NELSON MANDELA

UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE WORKING GROUP

META-ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE STUDIES AND PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS

Compiled by the Office for Institutional Strategy
30 September 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

Studies on institutional culture have been prevalent for decades and early research on institutional culture referred to the notion to illustrate that university campuses had unique cultures compared to other types of institutions (Lunsford, 1963; Riesman, Gus-field, & Gamson, 1970). These studies evolved further within higher education to link institutional culture with organisational success (Chaffee & Tierney 1988), while other studies demonstrated the way that different cultures shaped governance, leadership and planning.

Higher education literature suggests that universities need to have a "culture" that encourages change (Curry 1992). This body of research focuses on the aspects of culture that foster institutional change (Schein 1985). The second set of literature suggests that culture or key institutional elements that shape culture are modified as a result of change (Chaffee & Tierney 1988).

More recently, Adonis and Silinda (2021: 76) assert that institutional culture appears to remain a potent stumbling block in the pursuit of a more equitable South African higher education system in the post-1994 democratic era. Institutional culture includes the values, attitudes, styles of interaction, and collective memories of a university, known by those who work and study in the university environment through their lived experience (Steyn, 2007). Institutional culture becomes the default way of doing things with practices that are reproduced, normalised, and often serve to marginalise dissident voices (Higher Education Transformation Network, 2016: 15). Despite national policies and frameworks designed to promote equality, equity, transformation and change in the higher education sector, institutional cultures and epistemological traditions have not changed considerably (Heleta 2016).

It is against this backdrop that this report has been compiled to provide a consolidated overview of the recurring themes emerging from various institutional culture research studies and programmatic interventions implemented at Nelson Mandela University over the past decade (2010 – 2020). The Institutional Culture Working Group (ICWG) requested the Office for Institutional Strategy to conduct this meta-analysis to identify culture change interventions required to cultivate a values-driven, transformative institutional culture in alignment with the University's Vision 2030 Strategy.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report will aim to synthesise the findings of reports outlining the findings from previous research conducted on institutional culture, as well as from culture change interventions implemented at Nelson Mandela University over the past decade (2010 to 2020). These reports include the following:
- Institutional Climate Survey (2013)
- Institutional Racism Report (2017)
- Institutional Culture Enlivening Process (ICEP) (2017)

- Report on identity, institutional culture and heritage as it pertains to the University's George Campus (2017)
- George Campus Courageous Conversations and institutional culture interventions
- Institutional Transformation Plan (2018)
- Vice Chancellor's Listening Campaign (2018)
- Vice Chancellor's Inaugural Address (2018)
- Organisational Redesign Process (2019/20)
- Vision 2030 Stakeholder Engagements (2021)
- Enrolment Management Committee Minutes (2021).

According to Timulak (2009: 591), a qualitative meta-analysis provides a concise and comprehensive picture of findings across qualitative studies that investigate the same general research topic. The purpose of a meta-analysis is to provide a more comprehensive description of a phenomenon researched by a group of studies, including any ambiguities and differences found in primary studies. In this case, the phenomenon to be studied is the extent to which efforts to foster a values-driven, transformative institutional culture at Nelson Mandela University are yielding the desired results. This analysis will aim to identify key themes informing the programmatic interventions to be designed by the University's Institutional Culture Working Group to give practical effect to the University's Vision 2030 strategic intentions.

At the core of this meta-analysis are the envisaged directions of Nelson Mandela University according to internal and external stakeholders, some of which have already been embarked upon. These include, but are not limited to: interventions to enliven and transform institutional culture; new strategic directions such as the medical school, ocean sciences and revitalising the humanities; decolonisation and curriculum transformation; stakeholder engagement and communication; employee and student wellness; the reintegration of service employees; reimagining the student access and enrolment value chain; the language policy and multilingualism; naming, renaming, symbols and signage; racism and other forms of exclusion; and mechanisms to address complaints relating to unfair discrimination and other forms of exclusion.

This meta-analysis commences with an overview of key extracts from Vision 2030 informing the institutional culture trajectories at Nelson Mandela University. This will serve as a frame of reference for the identification of recurring themes emerging from various institutional culture studies over the past decade.

3. VISION 2030 STRATEGY AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

For the next decade, the Nelson Mandela University's Vision 2030 strategy is an expression of the strategic aspirations of the University as it pertains to embracing the legacy and ethos of our iconic namesake. The University encourages students and employees to consistently live the values of excellence, ubuntu, respect for diversity, integrity, social justice and equality, and environmental and resource stewardship. In so doing, the University aims to attract and nurture talented, diverse and high-performing students and employees by

cultivating an affirming institutional culture that promotes social inclusion, a sense of belonging and holistic well-being.

The *Statement of Commitment to an Inclusive Institutional Culture* is embedded in Vision 2030 and serves to articulate the University's intention to celebrate all forms of diversity. The University supports educational experiences and conditions that encourage social inclusion and cohesion in contributing to a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. Furthermore, Vision 2030 commits to eliminating all forms of unfair discrimination and exclusion on the grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, consciousness, belief and culture.

The institutional culture foundations underpinning Vision 2030 were largely informed by the advances made through the University's five-year Institutional Culture Enlivening Process (ICEP) from 2013 to 2017. This pioneering programmatic intervention was designed to offer new paradigms for organisational change and sought to cultivate new ways of being and doing that emphasise active listening and enable the participation of diverse voices in co-creating and re-imagining the future of the University. The ICEP "theory of change" was based on a complexity paradigm embedded in social and organisational justice. Culture change processes were pursued through deepening transversal 'courageous conversations' that could make a qualitative difference to the institutional culture of the organisation. Through providing opportunities to engage in generative and healing conversations, ICEP sought to enliven and facilitate self-organising alignment with the University's vision, values and transformative intentions.

These intentions were further reinforced in the Institutional Transformation Plan (ITP) for 2018 to 2022, which articulates three overarching goals concerning institutional culture, namely, ensuring the following:
- The University environment and experience of employees, students and stakeholders reflects respect for human dignity, inclusivity, diversity and a human rights culture.
- Implementation of programmes and measures designed to accelerate focused recruitment, capacity development and retention of designated and underrepresented groups, including persons with disabilities, at all levels and in all occupational categories.
- Promotion of accountability and ethics by improving the effectiveness of governance structures.

The effective implementation of the University's Vision 2030 Strategy and ITP will largely depend on the extent to which institutional strategic intentions are cascaded to every level of the University. To this end, fostering an inclusive, transformative institutional culture has been identified as a key strategic enabler in positioning Mandela University as a higher education institution of choice. At the core of this is giving expression to the values, legacy and ethos of Nelson Mandela, including the relentless pursuit of excellence in the University's core academic missions.

4. ENABLING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The Institutional Climate Survey Report (2013), the Vice Chancellor's Listening Campaign (2018), and the Vision 2030 stakeholder engagements all surfaced the need to promote academic excellence at Nelson Mandela University. This included broadening the notion of academic excellence to include African-purposed knowledge generation and scholarship, humanising pedagogies, decolonised curricula, and transformative engagement.

The University's Vision 2030 constitutes the foundations for the pursuit of inclusive excellence in the core academic missions, which are expressed as four Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs), as follows:
- Liberate human potential through humanising, innovative lifelong learning experiences that prepare graduates to be socially conscious, responsible global citizens who serve the public good
- Engage with all publics in equalising partnerships to co-create transformative, contextually responsive solutions in pursuit of social justice and equality
- Pursue impactful, pioneering research, innovation and internationalisation to address grand societal challenges and promote sustainable futures
- Catalyse dynamic, student-centric approaches and practices that provide life-changing student experiences within and beyond the classroom (Vision 2030,2021:49-52).

Below are some of the suggestions that have surfaced across the various studies and reports reviewed as part of this meta-analysis:
- Embracing a humanising pedagogical approach as the philosophical underpinning for curriculum transformation and institutional praxis. This seeks to honour and respect every individual's humanity, unique background and agency in developing their full human potential.
- A need to develop an integrated student academic performance tracking system to enable timeous identification of academically vulnerable students to ensure they benefit from holistic support to enhance their success.
- A culture of peer review of teaching materials and prescribed textbooks must be established among academic staff members to enhance quality and cultivate graduates who have the desired impact in society.
- Deliberate mentorship of junior academic staff members must form part of the University culture to improve capacity and ensure talent continuity. Academic mentoring should ensure that workloads are equally distributed, and that early-career academics are not overloaded with teaching at the expense of being research productive and obtaining their doctoral qualifications.
- The high student: staff ratios in certain faculties and/or fields of study have also frequently been identified as an urgent priority to improve student success rates and graduate outputs.
- The University must forge a strong postgraduate culture where students are encouraged to study further. Funding, capacity building and academic support must form part of this initiative to foster a vibrant postgraduate community.

- There is a need to reduce cumbersome processes and procedures as it relates to ethics approvals to improve research output and intensity.
- Attention must also be devoted to modernising infrastructure to embed flexible design and ensure that various learning and teaching methodologies are accommodated.

In addition to the above, calls for decolonisation and curriculum transformation were ignited by the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements and have been a centrepiece of fostering a vibrant and transformative intellectual culture at the University.

5. DECOLONISATION AND CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

In espousing its vision to be a "dynamic, African university", Mandela University is seeking to advance an academic identity and intellectual culture rooted in Africa and recognised for its leadership in generating contextually responsive knowledge and innovation that contributes to sustainable futures. A frequently recurring theme in the research studies and interventions reviewed as part of this meta-analysis was that the University must be critically engaged in transforming the curriculum to be Afrocentric and fit for purpose. Participants advocated for curricula that respond to the challenges confronting society nationally and on the African continent.

While the groundswell in student activism ignited by the #FeesMustFall campaign focused primarily on the cost of higher education, the protests assumed an all-encompassing character and demanded a radical re-imagination of the South African higher education landscape. This included demands for the decommodification of higher education, the decolonisation of the curriculum, the removal of statues, artworks and other artefacts symbolic of oppression, addressing inequities in racial and gender staff composition, as well as the insourcing of service employees (Langa, 2017).

Nelson Mandela University was no exception and, in addition to the above demands, student leaders also called for the establishment of an African and Gender Studies Centre to support the decolonisation of the curriculum and university spaces. Students argued that transformation cannot take place before decolonisation and advocated for platforms to transform curricula in a manner that directly engages with scourges such as gender-based violence, homophobia, xenophobia and racism.

Furthermore, delivering the curriculum is integral to the transformation of learning and teaching at the University. The University's academic completion plan designed to recover extensive teaching time lost during the protracted #FeesMustFall shutdowns was premised upon embracing flexible modes of delivery. Academic staff and students were required to migrate towards limited face-to-face contact complemented by online learning, teaching and assessment. This ignited the adoption of alternative forms of learning and teaching that extend beyond the classroom, which was further accelerated with the advent of the COVID pandemic and the associated lockdowns to curb the rapid spread of the virus.

Moreover that, as a significant move towards decolonisation, IsiXhosa be considered as a language of instruction. Various studies and culture change interventions at the University have also indicated that more attention needs to be devoted to the cultivation of intangible cultural heritage such as the development of indigenous and continental languages and knowledge (Goody, 2004).

6. LANGUAGE POLICY

One of Nelson Mandela's famous quotes reads as follows: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart". The words uttered by the University's namesake underscore the centrality of language in cultivating respect for diversity.

The University's current Language Policy recognises the three official languages of the Eastern and Western Cape regions in which its campuses are located, namely, English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa. Given that English is an international language of communication in science and business, this is currently the preferred medium of instruction at Mandela University.

Participants in facilitated conversations on the George Campus, however, indicated concerns regarding language exceptionalism. Disquietude was expressed about the use of Afrikaans during lectures by students and lecturers alike, given that this is inconsistent with University policy. They argued that the use of Afrikaans between lecturers and some students during lectures without any translation served to include some whilst excluding others. It furthermore emerged that this practice extends to the administrative component of the George Campus where telephone calls are also answered in Afrikaans irrespective of the caller's inability to communicate in this language. Participants stressed the importance of noting that, while Afrikaans is appreciated as one of the official languages of South Africa, its use in diverse platforms reinforces inequality and exclusion.

7. ROLE OF ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION

Tangible institutional culture change can be promoted through cultural artefacts, symbols, architecture, public art, heritage and the naming of physical spaces and buildings. This is supported by Schein (2010: 25-26) who states that artefacts include: *"…the visible products of the group, such as the architecture of its physical environment; its language; its technology and products; its artistic creations; its style, as embodied in clothing, manners of address, emotional displays, and myths and stories told about the organization; its published lists of values; its observable rituals and ceremonies; and so on."*

In line with the above, the ICEP and the Institutional Climate Survey (2013) showed that there was a need for Nelson Mandela University to transform its institutional culture and identity through the naming or renaming of buildings, as well as the presence of cultural artefacts such as public art and statues synonymous with the strategic direction of the

institution. The question of naming and renaming has been a consistent theme over time, especially where student voices are concerned. During #FeesMustFall, students agitated for the renaming of buildings and spaces to give fuller expression to the University's African identity. Students also proposed that a statue of Nelson Mandela be erected along with a state-of-the-art campus entrance that makes a symbolic statement about the prestige, honour and recognition of the global icon after whom the University is named.

In this regard, Boswell and Pillay (2021: 11) refer to the curation of two artistic representations of Nelson Mandela as important milestones in the University's transformation journey. The first being the Mandela Shirt and the second the Madiba Bench, both situated in prominent positions on either side of the Main Building on the University's Summerstrand South Campus. Both representations are now firmly anchored in the University landscape and articulate the aesthetic ethos of Nelson Mandela (the shirt), as well as the accommodating nature of the father of the nation (the bench).

Since the University was renamed in 2017, extensive stakeholder consultations have revealed in increasing depth what it means to enhance social cohesion through visual representations of our namesake on all campuses. The existing policy on naming was revised to develop a progressive guide for both revisiting existing names and naming future buildings and roads in alignment with the vision of the University. The programme of renaming commenced with the renaming of student residences and then proceeded to academic buildings on all campuses. Names selected seek to foster an inclusive institutional culture, resonate with the Mandela ethos, advance human rights, embed an African identity, draw on local and indigenous languages, and position the intellectual identity of the University globally.

Aligned to the notion of inclusivity, various studies have pointed to the need for institutional culture interventions that seek to foster social solidarity, inclusion and a sense of belonging for employees and students.

8. BUILDING SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND INCLUSION

At the ceremony for the renaming of the University in 2017, then-Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, reflected on the obligations of Mandela University to be at the forefront of efforts to ensure that higher education is an instrument for the achievement of social equality by removing *"…the cloak of institutionalised racism and sexism"* (Ramaphosa, 2017). This was reinforced in the Vice Chancellor's Inaugural Address (Muthwa, 2018) wherein she asserted that the University bears *"…a special responsibility associated with the name Nelson Mandela to align our intellectual resources to the historic task of creating a non-racial, equal and democratic society."* This can only be achieved by ensuring that all forms of unfair discrimination, racism, sexism, gender-based violence and exclusion are decisively addressed and eradicated.

As a microcosm of society, the University grapples with broader societal challenges such as racism and other forms of discrimination, sexual harassment and gender-based violence, as well as other forms of exclusion. Of concern, is that the quantitative results of the

institutional racism research conducted in 2015 revealed that more than 40 percent of participants – nearly 800 students and employees (n = 1971) – indicated that they had personally experienced racism at the University. Many participants believed that this deep-rooted challenge could be addressed through open, honest dialogue and creating safe, discursive spaces where such experiences could be shared and discussed without fear of reprisal and victimisation.

Further recommendations proposed by employees and students in various institutional research studies and stakeholder engagements included raising awareness of University policies that seek to foster social solidarity, equality and inclusion. To this effect, orientation and induction training programmes should conscientise all new students and employees about the need to consistently live the values of the University.

The VC's Listening Campaign (2018) and the Vision 2030 stakeholder engagements (2021) furthermore emphasised that social solidarity and inclusion must be founded on the practice of mutual respect and a shared sense of ownership in ensuring that the University's institutional culture is experienced as inclusive and affirming. Concerns were raised during the VC's Listening Campaign regarding the need for the University to guard against othering reintegrated service employees thereby creating an "us versus them" mindset. To this effect, employees and students need to continually engage in self-reflection and introspection to ensure that they embrace and live the core values articulated in Vision 2030 to cultivate a sense of belonging and solidarity.

The ICEP interventions further confirmed that one of the urgent themes for creating a transformative institutional culture at Nelson Mandela University would be the process of invigorating and re-imagining effective disciplinary processes and accountability conversations to address exclusionary behaviours and practices. The policy architecture of the University needed to provide for adequately resourced, effectively implemented and streamlined complaints mechanisms to report, investigate and take disciplinary action against those who violate policies designed to eliminate racism, sexism, gender-based violence and other forms of unfair discrimination and exclusion.

During the VC's Listening Campaign, stakeholders pointed to the need for a central capacity to deal decisively with racism, sexual harassment and GBV, and other forms of discrimination. It was proposed that this oversight structure focuses on advancing human rights and equality through advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, offering diversity training, and implementing effective complaints mechanisms to initiate and follow through on investigations into cases lodged to bring these to a speedy resolution. Through the organisational redesign process undertaken in 2019/20, these calls for a dedicated institutional Transformation Office were responded to and such a capacity was catered for as part of the newly established engagement and transformation portfolio (ETP).

In addition to the above, the importance of forging a culture of open engagement and inclusive communication has emerged as a recurring theme in respect of efforts to foster a values-driven, transformative institutional culture.

9.   INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION AND A CULTURE OF OPEN ENGAGEMENT

Ongoing stakeholder engagement has become one of the most prominent priorities for universities during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote commitment, motivation and a sense of belonging amid challenging circumstances. When the COVID-19 crisis first erupted, organisations across the world were plunged into such uncertainty it was hard for many to know whether they would emerge intact. This, coupled with disruption and a rapid transition to remote work and learning environments, has taken its toll on the wellbeing of employees and students.

Recognising and addressing the core human emotions of grief, loss and anxiety is an opportunity to rebuild organisational health, cultivate an ethos of care, and promote trust. Leaders need to invest time in cultivating open, compassionate conversations about what has been lost in the pandemic and the emotional impact this has had on employees, students and communities. Overlooking this poses the risk of appearing callous thereby undermining authentic stakeholder concerns about moving the university forward. Throughout this phase, messaging should focus on discovery as a way of simultaneously looking back and ahead by addressing this question: Through the crisis and our response, what have we learned about ourselves, each other, and our university that can help us in the future? (Honigmann, Mendy & Spratt, 2020).

The meta-analysis highlighted the important role of open communication in ensuring that all stakeholders are appraised of the strategic direction of the organisation and how they connect to that purpose. Participants in the studies analysed as part of this meta-analysis proposed the following:

- Forums to be established to facilitate frequent engagement on different topical issues at the University, especially at the middle management level.
- The University ought to adopt a culture of responsiveness by indicating how they respond to employee concerns.
- There is a need to communicate consistently as it relates to magnifying highlights, successes and best practices that exemplify the strategic aspirations and values of the University.
- Line managers must be encouraged to invest in self-development as it relates to cultivating the people skills required to foster a healthy working environment.
- Leaders at all levels should strive to be more accessible and visible (e.g. through "walkabouts") to reduce the social distance between management and employees.

The meta-analysis further revealed the need to strengthen employee relations at all levels to build trust between senior management, employees and organised labour. Among other things, this should include devoting attention to creating an enabling working environment for all employees to promote wellness and morale.

10. EMPLOYEE WORKING CONDITIONS AND MORALE

Students and employees alike called on the University to treat all employees with the same respect and consideration regardless of their job grade. The meta-analysis also pointed to the need to develop and implement a consolidated and integrated talent management strategy, including workforce profiling, talent continuity plans, and skills development to address current and future staffing needs within the University.

A frequently raised concern is the need for succession planning given the increasing numbers of aging employees employed at senior levels who are retiring and being replaced with inexperienced, junior employees. During the Vision 2030 stakeholder engagements, this was referred to as the inability to finalise a *"…thoughtfully constructed succession plan to ensure that we have a strong pipeline of employees with world-class competence…".*

Attention also needs to be devoted to the over-utilisation of part-time and contract employees against vacant posts in certain faculties, divisions and on the George Campus since this results in a lack of talent continuity and potential labour relations risks. Such employees are often allocated more work yet remunerated at lower levels than their permanently employed counterparts and this detracts from the intention of the University to be an employer of choice for talented, high-performing employees.

Among academic employees, concerns have also been related to persistently high student: staff ratios in certain faculties resulting in excessive teaching workloads, declining research productivity, and low morale. Concerns were also raised about the lack of career growth and advancement opportunities for PASS staff due to the absence of a promotions policy for these categories of employees. Talent attraction and retention becomes a challenge if these concerns are compounded by a lack of competitiveness in respect of salaries and conditions of service as compared to other universities and industries.

Similarly, there is a need to invest in strategies to attract talented and diverse students to ensure that the University meets its enrolment targets at under- and postgraduate levels across all fields of study. Institutional culture fulfils an important role in terms of ensuring that inclusive, enabling and humanising systems and processes advance an exceptional student access and enrolment experience for all applicants and returning students.

11. ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT AND VIBRANT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Efforts to advance digitalisation have been receiving focused attention to ensure that Mandela University addresses cumbersome institutional systems and processes, especially as it relates to the student access and enrolment value chain. Declines in enrolments within scarce skills fields and among postgraduate and international students called for the establishment of a multi-stakeholder Enrolment Management Committee (EMC) to reverse these trends.

The EMC has undertaken a careful analysis of the various factors contributing to the low conversion (45%) of admissions to enrolments which, in turn, results in the University not

meeting all its enrolment targets. The identified challenges include the lack of integration across the student access and enrolment value chain, as well as suboptimal turnaround times in providing feedback to applicants in respect of their application status. Moreover, student leaders have proposed an integrated admission offer whereby prospective students are offered spaces to study, as well as financial aid and placement in on- or off-campus residences should this be required.

Furthermore, EMC workstreams have suggested the need to revisit our growing and diversifying student profile to ensure that the University's student recruitment policies and practices are responsive and inclusive. Recommendations include fostering closer relations between the University and feeder schools, colleges and other catchment areas. In addition, there is a need to expand career guidance and support to prospective learners from Grade 9 onwards at feeder institutions to create a pipeline of talented students, especially within scarce skills fields and at the postgraduate level.

Benchmarking studies have also pointed to the need for Mandela University to embrace strategic enrolment management in an effort to ensure that: academic programme offerings are sought after; systems and processes are integrated, agile and fit-for-purpose; communication with applicants and admitted students is personalised and sustained until registration has been concluded; and resources are mobilised to expand the availability of financial aid, bursaries and scholarships for academically deserving, financially disadvantaged students who do not qualify for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

A further important factor that relates directly to institutional culture is the need to promote a vibrant student living and learning experience both on- and off-campus. The VC's Listening Campaign and the Vision 2030 stakeholder engagements have made extensive reference to the significance of providing students with enriching experiences and interactions that develop them as future leaders and responsible citizens who are empowered to contribute to a more socially just and equal society. Students and alumni have also referred to the need for the University to set itself apart by enhancing graduate employability and entrepreneurship through expanded experiential learning opportunities, mentorship and graduate-in-training programmes, closer linkages with the world of work, and enhancing the responsiveness and relevance of curricula to incorporate cutting-edge knowledge and innovation.

As a multi-campus institution, Mandela University should strive to promote an enabling student experience on all campuses.

12. MULTI-CAMPUS MANAGEMENT

Nelson Mandela University comprises of seven campuses, all of which constitute spaces through which a transformative, values-driven institutional culture can be fostered. Over time, various stakeholders have called for all University campuses to be assigned distinctive strategy-aligned academic identities and niches to ensure parity of esteem.

A key theme that was surfaced through the VC's Listening Campaign was how the programme and qualification mix (PQM) programmes of each campus potentially creates the perception that some campuses are inferior to others. For example, at the time (2018), extended curricula and higher certificates were mostly located on the Missionvale Campus (previously Vista University), the 2nd Avenue Campus (previously PE Technikon) mainly offered diplomas with the exception of the Business School, and sought-after qualifications in scarce skills areas such as science, engineering and technology, as well as professions such as law, accounting, health sciences and education were mainly concentrated on the Summerstrand South and North Campuses.

Employees and students alike have posited that this served to stigmatise certain campuses and reinforced the pre-merger binary divide between undergraduate certificates/diplomas and degrees. It was asserted that placing all University campuses on a level playing field through sought-after academic programme offerings, well-maintained infrastructure and equivalent access to quality service delivery would promote a unifying culture and sense of belonging. Students have emphasised the importance of vibrant living and learning environments in promoting inclusive student access for success and purposefully cultivating the desired graduate attributes within and beyond the classroom.

Some significant shifts have been achieved in recent years by locating the newly established medical school and the Foundation Phase programme of the Faculty of Education at the Missionvale Campus along with key institutional entities that focus on facilitating transformative engagement, such as the University's law and psychology clinics and the Centre for Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET). Furthermore, the University launched the country's only dedicated Ocean Sciences Campus at the site previously owned by the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Summerstrand. These campuses are now viewed as prime locations given that they represent fresh, new energies in driving key Vision 2030 strategic trajectories and, as such, have benefitted from significant investments in infrastructure upgrading and development.

The Bird Street Campus has also evolved as a significant site of engagement and convergence situated in the heart of Gqeberha's central business district. This is facilitated through co-locating the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Engagement and Transformation, the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET), the Chair in Identities and Social Cohesion in Africa (ISCIA), and the postgraduate programmes offered by the School of Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA). The University's Art Gallery is also housed on this campus and has been repurposed to showcase the work of postgraduate students, as well as local and international artists, in a building that itself represents multiple layers of heritage, history and identity (Boswell & Pillay, 2021: 13).

Through various courageous conversations, institutional culture interventions and the VC's Listening Campaign on the George Campus, students and employees highlighted a range of concerns needing attention. Those pertaining to institutional culture included the prevalence of racial divides within and beyond the classroom, the use of Afrikaans in

lectures, and resistance among certain stakeholders to the renaming of the George Campus (previously referred to as the Saasveld Campus).

The hybrid model of governance and management for the George Campus was also frequently alluded to as contributing to the perception that the Campus is treated like a "stepchild". Students and employees expressed frustrations about issues which are referred to Port Elizabeth and a response would often not be forthcoming. There was a call for greater delegation of authority to the George Campus to attend to issues and challenges specific to the Campus at the point of service delivery. Furthermore, stakeholders called for redress as it related to the positioning of the George Campus as a hub for transdisciplinary sustainability sciences located within a natural "lab" that has the potential to achieve global recognition.

The organisational redesign process made provision for the appointment of Senior Directors for the George Campus, as well as the Missionvale, Second Avenue and Bird Street Campuses. Both these positions report directly to the DVC People and Operations to ensure that service delivery and operations on these campuses receive much-needed attention. As part of the organisational redesign interventions, the multi-campus governance and management model was also reviewed to provide for representative, multi-stakeholder forums to advise on the academic and support service interventions required to contribute to a vibrant experience for all students and employees irrespective of which campus they are located at.

13. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sought to provide a high-level synthesis of recurring themes and findings emerging from institutional research studies, culture change interventions, the VC's Listening Campaign and the Vision 2030 stakeholder engagements over the past decade (2010 to 2020). This is intended to create a baseline assessment of institutional culture at Nelson Mandela University to identify areas of concern and opportunities that need attention in the immediate, medium- and long-term. On this basis, the Institutional Culture Working Group (ICWG) can design and implement various evidence-informed culture change interventions required to achieve the University's Vision 2030 strategic intentions of cultivating a transformative institutional culture.

This meta-analysis has revealed that the University needs to respond expeditiously to those issues identified by stakeholders that have been recurring over time, culminating in the Vision 2030 engagements in 2021. Whilst good progress has been made in addressing many of the challenges highlighted by internal and external stakeholders over time, some are persistent and forward-looking institutional culture interventions need to be designed to address these.

Based on the findings of this meta-analysis, it is recommended that the ICWG devote attention to the following:

- Conduct advocacy, sensitisation, induction and training programmes to ensure that students and employees consistently live the core values of the University in giving effect to the *Statement of Commitment to an Inclusive Institutional Culture* outlined in Vision 2030.
- Actively promote social justice, respect for diversity and equality by decisively eradicating all forms of discrimination and exclusion in keeping with the legacy and ethos of our namesake, Nelson Mandela.
- Design and implement holistic, integrated talent stewardship strategies to recruit, retain and develop talented, socially diverse students and employees who are committed to accelerating and deepening transformation and decolonisation within and beyond the classroom.
- Promote staff morale through open engagement and communication, attending to high workloads, implementing holistic wellbeing interventions, and promoting talent continuity by filling vacancies timeously with qualified, high-performing employees.
- Develop leadership skills at all levels to empower line managers to cultivate humanising, inclusive learning and work environments that liberate the full potential of all students and employees.
- Conclude the development of an institutional language policy that aligns with the *Language Policy Framework for Higher Education* (2020) and seeks to promote multilingualism as a strategy across all functional domains including scholarship, teaching and learning, and wider communication. Conditions must also be created for the development and strengthening of indigenous languages as forms of meaningful academic discourse, as well as sources of knowledge in different disciplines.
- Embrace the African identity of the University as an integral dimension of fostering a transformative institutional culture, including devoting ongoing attention to the symbolic value of arts, culture, heritage and naming of spaces and places on all campuses.
- Promote parity of esteem in a multi-campus context by identifying distinctive strategy-aligned academic niches for each campus and promoting equivalence of service delivery and vibrancy of campus life on all campuses.
- Invest resources in advancing digital transformation in pursuit of academic and operational excellence, including addressing the digital divide, broadening access to mobile devices and data connectivity, and intensifying humanising capacity development interventions to equip students and employees to meaningfully engage in flexible modes of learning and work.
- Promote a culture of engagement and responsiveness in addressing issues and concerns raised by students, employees and other stakeholders, including providing transparent feedback on progress or lack thereof.

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