in the case study university. The main part of the research instrument comprised structured items formulated mainly on the basis of the literature amassed, while a smaller portion of the instrument comprised open-ended questions. Data collection is regarded as one of the most important steps in research undertakings. Mouton (2001:100) supports this deliberation and further advises that a valid research instrument is an imperative for researchers.

#### **6.3.2.1 *The research instrument***

The data was collected by using a self-developed questionnaire, as this was deemed acceptable by the researcher. A researcher has the liberty to design questionnaires from scratch or to adopt and alter an already developed one to suit his/her own purposes and the research context. Both these two types of questionnaires have advantages and disadvantages (Mouton 2001). Although a self-constructed questionnaire may, on the one hand, be time-consuming and may have flaws and limitations, it addresses adequately what the researcher initially set out to unveil. In the research problem studied here a self-constructed questionnaire was used with the objective of unveiling how the satisfaction of academic staff in a South African university is affected by transformation. On the other hand, a ready-made questionnaire is time-saving, cost-effective and of high validity, but it oftentimes fails to fit

accurately to test what the researcher wishes to investigate. This is because it may not include all the factors which she/he wishes to investigate.

For this study, the researcher took cognisance of the fact that to develop a valid and reliable questionnaire is a complex process – one that demands careful planning (Blaxter *et al.* 1996; Mouton 2001; Mills 2000). In this particular case the initial step entailed referring to the reviewed literature and aligning the formulation of items with the literature and the preset aims and objectives of the study. The rich information in the literature served as a relevant and adequate backup in the development of items about issues that affect the satisfaction of academics in transforming universities of South Africa. The literature provided the key trends in factors that affect staff satisfaction/dissatisfaction, particularly in the context of a transforming higher education institution.

The purposes of the questionnaire were presented as to:

- identify factors which impact on the satisfaction of academic staff in a transforming South African university (i.e. the UFS) (*vide* Chapter 5 and Section 6.4);
- invite and get suggestions from academics on how factors that cause dissatisfaction can be dealt with (*vide* Sections 6.4 & 7.5);
- identify factors which cause academic staff dissatisfaction and to use them as issues of discussion in the focus groups and personal interviews with selected UFS academics and managers respectively (*vide* 6.4.3); and
- gather information that could be used as a basis for making recommendations and suggesting intervention strategies that can prevent the deterioration of academic staff satisfaction and improve it henceforth (*vide* 6.4.3).

This research questionnaire (Appendices A & B) was designed to comprise of two sections, namely Section A for the biographic information of the participants and Section B comprising items (both closed and open-ended) under nine different headings relating to change and transformation of higher education, government policy, the organisational culture, diversity, staff development opportunities, technological changes, quality and quality assurance, globalisation and internationalisation and other factors. These are just some of the critical transformation issues thought to be affecting academic staff in universities of South Africa in general and at the UFS in particular. As already indicated, the questionnaire gathered two types of information. Firstly, it enabled the researcher to obtain factual data through the use of closed pre-determined items. Secondly, it included open-ended questions that required participants to give their opinion about whether the factors mentioned affected them positively or negatively.

The different items (closed questions) were placed on a five-point Likert scale with the prompts very negative, somewhat negative, somewhat positive, very positive and not applicable. Participants were supposed to indicate by simply encircling one of the prompts mentioned what the effect of the different work-related issues listed in the questionnaire was. At the end of each of the categories open-ended questions were asked to find out from academics if they had been affected by any other factors not mentioned in the questionnaire. Another question requested academics to give constructive suggestions on how factors acting as barriers to satisfaction could be dealt with.

### **6.3.2.2 *The Likert scale***

The Likert scale is one of the widely used techniques in research (Hay, Herselman, Mbokodi & Fourie 2000). This technique entails making specific statements and giving them ratings weighed most often on a scale from one

to five. This scale is then placed to measure items suggested by the investigator and the respondents are requested to indicate how they feel about the items. Note must be made that these items are related to the problem under investigation. Mogey (1999) concurs that a typical question using a Likert scale might present a statement and request the respondents to indicate whether they "strongly agree"/"agree"/are "undecided"/"disagree"/"strongly disagree". In other cases the scale may not have the middle number, often labelled neutral, undecided or unsure. This type of a Likert scale is described by Trochim (2002) as the use of a forced-choice response scale according to which the respondents are forced to decide whether they lean more towards the "Agree" or the "Disagree" end of the scale for each item. In this research a five-point Likert scale was found appropriate, and this comprised statements which required that the respondents had to indicate whether they felt "Very negative"/"Somewhat negative"/"Somewhat positive" about the different issues of their jobs listed or whether the issue did not apply in their case. This scale could be classified as a forced-choice, as it forces the respondents to express their feelings either as negative or as positive, or to choose "Not applicable" if the issue does not affect their institution at all. Mogey (1999) and Trochim (2002) aver that the coded responses on their own are of less importance, but that the final score for each respondent is the sum of the ratings for all the items. It is worth mentioning that, although it is easier to process and to make comparisons and conclusions from the closed items that are used together with the Likert scale, the main disadvantage is that the items may be biased and frustrating to the respondents.

### **6.3.2.3 *Open-ended questions***

The open-ended qualitative questions were intentionally asked to elicit more interpretative answers to the questions and thus enhance the responses of the participants. Open-ended questions are a godsend in the enhancement of research, since they - unlike closed questions - do not force words into the

mouths of the participants but allow them to give their opinions unchannelled and unrestricted. Hay *et al.* (2000:41) also add that open-ended questions are advantageous to research investigations in that they afford the respondents the freedom to voice their thoughts freely and unencumbered. These authors state that once the respondents understand the intent of the question, then they respond accordingly. The concern in presenting to the participants a research questionnaire comprising both closed and open-ended questions together is that participants tend to answer the closed questions and avoid the open-ended ones, as they feel they are under no obligation to attempt them. In this sense the open-ended questions then defeat their purpose and that of the instrument.

#### **6.3.2.4 *Piloting the questionnaire***

It is the feeling of most researchers that a piloted questionnaire bears more substance than one that is disseminated raw (Mouton 2001; Holtzhausen 1999). According to Oppenheim (1998) it is important that questionnaires are tried and improved again and again, particularly during the developmental stages. This continuous upgrading needs to be done until the instrument can best serve the purpose that it was initially meant to serve. The research tool used in this study was piloted both formally and informally. In many cases, as is the case with this research tool, the researcher took the questionnaire through several stages of perfecting and upgrading before it was finally accepted as a suitable and well-serving instrument. This opportunity availed itself as the researcher engaged in regular consultations with the study promoter, the co-promoter and other researchers at the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development at the University of the Free State where the researcher was being trained as a research intern during the compilation of the instrument. These knowledgeable colleagues and experienced academics in the field of higher education evaluated the questionnaire for - among other things - content, relevance and clarity of the items, as well as length and user-friendliness. The researcher implemented the suggested

changes accordingly. Although Blaxter *et al.* (1996) regard this form of piloting as an informal pilot, it is still worthwhile as it enables a researcher to judge the feasibility of his/her research plans and to make modifications accordingly.

The research questionnaire was piloted formally during March and April 2002. During this phase questionnaires were sent out to 60 academic staff members at the UFS for completion and the researcher carried out this exercise personally. Out of a total of 60 questionnaires 46 were received back, ensuring a return rate of 76,6%. Apart from the fact that the respondents disclosed their feelings about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction about issues of transformation in their institution, some participants provided the researcher with valuable information regarding the research tool. Issues such as a lack of clarity in some items, difficulty, and the length of the questionnaire emerged as concerns. In addition, the researcher realised that, even though direct contact was important for rapport and for ensuring the return of the questionnaires, the form of dissemination she utilised proved laborious. On account of that, she decided to use the internal mailing system to reach her larger target in the actual survey that involved all permanent lecturing academic staff members at the university. Furthermore, in an attempt to address concerns regarding lack of clarity of some aspects of the questionnaire as well as the difficulty of the questionnaire, the researcher compiled and supplied a glossary. In addition to that, the questionnaire was also translated into Afrikaans. This translation of the questionnaire was deemed necessary in making the questionnaire easier and more accessible, particularly to the Afrikaans-speaking academic staff members who still form the larger majority of academics at the UFS. The questionnaire was translated by a professional language editor and was checked by the promoter as well as the co-promoter to ensure that the English and the Afrikaans versions were similar in information and meaning.

The responses of the Afrikaans questionnaire were also translated for the researcher who is not proficient in Afrikaans and were checked by the promoter.

#### **6.3.2.5 Validity**

Validity has to do with whether one's methods, approaches and techniques actually relate to or measure the issues which are being explored (Baxter *et al.* 1996). As the very first step towards ensuring the validity of this study, the researcher reviewed a wealth of literature pertaining to staff satisfaction. Apart from this literature serving as a point of departure, it made the researcher better understand the problem under investigation. Mills (2000) heralds this approach whereby research proceedings are based on reviewed literature. He postulates that engaging in a serious literature examination awards the researcher an opportunity to immerse oneself in knowledge and information that was already accumulated by other scholars giving one time to reflect on new research problems and align own research with existing corpuses of knowledge. The self-constructed questionnaire was therefore developed on the basis of the literature and the preset aims and objectives of the study and was geared towards answering questions that the researcher had identified. The researchers and academics at the Unit for Research into Higher Education situated in the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development were the experts in the field of higher education who had the opportunity to look at the instrument and make suggestions. In the process they also checked the validity of the content.

#### **6.3.2.6 Reliability**

Reliability means being able to employ and re-employ the supposedly valid chosen research methods, tools and techniques to test the issue under scrutiny and be able to maintain consistency in the results (Mouton 2001). In

simple terms, "reliability" refers to how well the research project was carried out, if the research was done in a way that - if other researchers were to investigate the same issues in the same or a comparable setting - they would obtain an essentially similar outcome, but not necessarily an identical interpretation. Any research that is able to sustain these foregoing aspects is regarded as reliable. In this study reliability was ensured by developing the research instrument on the basis of existing corpuses of literature on staff satisfaction. In addition, the reliability of the instrument was put to test by piloting it. An essentially similar outcome was obtained from both the pilot and the actual surveys ensuring that the instrument could be relied upon.

### **6.3.3 The case study technique**

Originally the researcher wanted to investigate the impact of change and transformation on academics in six universities representative of the three types of South African universities, namely the historically disadvantaged universities, historically advantaged Afrikaans universities and the historically advantaged English universities. But because "even in the most carefully planned research project things do not always go quite as planned" (Blaxter *et al.* 1996:135), the researcher had to rethink, redesign and manage her research differently. When the original plan failed because of a lack of cooperation in some of the six target universities (*vide* Chapter 7) the researcher decided on the case study approach involving the UFS (where the researcher is a lecturer) as the unit case under investigation. This choice was motivated by several reasons. Firstly, the response of this university towards the research efforts of the researcher was satisfactory (*vide* Chapter 7). Secondly, the country has a very large number of universities (21 universities) which are also geographically widely spread. In addition, these universities have an academic staff populace exceeding 10,000 (CHE 2001) (*vide* Section 1.6.3). This number cannot be reached and researched with any worthwhile results unless it is appropriately reduced, therefore the researcher decided to



do a thorough and in-depth study of a single university. All permanent lecturing academic staff at the UFS were therefore requested to complete the research questionnaire. This was followed by focus group discussions and personal interviews with selected academics and managers at the UFS.

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons, the UFS was found to be an ideal case of a university that has undergone a massive transformation and that is still subjected to demands for further transformation. Hence the choice.

In order to situate the reader about the nature of transformation that this university is faced with as well as the context within which academic staff at the UFS function, a brief historical background of the UFS will be given in the ensuing section.

### **6.3.3.1 *The historical overview of the unit of analysis (the UFS)***

As mentioned in section 1.5.3, the UFS is a historically white Afrikaans-speaking university (HWAU). This university is the brainchild of the *Volksraad* of the Free State Republic that decided in the early 1890s that an Afrikaans university was necessary in the Republic. The implementation of the idea was unfortunately delayed by the outbreak of the war against Britain in the same year, namely 1899. However, on 28 January 1904, the university was founded as the Grey University College (GUC). At that time the total student population of the university was only six and these were matriculated students who had registered for a complete Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree course which was being presented in English. In 1907 the Grey University College had grown to 29 students and the number of academics in the Faculties of Arts and Natural Sciences had grown to 10.

The Grey University College was highly English-oriented and it served the needs of the English communities and not the Afrikaners (Strydom & Holtzhausen 2001:16). Later on the medium of instruction was changed to Afrikaans and English and in 1935 the name of the university also changed from the Grey University College to the University College of the Orange Free State (UCOFS).

From the 1920s to the late 1940s, the GUC and later the UCOFS experienced fierce resistance from the Afrikaners against the use of English as a predominant language of instruction in an institution that claimed to be a double/dual medium institution. In the late 1940s the mode of instruction changed to Afrikaans because it was claimed that the Free State was predominantly a white Afrikaans state.

In March 1950, the Parliament Act No. 21 of 1949 officially approved the independence of the university and another name change from the UCOFS to the University of the Orange Free State (UOFS) or *Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat (UOVS)* took place. The University of the Orange Free State had after that been developing as an Afrikaans university which primarily made provision for one group of South Africans, the white Afrikaans-speaking students (Strydom & Holtzhausen 2001).

In the early eighties, however, black leaders from the democratic movement in the Free State placed pressure on the UOFS to avail educational and learning opportunities to the black majority. After the dawn of the new democratic era in 1994 the pressure on the UCOFS to accommodate black students and staff intensified and gradually the university began to open its doors to all the people of this country, regardless of colour or creed. This impelled a change in the language policy in 1994 to a system of parallel-medium instruction. Since that time and because of the strides taken in

transforming the language policy the UOFS has experienced dramatic changes in the numbers of black students and staff.

After a lengthy consultative process between UOFS and all the role-players the University of the Orange Free State experienced another name change in 2001, and the University then became known as the University of the Free State (UFS) or *Universiteit van die Vrystaat (UV)*. This name change was done in accordance with the change of the name of the province.

Although significant changes are currently noticeable at UFS in terms of black students and staff numbers, the UFS is still faced with the task of redressing the past inequities. Hence the transformation continues.

### **6.3.3.2 A brief overview of the UFS today**

The UFS, which is sometimes affectionately referred to as "Kovsies", is located in the heart of Bloemfontein in very close proximity to the city centre. It is situated on the left-hand side of the main road to Kimberley (the Nelson Mandela Road). Its entrance is characterised by a huge stone gate with the name of the university boldly carved on it in three languages, namely English, Afrikaans and Sotho for all those who enter the campus to view.

Although the UFS is truly a multicultural campus with more than half of the total students now being black and with an estimated figure of a 1000 students being international students, most of the buildings still bear Afrikaans names. Buildings as well as some streets have been named after some important political figures and therefore still bear their names, which are Afrikaans names. One other interesting culture of the UFS is the presence of artifacts and symbols that symbolise the history and pride of the traditional inhabitants of the university. Large stone statues of political figures such as

President C.R. Swart are found on the campus in close proximity to those buildings named after them.

It is important to mention that the student population in 2002 is estimated at 15362, 6437 of whom are white, 668 Coloureds, 256 Asian and 8001 Black. These students are enrolled in the six Faculties of the university, namely the Economic and Management Sciences, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, the Health Sciences, Law, Humanities and Theology.

The university has approximately 1700 employees. 650 are administrative and general workers, while the rest are professional staff. However, the larger bulk of these are comprised of white academics and Blacks form an astounding minority. The profiles of academic staff are still highly unbalanced in 2002, with 93% White and 7% Black staff.

As part of the transformation and its attempt to make the culture and climate inclusive of all staff and students regardless of race, the UFS has set up several structures and services. The transformation office, the diversity office and the language translation service are examples of some of the efforts aimed at harmonising the organisational culture of the UFS.

#### **6.3.4 Sampling and site selection**

Because of the complexity of the process of transformation in the South African higher education sector, it is difficult for one to carry out research pertaining to transformation without being purposive in the choice of sample. In a case like this one, a different approach would result in most of the critical issues that the researcher wished to investigate being left out. This could happen in the case of a random sampling. In this study the researcher chose to undertake an intensive and in-depth study in a university that has undergone a massive transfiguration since its inception consequently it is nowadays being hailed and admired by many for its progress and

advancement of transformation. It should be noted, however, that the UFS could be regarded as representative of South African universities in transformation only in as far as it is compared with other historically white Afrikaans-speaking universities with a history similar to that of the UFS.

The researcher requested a compilation of names of all permanent lecturing academics, indicating their language preferences, their departments and their telephone numbers from the Human Resources office and the UFS Computer Centre. Then a sticker with the address of the researcher was placed at the back of each questionnaire, which was placed in an envelope together with a covering letter. These were then posted to the academic staff through the internal posting services.

On the one hand, focus group discussions were organised and conducted by the researcher. The aim was to have a focus group comprised of 10 academic staff members representative of race and gender but unfortunately more females turned up for the group discussions than males. On the other hand, personal interviews were conducted with four selected management staff members of the university. These were the Dean of Student Services, the Registrar General and Strategic Planning, the Chief Executive Officer for the UFS Personnel Union (UVPERSU) and the Manager Support Service for Higher Education Restructuring and representative of the Black Staff Forum. This choice of participants was made on the assumption that they were well-informed on the issues of transformation and staff at the university.

#### **6.3.4.1 *Dissemination and retrieval of the questionnaires***

During the piloting phase the questionnaires were personally distributed to the academics and were later collected. 46 of the 60 questionnaires were received back, ensuring a return rate of 76,6%. In the second phase, however, the researcher disseminated questionnaires through the internal

posting services of the university, since questionnaires were sent out to all permanent lecturing academic staff at the university (469 academics) excluding the 60 who had completed the questionnaires in the initial stage (pilot phase). Academic staff were given four weeks to complete the questionnaires and post them back to the researcher for coding and analysis. In order for the researcher to ensure a high return rate, academics were periodically reminded by intranet and by telephone to return the questionnaires.

#### **6.3.4.2 *Focus group discussions***

The employment of focus group interviews as a research method of data-gathering is gaining popularity in human, social and in organisational research. This type of data-collecting method is regarded as meritorious in that it allows the researcher to observe a large amount of interaction on the topic under investigation within a short span of time and at a reduced cost (Babbie & Mouton 2001:292). Maharasoa (2001:16) submits to the merits of focus group discussions by adding that they present an opportunity to the researcher to observe and interpret human behaviour from a close range. It is through this closeness that the social interactions, as well as the heterogeneity of the perspectives of participants over a similar issue or problem under investigation can also be studied, reflected upon and appreciated.

Another merit for focus group discussions is that they also provide an opportunity for participants to immerse themselves and share perspectives regarding a problem that affects all of them, describing it and making recommendations on how to solve it. According to Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1994:114) this method of research is widely utilised in the corporate world by advertising and marketing organisations to understand the consumer preferences, identify strategies and evaluate the potential of new products.

In a similar way, this approach can be used in educational institutions as it is intended for this case study university to identify factors causing the dissatisfaction of academic staff, as well as to find out from staff how they think factors of dissatisfaction can be addressed.

### **6.3.4.3 *The personal interview***

An interview is a common data-collecting method of research in which the kind of data collected represents real facts about the behaviour or attitudes to a real topic or issue under investigation (Payne 1997). An interview can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured depending on what is being investigated and the kind of information that the researcher wishes to unearth. It should be noted that each of these types has its own merits for an empirical research. In the case investigated in this research, structured interviews were organised and conducted with four people in the management of the UFS. The interviewees were the Registrar General and Strategic Planning, the Dean of Student Services, the Chief Executive Officer for the UFS Personnel (UVPERSU) and the Manager Support Services for the Higher Education Restructuring who was also the representative of the Black Staff Forum. The objectives of these interviews were to present to these managers the findings of the questionnaire survey and to share with them those issues of transformation that were regarded to cause dissatisfaction among academics at the UFS. The interviews were not only intended to bring an awareness of issues of dissatisfaction but also to establish the type of intervention strategies that are in place at the UFS to enhance academic staff morale during periods of transformation.

The structured interviews were found to be ideal for this investigation, since such interviews are always meritorious where more than one person are interviewed on the same topic. On the one hand, the pre-developed format of questions guides the interviewer and prevents him/her from deviating from

his/her inquiry or from unintentionally asking each interviewee different questions. On the other hand, however, the semi-structured or unstructured interviews permit a free-flow of ideas between the researcher and the interviewee. They allow for a "probing" (Brown & Dowling 1998) and clarification of the responses of the interviewed person, allowing the researcher to obtain more than he/she would bargain in a more formalised interview.

### **6.3.5 Ethics**

Gaining access to the people and the institutions that one wishes to use in his or her research can be very arduous. Blaxter *et al.* (1996:149) remark that it is never "a one-off exercise, but rather a continuous and potentially very demanding process". The reason for this is that any research investigation usually raises ethical issues, especially if it involves people directly or if it investigates a controversial issue such as transformation in a historically white Afrikaans-speaking university. According to Blaxter *et al.* (1996) there are four crucial ethical principles that researchers in the social sciences must adhere to in doing research. These are:

- Ensuring that the identities of the participants are protected so that the information gathered does not embarrass or harm them in any way.
- Treating the participants with respect and seeking their cooperation in the research.
- Negotiating permission to do a study, explicitly stating that you will abide by their terms of contract.
- Telling the truth in reporting the research findings.

In this particular study the researcher ensured that these principles were adhered to. Firstly, a letter requesting the academics to support the research by participating in the survey was sent out with each questionnaire. It was



clearly stated in this letter that the names of the individual academics would be kept anonymous, while the results of the investigation would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Secondly, the participants were treated with courtesy and respect, as they were awarded the opportunity to complete the questionnaire in the language of their preference.

In the case of focus group discussions, the academics were forewarned that some of them would be requested to participate in focus groups. These participants were contacted and requested telephonically to participate well ahead of the time scheduled for the discussions. This was also done with the individual managers with whom personal interviews were held. Both these groups were requested to complete a consent form (*vide* Appendix 5) that the researcher had designed which bound the researcher to adhere to ethical ways of pursuing any research investigation.

#### **6.3.6 Data-processing and analysis of the questionnaires**

The researcher identified trends in the pilot questionnaires, particularly on issues of transformation that were regarded by academics to cause dissatisfaction. These were used for developing questions and prompts for the focus group discussions and personal interviews with selected academics and managers at the UFS.

In the second phase (the actual survey), the responses in the questionnaires were first coded by hand and the questionnaires were then analysed by the Computer Centre of the UFS. The researcher then grouped the data, identified patterns in the data and interpreted the data in order to report the findings and present recommendations.

## **6.4 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH DATA**

Data presented in this section were gathered by means of quantitative and qualitative research methods, namely questionnaires, personal interviews and focus group discussions.

### **6.4.1 Findings from the questionnaire survey**

As mentioned in section 6.3.4.1, the purpose of the questionnaire was twofold. First it was initially used in the pilot phase to identify trends in issues of transformation that impact the academics in preparation for the focus group discussions with selected academic staff and the personal interviews with selected managers at the UFS. The purpose of the interviews was to follow up on the factors of concern that had been mentioned. The trends identified were then used to develop interview agendas for both the selected academics and selected managers (*vide* Appendices 3 and 4).

Thereafter questionnaires were disseminated to the rest of the permanent lecturing staff in order to reach out to more and varied perspectives of the academics at the UFS. Questionnaires were sent to 469 academics. Only 95 of the 469 were received back after six weeks, giving a response rate of 20,3%. This result together with the result of the pilot survey gives a total response of 141 academic staff members (27%), and this is approximately a quarter of the whole population of permanent lecturing academic staff. Note must be made that the researcher sent a reminder to all the participants electronically by means of the UFS Digest for the academics to return the questionnaires. The efforts were in vain, however.

The trends identified in the actual survey did not differ from the results of the pilot study. Another point worth noting is that, although in theory a quantitative investigation is commonly employed to emphasise empirical quantifiable observation (*vide* 6.2.1), in the context of this research the utilisation of the quantitative research method serves another important purpose. The quantitative method should not be viewed as a way of presenting the numbers of academics who feel negative about change and transformation. Rather this approach should be seen as a strategy to gain a broad spectrum of perspectives of the academics concerned and this was indeed achieved. On that account the participation of a quarter of academics is not seen as a major drawback for the research investigation, more so because follow-up interviews were carried out with selected staff and managers.

The researcher saw fit to establish the status of the participants by requesting them to complete Section A on biographic information. This was done for the main reason of establishing whether there had been any representation for the different categories of academics at the UFS. Table 6.1 in the following section indicates the biographic information of the various respondents in the questionnaire survey.

#### **6.4.2 The biographic information of the respondents**

Although questionnaires had been sent out to all permanent lecturing academics at the UFS, they were completed by only 95 out of 469 academics from different categories, namely gender, rank, race, qualifications and number of years' experience in the current post and at the UFS.

**Table 6.1: The status of the respondents**

	<b>Frequency N=95</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Junior lecturer</b>	3	3,2
<b>Lecturer</b>	23	24,2
<b>Senior lecturer</b>	19	20,0
<b>Associate Professor</b>	10	10,5
<b>Professor</b>	35	36,8
<b>Missing</b>	5	5,3

**Table 6.2: The gender of the respondents**

	<b>Frequency N=95</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	63	66,3
<b>Female</b>	28	29,5
<b>Missing</b>	4	4,2

**Table 6.3: The race of the respondents**

	<b>Frequency N=95</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>White</b>	90	94,4
<b>Black</b>	5	5,6
<b>Missing</b>	0	0

**Table 6.4: The qualifications of the respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b> <b>N=95</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	4	4,2
<b>Honours degree</b>	7	7,4
<b>Master's degree</b>	25	26,3
<b>Doctorate</b>	54	56,8
<b>Missing</b>	5	5,3

**Table 6.5: Experience of the respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b> <b>N=95</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>0-5 years</b>	35	36,8
<b>5-10 years</b>	12	12,6
<b>11-15 years</b>	14	14,7
<b>More than 15 years</b>	29	30,3
<b>Missing</b>	5	5,3

**Table 6.6: Experience of the respondents at the UFS**

	<b>Frequency</b> <b>N=95</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>0-5 years</b>	24	25,5
<b>5-10 years</b>	10	10,5
<b>11-15 years</b>	14	14,7
<b>More than 15 years</b>	42	44,2
<b>Missing</b>	5	5,1

The data in Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 above show that a diverse population of academics were reached in the questionnaire survey. Table 6.1

shows that most of the respondents in this survey were professors (36,8%) and lecturers (24,2%), while only a few junior lecturers responded. More male academics (66,3%) responded than female academics. With regard to race, 94,7 % of the respondents were white while only 5,3% were black. This response is not surprising, since it is a known fact that there are imbalances in the numbers of black and white academics at the UFS, the low response rate of the black academics could be ascribed to the fact that black academics are very few at the UFS.

### **6.4.3 Findings from the actual questionnaire survey**

The results of the questionnaire survey are presented in a tabular (quantitative component) and a descriptive manner (open-ended questions) in nine categories, namely "Change and transformation", "Government policy issues", "The organisational culture", "Diversity", "Staff development", "Technological changes", "Globalisation and internationalisation", "Quality and quality assurance", as well as other factors.

It must, however, be noted that although a Likert scale with five options - namely very negative, somewhat negative, somewhat positive, very positive and not applicable - had been employed, the investigation set out to identify issues that caused negative feelings and not those that caused positive feelings among academics. This was done because the study aims at being instrumental in the improvement of academic staff satisfaction at the UFS during the transition period by suggesting ways in which the factors impacting negatively on academics can be addressed. Hence the focus of the ensuing analysis is to identify trends in those issues that caused staff to feel negative or somewhat negative.

### 6.4.3.1 *Change and transformation of higher education*

**Table 6.7: The impact of change and transformation of higher education on academic staff**

Question	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	Total negative responses	%
1.1 Changing roles of academics	1	24	49	14	1	25	26,34
1.2 The teaching/research dichotomy and the increasing demands for academics to excel at both teaching and research	6	26	37	21	2	32	33,6
1.3 Increasing importance of service learning	7	22	41	17	1	29	30,5
1.4 New modes of teaching and learning (e.g. resource-based learning)	4	15	37	35	2	19	20,0
1.5 New approaches to research (shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge production)	4	11	35	22	14	15	15,8

According to Table 6.7, academic staff at the UFS are affected by change and transformation. Academics seemingly are mostly affected by issues such as the change in their roles, which involves an increase in, among other things, the increasing demand for academics to excel in both teaching and research, whereas the increasing importance of service-learning is another major

influence. Apparently the new modes of teaching and learning, as well as the emerging new approach to research, i.e. a shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge production, affect fewer academics negatively.

The responses of the academics to the open-ended questions also provided important and interesting trends. It seems that academics at the UFS are affected by a diversity of issues regarding change and transformation. The trends identified indicate that they are affected profoundly by the use of the parallel medium of instruction. They said that the use of the two languages, namely English and Afrikaans to teach a single class, is a factor that magnifies their jobs. They argue that the dual medium does not only magnify their roles, but it furthermore consumes the time that they could otherwise have used for research and community service.

Academics at the UFS view change and transformation as a factor responsible for the increased work pressure that they are experiencing particularly where large classes are taught. Another compounding factor is the decentralisation by the top management of administrative work to the faculties and departments. According to the academics, this issue further interferes with their normal work roles, preventing them from completing their tasks successfully.



### 6.4.3.2 *Government policy issues*

**Table 6.8: The impact of government policy issues on academic staff**

Question	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	Total negative responses	%
2.1 Expanded access for non-traditional learners	5	13	51	21	2	18	18,9
2.2 The implementation of the Employment Equity Act (the appointment of black academics)	18	25	36	11	1	43	45,2
2.3 The distribution of promotional posts among academics of different race groups	18	29	32	10	4	47	49,4
2.4 The distribution of promotional posts among academics of different gender	13	17	37	21	3	30	31,6
2.5 The implementation of the Skills Development Act	5	13	41	20	8	18	19,6
2.6 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) demands for curriculum and programme restructuring	8	23	40	12	5	31	32,6
2.7 Demands for a programme-based approach	5	14	42	26	4	19	20,0
2.8 The restructuring of the South African higher education (mergers and incorporations)	10	30	38	11	2	40	42,1
2.9 The possible changes in the funding formula for higher education	4	22	39	7	13	26	27,4

Table 6.8 illustrates that government policy issues play a significant role as factors currently impacting on academic staff at the UFS. Attention must be drawn to the fact that issues such as the implementation of the Employment Equity Act; the distribution of promotional posts among academics of different race and gender groups; the NQF and its demands for curriculum and programme restructuring; as well as the general restructuring of the South African higher education, e.g. mergers and incorporations of institutions; seem to have a significant impact on academics at the UFS. However, the larger majority of academics do not seem bothered.

The greatest perturbation among academic staff with regard to government policy issues is the fact that promotions and appointments are done on the basis of race and gender rather than on the grounds of the individual academics' merits.

While one group of academics feels that the advancement of government policies such as the Employment Equity Act is not progressing as it is expected, another group, believes that affirmative action appointments should not be encouraged. The opinions of staff in this regard are that staff competencies, skills and knowledge must be the sole criteria for the promotion and appointment of academic staff.

### 6.4.3.3 *The organisational culture*

**Table 6.9: The impact of the organisational culture on academic staff**

Question		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	Total negative responses	%
3.1	Presence of traditional artifacts and symbols in the institution, e.g. statues and names of political figures	5	7	39	35	7	12	12,7
3.2	Prevalent norms and values in the institution	1	14	38	37	1	15	15,8
3.3	Prevalent rituals in the institution, i.e. the traditional ways of doing things	5	18	42	22	4	23	24,2
3.4	The language of instruction	8	16	36	32	1	24	25,2
3.5	The ability of the institutional culture/climate to accommodate non-traditional academics	4	20	49	16	4	24	25,3
3.6	The ability of the institution to accommodate non-traditional students	3	11	46	27	6	14	14,8

The results in Table 6.9 depict that certain issues of the organisational culture, such as prevalent rituals and traditions, the language of instruction, as well as the ability of the culture and climate of the UFS to accommodate non-traditional academics, are factors of significance impacting either very negatively or somewhat negatively on academics. Although the presence of artifacts and symbols at the UFS did not surface in the questionnaire survey as a major factor impacting negatively on academics, it was regarded as a serious issue of concern by selected academics in the focus group discussions and by some managers.

When they were asked to provide other factors of culture that affected their satisfaction negatively, the issue of the parallel medium of instruction resurfaced. As mentioned earlier in Section 6.4.3.1 academics regarded the use of the two languages, English and Afrikaans for instruction at the UFS, as a factor that increased their workloads dramatically, preventing them from participating in a meaningful manner in the other higher education roles such as publishing. Academics felt that they had been thrown in at the deep end and were not receiving any support in this regard.

6.4.3.4 *Diversity***Table 6.10: The impact of diversity on academic staff**

Question	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	Total negative responses	%
4.1 Changing profiles of staff by race, e.g. the increase in the numbers of black academics	5	21	49	14	3	26	27,4
4.2 Changing profiles of staff by gender	6	8	55	20	3	14	14,7
4.3 Changing profiles of students by race, e.g. the increase in the numbers of black students	3	10	48	29	2	13	13,7
4.4 Changing profiles of students by age (the presence of more adult learners)	1	5	46	39	3	6	6,4
4.5 Changing profiles of students by physical status (e.g. the presence of disabled students)	1	6	41	35	10	7	7,4
4.6 Proportion of staff from designated groups now occupying senior academic positions	4	29	43	11	5	33	34,7
4.7 Your institution's attempts to manage the diversity of staff and students	8	50	33	3	0	58	61,0
4.8 Working relationships among staff of different race groups	1	5	46	39	3	6	6,4
4.9 Working relationships among staff of different gender groups	2	2	35	54	1	4	4,2

Table 6.10 reveals that attempts by the UFS to manage diversity of staff and students are not regarded well by academics. An overwhelming majority of these academics (61,0%) felt very negative or somewhat negative about the mechanisms that the institution employs to manage diversity. The proportion of staff from designated groups now occupying senior academic positions, as well as the general increase in the numbers of black academics in the institution, also emerged as factors having a negative impact on a significant population of academics at the UFS.

There was consensus among academics that diversity should not at any cost be advanced through activities that threaten the quality of higher education. The biggest concern raised by academics in this regard was that the staff profiles at the UFS were changed, using gender and race as benchmarks, whilst the process had to, according to them, be dependent on the merits, competencies, skills and knowledge of the potential appointees.

Another concern regarding diversity at the UFS is the fact that the learner population is also rapidly becoming heterogeneous and that this has resulted in the admission to the UFS of students with low matriculation scores and students who are not prepared for university life. This factor was said to endanger the quality of education and the excellence that the UFS is striving for.

### 6.4.3.5 Staff development

**Table 6.11: Staff development opportunities**

Question		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	Total negative responses	%
5.1	Availability of opportunities for staff development	8	26	44	13	1	34	35,8
5.2	Time available for staff to participate in staff development	35	38	15	3	1	73	76,8
5.3	Induction processes for non-traditional academic staff	8	17	29	6	26	25	26,3
5.4	Induction processes for new academic staff	10	14	43	7	15	24	25,2
5.5	The relevance of staff development programmes to the needs of academic staff	14	26	39	5	7	40	42,1
5.6	The sustainability of staff development activities	9	35	37	4	6	44	46,3
5.7	Financial support you receive from your institution to develop as an academic	38	26	16	8	4	64	67,4
5.8	Availability of mentors for new academics	24	29	24	7	6	53	55,8

Table 6.11 confirms that staff development is currently an issue of major concern at the UFS.

As far as staff development is concerned, it seems that the UFS must address several crucial issues. Apparently there are not enough staff development opportunities for staff to involve in. The UFS does not even have a policy to guide the development of academic staff. This means that, at the moment, staff development occurs on an *ad hoc* basis within the faculties and departments.

It is also evident that because of the heavy workloads due to the use of the parallel medium instruction (*vide* Section 6.4.3.1 and 6.4.3.3), coupled with the addition to the traditional roles of other responsibilities that academics must perform as part of the institution's transformation, it is difficult to make time for participation in the few staff development programmes that sometimes become available. Another concern among the academic staff was that oftentimes the well-intended development programmes were irrelevant to their needs and thus they had to be changed accordingly.



### 6.4.3.6 *Technological changes*

**Table 6.12: The effect of technological changes on academic staff and their satisfaction**

Question		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	Total negative responses	%
6.1	New teaching/learning technologies	6	8	46	34	3	14	14,7
6.2	Opportunities to efficiently integrate new technologies into your academic role	8	17	42	25	1	25	26,3
6.3	Your ability as an academic to efficiently integrate new technologies into your academic role	1	11	50	31	1	12	12,7
6.4	Accessibility of technological resources	12	27	36	18	1	39	41,0
6.5	Opportunities for training in new technologies	12	30	31	17	4	42	44,2

It can be deduced from Table 6.12 that technology does have an impact on academics at the UFS. A notable percentage of respondents (44,2; 41,0 and 26,3%) felt that opportunities were lacking for staff to get training in new technologies and to efficiently integrate new technologies into their academic roles. In addition, they felt that technological resources are inadequate at the UFS.

Another factor mentioned under the section on the impact of technological changes on academics - apart from those that the researcher mentioned - is the absence of technological equipment and facilities in the lecture halls. Academics complained that some lecturing rooms did not have even mere data projectors. This was regarded by the academics concerned as a major concern.

Apart from the lack of facilities, there is also a concern that new technologies place a massive pressure on academics, as they do not get enough time to prepare themselves for emerging technologies through taking up appropriate technological training (*vide* 3.2.5). The academics' own limitations were not regarded as the only worrying factor, but the fact that most learners did not have skills in the use of technology, and in most cases they did not even have access to it. This, according to academics, added to their frustrations (*vide* 4.5.1.3).

### 6.4.3.7 *Globalisation and internationalisation*

**Table 6.13: The effect of globalisation and internationalisation on academic staff**

Question		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	Total negative responses	%
7.1	Globalisation, e.g. the re-articulation of the national higher education system into the global system	14	51	18	10	2	65	68,4
7.2	Internationalisation, e.g. student/lecturer mobility and the development of joint teaching, learning and research programmes	10	49	32	2	0	59	62,1
7.3	Your competence/ability as an academic to deal with and respond to global and international demands	2	14	49	25	4	16	16,8
7.4	Cross-boundary mobility of academics	2	18	44	21	5	20	21,0
7.5	Cross-boundary mobility of learners	4	20	41	18	3	24	25,3
7.6	The pace at which your institution responds to and participates in global and international issues	4	25	44	11	6	29	30,5

Table 6.13 emphasises the need for the UFS to prepare its academic staff to embrace globalisation and internationalisation. As the table depicts, an overwhelming majority of academics (68,4 and 62,1% respectively) felt negative about the re-articulation of the national higher education system into the global system, as well as the accompanying mobility of staff and students and the development of joint teaching and learning programmes. The pace at which the institution moves towards being globally and internationally competitive, does not please academics.

The general feeling among academics regarding the impact of globalisation and internationalisation was that academics were not adequately supported financially and did not have time to participate in matters of higher education globally and internationally. Academics regarded this lack of funding as a serious impediment to the pursuance of scholarship, as well as a serious cause for dissatisfaction.

### 6.4.3.8 *Quality and quality assurance*

**Table 6.14: The effect of quality and quality assurance on academic staff and their satisfaction**

Question		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	Total negative responses	%
8.1	Quality assurance structures and mechanisms in the institution	8	30	42	11	2	38	40,0
8.2	The demands of the national quality assurance bodies, e.g. the professional boards	3	21	41	16	11	24	25,3
8.3	The changing demands of the learners with regard to the quality of higher education	3	25	44	13	5	28	29,5
8.4	The changing demands of the labour market for graduates with appropriate skills	4	15	44	25	2	19	20,0
8.5	The ability of the institution to attain its goals and objectives	4	14	53	20	2	18	18,9
8.6	The ability of the institution to engage in continuous quality improvement	2	22	46	20	2	24	25,3

Table 6.14 indicates that several issues of quality and quality assurance pose some threats to an average of 26,5% academics at the UFS. Issues such as quality assurance structures and mechanisms, the demands placed by different quality assurance bodies and professional boards, as well as the learners and the labour market, seem to affect certain academics negatively. Academics are also affected by the way the UFS is trying to engage in continuous quality improvement.

Two issues were mentioned as other factors of concern regarding quality and quality assurance and its impact on academics at the UFS. First of all academics felt that the standards at the UFS were declining due to the intake of poor quality students and the fact that the "learners themselves prefer poor quality". The second factor, according to the academics, is the fact that communication of the quality assurance activities at the UFS was felt to be of very poor quality - hence the academics are always in the dark concerning plans at the institution. Regardless of these concerns, academics felt that they had to be patient and optimistic about whether the ongoing procedures at the UFS would assist with quality improvement or whether standards would continue to drop.

#### **6.4.3.9 Other factors**

The purpose of Question 9 was to establish whether academics were affected by any other factors other than those mentioned in the questionnaire. The issue of poor salaries and remuneration featured as a major problem among staff at the UFS. The argument was that salaries at the UFS were not market-related and they did not compare well with salaries at other institutions, the civil service or the private sector. Academics felt that the salaries of academics at the UFS were not commensurate with the amount of work that they had to do.

Rated second to salaries was the issue of limited financial support to academics for utilisation in research, for the purchasing of teaching equipment, as well as for partaking in overseas trips. In addition, they said that the exchange rate made it almost impossible for staff to keep up to date with subjects practiced mainly abroad where they had to buy textbooks and attend overseas conferences.

Another factor of concern is that the top management does not show much appreciation to academics about their work and the fact that academic roles are changing drastically and have become diverse and enormous. Academics felt very strongly about the pressure that the use of the parallel medium of instruction at the UFS placed on them as academics. Their experience regarding this issue was that the top management pretended not to see that parallel medium consumed most of the academics' time that they could otherwise use for research and publications. This was regarded as an even more serious concern since academics' promotions are based on their research output; the fact that they must "publish or perish".

#### **6.4.4 Concluding remarks**

The data gathered from the questionnaire survey reveals that change and transformation at the UFS are not occurring smoothly, since academics are affected negatively by a multitude of change factors. The researcher in focus group discussions did a further probing on issues that academics identified as issues of concern. This was done to present to the academics an opportunity to identify and suggest possible solutions to the problems caused by change and transformation at the UFS. The results of the focus group discussions are presented in the following section.

## **6.5 RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

As mentioned, the focus group discussions were conducted with selected academics to follow up on the issues that had been identified in the pilot study and in the questionnaire survey as major issues of concern among academic staff at the UFS. The issues identified were used to compile an interview agenda with questions classified in nine categories, namely change and transformation, government policy issues, the organisational culture, diversity, staff development, internationalisation and globalisation, quality and quality assurance, as well as other factors not included in the questionnaire.

### **6.5.1 Change and transformation**

Academics seemed to appreciate the fact that change and transformation are imperatives and that their roles were changing. However, they loathed the fact that the university did not support them to embrace change and transformation, but that they were often "thrown in at the deep end" with the expectation that they should perform all their roles effectively as well as maintain the quality of higher education. There was also a general feeling that the university awarded no recognition for those whose roles had become diverse and heavy. It seems that it is this lack of recognition that influences academics to harbour negative feelings about their jobs.

### **6.5.2 Government policy issues**

The evidence gathered from the academics in focus group discussions revealed that academics have lost confidence in the process of policy implementation by the UFS management. They felt that academics as parties involved and affected by transformation were not brought on board to participate in policy planning and implementation. In addition, academics felt that the interest groups representing them were not awarded any respect and



were not consulted on certain issues by the UFS management. Hence they were in the dark regarding policy issues.

### **6.5.3 Organisational culture**

Academics felt negative about the presence in the institution of artifacts and symbols if they were idolised and used to exclude other cultures. Otherwise they felt that they were a symbol of the UFS history and cultural heritage which informs people about the foundation of the university. The feeling was also that a lot of window-dressing was done to impress the outside world, while very little was visible in terms of actual changes to include other cultures.

### **6.5.4 Diversity**

The issue of parallel-medium instruction was regarded as a blessing for learners coming from diverse populations, although academics were of the opinion that it caused havoc in some instances. Respondents felt that it created problems for those academics who were expected to conduct lectures in both Afrikaans and in English, while they were only conversant with one of the two languages. They claimed that sometimes learners had feelings of distrust towards their lecturers as they feel that their lecturers do not teach the same material in the two separate classes. Furthermore, there was a general feeling that parallel-medium instruction was used in its true sense only in theory and not in practice, since some meetings - particularly at departmental level - are still conducted in one language only. Academics felt that the parallel-medium instruction had lost meaning and status and should be reviewed accordingly.

### **6.5.5 Staff development**

The general feeling was that there are not enough opportunities for staff development at the UFS. Apparently staff development is currently done on an *ad hoc* basis by certain departments and there is no uniformity in addressing the training needs of academics. Academics felt that formal induction and mentorship programmes were not only important, but also imperative at the UFS, particularly for junior, new and non-traditional academics. They felt that these programmes were needed now more than ever before, because both the external and internal forces have imposed and continue to impose drastic changes in the institution. The feeling was that the traditional "swim or sink approach" that was common in the academic arena was used at the UFS as well. According to the respondents, this approach would not suffice in a transforming university.

The lack of funding and time for academics to participate in staff development activities were also identified as major causes for concern among academics at the UFS. In addition, academics felt that the quality of staff development programmes offered was low and thus the programmes should be improved accordingly.

### **6.5.6 Technological changes**

Deficiencies regarding resources in technology became evident. Some academics still used old computers, while in the big lecture rooms there were no public address systems to help facilitate communication between the lecturers and the learners. There was a need for printers and more computers in certain departments. Apart from that, academics believed that only if the university can offer relevant training, can they effectively utilise technology as well as respond accordingly to its new demands.

### **6.5.7 Globalisation and internationalisation**

The general feeling regarding the academics' participation in global and international matters was that the UFS does not provide adequate support in terms of finances and mentorship for the academics. This is regarded a more serious issue, particularly among the upcoming academics who have not as yet developed any networks or accumulated any money in their entities for such participation.

Even though the environment at the UFS is not regarded as supportive for international participation, the academics concerned regarded globalisation and internationalisation as crucial issues in the new dispensation, particularly for quality improvement and consequent sustainability. However, they objected to the cross-boundary mobility of learners and the recruitment of international students if these students were not supported adequately, as is the case at the moment. This lack of support for the international students renders the work of the academics difficult and thus it acts as a source of dissatisfaction.

Although in the questionnaire survey academics regarded the cross-boundary mobility of staff as a factor of concern, the respondents in the focus group discussions felt it was good, since it had the ability to enhance the quality of higher education through learning from one another.

### **6.5.8 Quality and quality assurance**

The need for quality and quality assurance was accepted by the academics. They felt that students' evaluation was an essential component of any quality assurance system and should be respected by all academics. There was general consensus, however, that the quality assurance unit should become more functional, visible and known to the academics. The participants felt

that the apparent lack of a quality assurance system resulted in unfair promotion practices.

### **6.5.9 Other factors**

When they were asked what other factors other than those mentioned in the questionnaire impeded on academic staff satisfaction, poor salaries and remuneration came out as major factors of concern for academics. Academics had no doubt that salaries at the UFS were very low and not competitive with other higher education institutions. They said they were convinced that the turnover of good academics was not necessarily due to the institutional culture, but due to the low salaries paid.

## **6.6 RESULTS OF THE PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED UFS MANAGEMENT**

Personal interviews were conducted with selected members of the UFS management. These were the Registrar General and Strategic Planning (Mr Malherbe), the Dean of Student Services (Professor Verschoor), the Chief Executive Officer for the University of the Free State Personnel Union (UVPERSU) (Mrs Lombard), and the Manager Support Services for Higher Education Restructuring (Mr Helepi) who also represented the Black Staff Forum, which is one of the interest groups at the UFS. These participants were regarded as knowledgeable regarding issues of transformation and issues that concerned academic staff because of the positions they occupied at the UFS.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purposes of the interviews were to find out whether the University management was aware of the factors that caused academic staff to feel negative about their jobs, as well as to establish whether there were any strategies in place to address the problematic issues.

The interview sessions commenced with a briefing on the purpose of the research project and on those factors that had been identified from the pilot questionnaire survey as factors of concern for the academic populace. Having given the background to the research project and the outcomes of the pilot study, the researcher requested permission from the interviewees to record the proceedings of each interview by means of a tape recorder. In addition, the researcher requested the participants to complete the informed consent form (*vide* Appendix 5) that had been compiled to assure the participants that their involvement in the research would be treated with respect and confidentiality and that certain ethical considerations would be adhered to in reporting the findings.

Following these proceedings certain factors of concern were presented to the participant as part of the interview agenda (*vide* Appendix 4). The factors were classified into eight categories, namely change and transformation, government policy issues, the organisational culture, diversity, staff development, technological changes, globalisation and internationalisation, and quality and quality assurance. This was subsequently followed by the following two questions:

Question 1: *Are you aware that these factors cause the UFS academics to be dissatisfied with their work?*

Question 2: *What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address these issues?*

### **6.6.1 Change and transformation**

The interviewees were asked the two questions above regarding these issues:

- The changing roles of academics.
- Heavy workload due to, among other things, the inclusion of administrative work to the roles of academics.
- A lack of academic development to prepare academics to embrace change and transformation.
- Increasing student-teacher ratios.

All the participants conceded that they were aware that the traditional roles of academics are changing or have changed significantly at the UFS. They concurred that academics now had to do a great deal of administrative work, counselling of students, marketing of programmes, as well as engage in curriculum development - to mention only a few activities - yet the academics concerned have not undergone any training in this regard. There was also awareness that this step has magnified the workloads of academics and continues to do so particularly while the numbers of students at the UFS were furthermore escalating. Although this increase in student numbers was regarded as beneficial for the survival of the university, the needs of the incoming diverse student populace were stretching the resources too far.

It seems that the university management had not turned a blind eye to the needs of the academic staff, since a variety of intervention strategies were in place to address these issues. These were:

- (a) An all-encompassing strategy called the PMP Ke Nako Project which was aimed at putting in place a performance management system at the UFS. At the time of writing, this was underway, and consultants were busy with its development. This, according to Mr Malherbe, would address most of the issues relating to change and transformation at the UFS.
- (b) The university management had approved that a survey should be done to establish what the pros and cons were of the centralisation vs.

the decentralisation of administrative functions to the faculties and academics.

- (c) There are several support services on campus which should be made use of to reduce the work pressure of academic staff in terms of marketing and counselling of the students. These are, for example, the Public Relations Bureau which has a duty to market for the university and the counselling support services for learners.
- (d) A workplace skills development plan was drawn by the Human Resources Office (HR) and hopefully this plan would become functional soon. This plan would make use of the skills levies money that was available, but which was not effectively utilised at this stage to provide development opportunities for academics. According to Mr Malherbe, different support units existed on campus, for example the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development and the HR office. Those were in the process of identifying the development and training gaps and needs of staff at the UFS.
- (e) The management of the university was also dealing with the issue of increasing student-lecturer ratios. According to Professor Verschoor, the university Senate had approved the employment of assistants who were remunerated by the university by those academics with heavy workloads.

### **6.6.2 Government policy issues**

The participants were also asked whether they were aware that certain policy issues were invoking negative feelings among academic staff and whether the management had any intervention strategies in place to address the issues. These policy issues were:

- The implementation of the Employment Equity Act.
- The lack of clear guidelines for the implementation of different policies.

- The lack of information about the different higher education policies.
- The uneven distribution of promotional posts among academics of different race groups.
- The uneven distribution of promotional posts among academics of different gender groups.
- The ongoing restructuring of the South African higher education, e.g. mergers and incorporations.
- The possible changes in the funding formula for higher education.

Although there was general consensus that policy issues at the UFS were not progressing smoothly and that the fears of the academics about policy implementation were not unfounded, most of the participants felt positive about the progress and the effort that the university had made so far regarding transformation. However, they agreed that changes were occurring very slowly. One of the participants pointed out that not much was being done by the university to address issues of employment equity, as there were currently no clear strategies in place to recruit people from designated groups into positions at the university. According to Mr Helepi there were no succession plans to prepare people from designated groups to take up positions in the management in the near future. He added that there were no clear institutional strategies to enforce the implementation of the Employment Equity Act within the different faculties and that there was no monitoring of promotions of academics to establish whether these took place in line with the stipulations of the national policy. All these, Mr Helepi believed, implied that employment equity had not yet become a priority.

Even though the implementation of employment equity was progressing so slowly, efforts were being made at the university to advance the policy. According to Mrs Lombard, as a starting point, all institutional plans had been revised and altered to eliminate all types of discrimination against different groups of people at the UFS. Another major step that the university had



already taken, was that the university had submitted Employment Equity Plans to the Department of Labour at the end of 2001. At the end of 2002 it must again submit plans on employment equity to the Department of Education as part of its three-year rolling plan. According to Malherbe, these plans must show clear targets of quotas that the university foresees possible to implement. The Department will analyse these plans and enter into a consultative process of negotiating with the university annually. Apart from that, the Director of Diversity is currently busy preparing the ground for the implementation of the Employment Equity Act, and he visited faculties and departments to find out what their current staff profiles and future plans looked like. In addition to that, on 10 June 2002 the University Council approved as part of the vision, mission, values and strategies that the UFS was to become an excellent, equitable and innovative university with equity and redress as one of the four strategic issues for the period 2002-2006. For this purpose, the university management had appointed a task team to plan the process of implementing the Employment Equity Act and for addressing issues of diversity. Different people were summoned to formulate the institutional policy for equity, to set clear targets, and to develop strategies to achieve them within the employment equity and diversity spheres.

A summit on diversity and equity issues was also held on 25 July 2002 at the University where certain issues regarding the Employment Equity Act were stressed as issues of high priority.

The participants in addition indicated that they were aware of the fact that the ongoing restructuring of the higher education, especially the mergers and incorporations that were in process, were causing feelings of uncertainty and fear among academics at the UFS and elsewhere. Unfortunately, at present there were no structures in place to alleviate the fears of these academics. Mr Malherbe could only assure the academics that they should vest their trust in the university management, since it was doing everything in its power to

protect the UFS staff and was thus involved in the process with utmost caution.

Regarding the issue of the possible changes in the funding formula for universities, all the participants claimed that they were not aware that this factor was invoking some fears among academic staff, as they felt the issue was still under discussion.

### **6.6.3 The organisational culture**

Concerning the organisational culture, the participants were required to say whether they were aware that certain cultural issues needed to be addressed at the UFS, as they caused dissatisfaction among some academic staff. They were also asked to mention any intervention strategies that existed on campus to address the problems. These cultural issues were:

- The presence in the institution of artifacts and symbols.
- Prevalent norms and values at the UFS.
- Prevalent rituals.
- The language of instruction at the institution.
- The institutional culture and its ability to accommodate the non-traditional academics.

The participants were all aware of the fact that academics had different opinions about the presence of artifacts and symbols in the institution. They all said they were, on the one hand, aware of the group of academics who felt that artifacts and symbols that represented only a certain group and which also had the sentiments of the past embodied in them, should be removed. On the other hand, they were aware of the group that believed that history can never be done away with and should therefore be kept intact for the future generations. An agreement on the part of the University in

addressing this issue is that the names of buildings, for example, should be in the three languages, namely Afrikaans, English and Sesotho to try and accommodate the non-Afrikaans-speaking people on campus. According to Mr Malherbe, this process was an expensive exercise and could not take place overnight. A good example of this process of name change is evident at some residence halls, for example the students changed the residence that was initially known as D.F. Malherbe to Villa Bravado.

It is the feeling of most of the participants that the cultural artifacts and symbols must stay as a way of preserving the UFS history. Professor Verschoor pointed out that the University intended including other cultures in a more visible manner. He pointed out that the University was going to build a soccer stadium, which will be inaugurated in 2004, on campus, and he believed that, since soccer is a sport cherished more by Blacks, this stadium should be seen as a symbol of the inclusion of Blacks at the UFS.

With regard to the issue of prevalent rituals at the UFS as a factor that is causing certain academics to be dissatisfied with the working environment, Mr Helepi confirmed that most of the university rituals were perceived by the non-traditional groups as a glorification of the past history. Unfortunately some of the history left indelible prints and caused some individuals bitterness.

All the participants concurred that some of these cultural issues could be solved through compromise and communication with staff. The feeling was that conflict of values could be avoided by maximally utilising some of the University support services, for example the use of the language service for language interpretation in meetings where some people are not conversant in Afrikaans or in English. Mr Malherbe added that language interpreters were currently utilised at all council, executive management and faculty meetings and that it was up to the Heads of the different Departments to utilise this

support system during departmental meetings, since it was at the departmental level that academics seemed to be concerned about being excluded during meetings. Mr Malherbe confessed that no monitoring went on at the departmental level to ensure that language interpretation service was utilised optimally. To stress the importance of inclusivity on the basis of language, he pointed out that the University was compelled by the national policy, for example the Higher Education Act, to have an institutional language policy and that that was soon to be finalised by the Council of the University. "At the moment the university is functioning on mutual agreements regarding the policy of language", said Mr Malherbe. Regardless of these milestones in the development of an inclusive language policy, some academics believed that a parallel language usage at the UFS existed only in theory and not in practice. Mr Helepi concurred with these academics.

Through holding diversity workshops for all staff the University is now addressing the issue of an unaccommodative culture and it is through these workshops that staff are sensitised regarding issues of diversity.

#### **6.6.4 Diversity**

The question with regard to diversity required the participants to say whether they were aware of certain diversity issues as factors that caused staff dissatisfaction at the UFS and whether any intervention strategies were in place to address these issues. The issues of concern were:

- The changing profiles of staff by race.
- The changing profiles of staff by gender.
- The proportion of staff from designated groups who are occupying senior positions.
- The working relationships among staff of different gender groups.
- Unfair appointment and promotion of academic staff.

- The slow change of profiles of academic staff from designated groups.

All the participants asserted that they were aware that diversity and equity issues were still problematic and needed to be awarded attention. They agreed that the University was currently engaged in trying to address these issues through putting up an institutional employment equity plan. The participants said that this step was part of the University's response to the national policy. In addition, it was also aimed at hastening the process of change of staff profiles by race and gender, not only to fill academic posts at lower levels, but also to change the profiles of women and Blacks in the management of the university.

At present the UFS has a project for grooming its own academic staff. This project is known as the "Grow your own timber Mentorship Project" and it is funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation. According to the participants, this is the University's opportunity to develop in-house those black students who possess the aptitude to become academics. Apart from this, the University appointed task teams to work on an institutional policy for equity – a policy that will indicate clear targets and strategies for the advancement of equity at the UFS (*vide* Section 6.5.1.2).

Although the University is active in trying to address the issues mentioned above, when they were asked whether the University had any intervention strategies to stop the turnover of black academics, the participants confessed that not much was being done to arrest that situation. Mr Malherbe pointed out that reports from the different departments on the resignations of black academics usually reached the top management too late for them to intervene. Mrs Lombard's opinion on this issue was that such staff did not necessarily leave the institution because of culture, which she said had changed significantly because of the efforts of the UFS Rector (Professor Stef Coetzee), but that those academics who left opted for workplaces which could

pay them better salaries. She felt these staff should be paid well to stop them from leaving the institution. According to Malherbe, "the university is competing with the private sector for qualified black academic staff", a fact which acts as a compounding factor to the turnover of black academics.

Even when faced with these problems it seems the University does not do much to retain the black academics already working at this place, particularly those who are employed on temporary contracts. Mr Helepi mentioned that the university did not have any strategies such as exit interviews in place to deal with the turnover of black academics.

The participants indicated that they were all aware of the tension that sometimes develops in the working relationships of different gender groups. Mrs Lombard affirmed that incidences of male domination and patronisation of female academics had been brought to her attention at her office (UVPERSU) and that in such cases her office intervened by meeting the conflicting parties. "Diversity workshops conducted by the university are hoped to address issues of culture and change of attitudes among staff. However, these will only work if individual people make an attempt to change their own attitudes", said Mr Helepi.

From the results of the interviews it seems that there is no written institutional policy for promotions at the UFS. Faculties and departments function on their own promotion policies which are not monitored by the top management. At the moment the university is functioning on a "gentleman's agreement with the faculties on the issues of equity", said Mr Malherbe. According to Mrs Lombard, it is hoped that with the PMP Ke Nako performance management system which is underway at the UFS, issues of this nature will receive attention.

### 6.6.5 Staff development

The following issues regarding staff development were also identified as issues that caused academic staff to harbour negative feelings about their jobs:

- The unavailability of opportunities for staff development.
- Insufficient time for staff development.
- The lack of induction programmes for non-traditional academic staff.
- The lack of induction for new academic staff.
- The fact that staff development programmes are usually irrelevant to the needs of academics.
- The fact that staff development programmes are not sustainable.
- Insufficient financial support for staff development programmes.
- The lack of mentors for new and junior staff.
- Poor communication of the few available staff development programmes to junior staff.

When asked about whether they were aware of these issues regarding staff development as issues of concern to the UFS academics, all the participants reported that they were aware that staff development at the UFS was an issue that warranted urgent attention. The feeling of one of the participants (Professor Verschoor), however, was that the seriousness of the problem might differ from one department to another. In acknowledgement, Mr Helepi pointed out that at the recent diversity summit which had been held at the UFS on 25 July 2002, the issue of staff development had been discussed as one of the priority areas that needed attention. He mentioned that it had been decided at that meeting that the University had to identify resources that can be utilised in training and development, and that it must establish whether such resources were being utilised optimally. These resources included the skills levies money as well as the expertise found internally, for

example in the Faculty of Management Sciences. According to Mr Malherbe, a task team had been appointed to develop a clear policy and plan for staff development at the UFS. It was expected that this task team would make comprehensive plans indicating the needs of staff, resources needed – both financial and physical - as well as strategies and targets for staff development. It is hoped that these plans will be ready by the end of this year (2002). According to Mr Helepi, Professor Verschoor and Mrs Lombard, the ongoing diversity workshops that are arranged and presented by the diversity office in collaboration with the Dean of Students as well as the office of UVPERSU are regarded as part of staff development at the UFS. These workshops are meant to develop and sensitise staff on issues of culture, as well as change their attitudes towards one another.

The participants agreed that the lack of time for involvement in staff development could be an issue of concern among academics at the UFS, since academics have heavy workloads due to the change in their roles as well as the increasing student-teacher ratios. The feeling on how time can be made available for staff development, is that staff should make use of the support services mentioned in sections 6.5.1.1 c and e.

According to the participants, there is an induction programme that is annually offered to new staff at the UFS. However, Mr Helepi, acknowledged that he had found from his own experience that the programme was irrelevant and not up to the standard of adult academics. Another obvious drawback is that the programme is presented only once in a year and this confirms the concern of some academics that staff development programmes are not done on a continuous basis at the UFS.

When asked about whether they were aware that there was not sufficient financial support for staff development programmes, the response from one of the participants was that the skills development levies money had not been



used at all. This source needs to be utilised. The UFS HR office is currently busy developing skills development plans for the institution.

On the question of the lack of mentorship for junior and new staff at the UFS, all the participants indicated that they were aware that the traditional "swim or sink approach" in the academic field still exists at this university and that there is no policy or scheme for mentoring academic staff members who need guidance and development. The only known formalised case of mentorship on campus is the "Grow your own timber Mentorship Project" (*vide* 6.5.1.4) according to which the academics who are undergoing training, have been allocated mentors who are remunerated. Any other mentorship outside this is done on an *ad hoc* basis within the departments. In both these cases mentioned the mentors have not received any prior mentorship training.

The fact that communication at the UFS is not very effective, particularly communication of the few available staff development programmes, did not come as a surprise to the participants. One of the participants, Mrs Lombard, said: "Communication on campus is very poor, it needs a major uplift". According to Mr Malherbe, the university had already appointed a "black" professional communicator who was an expert at strategic planning and that person would ensure that all university matters were communicated well.

### **6.6.6 Technological changes**

Technological changes and demands were identified as factors that impact on academic staff and their satisfaction. The questions regarding the inaccessibility of technological resources and the lack of opportunities for training in new technology were posed to the participants. They were also requested to mention whatever intervention strategies existed at their institution to address the issues.

The participants pointed out that they were aware of the technological needs of the university and the different academic staff members. Mr Malherbe mentioned in his response to these questions that the university, through its Human Resources Office, was in the process of identifying the needs of staff so that relevant programmes could be offered. He furthermore mentioned that the computer system of the UFS which had been developed internally over years needs to be upgraded or replaced and that this project, which is estimated to cost approximately R7million, is underway. According to Professor Verschoor, another interesting and worthwhile opportunity in computer training is the "Research toolbox" – a computer programme which is currently being offered by the UFS library. Verschoor added that the only thing that needed to be done, was to regularly advertise this tool and to advertise it better, not only through the use of technology but also through the use of written memos. This he said was the only possible way to ensure that all academics could make use of the opportunity, both for themselves and for their learners.

### **6.6.7 Globalisation and internationalisation**

The responses of the academics in the questionnaire survey on the impact of globalisation and internationalisation revealed that certain issues regarding these trends were causes for concern and that they evoked some negative feelings among some academic staff. These issues are:

- The cross-boundary mobility of staff.
- The cross-boundary mobility of learners.
- The lack of preparedness among academics to embrace globalisation and internationalisation.
- The lack of opportunities for staff to participate in global and international higher education issues.
- The lack of funding for staff to participate globally and internationally.

In his response to the question regarding whether the management was aware of these issues and whether there were any intervention strategies in place to address them, Mr Malherbe admitted that - since these trends were new experiences - academic staff were not geared to embrace and participate in them effectively. He stated that the UFS did not have any centrally planned and monitored structure to deal with issues of this nature, but that the involvement of the University had always been a bottom-up approach in which the academics within the different faculties communicate and develop networks with their peers internationally.

Responding to the same issue, Mr Helepi acknowledged the fact that there were limited opportunities for staff, not only for the academics, but for all the UFS staff to participate globally and internationally. In response to the question of limited financial support, Professor Verschoor pointed out that the Human Resources Office caters for the development of staff and should be approached regarding issues of financing. Apart from this, he suggested that academics should make use of the opportunity that the office of the Vice-Rector: Academic presented to them (the academics) that they would be given incentives for publishing, and then they could use the money for their development, e.g. to attend international conferences.

All the participants felt that the University needed to raise an awareness among all UFS academics and other staff about the existence of the global and international forces and the benefits of functioning in a global world. Professor Verschoor mentioned that the cross-mobility of learners, for instance, should be seen as a good factor to the survival of the UFS, since international students bring money to the university. He furthermore pointed out that the university had established an international office with an international liaison officer. According to Verschoor, the duty of this office is to develop networks and to market the university internationally.

### 6.6.8 Quality and quality assurance

The questions on quality and quality assurance were asked with regard to the following factors:

- The fact that quality assurance structures and mechanisms are lacking/inadequate in the institution, e.g. there are no quality managers to provide structural support for the quality process.
- The changing demands of the learners with regard to the quality of higher education.

When asked whether they were aware of these issues pertaining to quality and quality assurance as causes for concern among academics at the UFS and whether any strategies existed to address these issues, the participants disclosed that they were not aware of these concerns. They indicated that the UFS had already set up quality assurance structures in response to the national policy, as well as to ensure that the UFS becomes a university of preference. The participants pointed out that the university had established a quality assurance unit although they concurred that a lot of work still had to be done in terms of the actual process and the evaluation of all the university activities and structures. "An institutional audit is hoped to take place in October 2002", said Mr Malherbe. He confessed, however, that the Quality Assurance Unit is currently without enough capacity, a factor that is likely to interfere with its efficacy. He furthermore pointed out that the national policy requirements do not make things any easier for the institution, as the implications of implementing the suggested processes are enormous. The University will, for example, need a new computer system for this process.

Another structure that was regarded as a starting point towards ensuring quality at the UFS was, according to Professor Verschoor, the PMP Ke Nako performance management system that was under construction.

With regard to the fact that the academics were concerned with the changing demands of the learners for the quality of higher education they were receiving, all the participants were of the opinion that academics had unfounded fears and they should become more open to criticism. In their own words, the participants individually said, "Academics should realise that student evaluation is a well-known phenomenon which should be listened to". "Students' feedback should be accepted as part of quality assurance", said Mr Malherbe. "Academics should welcome change if they hope to change the learners", said Mr Helepi. "Academics should realise how important quality education is nowadays, as only the best institutions will survive in the near future. They should realise that both the parents and the learners want the first and not the second-best education for employability purposes", said Lombard.

#### **6.6.9 Other factors**

Salary and remuneration were regarded by academics in the questionnaire survey as another factor that caused them to feel negative about their jobs. They argued that salaries at the UFS were not competitive with other higher education institutions, the civil service and the private sector. In his response to the question regarding whether the management was aware of this factor as an issue of concern to the academic staff, Mr Malherbe stated that a survey was being done as part of the PMP Ke-Nako Project. This, he said, was aimed at establishing exactly what the salary status of the UFS looked like both in isolation and in comparison with other universities. Mrs Lombard and Mr Helepi in support of this assertion, said that they hoped that the PMP would solve the salary problems at the UFS. In addition, Mrs Lombard

disclosed that her office (UVPERSU) was engaged in negotiating a budget for salaries and hopefully there would not be a need for salary negotiations in the future once an agreement has been reached in that regard and once the PMP Ke-Nako Project is in place.

Professor Verschoor pointed out that the 11,2% salary increment that was provided during the year 2002, was just the starting point in addressing the academics' concerns with regard to salaries. He added that this intervention was part of a three-year plan which the university was busy working on and which would be fully implemented in three years, provided that the student numbers kept on increasing.

None of the participants except one had any general comments on the impact of transformation on academic staff at the UFS. As part of the general comments, Professor Verschoor concluded by saying that the UFS is a dynamic and an interesting environment undergoing transformation.

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on the presentation of the empirical results obtained from the questionnaire survey that was done with the UFS academics, focus group discussions with selected academics, as well as personal interviews with selected managers at the UFS. Its main purpose was firstly, to practically identify issues that caused academics at the UFS to be dissatisfied with their work. Secondly, the purpose was to discuss these issues with the academics concerned with a view to identifying possible solutions for addressing the issues and, furthermore bring the UFS management to an awareness of issues of transformation that impact negatively on academic staff. In addition, the empirical investigation aimed at establishing whether the management had any strategies in place to address the problems of academic staff at the UFS. Interesting perspectives, insights and ideas were

gleaned from the results of the questionnaire and the discussions with all the participants.

The discussions were limited to key transformation issues which were placed in the following categories: Change and transformation; government policy issues; the organisational culture; diversity; staff development; technological changes; globalisation and internationalisation; quality and quality assurance. Apparently the UFS management is aware of most of the factors that were mentioned under these categories as issues of concern to the academic staff. The UFS is making efforts to improve the situation and, as it is, some intervention strategies are already in place to address most of the issues of concern. In addition, many more strategies are in the process of development and the UFS management is working hard on issues of transformation. However, it was a revelation to the researcher that poor communication between the UFS management and the academics acts as a major drawback at this institution. It seems that most of the plans and strategies that are in place are not communicated to the academics. Hence the academics concerned are ignorant of these strategies and are therefore harbouring feelings of negativity.

It also became apparent that there is too much decentralisation of issues to the faculties and departments, as well as too much autonomy vested on the faculties and departments with a lack of co-ordination and monitoring. For this reason some support services, e.g. the language interpretation service - which could benefit academic staff and which is already in full use at the top management - is not utilised by some departments. In addition, the implementation of both the national and the institutional policy occurs on an *ad hoc* basis within the faculties, whilst academics are left in the dark regarding the institution's response to the national policy and the accompanying demands for change and transformation.

Based on the findings and analysis of the results of the empirical investigation with the academics and the UFS management regarding the impact of transformation on academics, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made in the next chapter.



Chapter



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**CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS  
AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING  
ACADEMIC STAFF SATISFACTION  
IN A TRANSFORMING  
SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY**

**7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The principal reason for this research inquiry was to investigate the impact of transformation on academic staff and their satisfaction in a South African university that is undergoing transformation. This was done with the ultimate aim of suggesting guidelines as well as making recommendations to the University management for the improvement and enhancement of academic staff satisfaction during a period of transformation. This was achieved by firstly engaging in an in-depth literature review of what staff satisfaction entails (*vide* Chapter 2). Secondly, it was done by the identification of factors that affect staff satisfaction in a general organisational setting (*vide* Chapter 3); in higher education in general (*vide* Chapter 4); and in the South African higher education in particular (*vide* Chapter 5). The

researcher also engaged in an empirical research which was aimed at identifying the exact implications of transformation on academic staff at the case study university (the UFS) (*vide* Chapter 6).

In view of the findings presented in the foregoing chapters of this study, conclusions, recommendations and guidelines will be advanced.

## **7.2 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE LITERATURE**

The wealth of literature amassed has served as a pillar-stone for this research project. It provided not only an important, but also a very interesting perspective about the concept of staff satisfaction and it is therefore on the basis of these findings that certain deductions could be actualised.

### **7.2.1 Conclusions from Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 enlightened the reader concerning what staff satisfaction entails. It unearthed the supercomplexity of the issue of staff satisfaction as illustrated by its multiple definitions (*vide* 2.2). The chapter further highlighted the highly contested nature, the apparent lack of interpretation, the dynamic nature, as well as the multifacetedness of the concept of staff satisfaction (*vide* 2.2.7). Literature regards this lack of consensus on the definition of staff satisfaction as an issue which could result in a state of confusion among managers/leaders concerning the reality about the satisfaction of staff in their organisations and the perceived situation at a given time and for different individuals. This implies that those with a stake in higher education should make attempts to try and understand the concept of staff satisfaction better in order to be able to scan the working environment as well as the changes in satisfaction among their academic staff.

### **7.2.2 Conclusions from Chapter 3**

Although higher education is known as a unique field of study, higher education institutions are not totally unique, but they are comparable to general organisations - they resemble other organisations in a variety of ways. There may be unique factors and attributes resulting in changes in the satisfaction of staff in a general organisation; nevertheless, literature reveals that staff - regardless of the type of organisation they work in - are prone to the influence of basically the same external and internal factors (*vide* 3.2).

### **7.2.3 Conclusions from Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 provided an exposition of a plethora of factors of both external and internal origin which characterise higher education institutions worldwide and which affect academic staff and their satisfaction (*vide* 4.5 and 4.6). The chapter further revealed how dynamic the working environments in higher education have been since the inception of the university (*vide* 4.3). It shows that academic staff in higher education have had their satisfaction affected by a myriad of factors since the conception of the university, and that change and transformation are not novel factors in the new dispensation and in the higher education sector. In addition, the chapter exposed the complexity and dynamism of the conditions in higher education today. It emphasised the dire need for academics and managers/leaders in higher education to be vigilant, adaptable and visionary in keeping up, as well as coping with the pace and the impact of change and transformation.

### **7.2.4 Conclusions from Chapter 5**

This chapter commenced with a brief synopsis of the history of the South African education system (*vide* 5.3), the different forces that shaped the current taxonomy of the South African universities as well as the forces that

impelled the system to change and become single and coordinated. It highlighted the different higher education and labour policies, identifying how the needs of academic staff in South African universities are taken care of in these policies. In addition, the researcher established how the requirements of these policies (*vide* 5.4) may be affecting academic staff and academic staff satisfaction. The literature provided a firm support to the notion that, in the South African higher education, policy is one of the main and essential driving forces behind change and transformation.

Although policy was identified as an essential motivation and impetus behind the highly needed change and transformation of the higher education system, the amassed literature revealed that the movement towards achieving an inclusive and responsive education system has resulted in a policy overload on the system. This has become the case particularly since the democratic government came to power in 1994. This policy overload affects academics whose roles have had to change as institutions have prepared to implement the different policies, doing more work with fewer staff. Academics must now deal with cumbersome red tape and administrative chores in order to institutionalise the national policies. This factor acts as a source of demotivation and dissatisfaction among academic staff whose support of change is highly sought within institutions.

### **7.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION (CHAPTER 6)**

Theory only was found to be insufficient in describing the impact of change and transformation on academic staff working at the UFS. Therefore this part of the research - which involved the actual investigation of the cause and effect nexus between change, transformation and academic staff and their satisfaction - was regarded as the hallmark of the study/project. Deductions were made on the basis of the results of the empirical research that had been

performed at the case study university (the UFS). Both the qualitative and quantitative research results will provide a basis for the ensuing conclusions.

### **7.3.1 Conclusions from the quantitative investigation**

The quantitative investigation, which was presented in the form of a questionnaire, revealed that academics at the UFS are affected by several diverse issues of transformation and change. These issues, which have been found to have an impact on a significant percentage of respondents, were used as a basis for the focus group discussions which were held with selected academic staff, as well as the personal interviews which were conducted with selected UFS managers. The issues identified in the questionnaire survey provided an opportunity for the academics to present their own recommendations on how the UFS management may prepare the environment at the UFS to be conducive for staff satisfaction during periods of transformation and change.

### **7.3.2 Conclusions from the qualitative investigation**

The qualitative component was undertaken in the form of focus group discussions and personal interviews with selected UFS academic staff and managers.

#### ***7.3.2.1 Conclusions from focus group discussions with academic staff at the UFS***

Academics at the UFS have negative feelings about certain issues of change and transformation. Their main concern is the impact and the implications of change and transformation on their traditional academic roles of teaching, research and service. The fact that academics must now do administrative work, marketing, etc. has magnified the work of the academics at the UFS, making them view change and transformation negatively.

An interesting factor however, is that the academics concerned - regardless of the effect of change and transformation on their roles - have an understanding of the need for change at their institution. But still they are distressed by the impression they have of the UFS management that there is not a shared understanding between themselves and the management about the implications of transformation that goes on at the UFS. Communication between these two parties seems to be very poor and, in addition, academics feel that they are not given any recognition for the heavy workloads that they must now deal with.

With regard to policy, the feeling among academics is that policy implementation is irregular, particularly the implementation of the policy on employment equity. Apart from that, academics seem not to have adequate information with regard to national and institutional policies, as well as their implementation in the institution. It seems that the UFS management needs to improve its communication strategies with its academics. A close and continuous interaction and communication of all information and implementation plans seem imperative at the UFS.

Concerning the organisational culture, academics at the UFS have differing opinions, particularly with regard to the presence in the institution of symbols and artifacts. While, on the one hand, one group of academics argues that these symbols and artifacts are non-inclusive and are a cause for lowered staff motivation and dissatisfaction and must be removed, another group pronounces its support for their existence. This second group argues that these symbols and artifacts must be kept by the institution, as they portray the history and foundation of the university.

Evidently, the UFS needs to take action regarding this issue and must work with the two disagreeing groups to reach an amicable solution that will be acceptable to all academics, regardless of race. The university must take

cognisance of the fact that staff satisfaction can also be an expression of attitudes, which are a characteristic way of responding to an object or a situation, particularly if the object or situation is associated with an unpleasant experience (*vide* Section 2.2.4). In such instances the attitude could lead to certain behaviours and the expression of opinions as it is the case with certain members of staff at the UFS.

Whilst one would have thought that issues of diversity, particularly regarding the relationships among academics of different race groups, would be the most pronounced at the UFS, it appears that this is not the case. The most problematic issue in this regard is the utilisation by the university of the parallel medium of instruction, which is aimed at providing access of education to learners of different race groups. This is proving to be problematic in that it magnifies the work of the academics at the UFS. In addition, some departments still exclude staff who do not know Afrikaans by conducting meetings in Afrikaans, while they could make use of the language service at the UFS.

Concerning the aspect of staff development at the UFS, several deductions can be made. Firstly, the university does not have a staff development policy at the macrolevel. Secondly, staff development occurs on an *ad hoc* basis within the different departments. Thirdly, the UFS does not have a mentorship policy, scheme or programme for new, junior or non-traditional staff. The new and junior academics are initiated with the popular "swim or sink" approach and they must find their way to becoming experienced academics. Undoubtedly this acts as a source of demotivation and dissatisfaction among academics, particularly during times when they must struggle to stay afloat the torrential waves brought about by change and transformation in higher education.

Technological changes also have a certain impact on academics at the UFS. The major problems in this regard are the fact that technological resources as well as the opportunities for training in new technology are insufficient. These two factors act as sources for demotivation among academics at the UFS and make it impossible for academics to embrace technological change.

Other external trends and forces which seem to have an impact on academic staff at the UFS are globalisation and internationalisation. Although academics at the UFS regard the involvement of their university in global and international higher education matters as inevitable, there is an apparent lack of support for staff to effectively participate in global and international issues such as conferences. Apart from this, there seems to be a need for the university to support international students, who have increased in numbers at the UFS. Academics are of the opinion that these students do not receive adequate support and therefore this makes their jobs difficult. They believe that the benefits of cross-boundary mobility can only be gleaned, and the quality of education at the UFS maintained if the university supports international students accordingly.

The issue of low salaries emerged as another factor that causes concern among academics at the UFS. Salaries and remuneration at the UFS are regarded as low, non-competitive and not market-related and are thought to be the reason for the turnover of staff at the UFS. Although the issue of poor salaries may not be the sole reason for the turnover of staff, it may play a significant role in that regard.

### ***7.3.2.2 Conclusions from personal interviews with the UFS management***

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 6, the purpose of the personal interviews with the selected UFS management was to establish whether the management is aware of different issues of transformation that are impacting



on academic staff and their satisfaction. The interview discussions also served to bring these issues to the awareness of these managers if they were not aware of them. The researcher furthermore used the interviews to establish whether any intervention strategies exist at the UFS to address the issues of concern.

The following findings and conclusions, based on the results of the personal interviews presented in Chapter 6 are therefore advanced.

□ **Conclusions regarding change and transformation at the UFS**

The UFS management is aware that change and transformation of the higher education sector in general and of the roles of academics in particular impact negatively on academic staff and their satisfaction (*vide* 6.6.1). The UFS management is aware that the roles of academics at the UFS have changed and continue to change drastically because of the UFS's decision to decentralise some administrative work to the faculties. The management is furthermore aware that academics in some faculties are experiencing very heavy workloads due the increasing student-lecturer ratios, the demands for academics to do administrative work and to market their courses.

There is also evidence of the fact that academics at the UFS were not given any prior preparation or training to support them to effectively deal with their traditional roles, the new roles and to generally embrace change and transformation at the UFS. An interesting revelation, however, is that some strategies are already in place, while some are in the pipeline to address the issues of concern (*vide* 6.6.1). Sadly though, most of these strategies and plans are not communicated at all or communicated well with the academics concerned, hence their lack of knowledge and the feelings of dissatisfaction.

Even though some structures already exist to address some of the issues of transformation, there is no evidence to the existence of structures that can assist to prepare academics for change and transformation in general.

□ **Conclusions regarding government policy issues**

The UFS is currently involved in the development of institutional policies and plans for the implementation of the national policies such as the Employment Equity Act (*vide* 6.6.2). Although the University is busy with plans regarding employment equity, it is clear that the process of implementing equity policy occurs very slowly due to a lack of national guidelines for implementation as well as the lack of qualified academics from the designated groups (*vide* 6.6.2).

It also became apparent from the responses that policy planning occurs at the top management level without the involvement of the academics and that the plans are not communicated well to the lower levels. Academics seem to lack knowledge about policy planning and implementation. Apparently a principled involvement of academics and coordination of plans without any blurring of the role of the top management in planning are essential at the UFS.

Further evidence shows that there is no institutional policy for promotions of academics, since promotions of academics are administered at individual faculty and department levels. Apparently different faculties have their own promotions criteria in place, and unfortunately these are not well known by the top managers who confessed that they were not aware that promotions were, according to some academics, sometimes done unfairly (*vide* 6.6.2).

Academics regarded the ongoing restructuring of the higher education system, for example the mergers and incorporations that are in process at the UFS, as a factor causing them to have negative feelings about their jobs. Unfortunately evidence points to the fact that no institutional structures exist

to inform, sensitise and alleviate the fears and uncertainties that academics have about these processes. Seemingly, the UFS takes it for granted that all academics are informed accordingly.

□ **Conclusions regarding the organisational culture**

The responses of the selected UFS managers show that the management is aware that the presence in the institution of artifacts and symbols that represent one group of the UFS staff is viewed as a factor that causes cultural conflict and negative feelings among some academics (*vide* 6.6.3). The management is aware of the group of academics who wish that these artifacts and symbols should be removed. It is, on the other hand, also aware of the other group of academics who feel that the artifacts are a symbol of the history of the UFS and that they should not be removed, but should be preserved for future generations. However, the feeling is that the culture should make room for and should be inclusive of the other cultural groups at the UFS. Unfortunately this issue has just been discussed by the management and no visible changes in terms of making the UFS culture (artifacts and symbols) all-inclusive are evident.

The UFS has structures such as the language service and the diversity office in place to address some of the cultural problems that prevail on campus. It seems, however, that some of these services are not utilised optimally, as there are incidences of the exclusion of other cultural groups at the UFS, particularly at departmental level and during the performance of certain rituals. The policy of parallel medium seems to function well in theory and not very well in practice (*vide* 6.6.4). In reality the language policy seems to be the dominant language medium of instruction.

All in all, some structures aimed at rendering the culture at the UFS accommodative, do exist at the UFS, although these are not adequate and they are furthermore not monitored. Evidence points to the fact that these

structures are not utilised optimally and effectively. In addition, much still remains to be done regarding the implementation and utilisation of existing structures and resources to render the UFS environment conducive during this period of transition.

□ **Conclusions regarding diversity**

The UFS management is aware of the fact that certain issues of diversity at the UFS impact negatively on the academics and their satisfaction (*vide* 6.6.4) and to address these issues, the University has implemented structures and continues to do so. The diversity office is one such structure which is busy conducting workshops aimed at sensitising staff regarding issues of diversity (*vide* 6.6.4). In addition, employment equity plans are being developed and the issue of equity is being addressed. There is evidence, however, that the diversity workshops are a once-off activity for staff, as they are not continuous and do not follow up on staff who have attended to monitor their response.

The change in the numbers of staff from the designated groups occurs very slowly (*vide* Sections 5.6 and 6.6.4), which is contrary to the demands of the national policy (5.4.9). The number of academics from designated groups at the UFS is still very low.

There is evidence that male domination and the patronisation of female academics occur at the UFS, particularly regarding promotions. Reports have been made to the university's staff union (UVPERSU) in this regard (*vide* 6.6.4). This confirms the amassed literature on career pathing and gender stereotyping that sometimes women's career pathing is made difficult by a range of discriminatory attitudes and practices by the management, particularly in a male-dominated workplace (*vide* 3.2.8.2).

The UFS has no system in place to stop the turnover of staff from the designated groups (*vide* 6.6.4). Apparently the university has no clear career pathing trajectories for the few academics (from designated groups) who are currently employed at the UFS. This contravenes the theory on career pathing which specifies that career pathing opportunities are worthwhile aspects of the life of any employee and, if they are not made available to staff, this can spoil relationships and increase staff turnover (*vide* 3.2.8.1).

□ **Conclusions regarding staff development**

The UFS does not have an institutional policy for staff development (*vide* 6.6.6). The institution through its Human Resources Office is currently running a need assessment. In addition, skills development plans were only recently drawn. This explains the reason why the nature of staff development at the UFS is *ad hoc* and dependent on individual departments and faculties. It is evident from the responses of the selected UFS managers during the personal interviews, that the aspect of staff development is currently and totally the responsibility of the individual faculties and departments and that the top management does not monitor activities regarding staff development.

Opportunities for staff development are limited at the UFS. In addition, academics do not have time to participate in the few available programmes, since they are overloaded with teaching, research and administrative work (*vide* 6.6.6). This observation contradicts the fact that staff development programmes are considered by Albertyn and Kapp (2001:32) as helpful tools in empowering staff in higher education, particularly those who initially have feelings of dissatisfaction, lack assertiveness, are unable to cope, lack control and have fear of failure. In effect, all types of development - whether for induction, mentorship, ongoing development or for managing performance - are no longer an option for all higher education institutions, particularly in the light of the radical changes facing the higher education institutions in the new dispensation (*vide* 5.9.3).

Nevertheless, counter to these observations there is no induction for the non-traditional staff at the UFS, while induction of new staff occurs only once a year, i.e. at the beginning of the year and nothing is offered to those who are appointed during the course of the year. The common approach to induction is the traditional "swim or sink" approach which oftentimes culminates in feelings of frustration, isolation, as well as lowered self-concept and aspirations (*vide* 5.9.3.1).

There is also evidence that the university does not have a formal mentorship scheme or policy for all junior and new academics (*vide* 6.6.6). The only existing formal mentorship scheme is the "Grow your own timber" Mentorship Project of the UFS (*vide* 6.6.4 and 6.6.5) which unfortunately caters for only a handful of black junior and new academics.

#### □ **Conclusions regarding technological changes**

The UFS management is aware that new and emerging demands of technology are impacting negatively on the academics at the UFS (*vide* 6.6.6). In response, the management through the Human Resources Office is running a need assessment in order to identify the training needs of academics and consequently develop relevant programmes for the academics. In addition, considerations have been made to upgrade the computer system of the UFS (*vide* 6.6.6).

The UFS also offers a computer programme called the "Research toolbox" to its academics, even though this structure is not known to most academics (*vide* 6.6.6). This poor communication of the few available resources, coupled with the unavailability of opportunities for training, seems to act as compounding factors for staff's dissatisfaction.

### □ **Conclusions regarding globalisation and internationalisation**

The UFS management is aware that the forces of globalisation and internationalisation as new trends could impact negatively on academic staff at the UFS (*vide* 6.6.7), particularly if it is not prepared to embrace them. Nevertheless, the university does not have any centrally controlled structure or office to deal with issues of this nature and to liaise with the international world on behalf of the academics and the institution in general. In addition, it is evident that not enough financial support and training are provided for junior and new academic staff to participate and compete globally and internationally.

### □ **Conclusions regarding quality and quality assurance**

The UFS management is not aware of the fact that certain issues regarding quality and quality assurance are impacting negatively on academic staff at the UFS (*vide* 6.6.8). It became apparent from the responses of some academics in the questionnaire survey that academics were not aware that the institution had put quality assurance structures in place (*vide* 6.4.3.8). A Quality Assurance Unit of the UFS, which will hopefully address issues regarding quality and quality assurance (*vide* 6.6.8), was established. The only drawback is that this Unit is understaffed. Hence its work on campus is not as yet recognisable and known to the academics.

### □ **Conclusions regarding other factors that impact negatively on academic staff at the UFS**

A general feeling by the respondents was that salaries at the UFS are indeed not competitive with those at other higher education institutions, as well as in the civil service and the private sector. In effect they are said to be 30% lower than what the labour market offers (*vide* 6.6.9). The respondents confessed that the turnover of staff at the university could be attributed to these low salaries. An important revelation made by the researcher, however,

is that the salaries at the UFS are under review and the university is in the process of developing a performance management system which will be linked to the salary and remuneration system.

#### **7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING AND ENHANCING ACADEMIC STAFF SATISFACTION IN A TRANSFORMING SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY**

The recommendations that will be presented in this section will be twofold, i.e. recommendations made by academic staff themselves during focus group discussions, as well as those advanced by the researcher. The researcher strongly feels that academics need to have ownership of matters that concern them in their institutions. Hence the research investigation deliberately solicited the recommendations of the academics through focus group discussions, as well as by means of the open-ended questions in the questionnaire survey. In addition, the researcher is also of the opinion that academics possess the kind of academic acumen and potential that should be tapped rather than be underestimated by imposing remedial strategies and other issues upon them. For that reason the researcher strongly believes that their recommendations on how the UFS can improve and enhance academic staff satisfaction and motivation, should have a place in this thesis, and that their recommendations should not be regarded merely as perceived untested solutions.

##### **7.4.1 Recommendations by academic staff**

Academics at the UFS are of the opinion that, if this institution is to become a place of preference, the UFS management should take heed of the following recommendations regarding change and transformation at the UFS:



#### **7.4.1.1 *Recommendations regarding change and transformation***

Academics are well aware of the impelling need for higher education to be responsive to change and transformation. The general feeling, however, of the academics is that the university should invest in its academics by preparing them through training and development to deal with the new and challenging roles that are emerging in the higher education sector in general and at the UFS in particular. The idea behind this is that, if academics are well-versed to engage in and propel issues of change and transformation, then they will appreciate and provide the right impetus for it.

According to the academics concerned, the top management should give recognition either in terms of promotion, privileges or incentives for those whose roles have become too diverse and enormous. This they believe could give academics the impetus they need to sustain the momentum for the UFS transformation and change, regardless of the heavy workloads that they must deal with. An important issue that resulted from the transformation of the UFS regarding diversity is that of the parallel medium of instruction. Academics view this as an aspect that magnifies their teaching workloads. They recommend that the language policy at the UFS needs an urgent review so that a realistic workable solution can be reached. According to the academics concerned, the problems that are related to language can be solved in a variety of ways. Firstly, it can be done by changing the attitudes of certain academics towards language so that only one language can be used for instruction. Secondly, there is also a feeling that academics should specialise in what they excel in, for example, those who are expert at research should be given a chance to do more research, while those who are excellent lecturers should only teach. However, the feeling is that both roles should then be rewarded equally. Some academics are of the opinion that the problems associated with the language of instruction should be solved through a consultative process with all those affected in order to reach

consensus on whether there is still a need to continue with the two languages. Another group of academics believes that things would not be as bad if there were enough lecturers at the UFS.

All in all academics feel that change is necessary, but that it becomes disruptive if it is not adequately planned and prepared for. They acknowledge the fact that they need some form of development to prepare them for their changing roles, but, still they say they expect the management to honour the job descriptions that it assigns to them. They plead with the management not to overload them with any form of work that does not really qualify as academic in nature, for example administrative work. The feeling is that academics waste too much time doing administrative work, e.g. packing boxes, pushing trolleys and checking whether students are registered or not, etc. when they could use that time to advance their scholarly duties such as publishing now that their academic lives are so extremely dependent on research outputs. They suggest that, in order to alleviate this problem, the management should hire people to assist the academics and relieve them of the heavy workloads. Senior students are seen as potential people who can be given some remuneration to assist staff in this regard and probably in the marking of tests as well. This idea is also seen as a way to develop and train students at the UFS to become future academics.

#### **7.4.1.2      *Recommendations for dealing with government policy issues***

Academics feel that the top management must invite them to participate during the phase of policy planning to ensure feelings of ownership towards both the national and institutional policies (*vide* 3.3.7.4 and 5.4). This, they believe, can be done through the organisation and the presentation at the UFS of summits similar to one that was held for the management in July 2002. They are of the opinion that such a summit could present an ideal forum where opinions can be shared and plans developed.

Although they are aware of the existence of various interest groups and committees involved in that regard, the feeling is that such groups are not awarded enough recognition and respect by the top management. In addition, they feel there is no coordination between the different interest groups at the UFS. This, they feel, could be a cause for the development of conflict and duplication of work. Obviously this does not support the advancement of change and transformation at the UFS.

Another valuable suggestion by academics is that the UFS must think of establishing an office or another form of structure to work specifically with issues of change and transformation. The belief is that such an office would also ensure that information on both the national and the institutional policies is communicated and disseminated efficiently to all academics. According to the academics, another role of such a structure would be to plan, implement and monitor plans at all the levels of the organisation. This is because the general feeling is that there is laxity by policy implementers at the grass-roots level to buy into innovations. On this account policy implementation regarding certain issues such as promotions of staff depends on the individual deans, and in most cases the set criteria for promotion of staff are not adhered to. Furthermore academics feel that policy implementation occurs in theory (window dressing) as the UFS has good plans with no evidence of their actual implementation. Some academics propose that more attention should be paid to the implementation of the Labour Relations Act and the Employment Equity Act, in particular by hiring academics from the designated groups on temporary contracts while training them and creating permanent posts to accommodate them at the UFS. Some academics, however, feel that the advancement of policy must not jeopardise the quality of education at the UFS by hiring staff solely on racial and gender grounds and not according to competencies, merit and skills.

According to the academics, a central office dealing with change and transformation could make a difference at the UFS, as it would also clarify a lot of issues regarding change. The belief is that sometimes staff act and harbour feelings of fear towards the implementation of policy only because they lack clarity regarding such policy (*vide* Section 3.2.7.4). A notable example is the policy on the possible merging of the UFS with Vista University and UNIQWA. Academics pointed out that they knew very little about what was happening regarding this issue. Hence they were skeptical about the process.

#### **7.4.1.3 Recommendations for creating an all-inclusive organisational culture**

The feeling about the UFS culture is that it is "still very much Afrikaner-orientated and therefore it does not encourage a multicultural atmosphere that is friendly and accessible". The challenge that the UFS management is facing in this regard is to render the institutional culture all-inclusive by offering sensitisation programmes aimed at changing the attitudes of the different groups of academics, encouraging them to have respect for one another, as well as be accommodative of other cultures.

The feelings of academics about the existence of symbols and artifacts at the UFS are divided. One group of academics is of the opinion that any such symbols should be kept as the cultural heritage of the University to mark the foundation thereof. This group feels that the UFS management should, however, hasten its efforts to make this culture inclusive by adding/putting up those symbols and artifacts that will symbolise the unification of the diverse cultures at the UFS. Another group, however, feels that all the artifacts and symbols belong in museums and that those symbols and artifacts on campus that represent the culture of a single group of people and that have the sentiments of the past embodied in them, should be removed. The feeling is that consensus should be sought on what types of names for the different

buildings at the UFS would engender a new and shared culture. According to these academics, the past and the present - can not exist together, particularly if emotive issues are still attached to them.

#### **7.4.1.4 *Recommendations for dealing with diversity***

The most notable issues of diversity causing concern among academics are regarded as language, promotions and appointments of staff by race and gender and the effect on quality of providing access to students coming from designated groups. The parallel medium of instruction is said to cause academics increased workloads, leaving them no time for their other roles. As mentioned in Section 7.4.1.1, a workable solution according to the academics concerned, is to reach consensus on which language to use at the UFS or to employ more staff to deal with the increased student numbers.

Regarding the implementation of the Employment Equity Act at the UFS, academics have mixed feelings. There is a group of academics who feel that the advancement of equity occurs very slowly and that visible changes regarding equity and the recruiting of staff from designated groups must be seen at the UFS. However, the feeling is that recognition must be awarded to the maintenance of quality by using merits and competencies as major prerequisites for appointments and promotions.

This group of academics who are threatened by diversity issues also believe that the inclusion of students from designated groups affects the quality of education provided at the UFS. They recommend that the university must make attempts to improve the quality of the applicants by providing bridging courses and encouraging a better school system.

#### **7.4.1.5 *Recommendations for staff development***

These are some of the remarks that academics made regarding staff development and which can be regarded as being straight from the horses' mouths:

"More staff should be hired to leave room for staff development."

"Decrease teaching loads by appointing more staff."

"Fire redundant staff or retrain them."

"Make academics' workloads lighter by employing more staff."

"Acknowledge the academics' primary roles of teaching, research and service."

"The slow pace at which staff development occurs for juniors does not give them the competitive edge over other universities."

"Career planning and staff development need to be addressed urgently."

"Mentoring of juniors to become integrated into the academic community will increase the research output and make the UFS a university of preference."

"Bring relevance into staff development."

"A formal mentorship system or scheme should be introduced at the UFS."

Although these comments originate from the acknowledgement by academics of the importance of staff development at the UFS, it also becomes apparent that the UFS does not award sufficient recognition to the issue of staff development.

#### **7.4.1.6 *Recommendations for dealing with technological changes***

The main challenge for the top management with regard to technological changes is to equip all relevant places with the right technological equipment and to improve communication by upgrading the internet service as well as by the use of computers by academics.

#### ***7.4.1.7 Recommendations for dealing with globalisation and internationalisation***

Financial stringency has been identified as a major contributory factor prohibiting the academics' participation in internationalisation. In their recommendations academics said the only way in which both the staff's and the students' international exchange could be promoted, was by making money available to the academics.

#### ***7.4.1.8 Recommendations for dealing with quality and quality assurance***

According to academics, a challenge regarding quality and quality assurance at the UFS is to improve the academic standards. The belief is that this can be done by acknowledging the gaps that exist between the school system and university education and then by taking necessary steps to intervene so that the quality of education at the UFS can be upheld during the transition period. Apart from that, academics feel that the quality of communication of matters and issues of transformation needs to be given attention. Academics feel that there is usually a lack of knowledge among them about what the university is planning for the future and this communication breakdown results in feelings of uncertainty. A recommendation in this regard is that the top management should communicate more effectively by means of the computer network or the distribution of newsletters.

Although academics acknowledged the establishment of the Quality Assurance Unit at the UFS, they felt that they are still waiting to see its function. They suggested that a newsletter could also be developed and distributed to inform staff about the role and all the activities, processes or structures that are being evaluated by the Quality Assurance Unit.

#### **7.4.1.9 *Recommendations for addressing other issues***

When they were asked what other issues caused concern, two important issues were brought to the fore by the academics. These are poor salaries and the lack of financial support for staff to do research. Several recommendations were made regarding the salary structure and remuneration of staff. The University is advised to address this issue by developing an appropriate salary structure that is market-related and competitive with salaries in other higher education institutions, the civil service and the private sector. Academics stated that the salary structure must be commensurate with the service that they render for their institution.

#### **7.4.2 Recommendations and guidelines to improve academic staff satisfaction**

This research effort would not be complete without the presentation of the researchers' suggested intervention and recommendations for the enhancement and improvement of the satisfaction of academics during times of transformation. The previous chapters evidenced that the forces that are driving the change and transformation of the higher education arena in general and of the UFS in particular oftentimes impact negatively on academic staff and their satisfaction. Ideally this research investigation must conclude by paying attention to the practical steps that the UFS must plan and implement to render its environment conducive to the enhancement of academic staff satisfaction, as well as the overall quality of the work of academics and the University at large.

The recommendations made by the academics addressed the issues of change and transformation that were investigated by means of a questionnaire. The researcher will, however, present more general



recommendations on how the university may prepare the environment for change and transformation.

#### **7.4.2.1 *Recommendations and guidelines for the advancement of change and transformation***

The following aspects should be considered in preparation of any change that is to be introduced, as well as during transformation:

□ **Be aware of the implications of change and transformation**

First and foremost, the university management should be aware of the implications that change and transformation of this university and the higher education in general have for the University community at large, academics included. The fact that change is unnerving, threatening and brings unpredictable results (*vide* 3.3.6), demands that time should be spent forecasting its implications and benefits. This could be achieved through a regular assessment/evaluation of the impact of the new demands and imperatives for change and transformation. The UFS should undertake a study such as this one, or rather one focussing at a certain critical issue of transformation at the time. This must be done annually, or even quarterly. Such a research undertaking has a potential to discover/unearth how academic staff may be feeling because of the effect of transformation at a given time.

□ **Forecast the possible barriers and obstacles to the advancement of change and transformation**

Since no stasis exists where there is change and transformation, the University management should not be stagnant in their thinking, but need to be proactive and highly strategic in steering change. They should be in a position to visualise and forecast what awaits the institution and the people involved in every step/stage of the change and transformation. This implies

that they must be innovative in both their short- and long-term plans for the implementation of change and the transformation of the University. This approach would undoubtedly ensure that barriers and obstacles to the process of transformation are dealt with timely and before they developed into serious problems and sources of staff demotivation and dissatisfaction (*vide* Section 4.6.6).

□ **Plan for change and transformation**

Based on an informed awareness of the possible implications as well as the impact of change and transformation on academics, the management should then rigorously plan for change. It is through proper planning that it can advance its aspiration to effect successful change and transformation. It is imperative that the management trusts in the potential and capabilities of all the stakeholders at the UFS. All the role-players should be brought on board to prepare the ground for the advancement of change.

As part of the planning process, the top management should give priority to issues of policy and transformation that cause most concern to staff, e.g. the advancement of equity at the institution. The management needs to prioritise the promotions and appointments of white females and black staff in order to respond to the Employment Equity Act in a more practical and visible manner. Commitment is required from the management, not only at the top level, but also at faculty and departmental level. The faculties and departments can show their commitment by developing workable and realistic plans for the advancement of equity. These plans should show clear targets, the budget needed, strategies to reach the targets and the time frames for reaching the targets.

□ **Share information about the national and institutional policy demands and other forces driving change**

As part of planning, information should be shared about the national and institutional policy demands and imperatives as well as about the existence of other trends, megatrends and forces that propel change. These must be communicated by the management to the academics. The University needs to have a forum where all those who are expected to effect change and all those who are expected to support it or who will be affected by it in one way or another, will have an opportunity to participate in the planning process. This forum would present an opportunity to the academics concerned to engage in debates on forces that are probably going to impact on their institution and the possible strategies to utilise in supporting such changes. This would function as an excellent strategy to win the support of those affected by change, as well as those who are expected to support transformation. With this kind of approach, academics will not view change and transformation as factors imposed on them to change their traditional academic roles, or even as factors that are intended to erode their freedom to pursue their scholarly activities. In addition, such forums would encourage academics to have respect for the heterogeneity of the perspectives that diverse people can present.

Planning for change should not only happen at the macrolevel, but should become the responsibility of people at the lower levels as well. Both institutional and departmental operational plans need to be developed. Any proper plan should entail the processes of implementation; strategies for the implementation; people expected to implement and monitor the processes; as well as the time frames for the implementation of the plans. All academics should be conversant with these fine details contained in plans for transformation. All the plans should have a clear indication of the point of departure in engaging with change. In addition, they must have a clear route

that all those who are expected to deal with change must follow, otherwise the change may not get off the ground.

□ **Support staff to embrace change**

According to Harvey and Knight (1996:178) without staff development it is difficult for academics to have both the freedom and ability to promote transformation.

It is important and imperative for the University management to realise that change and transformation without realistic plans and support are a futile exercise which can never sustain any momentum. A plan to increase student numbers at the UFS should, for example, be accompanied by a plan to support the students. The projections of student numbers should tally with the projections for academics and other staff needed to support them, otherwise experiences such as high student-teacher ratios will not disappear at this institution. There is a burning need to link the potential growth of this University to staff recruitment and development. As part of providing support to academics, resources must be made available. These may be physical, e.g. infrastructure, financial, policy guidelines, strategies for implementation of change, etc.

Effecting the new demands for change and transformation presupposes the existence of a concrete institutional policy as well as a clearly mapped out *modus operandi* for staff development. This is because a staff development policy is no longer an option, but a pressing necessity for all higher education institutions, particularly those undergoing transformation (*vide* Section 5.9.3). Staff development need not be done on an *ad hoc* basis, but must be done by offering formal ongoing programmes. For a university that is undergoing transformation there must be a diversity of programmes, each one geared towards addressing a specific issue of transformation. This must be aligned with the commonly known principle for the construction of staff development programmes which regards a proper programme as one that is developed on

the basis of a specific need (*vide* Section 4.6.7). At the UFS, for example, there should be programmes on the general sensitisation of staff about the need for change and transformation. Such programmes would also entail making staff aware of the possible implications of the changes to be effected in their institution. In addition, they would include ways in which the management hopes to effect change, offer support, and deal with barriers and potential obstacles to change. Generally these programmes should prepare academics to expect, embrace and support change. It is only when academics buy into the need for change and transformation and are well informed about the benefits, the likely obstacles, as well as the kind of interventions that the management will execute to protect and support them, that they will allow their institution to transform without being fearful.

The pervasiveness of change impels higher education leaders not to impose change, but to introduce it in such a way that people appreciate its necessity (*vide* Section 4.4).

As mentioned earlier, there is also a need for the development and offering of specific but relevant programmes to address issues such as diversity, the organisational culture, quality and quality assurance, technological changes, globalisation and internationalisation. These programmes must, however, be needs-orientated. Their development must be preceded by an assessment of the needs of the academics regarding the issues mentioned above. This assessment would identify the fears, incompetencies, worries, as well as the staffs' developmental and training needs concerning transformation. It is through exposing academics to continuous relevant training and preparation that they will feel positive rather than negative about change and transformation.

Since it is apparent that developmental areas and needs for academics are varied, it would make sense to establish a centre for training and development to shoulder the various responsibilities entailed in the offering of

meaningful and dynamic staff development programmes. Given enough capacity, as well as adequate financial support, a centre of this nature would have to function as the eyes of the academics by assessing both the external and the internal environments of the institution. This would have to be done regularly to become accustomed to for example the emerging trends and megatrends such as technology, globalisation and internationalisation, as well as the demands that these forces bring with them. In addition, it is through this assessment that the direction that change is likely to take and appropriate strategies to prepare the institution accordingly for change can be identified.

One of the crucial assignments of such a centre would be to take an inventory of all existing departmental policies and plans for staff development, as well as to run a need assessment for staff to identify generic deficiencies and needs. On the basis of these, generic policy guidelines can be outlined. This may be followed by the development of relevant needs-directed staff development programmes.

The centre would have to ensure effective communication of the available programmes to all the inhabitants of the UFS, but most especially to those in dire need of training, for example junior, new, as well as other academics needing refreshment and upgrading, as well as a change in attitudes. In the case where specific subject-related staff development programmes would be needed, the centre would have to make recommendations to specific faculties and departments to find relevant programmes, in addition to offering them. This process would need to be monitored, however.

An overarching policy for mentorship would have to be formulated by the centre (*vide* 5.9.3.1), and this would serve as a basis for reference in planning and implementing mentorship at the faculty and departmental levels. Such a policy should provide clear guidelines for mentoring and should furthermore

clearly indicate what the expectations of the mentorship programme are to both as far as the mentors and the mentees are concerned.

The mentorship scheme should be made meaningful and worthwhile by setting rules and regulations to ensure that only dedicated mentors participate in such a scheme. Those willing to assist should be encouraged to apply for mentorship and they should be rewarded accordingly by their efforts. Because change and transformation have been and continue to be forceful and harsh to academics, staff development endeavours should also be geared towards improving the attitudes and the morale of staff concerned (*vide* Section 4.6.7).

#### □ **Setting up and utilising effective communication structures**

In addition, as part of planning and providing support for change, effective communication structures should be put in place. For example English could be used as the *lingua franca* for the academic discourse and communication. This is because the value of effectively communicating during all the stages of change implementation should not be underestimated. It should be realised that underpinning change of any real consequence at an institution of higher learning there is a need for meaningful dialogue among the academics and the management (*vide* Section 4.6.8). This kind of discourse could identify the most salient problems as well as how they may be resolved as a point of departure for the implementation of change. All the stakeholders at the UFS should realise that communication is a critical element that can ensure that all the participants are aware of the need, requirements, resources and the expected outcomes for change. While open communication can be regarded as a worthwhile tool that can be employed to promote a "buy into change" attitude among the UFS academics a lack or barbed, distorted communication can be devastating in terms of productivity and staff morale (*vide* 4.6.8). Hill, Green and Eckel (2001) insinuate that change and transformation can be very exhilarating and that, if open and ample communication is ensured, by

creating room for respect for the diversity in perspectives, then it becomes a positive rather than a threatening experience to those involved. This is the same approach that academics at the UFS need to adopt in order to solve problems emanating from the diversity in cultures that the UFS is known for. In addition, this could pave the way for transforming this institution into a truly multicultural environment.

□ **Create an organisational culture conducive for change and transformation**

At present it seems that there are not sufficient efforts aimed at the transformation of the culture at the UFS which is regarded as a predominantly Afrikaner-centred culture rather than a multicultural one (*vide* Section 7.4.1.3). While other people feel that the presence at the UFS of artifacts and symbols representing only the traditional occupants of this university should be removed and replaced by symbols that all the diverse cultures at the place can associate with, the researcher has a different opinion. Her feeling is that history is a memory that can never be erased by the removal of material symbols (*vide* Section 4.6.3). Hence these should remain as the cultural heritage symbolising where the University originated, i.e. its foundation. However, the management should be committed to making the UFS a truly multicultural university and should therefore hasten its efforts to make this cultural heritage welcoming and accommodative to other people. Since the cultural symbols and artifacts of the UFS exhibit "phylogenetic inertia" (*vide* 4.6.3) and are embedded in a history that acknowledges only one group of academics, then the management must make attempts to change them, not necessarily by removing them, but by encouraging the exploration of heterogeneity and a better understanding of individual cultures.

First and foremost, it should educate the non-traditional occupants of the UFS about the history of this University to make them appreciate its importance to the traditional occupants and the University as a whole. It is also the duty of



the management to, on the one hand, change the attitudes of all those who feel negative about the existence of cultural artifacts and symbols because of the bitter memories that these symbols bring to them. On the other hand, the management should also strive to change the attitudes of the traditional occupants of the UFS towards the newcomers. The management should identify existing cross-cultural barriers between the two disagreeing groups, and should encourage staff to share them and overcome them together. Traditional staff should be made aware of the importance of change and transformation as well as the benefits of the diversity that is brought to the UFS by these processes. They should be encouraged to be accommodative to non-traditional academics and to learn to compromise with regard to issues such as language. All stakeholders at the UFS should realise that to cherish diversity, as we all proudly would like to be regarded at the UFS, is to have courage to change attitudes, behaviours, procedures and "abnormal norms".

The University should, through negotiations, find new symbols and artifacts to celebrate the present multicultural UFS and to create a new unifying future for both the traditional and the non-traditional UFS staff. While that is done, the University must be cautious in its new choice of symbols. The names of buildings and streets should, for example, not be symbolic of specific individuals, particularly political figures. The UFS management needs to engage in a rigorous review and refocus thereof, of values that are essential to all the academe and to the performance of the organisation. The management must make sure that these values are represented and reflected in the actions of all staff. In addition, a reward system maybe developed and utilised to acknowledge positive attitude and behaviour and disregard the non-existence of important values in staff activities.

□ **Monitor the implementation of change and transformation**

Another important step in the advancement of change and transformation is to monitor the implementation process. At the moment such monitoring

processes seem to be done by the government and not the institution. Therefore, the UFS management needs to put in place a structure that will monitor very carefully and closely the implementation of change and other activities, not only at the top management level, but, most importantly, within the faculties and departments. This is unavoidable, since the research investigation revealed that departments and faculties are currently functioning in an uncoordinated manner and they exist as isolated units within one organisation. Hence some faculties or departments have structures for the advancement and support of transformation, while others do not. In the researcher's opinion, it does not really matter whether the university has decentralised responsibilities to the departments and faculties or whether academics must enjoy their academic freedom, but the truth is that decentralisation does not mandate a lack of accountability on the side of the management. It is inescapable that the management must know what happens in the departments and faculties regarding staff. Monitoring would therefore guarantee that all the institutional plans are communicated to all the levels and all staff.

Monitoring will furthermore ensure that the existing university structures aimed at supporting staff are utilised and are utilised well. The language service, which must have cost a lot of money to set up, is for example not yet fully utilised at some levels of the University. This creates unnecessary problems of exclusion of some staff in important meetings and thus it contradicts the University's vision and mission to make the UFS an excellent, equitable and innovative university.

□ **Evaluate the impact of change and transformation**

The implementation of change and transformation together with their impact on the organisation needs to be evaluated regularly in the same way that other organisational processes and structures are evaluated. This operation will facilitate the process of replanning according to which new structures can

be set up or old ones reviewed. In addition to identifying new challenges and shortcomings timely, evaluation can be used as a basis for giving recognition to those who support the process.

□ **Give recognition to those advancing and supporting change**

Monitoring of the implemented plans will not only identify problems hindering progress, but can be used as a tool for giving recognition to the people to whom the advancement of change is entrusted. Recognition can be rendered in various ways, e.g. it can be by simply giving the academics a pat on the back and voicing appreciation for the work that the academics concerned are doing. It can come in small incentives like tokens, as well as by awarding flexible time schedules. It can be presented in providing development, clear career paths, as well as promoting staff accordingly. Most importantly, recognition of the massive and diverse roles of academics can occur through revising and increasing their salaries so that they are on par with the salaries of their peers in other higher education institutions. This would ensure that the salaries are commensurate with the heavy and diversified workloads that staff must grapple with (*vide* 3.3.7.1). Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1994:148) believe that a proper allocation of rewards can influence both performance and satisfaction (*vide* Section 3.2.7.1).

Thus it becomes apparent that the entire process of change and transformation needs to be planned and implemented carefully by those entrusted with the responsibility of transforming the UFS. The various processes that must be managed are summarised in Figure 7.1. It is worth noting that the steps should neither be viewed nor implemented in complete isolation, but should be seen as integrated processes that are dependent on one another. Figure 7.1 summarises these processes as follows:

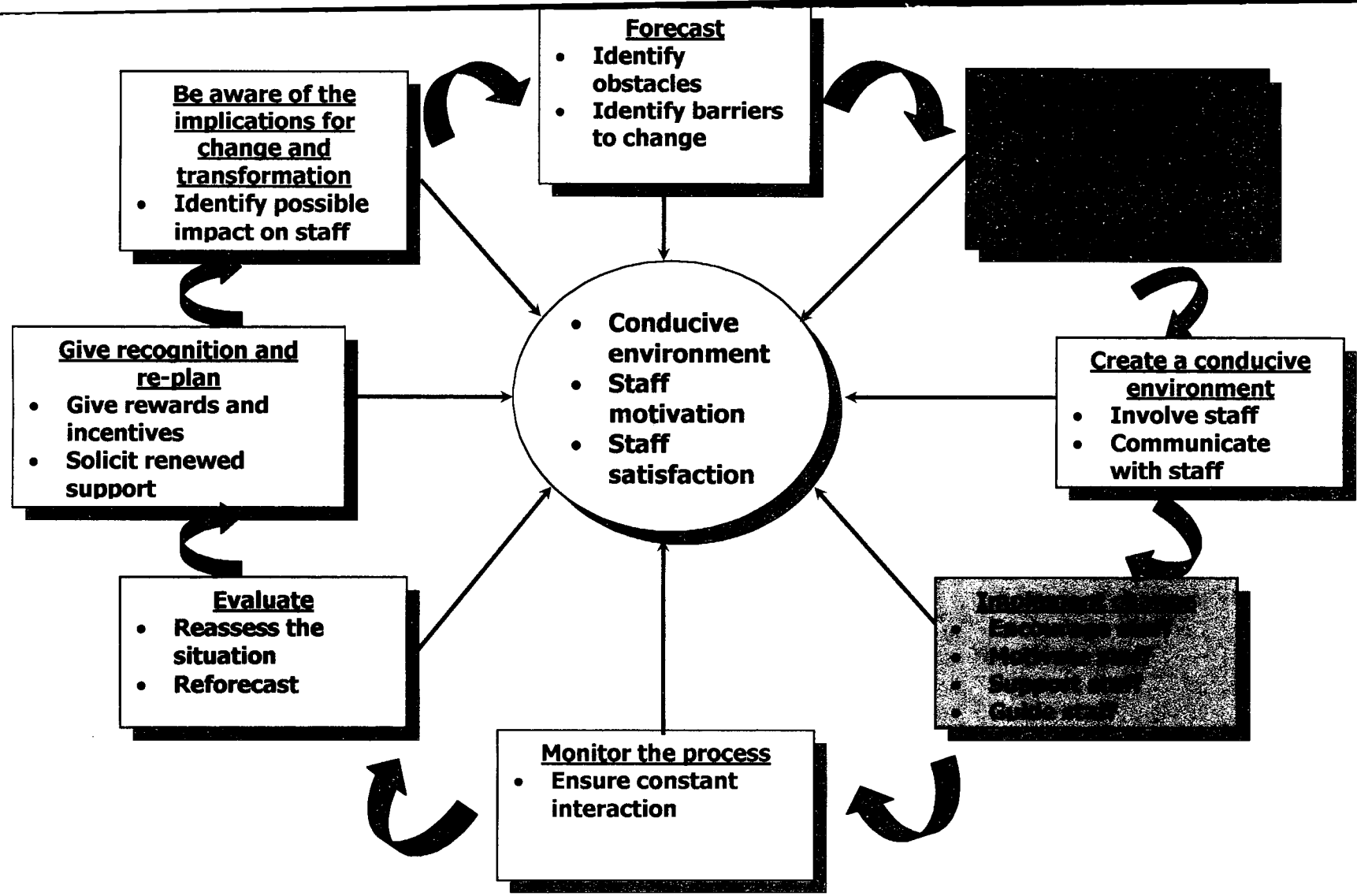


Figure 7.1: A holistic approach to creating an environment that is conducive for improved staff satisfaction during periods of change and transformation

### **7.4.2.2 *Concluding remarks***

The ongoing transformation at the UFS has not been an easy process for the University and all its stakeholders. All the inhabitants of the University have been and continue to be affected in one way or another by the relentless forces and pressures that dictate the reconfiguration of the higher education system in general and of some institutions in particular. Indeed the study reflected that academic staff satisfaction at the UFS is affected either positively or negatively by diverse issues, as Davis and Newstrom (1985) indicated in their school of thought. In certain areas the UFS management has apparently been very progressive and has made notable changes by setting up structures for steering and sustaining the momentum for change and transformation in the institution. However, much still remains to be done. Apparently many issues of transformation still need to be dealt with rigorously, regarding not only the development of new strategies and plans, but also ensuring their consequent successful and smooth implementation. The supposedly existing structures and plans need to be communicated well with the academics so that they too can become part of the planning and the implementation of the transformation process. It is through this active involvement and the efficient utilisation of the few existing support structures that the environment at the UFS will become conducive and supportive to its employees.

## **7.5 THE DRAWBACKS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

In this section I would like to share some of the drawbacks/problems that I experienced in this research project. I would like to send a warning signal to other researchers and particularly to future Ph.D. students that, even in the most carefully planned research project, things that may offset your entire plan are bound to emerge.

The initial plan for this research was to investigate the impact of change and transformation in six South African universities, i.e. two historically white English, two historically white Afrikaans-speaking and two historically black universities. However, I was forced to rethink, redesign and refocus my research investigation for the following reasons:

- Failure to gain access to do research in historically white English universities because of lengthy, laborious ethics protocols that a researcher must follow to get permission to conduct research.
- A lack of support for research by academics in some universities and the consequent failure by the participants to return the questionnaires after a waiting period of three months.

I must mention that it took me three months to try and solicit staff's support for my empirical and for these reasons I had to change my research approach into a case study using the University of the Free State as my case unit. It is worth mentioning that the decision to use UFS was motivated by the fact that, among the six universities, the UFS was the only university in which the academic staff had responded in an acceptable manner, since there was a return rate of 76,6%.

A recommendation to students or people contemplating doing research is that they should plan enough time for their empirical and should seek permission or solicit support of their target population well ahead of time to avoid disappointments. However, they should also realise that failure of one method or approach does not spell doom for a research project, but calls for replanning and refocusing of the plan.

## **7.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 6, there is not a single research method that is without flaws and, even with the best planning, research does not usually proceed quite as planned. One is bound to encounter drawbacks and limitations. Even in this research a few limitations have been identified. While this research investigation involved the utilisation of several methods of research, it is still not without limitations.

### **7.6.1 Sample size and the generalisability of the research results**

The use of one university as a case study implies that the results may not be generalised to the situation and contexts of all South African universities. Only those universities that are also historically white Afrikaans-speaking and which have a similar historical background may generalise these results to their contexts. Apart from that, the researcher had hoped to draw a sample of academics that were representative of all races and both genders, but the imbalances of staff according to race and gender resulted in failure to have equal numbers of people from these groupings.

### **7.6.2 Response rate**

Although the researcher aimed at reaching all permanent lecturing academic staff at the UFS, and sent questionnaires to all of them, the response rate was not satisfactory. For both the pilot and the actual survey, 141 questionnaires out of 529 questionnaires were received back, ensuring a response rate of 27%. This has, however, not affected the research results. Firstly, a focus group discussion was done and personal interviews were conducted in order to supplement the results of the questionnaire survey. Secondly, the main objective of the research was not to analyse the impact of

change and transformation at the UFS in terms of the numbers of those academics who are affected. The main objective was rather to gather data in the form of opinion presentation, comments and suggestions in order to bring to the management at the UFS an awareness of issues of transformation that impact negatively on academic staff. The investigation furthermore aimed at identifying already existing strategies for intervention at the UFS, as well as at presenting an opportunity for making recommendations on how the UFS environment could be made conducive to academics during periods of change and transformation.

## **7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The transformation of the higher education sector seems to be a never-ending process and, although in most cases it happens for the benefit of all the stakeholders, it has the potential to impact negatively on all academics regardless of the type of institution or university. On account of that, further studies on academic staff satisfaction should target a larger population of universities of South Africa, since all of them are undergoing transformation. This study focused on only one university as a unit case, but the findings from other universities may contribute to a broader understanding of factors that affect academic staff, their satisfaction and therefore the quality of higher education during times of transformation.

Since academic staff satisfaction is a dynamic and non-static issue (*vide* Chapter 2), affected by a variety of factors (*vide* Chapters 3, 4 & 5) and situations, longitudinal studies of academic staff satisfaction could prove invaluable for institutions of higher education. This is particularly so if such institutions regard surveys of academic staff satisfaction as a way of evaluating quality. In this way research will not be done for the sake of compiling written documents, but will be practically applied to effect change.



Since this study was broad and since many aspects were investigated all at the same time, another important avenue that could be explored further concerning academic staff satisfaction in South African universities would be to do an in-depth investigation of each of the factors that affect academic staff satisfaction. This would portray a more vivid picture regarding the effect of issues of transformation on academics and would consequently enable researchers to establish the means to present possible solutions to the problem of low satisfaction, dissatisfaction and poor work quality.

## **7.8 CONCLUSION**

Higher education worldwide and in South Africa in particular has been experiencing many years of change and transformation. Higher education institutions have responded and are still under pressure to respond to change agents and factors of both internal and external origin. There is an increasing pressure for institutions to be locally and globally responsive and competitive. During the past century, and more dynamically during the past decade, the University of the Free State (UFS) has also undergone many changes and experienced many difficulties. These changes have emerged in numerous forms because of various compelling factors. It should be noted that none of these difficulties and factors are less important than the current burdensome transition that the university still faces today.

Unfortunately the nature of change and transformation that the UFS is experiencing have not become a burden to the UFS and its academics only, but to other institutions with a similar history. Academics in these institutions have also not remained immune to these change factors as their universities went through the transfiguration.

A literature review of the South African higher education system reveals that the system is peculiar because of its history and the context in which it operates. Although the system is exposed to universal transformation issues, it is also adversely affected by factors that are unique to the South African situation only. This study therefore recommends that academic staff satisfaction should be evaluated regularly by the UFS and all higher education institutions, particularly universities, in order to understand the working environments of academics to improve them and to improve staff satisfaction.

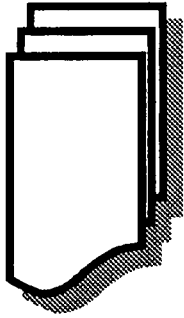
Although the guidelines provided in this thesis serve as a basis for the case study university (the UFS) to improve the satisfaction of its own academics, they could as well be used for the same purpose by other South African universities. They could also be relevant to other universities, particularly those with a history and a context that are similar to that of the UFS.

The most important thing for universities to note, is not to take the implications caused by change and transformation for granted, but rather to adopt a holistic approach in preparing their environments for change and transformation as well as motivate their staff to embrace and support change and transformation (*vide* Section 4.6.10). In that way they can ensure that change and transformation will not become a major factor causing staff dissatisfaction.

**"An institution that does not routinely evaluate all the aspects of the organisation and make the changes necessary to address its shortcoming, is jeopardising its future"**

(Bender 2002:113).





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# **APPENDIX 1**

**UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE**

**CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT**

## **ACADEMIC STAFF SATISFACTION AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY UNDERGOING TRANSFORMATION**

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY ACADEMIC STAFF AT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE**



**JUNE 2002**

**M.L.E. MAPESELA**  
Ph.D.

**375**

## Background perspectives

Higher education institutions worldwide are in a flux of dynamic change and transformation due to – among other things - trends such as the massification of higher education, widened access, responses to demands of technology, internationalisation, globalisation, increased accountability, and the use of new modes of delivery and materials (Green & Hayward 1997; Harvey 2001; Van der Wende 2001). Most of these changes have direct implications for academic staff in higher education. Not only are traditional academic roles changing, but - in certain instances - working conditions have become unfavourable and unsupportive of staff's efforts to pursue the mission of higher education (Weber 1999).

The White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation (RSA DoE 1997:5) expounds that, because the resultant competitive higher education environment that emerges with change, affects all institutional structures, institutions must engage in periodic evaluations of all their internal structures, processes and products. This should be done with a view to identifying flaws as well as improving, renewing or effecting progress. The issue of academic staff satisfaction then emerges as one aspect that institutions must evaluate periodically, because the quality of higher education that is envisaged worldwide depends not only on a higher education environment that is stable and supportive, but also on the excellence of the academics (Winter, Taylor & Sarros 2000).

This research survey therefore hopes to draw on the main change-driving forces impacting on academic staff satisfaction and how they affect staff. In addition, the survey hopes to explore various ways in which factors causing dissatisfaction can be addressed. Thus the purposes of this questionnaire are as follows:

### PURPOSES

1. To identify factors which cause academic staff satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
2. To determine the *status quo* in a transforming South African university regarding academic staff satisfaction.
3. To invite and get suggestions from academics concerning how factors that cause dissatisfaction in their institution can best be addressed.
4. To use the results of this survey as a basis for making recommendations and suggesting intervention strategies that the University of the Free State could use to prevent the deterioration of staff satisfaction and improve satisfaction.

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. The questionnaire consists of two sections, namely Sections A and B. Section A is the biographic information and Section B comprises items under different headings.
  2. Please read both sections very carefully before completing the questionnaire.
  3. The questionnaire should be completed by academics from all categories and levels.
  4. Some items in Section B require **optional** responses, where you simply encircle the number corresponding with the statement that best describes how you feel about your job at this moment.
  5. For every category space is provided to supply additional information. Please attempt this part and give your honest opinions as well as suggestions on how you think factors that cause dissatisfaction may be dealt with.
  6. All information gathered in this survey will be used for research purposes only and all responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- NB: Please consult the glossary provided at the end of the questionnaire to clarify certain aspects while you are completing the questionnaire.

**Your co-operation in completing this questionnaire will be highly appreciated.**



# SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

For office  
use only

1

2-5

Please encircle the number that corresponds to the correct item.

1. Rank of person completing the questionnaire

- (a) Junior lecturer
- (b) Lecturer
- (c) Senior lecturer
- (d) Associate professor
- (e) Professor

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

6

2. Gender of person completing the questionnaire

- (a) Male
- (b) Female

1	
2	

7

3. Race of the person completing the questionnaire

- (a) White
- (b) Black
- (c) Asian
- (d) Coloured

1	
2	
3	
4	

8

4. Qualifications

- (a) Bachelor's degree
- (b) Honours degree
- (c) Master's degree
- (d) Doctorate

1	
2	
3	
4	

9

5. Number of years of experience in current post

- (a) 0 – 5 years
- (b) 6 – 10 years
- (c) 11 – 15 years
- (d) More than 15 years

1	
2	
3	
4	

10

6. Number of years working at UFS

- (a) 0 – 5 years
- (b) 6 – 10 years
- (c) 11 – 15 years
- (d) More than 15 years

1	
2	
3	
4	

11

## SECTION B

Eight broad categories of factors that impact on academic staff satisfaction were identified. In each of these categories several factors are listed. You are required to carefully consider each of these factors and the extent to which it has a **positive** or **negative** effect on your satisfaction as an academic staff member.

Please **encircle** the number that best describes how you feel about each aspect of your job that has been mentioned, e.g.

1. Very negative
2. Somewhat negative
3. Somewhat positive
4. Very positive
5. Not applicable.

For each of the categories some space is left for additional comments and suggestions on how factors which have a negative effect on your satisfaction can best be dealt with in your institution.

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	
<b>1. CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION</b>						
1.1 Changing roles of academics	1	2	3	4	5	12
1.2 The teaching/research dichotomy <sup>1</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	13
1.3 Increasing importance of service-learning	1	2	3	4	5	14
1.4 New modes of teaching and learning (e.g. resource-based learning)	1	2	3	4	5	15
1.5 New approaches to research (shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge production)	1	2	3	4	5	16
1.6 Mention other factors in this category which have a marked effect on your satisfaction. ..... ..... ..... .....						17-19 20-22 23-25 26-28
1.7 Say whether the factors mentioned in 1.6 above have a positive or a negative effect. ..... .....						29-31 32-34
1.8 How could the above factors that have a negative effect on your satisfaction be dealt with? ..... ..... ..... .....						35-37 38-40 41-43 44-46

**2. GOVERNMENT POLICY ISSUES**

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	
2.1 Expanded access <sup>2</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	47
2.2 Implementation of the Employment Equity Act <sup>3</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	48
2.3 Distribution of promotional posts among academics of different race groups	1	2	3	4	5	49
2.4 Distribution of promotional posts among academics of different gender	1	2	3	4	5	50
2.5 Implementation of the Skills Development Act	1	2	3	4	5	51
2.6 National Qualifications Framework (NQF) demands for curriculum and programme restructuring	1	2	3	4	5	52
2.7 Demands for a programme-based approach	1	2	3	4	5	53
2.8 Restructuring of the South African higher education (mergers and incorporations of institutions)	1	2	3	4	5	54
2.9 Possible changes in the funding formula for higher education	1	2	3	4	5	55

2.10	Mention other factors in this category which have a marked effect on your satisfaction.					56-58
	.....					59-61
	.....					62-64
	.....					65-67

2.11	Say whether the factors mentioned in 2.10 above have a positive or a negative effect.					68-70
	.....					71-73

2.12	How could the above factors that cause a negative effect on your satisfaction be dealt with?					74-76
	.....					77-79
	.....					80-82
	.....					83-85

3. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	
3.1	Presence of traditional artifacts and symbols in your institution <sup>4</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	86
3.2	Prevalent norms and values in your institution	1	2	3	4	5	87
3.3	Prevalent rituals in your institution <sup>5</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	88
3.4	The language of instruction in your institution	1	2	3	4	5	89
3.5	The ability of your institutional culture/climate to accommodate non-traditional academics	1	2	3	4	5	90
3.6	The ability of your institution to accommodate non-traditional students	1	2	3	4	5	91
3.7	Mention other factors in this category which have a marked effect on your satisfaction. ..... ..... ..... .....						92-94 95-97 98-100 101-103
3.8	Say whether the factors mentioned in 3.7 above have a positive or a negative effect. ..... .....						104-106 107-109
3.9	How could the above factors that have a negative effect on your satisfaction be dealt with? ..... ..... ..... .....						110-112 113-115 116-118 119-121

4. DIVERSITY		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	
4.1	Changing profiles of staff by race <sup>6</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	122
4.2	Changing profiles of staff by gender <sup>7</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	123
4.3	Changing profiles of students by race <sup>8</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	124
4.4	Changing profiles of students by age (presence of more adult learners)	1	2	3	4	5	125
4.5	Changing profiles of students by physical status (presence of disabled learners)	1	2	3	4	5	126
4.6	Proportion of staff from designated groups now occupying senior academic positions	1	2	3	4	5	127
4.7	Your institution's attempts to manage diversity (of staff and students)	1	2	3	4	5	128
4.8	Working relationships among staff of different race groups	1	2	3	4	5	129
4.9	Working relationships among staff of different gender groups	1	2	3	4	5	130
4.10	Mention other factors in this category which have a marked effect on your satisfaction. ..... ..... ..... .....						131-133 134-136 137-139 140-142
4.11	Say whether the factors mentioned in 4.10 above have a positive or a negative effect. ..... .....						143-145 146-148
4.12	How could the above factors that have a negative effect on your satisfaction be dealt with? ..... ..... ..... .....						149-151 152-154 155-157 158-160

5. STAFF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	
5.1	Availability of opportunities for staff development	1	2	3	4	5	161
5.2	Time available for staff to participate in staff development activities	1	2	3	4	5	162
5.3	Induction processes for non-traditional academic staff	1	2	3	4	5	163
5.4	Induction processes for new academic staff	1	2	3	4	5	164
5.5	Relevance of staff development programmes to the needs of academic staff	1	2	3	4	5	165
5.6	The sustainability of staff development activities	1	2	3	4	5	166
5.7	Financial support you receive from your institution to develop as an academic	1	2	3	4	5	167
5.8	Availability of mentors for new academics	1	2	3	4	5	168

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5.9	Mention other factors in this category which have a marked effect on your satisfaction.				5-7
	.....				8-10
	.....				11-13
	.....				14-16
5.10	Say whether the factors mentioned in 5.9 above have a positive or a negative effect.				17-19
	.....				20-22
5.11	How could the above factors that have a negative effect on your satisfaction be dealt with?				23-25
	.....				26-28
	.....				29-31
	.....				32-34

6. TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	
6.1	New teaching/learning technologies	1	2	3	4	5	35
6.2	Opportunities to efficiently integrate new technologies into your academic role	1	2	3	4	5	36
6.3	Your own ability to efficiently integrate new technologies into your academic role	1	2	3	4	5	37
6.4	Accessibility of technological resources	1	2	3	4	5	38
6.5	Opportunities for training in new technologies	1	2	3	4	5	39
6.6	Mention other factors in this category which have a marked effect on your satisfaction.						
	.....						40-42
	.....						43-45
	.....						46-48
	.....						49-51
6.7	Say whether the factors mentioned in 6.6 above have a positive or a negative effect.						
	.....						52-54
	.....						55-57
6.8	How could the above factors that have a negative effect on your satisfaction be dealt with?						
	.....						58-60
	.....						61-63
	.....						64-66
	.....						67-69

7. GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	
7.1	Globalisation (e.g. re-articulation of the national higher education system into global system)	1	2	3	4	5	70
7.2	Internationalisation (e.g. student/lecturer mobility and development of joint teaching, learning and research programmes)	1	2	3	4	5	71
7.3	Your competence/ability to deal with and respond to global and international demands	1	2	3	4	5	72
7.4	Cross-boundary mobility of academics	1	2	3	4	5	73
7.5	Cross-boundary mobility of learners	1	2	3	4	5	74
7.6	The pace at which your institution responds to and participates in global and international issues	1	2	3	4	5	75
7.7	Mention other factors in this category which have a marked effect on your satisfaction. ..... ..... ..... .....						76-78 79-81 82-84 85-87
7.8	Say whether the factors mentioned in 7.7 above have a positive or a negative effect. ..... .....						88-90 91-93
7.9	How could the above factors that have a negative effect on your satisfaction be dealt with? ..... ..... ..... .....						94-96 97-99 100-102 103-105



8. QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE		Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Not applicable	
8.1	Quality assurance structures and mechanisms in your institution	1	2	3	4	5	106
8.2	Demands of national quality assurance bodies (e.g. professional boards)	1	2	3	4	5	107
8.3	Changing demands of learners with regard to the quality of higher education	1	2	3	4	5	108
8.4	Changing demands of the labour market for graduates with appropriate skills	1	2	3	4	5	109
8.5	Ability of your institution in attaining institutional goals and objectives	1	2	3	4	5	110
8.6	Ability of your institution to engage in continuous quality improvement	1	2	3	4	5	111
8.7	Mention other factors in this category which have a marked effect on your satisfaction. ..... ..... ..... ..... .....						112-114 115-117 118-120 121-123
8.8	Say whether the factors mentioned in 8.7 above have a positive or a negative effect. ..... .....						124-126 127-129
8.9	How could the above factors that have a negative effect on your satisfaction be dealt with? ..... ..... ..... .....						130-132 133-135 136-138 139-141
9.	What factors other than those mentioned in the questionnaire do you think impede on academic staff satisfaction in South African higher education institutions? ..... ..... ..... .....						142-144 145-147 148-150 151-153
10.	Please give constructive suggestions on how the factors mentioned in Question 9 could be dealt with. ..... ..... ..... .....						154-156 157-159 160-162 163-165

## Glossary

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1. Increasing demands for academics to excel at both teaching and research.
2. Expanded access, particularly for non-traditional learners, as well as learners from historically disadvantaged race, gender, age, and socio-economic groups.
3. The implications of appointing more representatives from designated groups at the UFS, particularly more black academics.
4. The presence of artifacts and symbols such as statues of political figures and names of political figures for buildings, streets, etc.
5. "Prevalent rituals" means the common (traditional) way of doing things.
6. The increase in numbers of black academics at the UFS.
7. The increase in numbers of female academics at the UFS.
8. The increase in numbers of black students at the UFS.



**Thank you for your assistance!**

## APPENDIX 2

### Agtergrondperspektiewe

Hoërondewysinstellings wêreldwyd verkeer in 'n toestand van dinamiese verandering en transformasie. Dit is onder andere te wyte aan tendense soos die massifikasie van hoër onderwys, verhoogde toeganklikheid, reaksie op die eise van tegnologie, internasionalisasie, globalisasie, groter eise om verantwoordingdoening en die gebruik van nuwe onderrig-/leermetodes, -tegnieke en -materiaal (Green & Hayward 1997; Harvey 2001; Van der Wende 2001). Die meeste van hierdie veranderinge hou direkte implikasies vir akademiese personeel van hoërondewysinstellings in. Nie alleen is tradisionele akademiese rolle besig om te verander nie, maar in sekere gevalle het werkstoestande ongunstig geword en ondersteun dit nie die personeel se pogings om die missie van hoër onderwys na te streef nie (Weber 1999).

Aangesien die kompeterende hoërondewysomgewing wat uit verandering voortspruit, alle institusionele strukture beïnvloed, beklemtoon die Witskrif op Hoër Onderwys [*White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation* (RSA DoE 1997:5)] dat instellings betrokke moet wees by periodieke evaluerings van al hulle interne strukture, prosesse en produkte. Dit behoort te geskied met die oog op die identifisering van swakhede, sowel as vir verbetering, hernuwing of vordering. Die vraagstuk rakende akademiese personeeltevredenheid spruit dan voort as een aspek wat instellings periodiek moet evalueer, aangesien die kwaliteit van hoër onderwys wat wêreldwyd voorsien word, nie alleen op 'n hoërondewysomgewing vertrou wat stabiel en ondersteunend is nie, maar ook op die voortrefflikheid en uitnemendheid van die akademië (Winter, Taylor & Sarros 2000).

Hierdie navorsingsopname wil dus die belangrikste magte wat verandering tot gevolg het en hoe hulle akademiese personeeltevredenheid beïnvloed, ondersoek. Verder wil dit verskillende wyses ondersoek waardeur faktore wat ontevredenheid veroorsaak, aangespreek kan word. Die doel van hierdie vraelys is as volg:

#### DOEL

1. Om faktore wat akademiese personeeltevredenheid en -ontevredenheid veroorsaak, te identifiseer.
2. Om die *status quo* rakende akademiese personeeltevredenheid in 'n transformerende Suid-Afrikaanse universiteit te bepaal.
3. Om bydraes en voorstelle van akademië te verkry rakende hoe faktore wat ontevredenheid in hul instelling veroorsaak, op die beste moontlike wyse aangespreek kan word.
4. Om die resultate van hierdie opname te gebruik as die basis vir die maak van aanbevelings, asook om intervensiestrategieë voor te stel wat die Universiteit van die Vrystaat kan gebruik om die agteruitgang van personeeltevredenheid te verhoed en om tevredenheid te verbeter.

#### INSTRUKSIES

1. Die vraelys bestaan uit twee afdelings. Afdeling A behels biografiese inligting en Afdeling B bestaan uit items onder verskillende opskrifte.
  2. Lees asseblief beide afdelings baie sorgvuldig voordat u die vraelys voltooi.
  3. Die vraelys behoort deur akademië uit alle kategorieë en vlakke voltooi te word.
  4. Sommige items in Afdeling B vereis **opsionele** antwoorde waar u eenvoudig die nommer omkring wat ooreenstem met die stelling wat die beste beskryf hoe u op hierdie oomblik omtrent u werk voel.
  5. Vir elke kategorie word ruimte voorsien om addisionele inligting te verskaf. Probeer asseblief om hierdie deel in te vul en gee u eerlike mening asook voorstelle rakende hoe u dink faktore wat ontevredenheid veroorsaak, hanteer kan word.
  6. Alle inligting voortspruitend uit hierdie opname sal alleenlik vir navorsingsdoeleindes gebruik word en alle antwoorde sal met die grootste mate van vertroulikheid hanteer word.
- NB: Raadpleeg asseblief die woordelys aan die einde van die vraelys om duidelikheid omtrent sekere aspekte te verkry terwyl u die vraelys invul.

# AFDELING A: BIOGRAFIESE INLIGTING

Slegs vir  
kantoorgebruik

1

2-5

**Omkring** asseblief die nommer wat met die korrekte item ooreenstem

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>1. Rang van die persoon wat die vraelys invul</p> <p>(a) Junior lektor</p> <p>(b) Lektor</p> <p>(c) Senior lektor</p> <p>(d) Medeprofessor</p> <p>(e) Professor</p> | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3   | 4 | 5  | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 10px;">6</p> |  |  |  |  |  |
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| <p>2. Geslag van die persoon wat die vraelys invul</p> <p>(a) Manlik</p> <p>(b) Vroulik</p>  | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> </table>   | 1 | 2 | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 10px;">7</p> |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
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| <p>3. Ras van die persoon wat die vraelys invul</p> <p>(a) Blank</p> <p>(b) Swart</p> <p>(c) Asiër</p> <p>(d) Kleurling</p>  | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> </table>   | 1 | 2 | 3   | 4 | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 10px;">8</p>  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
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| <p>4. Kwalifikasies</p> <p>(a) Baccalaureusgraad</p> <p>(b) Honneursgraad</p> <p>(c) Meestersgraad</p> <p>(d) Doktorsgraad</p>   | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> </table>   | 1 | 2 | 3   | 4 | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 10px;">9</p>  |   |  |  |  |  |  |
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| <p>5. Aantal jare ondervinding in huidige pos</p> <p>(a) 0 – 5 jaar</p> <p>(b) 6 – 10 jaar</p> <p>(c) 11 – 15 jaar</p> <p>(d) Meer as 15 jaar</p>                      | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> </table>   | 1 | 2 | 3   | 4 | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 10px;">10</p> |   |  |  |  |  |  |
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| <p>6. Aantal jare wat u werksaam is by die UV</p> <p>(a) 0 – 5 jaar</p> <p>(b) 6 – 10 jaar</p> <p>(c) 11 – 15 jaar</p> <p>(d) Meer as 15 jaar</p>                      | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">1</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> </table>   | 1 | 2 | 3   | 4 | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> <p style="margin-left: 10px;">11</p> |   |  |  |  |  |  |
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## AFDELING B

Agt breë kategorieë van faktore wat 'n uitwerking op personeeltevredenheid het, is geïdentifiseer. In elk van hierdie kategorieë word verskeie faktore genoem. U word versoek om elkeen van hierdie faktore asook die mate waartoe dit 'n **positiewe of negatiewe** effek op u tevredenheid as 'n akademiese personeellid het, sorgvuldig te oorweeg.

Trek asseblief 'n sirkel om die nommer wat die beste beskryf hoe u voel omtrent elke aspek van u werk wat genoem word, bv.

1. Baie negatief
2. Redelik negatief
3. Redelik positief
4. Baie positief
5. Nie van toepassing nie.

Vir elk van die kategorieë word spasio oopgelaat vir addisionele opmerkings en voorstelle rakende hoe faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, die beste hanteer kan word.

1. VERANDERING EN TRANSFORMASIE VAN HOËR ONDERWYS	Baie negatief	Redelik negatief	Redelik positief	Baie positief	Nie van toepassing nie		
1.1 Veranderde rolle van akademici	1	2	3	4	5	12	
1.2 Die onderwys/navorsingstweeledigheid <sup>1</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	13	
1.3 Die toenemende belangrikheid van samelewingsdiensleer	1	2	3	4	5	14	
1.4 Nuwe modusse van onderrig en leer (bv. brongebaseerde leer)	1	2	3	4	5	15	
1.5 Nuwe benaderinge tot navorsing (verskuiwing vanaf Modus 1 tot Modus 2- kennisproduksie)	1	2	3	4	5	16	
1.6 Noem ander faktore in hierdie kategorie wat 'n merkbare uitwerking op u tevredenheid het.							17-19
.....							20-22
.....							23-25
.....							26-28
1.7 Sê of die faktore wat in 1.6 bo genoem is, 'n positiewe of 'n negatiewe uitwerking het.							29-31
.....							32-34
1.8 Hoe kan die bogenoemde faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, hanteer word?							35-37
.....							38-40
.....							41-43
.....							44-46

2. REGERINGSBELEIDKWESSIES		Baie negatief	Redelik negatief	Redelik positief	Baie positief	Nie van toepassing nie	
2.1	Verhoogde toeganklikheid <sup>2</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	47
2.2	Implementering van die Wet op Billike Indiensneming <sup>3</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	48
2.3	Verspreiding van bevorderingsposte tussen akademici van verskillende rasse-groepe	1	2	3	4	5	49
2.4	Verspreiding van bevorderingsposte tussen akademici van verskillende geslagte	1	2	3	4	5	50
2.5	Implementering van die Wet op Vaardigheidsontwikkeling	1	2	3	4	5	51
2.6	Eise van die Nasionale Kwalifikasieraamwerk (NKR) vir kurrikulum- en programherstrukturering	1	2	3	4	5	52
2.7	Klem op 'n programmebaseerde benadering	1	2	3	4	5	53
2.8	Herstrukturering van die Suid-Afrikaanse hoër onderwys (samesmeltings en inkorporerings van instellings)	1	2	3	4	5	54
2.9	Moontlike veranderinge in die befondsingsformule vir hoër onderwys	1	2	3	4	5	55
2.10	Noem ander faktore in hierdie kategorie wat 'n merkbare uitwerking op u tevredenheid het.						
	.....						56-58
	.....						59-61
	.....						62-64
	.....						65-67
2.11	Sê of die faktore wat in 2.10 bo genoem is, 'n positiewe of 'n negatiewe uitwerking het.						
	.....						68-70
	.....						71-73
2.12	Hoe kan die bogenoemde faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, hanteer word?						
	.....						74-76
	.....						77-79
	.....						80-82
	.....						83-85

3. ORGANISASIEKULTUUR		Baie negatief	Redelik negatief	Redelik positief	Baie positief	Nie van toepassing nie		
3.1	Aanwesigheid van tradisionele oorblyfsels en simbole aan u instelling <sup>4</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	86	
3.2	Heersende norme en waardes aan u instelling	1	2	3	4	5	87	
3.3	Heersende rituele aan u instelling <sup>5</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	88	
3.4	Die medium van onderrig aan u instelling	1	2	3	4	5	89	
3.5	Die vermoë van u institusionele kultuur/klimaat om nie-tradisionele akademici te akkommodeer	1	2	3	4	5	90	
3.6	Die vermoë van u instelling om nie-tradisionele studente te akkommodeer	1	2	3	4	5	91	
3.7	Noem ander faktore in hierdie kategorie wat 'n merkbare uitwerking op u tevredenheid het.							
	.....							92-94
	.....							95-97
	.....							98-100
	.....							101-103
3.8	Sê of die faktore wat in 3.7 bo genoem is, 'n positiewe of 'n negatiewe uitwerking het.							
	.....							104-106
	.....							107-109
3.9	Hoe kan die bogenoemde faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, hanteer word?							
	.....							110-112
	.....							113-115
	.....							116-118
	.....							119-121

4. DIVERSITEIT		Baie negatief	Redelik negatief	Redelik positief	Baie positief	Nie van toepassing nie	
4.1	Veranderde personeelprofiel volgens ras <sup>6</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	122
4.2	Veranderde personeelprofiel volgens geslag <sup>7</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	123
4.3	Veranderde studentprofiel volgens ras <sup>8</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	124
4.4	Veranderde studentprofiel volgens ouderdom (ouer en meer volwasse-leerders)	1	2	3	4	5	125
4.5	Veranderde studentprofiel volgens fisiese status (fisies-gestremde leerders)	1	2	3	4	5	126
4.6	Proporsie van personeel uit aangewese groepe wat tans senior akademiese poste bekleed	1	2	3	4	5	127
4.7	U instelling se pogings om diversiteit te bestuur	1	2	3	4	5	128
4.8	Werkverhouding tussen personeel uit verskillende rasse-groepe	1	2	3	4	5	129
4.9	Werkverhouding tussen personeel uit verskillende geslags-groepe	1	2	3	4	5	130
4.10	Noem ander faktore in hierdie kategorie wat 'n merkbare uitwerking op u tevredenheid het.						
	.....						131-133
	.....						134-136
	.....						137-139
	.....						140-142
4.11	Sê of die faktore wat in 4.10 bo genoem is, 'n positiewe of 'n negatiewe uitwerking het.						
	.....						143-145
	.....						146-148
4.12	Hoe kan die bogenoemde faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, hanteer word?						
	.....						149-151
	.....						152-154
	.....						155-157
	.....						158-160



5. PERSONEELONTWIKKELINGSGELEENTHEDE		Baie negatief	Redelik negatief	Redelik positief	Baie positief	Nie van toepassing nie	
5.1	Beskikbaarheid van geleenthede vir personeelontwikkeling	1	2	3	4	5	161
5.2	Tyd wat beskikbaar is vir personeel om aan personeelontwikkelingsaktiwiteite deel te neem	1	2	3	4	5	162
5.3	Induksieprosesse vir nie-tradisionele akademiese personeel	1	2	3	4	5	163
5.4	Induksieprosesse vir nuwe akademiese personeel	1	2	3	4	5	164
5.5	Relevansie van personeelontwikkelingsprogramme tot die behoeftes van akademiese personeel	1	2	3	4	5	165
5.6	Mate waartoe personeelontwikkelingsaktiwiteite volgehou word	1	2	3	4	5	166
5.7	Finansiële ondersteuning wat u van u instelling ontvang om as 'n akademikus te ontwikkel	1	2	3	4	5	167
5.8	Beskikbaarheid van mentors	1	2	3	4	5	168

**Slegs vir kantoorgebruik**

	1		
			2-4

5.9	Noem ander faktore in hierdie kategorie wat 'n merkbare uitwerking op u tevredenheid het.				5-7
	.....				8-10
	.....				11-13
	.....				14-16
5.10	Sê of die faktore wat in 5.9 bo genoem is, 'n positiewe of 'n negatiewe uitwerking het.				17-19
	.....				20-22
5.11	Hoe kan die bogenoemde faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, hanteer word?				23-25
	.....				26-28
	.....				29-31
	.....				32-34

**6. TEGNOLOGIESE VERANDERINGE**

	Baie negatief	Redelik negatief	Redelik positief	Baie positief	Nie van toepassing nie	
6.1 Nuwe onderrig-/leertegnologieë	1	2	3	4	5	35
6.2 Geleenthede om nuwe tegnologieë effektief binne u akademiese rol te integreer	1	2	3	4	5	36
6.3 U eie vermoë om nuwe tegnologieë op 'n bekwame wyse binne u akademiese rol te integreer	1	2	3	4	5	37
6.4 Toeganklikheid van tegnologiese hulpbronne	1	2	3	4	5	38
6.5 Geleenthede vir opleiding in nuwe tegnologieë	1	2	3	4	5	39

6.6 Noem ander faktore in hierdie kategorie wat 'n merkbare uitwerking op u tevredenheid het.						40-42
.....						43-45
.....						46-48
.....						49-51
6.7 Sê of die faktore wat in 6.6 bo genoem is, 'n positiewe of 'n negatiewe uitwerking het.						52-54
.....						55-57
6.8 Hoe kan die bogenoemde faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, hanteer word?						58-60
.....						61-63
.....						64-66
.....						67-69

7. GLOBALISASIE EN INTERNASIONALISASIE		Baie negatief	Redelik negatief	Redelik positief	Baie positief	Nie van toepassing nie		
7.1	Globalisasie (bv. Toetrede van die nasionale hoërondwysstelsel tot 'n globale hoërondwysstelsel)	1	2	3	4	5	70	
7.2	Internasionalisasie (bv. mobiliteit van studente en dosente en die ontwikkeling van gesamentlike onderrig-, leer- en navorsingsprogramme)	1	2	3	4	5	71	
7.3	U vermoë om globale en internasionale eise te hanteer en daarop te reageer	1	2	3	4	5	72	
7.4	Oor-grens mobiliteit van akademici	1	2	3	4	5	73	
7.5	Oor-grens mobiliteit van leerders	1	2	3	4	5	74	
7.6	Die pas waarteen u instelling op globale en internasionale kwessies reageer en daaraan deelneem	1	2	3	4	5	75	
7.7	Noem ander faktore in hierdie kategorie wat 'n merkbare uitwerking op u tevredenheid het.							
	.....						76-78	
	.....						79-81	
	.....						82-84	
	.....						85-87	
7.8	Sê of die faktore wat in 7.7 bo genoem is, 'n positiewe of 'n negatiewe uitwerking het.							
	.....						88-90	
	.....						91-93	
7.9	Hoe kan die bogenoemde faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, hanteer word?							
	.....						94-96	
	.....						97-99	
	.....						100-102	
	.....						103-105	

<b>GEHALTE EN GEHALTEVERSEKERING</b>							
<b>8.</b>		Bate negatief	Redelik negatief	Redelik positief	Bate positief	Nie van toenasssing nie	
8.1	Gehalteversekeringsstrukture en –meganismes aan u instelling	1	2	3	4	5	106
8.2	Eise van nasionale gehalteversekeringsliggame (bv. professionele rade)	1	2	3	4	5	107
8.3	Veranderde eise van die leerdere m.b.t. die gehalte van hoër onderwys	1	2	3	4	5	108
8.4	Veranderde eise van die arbeidsmark vir gegraduateerde met gepaste vaardighede	1	2	3	4	5	109
8.5	Vermoë van u instelling om institusionele doelwitte en doelstellings te bereik	1	2	3	4	5	110
8.6	Vermoë van u instelling om voortdurend gehalte te verbeter	1	2	3	4	5	111
8.7	Noem ander faktore in hierdie kategorie wat 'n merkbare uitwerking op u tevredenheid het. ..... ..... ..... .....						112-114 115-117 118-120 121-123
8.8	Sê of die faktore wat in 8.7 bo genoem is, 'n positiewe of 'n negatiewe uitwerking het. ..... .....						124-126 127-129
8.9	Hoe kan die bogenoemde faktore wat 'n negatiewe uitwerking op u tevredenheid het, hanteer word? ..... ..... ..... .....						130-132 133-135 136-138 139-141
9.	<b>Watter faktore behalwe dié wat in die vraelys genoem word, dink u verhinder of belemmer akademiese personeeltevredenheid in Suid-Afrikaanse hoërondewysinstellings?</b> ..... ..... ..... .....						142-144 145-147 148-150 151-153

10. Maak asseblief konstruktiewe voorstelle rakende hoe die faktore wat in Vraag 9 genoem is, hanteer kan word.

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


154-156  
157-159  
160-162  
163-165

### WOORDELYS

1. Toenemende eise wat aan akademici gestel word om in sowel onderrig as navorsing uit te blink.
2. Uitgebreide toeganklikheid, veral vir nie-tradisionele leerders, en leerders uit histories benadeelde ras-, geslag-, ouderdom- en sosio-ekonomiese groepe.
3. Die implikasies van die aanstelling van meer akademici uit aangewese groepe aan die UV, veral swart akademici.
4. Die teenwoordigheid van artefakte en simbole soos standbeelde van politieke figure, asook die name van politieke figure vir geboue, strate, ens.
5. "Heersende rituele" beteken die algemene (tradisionele) wyse waarop dinge gedoen word.
6. Die toename in getalle van swart akademici aan die UV.
7. Die toename in getalle van vroulike akademici aan die UV.
8. Die toename in getalle van swart studente aan die UV.

**Dankie vir u hulp!**

## **APPENDIX 3**

# **INTERVIEW AGENDA FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

## **Introduction**

The introduction will entail the following:

- Welcoming the participants and introductions.
- Providing a brief background of the research project.
- Giving a briefing on the findings obtained from the pilot questionnaires, particularly issues that cause the dissatisfaction of permanent lecturing academic staff at the University of the Free State.
- Obtaining permission to record the proceedings of the group discussions on audio-cassette tape.
- Requesting the participants to complete the participant sheet/informed consent form.

## Focus group discussions reporting format

### 1. CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

Problem identified	Individual/personal intervention	Management intervention
▪ Changing roles of academics		
▪ Heavy workload		
▪ A lack of academic development to assist staff to embrace change		
▪ Increasing student-lecturer ratios		

### 2. GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Problem identified	Individual/personal intervention	Management intervention
▪ The implementation of the Employment Equity Act		
▪ The lack of clear guidelines for the implementation of different policies		
▪ The lack of information about the different higher education policies		
▪ The uneven distribution of promotional posts according to race		

▪ The distribution of promotional posts according to gender		
▪ The ongoing restructuring of the higher education sector (mergers and incorporations)		
▪ The possible changes in the funding formula		

### 3. THE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Problem identified	Individual/personal intervention	Management intervention
▪ The presence of artifacts and symbols in the institution		
▪ Prevalent norms and values at the UFS		
▪ Prevalent rituals		

### 4. DIVERSITY

Problem identified	Individual/personal intervention	Management intervention
▪ Changing profiles of staff by race (happening slowly)		
▪ Changing profiles of staff by gender		
▪ The proportion of staff from		



<b>designated groups in senior positions</b>		
▪ <b>The working relationships between staff of different gender groups</b>		

## 5. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

<b>Problem identified</b>	<b>Individual/personal intervention</b>	<b>Management intervention</b>
▪ <b>Unavailability of opportunities for development</b>		
▪ <b>Insufficient time for staff development</b>		
▪ <b>Lack of induction for non-traditional staff</b>		
▪ <b>Lack of induction for new academics ("swim or sink approach")</b>		
▪ <b>Staff development programmes are usually irrelevant to the needs of staff</b>		
▪ <b>Staff development programmes are unsustainable</b>		
▪ <b>Insufficient financial support for staff development</b>		
▪ <b>Lack of mentors for junior and new staff</b>		
▪ <b>Poor communication of the few available</b>		

<b>staff development programmes</b>		
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## 6. TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES

<b>Problem identified</b>	<b>Individual intervention</b>	<b>Management intervention</b>
▪ <b>Inaccessibility of technological resources</b>		
▪ <b>Insufficient opportunities for training in new technologies</b>		

## 7. GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION

<b>Problem identified</b>	<b>Individual/personal intervention</b>	<b>Management intervention</b>
▪ <b>The cross-boundary mobility of staff</b>		
▪ <b>The cross-boundary mobility of learners</b>		
▪ <b>Lack of readiness for globalisation and internationalisation</b>		
▪ <b>Lack of opportunities for staff to participate globally</b>		
▪ <b>Lack of funding for staff to participate globally</b>		

## 8. QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of quality assurance structures and mechanisms</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The changing demands of the learners on the quality of higher education</li> </ul>		

## 9. OTHER FACTORS

Problem	Individual/personal intervention	▪ Management intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Salary/ remuneration</li> </ul>		

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **INTERVIEW AGENDA FOR SELECTED UFS MANAGERS**

#### **Introduction**

The introduction will entail the following:

- Providing a brief background of the research project.
- Explaining the purpose of the interview.
- Giving a briefing on the findings obtained from the pilot questionnaires, particularly issues that cause the dissatisfaction of permanent lecturing academic staff at the UFS.
- Obtaining permission to record the interview on audio-cassette tape.
- Requesting the participant to complete the participant informed consent sheet.

#### **THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

The pilot study that was done at the UFS in May/June 2002 to identify the impact of transformation on academic staff satisfaction revealed several factors/issues that act as major sources of dissatisfaction among the permanent lecturing academic staff at the UFS. These issues have been classified into eight categories, namely change and transformation; government policy issues; the organisational culture; diversity; staff development; technological changes; globalisation and internationalisation; and quality and quality assurance:

## **1. Change and transformation**

- The changing roles of academics.
- Heavy workload and inclusion of administrative work to the roles of academics.
- A lack of academic development to assist staff to embrace change and transformation.
- Increasing student-lecturer ratios.

**Question: Are you aware that these factors cause the UFS academics to be dissatisfied with their work?**

**What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address these issues?**

## **2. Government policies**

- The implementation of the Employment Equity Act.
- The lack of clear guidelines for the implementation of different policies.
- The lack of information about the different higher education policies.
- The uneven distribution of promotional posts among academics of different race groups.
- The uneven distribution of promotional posts among academics of different gender groups.
- The ongoing restructuring of the South African higher education, e.g. mergers and incorporations.
- The possible changes in the funding formula for higher education.

**Question: Are you aware of these policy issues as causes of academic staff dissatisfaction at the UFS?**

**What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address them?**

### **3. The organisational culture**

- The presence in the institution of artifacts and symbols.
- Prevalent norms and values at the UFS.
- Prevalent rituals at the UFS.
- The language of instruction in the institution.
- The institutional culture and its ability to accommodate the non-traditional academics.

**Question: Are you aware that these issues concerning the organisational culture of the UFS cause dissatisfaction among academics?**

**What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address them?**

### **4. Diversity**

- Changing profiles of staff by race.
- Changing profiles of staff by gender.
- The proportion of staff from designated groups who are occupying senior positions.

- The working relationships among staff of different gender groups, e.g. domination and patronisation of female academics by their male counterparts.
- Unfair appointment and promotion of academic staff (not done according to merit).
- Slow change of profiles of academic staff from designated groups.

*Question:* **Are you aware of these diversity issues as causes of dissatisfaction among the UFS academic staff?**

**What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address them?**

## **5. Staff development**

- Unavailability of opportunities for staff development.
- Insufficient time for staff development.
- Lack of induction programmes/processes for non-traditional academic staff.
- Lack of induction for new academic staff (the existing approach is the "swim or sink" approach).
- Staff development programmes are usually irrelevant to the needs of academics.
- Staff development programmes are never sustainable.
- Insufficient financial support for staff development programmes.
- The lack of mentors for those in need of guidance, i.e. the junior and new staff.
- Poor communication of the few available staff development programmes to junior staff.

*Question:* **Are you aware that these issues concerning staff development are causes of dissatisfaction among academic staff?**

**What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address them?**

## **6. Technological changes**

- The inaccessibility of technological resources.
- Insufficient opportunities for training in new technologies.

*Question:* **Are you aware that these above-mentioned issues concerning technological change cause dissatisfaction among the UFS academics?**

**What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address them?**

## **7. Globalisation and internationalisation**

- The cross-boundary mobility of academic staff.
- The cross-boundary mobility of learners.
- The lack of readiness and preparedness among academics to embrace globalisation and internationalisation.
- The lack of opportunities for staff to participate in global and international higher education issues.
- The lack of funding for staff to participate globally and internationally.



**Question: Are you aware that these above-mentioned issues regarding globalisation and internationalisation cause dissatisfaction among academic staff at the UFS?**

**What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address them?**

## **8. Quality and quality assurance**

- Quality assurance structures and mechanisms are lacking/inadequate in the institution, e.g. there are no quality managers to provide structural support for the quality assurance process.
- The changing demands of the learners on the quality of higher education.

**Question: Are you aware that these quality assurance issues cause dissatisfaction among the UFS academic staff?**

**What intervention strategies have/will your office put in place to address them?**

## **9. Other factors**

- Salary/remuneration (not competitive, does not compare with the other higher education institutions, the civil service and the private sector).

**Question: Are you aware of this issue as a cause of dissatisfaction among the UFS staff?**

**What intervention has/will your office put in place to address this issue?**

**10. General comments and concluding remarks**

Please provide any comments on the impact of transformation on academics at the UFS.

**APPENDIX 5**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

I participate in these focus group discussions/interviews willingly and with the understanding that the researcher will honour the following ethical conditions:

- 1. The outcome of these discussions/interviews will be used for study purposes and any other reasons disclosed to me.
- 2. The results shall be handled and treated with the highest measure of confidentiality.
- 3. The reporting of the results shall be truthful.
- 4. There are no legal implications attached to the interviewee's participation in this study.
- 5. The researcher shall honour this contract.

**Name of participant:** .....

**Position held:**.....

.....  
**Signature of participant**

.....  
**Date interviewed**

.....  
**Signature of researcher**

.....  
**Date**