Institutional Curiosity

Edited by

Mary Crewe

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This is the first collection of writing by various UP academics about reimagining UP and how it may look in the future. These are opinion pieces, thoughts and reflections about the University and other collections will be published as contributions are received.

Foreword

Mrs Mary Crewe

> *Pearl fishing is not mere historical retrieval. It involves moving along the jagged ocean floor and upsetting its natural sedimentation in order to recover those hidden treasures. To reach them, the diver must often mess up the layers of the ocean by testing the broken edges, ruptures, and discontinuities of the past instead of treating them as elements in a smooth continuous path.*
>
> Seyla Benhabib (2022)[1]

Reimagining UP resembles the practice of pearl fishing. It requires that we upset the natural sedimentation of the academic institution, disturbing layers of history and tradition, to identify and assess the ruptures and discontinuities of the past, and comb for hidden treasures to inform how we think about the re-imagined institution and dream of a different future – both these activities will ultimately determine how we manage it.

This collection of essays, *Institutional Curiosity*, engages in a certain mode of pearl fishing. The contributors to the collection seek out novel ways in which to engage in debates about change, about continuity, about knowledge, and about excellence. Some individuals employed at UP are thinking in a re-imagined way about how to interrogate the University's layers of history and tradition, and reveal new and hidden treasures of thought.

The UP Senate conference, which was scheduled for 22 and 23 February 2021, focused on reimagining. The full title of the conference was Reimagining Higher Education – Frontlines, Intersections, and Opportunities. In exploring

1 Benhabib, S. 2022. 'Thinking without banisters.' *New York Review of Books*, 24 February 2022.

Reimagining UP – or engaging in Institutional Curiosity – various members of staff were asked to reflect how the University could be re-envisioned. Initial responses and discussions were challenging. Many people agreed to write up and share their insights.

As so often happens with this kind of engagement, there was a high attrition of anticipated written contributions. The Covid-19 pandemic, institutional work demands, isolation, work schedules, and deadlines got in the way of certain submissions. Some colleagues feared that speaking freely might be damaging to their positions in their departments and in their faculties. Their anxieties reflect the importance of nurturing and protecting institutional curiosity and reimagination. We should try to understand these fears in the context of ideas and the challenge that a University represents. What this collection then provides is interweaving thoughts from discussions and engagement, and papers written by colleagues in various faculties and departments on what it might mean to reimagine UP.

Many of the debates about change and reimagining UP address questions raised by institutional culture. A great deal has been written about institutional culture: what it means and understanding what it represents. Often such debates are construed in predominantly negative terms: the institutional culture and the narratives that support it underpin, hide, buttress, and support discrimination and inequalities based on race, class, gender, and other forms of exclusion. In many cases papers about institutional culture address the oppression of the status quo, and the challenges of confronting and changing it. All too often, the questions that arise are status quo questions, which tend to evoke status quo answers. Often answers or solutions mitigate the status quo – they ease the impact but do not change it much, nor do they address how the status quo might be tinkered with or challenged.

One way to think about institutional culture and all that arises from it is to change the narrative to institutional curiosity, or as John Higgins suggests, development of a critical literacy[2]. Curiosity is the bedrock of academic research, debate, and teaching. Curiosity generates critical thinkers; critical thinkers ask critical questions and endeavour to answer them in critical ways, which often raise further questions and initiate new debates, rather than merely providing answers and easy solutions. It is not the answers themselves that are important, but rather the search for the answers, asking questions in a fundamentally different way,

2 Higgins, J. 2007. 'Institutional culture as byword.' *In Review of Higher Education in South Africa*: *Selected Themes*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education, 97-123.

challenging taken-for-granted assumptions, and fostering a scepticism that fuels a critical, as well as an institutional, curiosity.

The anti-discrimination policy (ADP) recently adopted by UP allows for such critical engagement. Does the University lead or follow the society in which it is based? How can a policy be used to generate curiosity, debate, and change, rather than be perceived as a form of coercion and control? All aspects of the ADP require critical literacy: how do we reimagine the ways in which we think about or 'perform' race, class, gender, violence (symbolic and normative), xenophobia, and faith-based discrimination? How do we foster an intellectual and critical leadership that avoids easy solutions and allows for descriptions rather than explanations and understanding?

Institutional curiosity creates the possibility of what Stuart Hall called metaphors of transformation[3]. Hall wrote that these metaphors need to satisfy two needs. They should allow us to imagine what it would be like if the prevailing cultural values are challenged and transformed, and if old social hierarchies are overthrown and new meanings and values appear. However, he continued that such metaphors should also have analytic value. They must provide ways of thinking about the relation between the social and symbolic domains in the process of transformation or reimagination.

Institutional curiosity is a different way of looking at the University. It involves reimagining the intellectual space and the ways in which the University could be reformed through curious intellectual engagement with the institution. It concerns, in the words used by Seyla Benhabib to describe Hannah Arendt's work, 'thinking without banisters'[4].

3 Hall, S. 1996. 'For Allon White: metaphors of transformation.' In Morley, D. & Chen, K.H. Hall (eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, 287-305.

4 Benhabib, S. 2022. 'Thinking without banisters.' *New York Review of Books*, 24 February 2022.

UP can stake its place as a benchmark space of higher learning in, and of, Africa

Prof Siona O'Connell
Faculty of Humanities

Every year since 2015 students at South African universities have protested against financial exclusion, organised protest marches, and attacked sacred cows of the colonial legacy in higher education. With the death of a bystander making headlines in 2021, protests continued to draw attention to the reality that funding is an intractable problem in higher education, worsened by a South African economy in a quagmire, by economic disparities, and by political opportunism.

Protesting against fee increases in higher education and demanding free education, students have called for the end of racism and outsourcing of support services at universities. These protests, organised under the banners #RhodesMustFall (RMF) and then #FeesMustFall (FMF), set in motion a series of events with far-reaching consequences for higher education in South Africa and many other countries. Urgent and long-overdue questions were asked regarding the legacies of colonialism, the meaning of symbols and artefacts in the institutional culture of the university and of curricula, and contemporary management practices in higher education.

African studies scholar Professor Nick Shepherd has argued that although RMF sought to interrogate and address the impact of Cecil Rhodes's colonial heritage on the South African university and its curriculum, culture, and ethos, the campaign neglected a historical reality that constituted another earlier trauma, namely slavery, initiated with the first colonial encounters in the mid-seventeenth century at the Cape, and enduring for almost two hundred years. I would argue that in the main in South Africa, slavery is broadly understood to be located and of significance only for the Western Cape. Slavery and colonisation in South Africa have largely been unacknowledged, overshadowed by the more dominant narrative of apartheid. However, given that the Cape was colonised two centuries before the rest of South Africa, the importance of this legacy and its impact on social and economic conditions is fundamental to understanding contemporary South Africa. Grasping the issues facing the South African university today requires an understanding of South Africa's long history of slavery and the displacement of indigenous people and people of colour.

There can be no question that slavery shaped South Africa from the earliest days of colonial exploration, and it continued to have a critical influence through the continuum of colonialism, informing early forms of racial segregation and later feeding into apartheid. The legacy of slavery continues to influence our perspectives today. It is evident in prevailing attitudes to the work of those who are seen as 'black', particularly in the mining and viticulture industries, and in domestic service in many homes. There is a continual reminder of slavery through surnames such as December, September, and February, which recall the random names allocated to enslaved ancestors, based on the month in which such ancestors arrived at the Cape, and were parcelled out to their 'owners'. It is also evident in some of the schisms in religious denominations, notably the division between the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA), a branch of Christianity that evolved from the Slave Church ('Gestig').

Slavery shaped churches, mines, agriculture, and educational institutions. The first pass laws were introduced in 1972 in Kimberley to control African labourers employed on the diamond mines. The Natives Land Act of 1913 was the first significant legislation passed after South Africa was united as a single political entity in 1910. The 1913 Natives Land Act dispossessed countless African families of access to farmland and limited the land which could be settled by Africans to a paltry 7% of the geographic area of the country, at a time when Africans constituted 67% of the population. In 1889 the Volksraad of the Transvaal Boer Republic discussed establishing a university for the capital, i.e. Pretoria. In 1932, only 98 years after the abolition of slavery in the Cape Colony, the University Council declared that Afrikaans should be the only medium of instruction. What is now known as the University of Pretoria witnessed the 1935 Innersloop forced removals and the formation of the African Mine Workers' Union (1941). The founding of the School of Management in 1949 occurred on the eve of key apartheid legislation that would have a far-reaching and catastrophic impact: the Population Registration Act of 1950 (which defined all South Africans in terms of race), the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Immorality Act of 1950 (which criminalised and prohibited sexual relationships and marriages between people of different races), the Group Areas Act of 1950 (which separated people living in urban areas in terms of their race), the Suppression of Communism Act of 1953 (which prohibited Communism and other forms of political opposition to apartheid), the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of

1953 (which reserved most toilets, buses, trains, hospitals, ambulances, cinemas, theatres, swimming pools, beaches, and parks for white people, and allocated inferior facilities to members of other race groups), and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (which closed down all mission schools that provided Africans with education, and imposed racially segregated education on all, with vastly inferior education provided to Africans, coloured people, and Indians). Anyone associated with UP between 1953 and 1967 should have been aware of race-based forced removals from various areas of Pretoria, including Garsfontein, Newclare, Bantule/ Hovesgrond, Eersterus, Wonderboom, Marabastad, Lady Selbourne, Asiatic Bazaar, Yskor, Mooiplaats, and Riverside. Like other universities in South Africa, UP has a troubled past that affects the present in many ways. At times, understanding of the discrimination in the past is seen by academics as providing an opportunity to enable comprehension of present circumstances, and fosters questioning of current policies. Yet on other occasions, academic practices discourage any form of dissent from, or opposition to, the 'UP way'. It appears to have been mute when race-based forced removals took place in Pretoria 50 to 70 years ago.

What lurks behind the pleasant veneer of the impeccably manicured gardens at UP are markers of belonging and privilege that are somewhat less apparent. These include ways of doing things, rites and rituals, old boys' and old girls' networks, ways of speaking and behaving, deference to rank and tenure, and formal forms of politeness that sit uncomfortably with the new. It is incredibly difficult for an academic outsider to find their feet at UP: a sense of bewilderment and paralysis sets in, and unless newly appointed lecturers discover generous and kind mentors who can help them learn and comprehend how things are done, and the new academic is prepared to work only on the margins, paths to success and well-being can be harrowing and thorny.

I do not believe that it is an understatement to say that the university can be a hostile environment for anyone who does not play by the unspoken rules. It is not a comfortable place for the thin-skinned. Women, especially women of colour, often find themselves described as 'difficult' when they voice their opinions. They are often bewildered by rules that appear mandatory for some and optional for (privileged) others. They often have to work twice as hard, engage in mental and emotional contortions (whilst coming to terms with bureaucracy) to avoid any perception that their appointment is based on tokenism. There is not a formal policy that outlines exactly how UP expects its citizenry to behave. For those of

us relatively new to the institution and unfamiliar with UP culture, the university can be lonely and alienating. I imagine that many non-conforming students have similar experiences.

Having said this, UP has more than a few treasures, often found in the most unlikely of places. I believe that the most rewarding aspect of my UP experience has been discovering colleagues and students from entirely different backgrounds, who find common ground through enlightened conversations, respect, hard work, and humility. More can be done to inculcate a culture of dialogic learning, knowledge transfer, and support, tasking each UP staff member and student to grasp that a university is a place of critical knowledge production. It should never be anything less than this.

One would be hard-pressed to not appreciate that UP Hatfield is a beautiful and well-tended campus, providing a soothing green environment. The Old Arts Building – where I had my first office – provides spectacular views of the campus. Space matters. Everything has its place. Markers of history and heritage abound at UP, which is a stone's throw from the Union Buildings – in itself of great significance. These markers are evident in statues, architecture, building names and nicknames, collections, and furniture, inscribing not only the history and heritage of the institution, but also silencing other histories that remain in the shadows of the tall trees that shield students in the heat of Pretoria summers.

It is a struggle to find any UP memorial that publicly acknowledges slavery, yet the form and history of this university sit squarely within South Africa's slave past and the cost that slavery and other forms of discrimination continue to exact on the majority of South Africans; to pay lip service to slavery at UP does a disservice to the institution.

Public commitment to studying the catastrophic and persistent impact of slavery in South African will clear the way in significant areas for this university and the broader public that it serves:

- It offers an opportunity to scrutinise the South African academy about the processes of transformation and the decolonisation of learning through a deep-time perspective on the interlinked legacies of the historical catastrophes of slavery, colonialism, and apartheid, as a vehicle to understand their far-reaching and complex effects. Decolonisation

has been at the forefront of teaching and learning, yet not enough has been done to engender the understanding that transformation and decolonisation must, from the outset, be deeply self-reflexive.

- It enables a greater understanding of colour, gender, and sex (in addition to race). It can lead the way with regard to how 'colouredness' is understood in South Africa. Coloured students are few and far between at UP: we need to ask ourselves what about this university makes it seem unwelcoming to this demographic.
- It sheds light on the status of institutions as material beneficiaries of slave economies, and encourages each of us to think seriously about what privilege in South Africa looks like.
- It lays the groundwork for a pedagogically sound and rigorous African studies course that every UP student should take, so that that the business of what it means to study in Africa, and to study Africa, takes its rightful place in this South African academy. This is not just relevant to students and faculty of the Humanities. It should involve questions important for all academics and their students across all the disciplines that are committed to the process of transformation and decolonisation already underway at UP. Such a course could shape the beginnings of a UP culture that speaks to all.

We know that enormous changes are expected in the future which may change the face of the planet. Although South Africa is seen as a middle-income country, it struggles with substantial income inequalities, which natural hazard-induced disasters and climate change are likely to exacerbate. In South Africa, the scars of vast inequalities and social engineering that characterised the apartheid system persist (and in some cases have worsened), despite nearly three decades of democracy. The country is one of the most unequal societies globally. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the ongoing glaring injustices of the country's past.

We have already had to change the way we work as a result of the pandemic. I hope that the past two years have changed the way that we think. We are all involved in the building of democracy. We need to be committed to ensuring that all South Africans can thrive, and we have to deal with the unfinished business of the legacy of apartheid.

UP offers an opportunity to build on the work of the great thinkers of the past, including Imhotep, Plato, Confucius, Mao, Nyerere, Newton, Freire, and Wallerstein, all of whom allocated a special place in their theories of development to understanding that education was the unshakeable foundation of whatever kind of development or progress a country wanted to pursue. UP can stake its place as a benchmark space of higher learning in, and of, Africa.

We can be known as the university capable of having the most difficult of conversations, of not tinkering at the edges of change, and of looking at the past with compassion.

We can do this, not in the shadow of tall trees, but in the full light of the African sun: each of us equal and fully grounded, so that we can continue the long journey to freedom dreamt of by slaves so many centuries ago.

Video killed the radio star! – Reimagining UP after a pandemic

Prof Christian W.W. Pirk
Department of Zoology and Entomology

During 2020, when countries were shutting their borders and universities around the world moved to online teaching, I had discussions with collaborators and friends from other universities around the world. I got the impression that NAS/UP was well-prepared to facilitate the shift to online tuition. Events in previous years had equipped us to manage a rapid transition to online teaching, unlike our colleagues in the global north who had to start with the basics.

Nevertheless, many skills and new forms of infrastructure were acquired during the pandemic. It concerned not only locating hardware, such as 3 000 laptops for students in dire need of internet-enabled devices, to ensure that no student was left behind, but also involved ensuring that staff and students in home offices were functional, and up and running.

With global vaccination rates rising slowly, we can start to think about what the 'new normal' means in the context of a contact university such as UP.

In my opinion, the landscape in higher education is changing. We should ensure that we are shaping the landscape, rather than being left behind.

One of our first steps should be to ensure that we get students back on campus. The Honours class of 2022 will be filled with students, who in the case of NAS students have never seen a laboratory or a microscope because of their limited experience on campus. And yet they are expected to conduct research in the years to come! I was once asked by a member of the public, 'Why do students pick UP?' It is clearly the quality of education that they receive that encourages students to enrol here, but sports and the social aspects of being a contact student are also attractions. If the latter advantages fall away, what prevents students from enrolling at UNISA (which is more financially viable for most students), or at another contact university?

Another critical issue is that although students might have the hardware and data to be connected and to complete courses online, studying at home does not necessarily provide the right learning environment, especially if a student is the first member of their family to attend university. In some families, sitting quietly and reading a book is not considered real work; one is seen to be 'just

sitting around'.

Furthermore, we should not ignore the benefits of being in a classroom and being able to engage in interpersonal discussion. Although video conferencing platforms have advanced in the past 18 months, the lecturing styles of many academics have regressed to *ex-cathedra* teaching in front of a blank screen, rather than teaching in front of a blackboard. Requests such as 'Please unmute!' or 'Can you see my screen?' do not enhance the quality of the learning experience. As we know from multiple studies, if the student-teacher ratio is too high, learning will take longer and will be less efficient. Learning online removes an important mode of communication, viz. non-verbal communication, since it is difficult to discern non-verbal communication based solely on facial expression.

These challenges should not be understood as simply arguments in favour of reverting to the traditional classroom set-up, but rather as reasons why we need to find a balance between our new online or virtual teaching skills, and contact learning. We may want to consider adding online classes to the timetable in order to create a timetable with fewer clashes. The 07h30 lecture slot could be designated an online slot, and so could be lectures scheduled after 17h30.

Obviously, the number of online and synchronous and asynchronous lectures offered should be guided by the learning programme, module, or course in question. For example, I would assume that Masters Courses would be attended mostly by students who work during office hours, and who would, therefore, potentially prefer asynchronous lectures or online lectures later in the day.

Live-streaming or recording lectures would enable staff members and students to customise their timetables, and would allow for greater flexibility, which would be useful in certain situations, such as students having child-care commitments, caring for family members, or living in a province other than Gauteng. Another benefit would be that an external examiner for a course could obtain a more comprehensive overview of the course content and the dynamics of learning within the module. For example, our external examiners for the Honours programme in 2020 had the option of listening to presentations by students, which enabled them to ask additional in-depth and challenging questions about students' projects.

In addition to these institutional advantages, having a more flexible timetable and allowing students to attend to lectures in their own time and at their own pace, would enable the more immediate implementation of new methods and ideas in the classroom. In 2021 I delivered a lecture in the Frontiers in Social Evolution

(FINE) lecture series – the series addressed all aspects of social evolution, and lectures were delivered by leading academics in their respective fields. Each lecturer had to not only deliver a lecture, followed by a Q&A session, but also be available for one-on-one meetings with individual students. My involvement did not begin with delivering my lecture, but was initiated four hours earlier through a meeting with various people around the globe, in a discussion about social evolution.

Owing to the time difference, colleagues from the University of Chattanooga and Yale University had to start with their lecturing much earlier. The process confirmed that one can have leading experts present their research to a class, or introduce their fields of expertise, regardless of the physical location of the class, the presenter, or the lecturer.

As academics, we get excited about our topics of research and we can communicate our excitement to our students, but we also need to teach students about aspects of our field of knowledge that we do not feel as enthusiastic about. A logical solution is to identify an expert in the field who can present their work, which allows students to not only access knowledge, but to also tap into the excitement of that particular expert. In the past, this type of input was limited by the necessity of actually having the expert present on campus as a visiting researcher, and their input had to be arranged at the most appropriate point in the course. For example, colleagues who visit for fieldwork usually travel to South Africa in our spring and summer, which is at the very end or very beginning of the South African academic year. In this narrow window of opportunity, the majority of South African students are often on their summer holidays.

The huge increase in skills by people worldwide, including academics, makes it much easier to convince an academic to present as part of a course, and to schedule online lectures within appropriate time-slots. However, at present this is just one component of extra-curricular activities, and it has not been formally integrated. I think we will see a development of a new type of university, which will integrate contact with online and asynchronous/synchronous activities. Instead of building satellite campuses like some North American universities have done, especially in the Middle East and Asia, one has the opportunity to offer courses and degrees to students, regardless of where they are. As an esteemed colleague of mine said, this shift may result in a decline in the number of traditional contact universities, similar to the demise of movie theatres that suffered from the development of VHS and DVD technology, or the decline of

radio when TV music channels eliminated the necessity of listening to music on the radio (*Video killed the radio star!*; Bruce Woolley and the Camera Club 1979).

As a result of the pandemic and shifts in processes within universities, the relationship between the physical location of a university and where a student is based might not be as strong as it was in the past. Previously, to study at the highest-ranked Zoology and Entomology Department in Africa, or at one of the top 50 globally, one had to relocate to UP. The past 18 months have shown that one can obtain a BSc at UP without being physically present during the second and third years of study.

Nevertheless, the idea is not to create a new version of a distance university, such as Unisa 2.0, but to add an additional component to academic contact activities, especially given that some of the most important aspects of an academic experience are the interactions within a university environment, or having discussions and interactions with academics, researchers, professional staff, and fellow students. Therefore, the solution is not to 'just' present online. With this in mind, some of our future students might select a university which will allow them to study in an environment in which they are regularly exposed to leading experts in the field, even if these experts are located at another university.

One of the requirements for establishing these links, and getting the leading figures into the classroom, is a research-intensive department. (Note that the department is the unit I chose, since it describes the typical academic home of a student, but thinking instead about an institute or a centre would not require a significant shift in my argument.)

As stated in the UP vision, a strong research focus would result in the reality that new collaborations and networks could be set up more easily. It would mean a number of established networks from which one could draw experts in particular fields to complement the expertise at UP. The next step would be to integrate such collaborations into formal teaching, either by having collaborators present in the classroom, or by accepting the student's participation in a module provided by another university as part of a UP module. Only if we enhance online activities to such an extent that they 'convert' into a UP degree, will UP be at the forefront of development.

As UP is already involved in international degree programmes and, therefore, competes at a global level (to a lesser degree in some departments and to a greater degree in others), the next logical step would be to offer the option of completing some components of a degree 'remotely'. For example, since 1996

UP has had a memorandum of understanding with the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), which defines the roles of partners in the African Regional Postgraduate Programme in Insect Science (ARPPIS). Students are chosen from all over Africa for an MSc or a PhD – and are mainly based at ICIPE – with one of 29 African universities in 19 different countries, of which UP is one.

Over the past 25 years, a number of UP PhD graduates have been part of the programme and have started their own careers. According to students, the main criteria for choice of institution, based on past feedback and the input of current PhD students within the programme, are the field of expertise, the reputation of the university supervisor(s), the reputation of the institution, and the costs involved.

Being in a position to attract students to our programmes, and colleagues from other universities to contribute to our degree programmes is critical. Our attractiveness comes from UP being research-intensive and from having internationally recognised academics with expertise at UP. Currently, we have a more bottoms-up approach, where active researchers or groups have their own networks which they utilise to draw in experts from outside UP. The next step would be to also utilise a top-down approach, and set up networks at an institutional level for closer collaboration on degree programmes. The University of Montpellier comes to mind – UP already has a longstanding link with it, as well as with the network of the African Global University Project. They could establish a formal framework for having courses accepted for degrees at partner institutions. In this way students would have an opportunity to not only be taught by our excellent academic staff, but also be able to customise their experience during their university studies.

In addition, there would be a reduction in the costs of travelling and applying for visa applications. One could do a degree in Entomology and attend lectures on forest insects in Canada, get an introduction to dung beetles in Australia, investigate landscape factors affecting bee diversity in the USA, or learn about stingless bee diversity in Brazil, the effect of climate change on butterfly communities in Europe, and amazing biodiversity in South Africa.

Different courses could be reflected in transcripts. The decision about what courses would be acceptable would be determined by the UP staff member who coordinated the UP component of the course. One could also draw on extraordinary lecturers and professors within the university, and have them

contribute to specific courses remotely.

In light of the objective of the University to be a leading research-intensive university in Africa – known for developing people, creating knowledge, and making a difference locally and globally – utilising online resources will help to mitigate delays in registration, especially for international students due to slow processes which are beyond the control of the university, such as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), visa applications, and Section 20, to name just a few. Because of personal experience with the NAS faculty office, UP has a professional staff with extensive knowledge of which degrees from which countries SAQA will or will not have problems with, and we should capitalise on this knowledge. If we have had the experience that a degree from country A is usually accepted by SAQA without problems, we could provisionally accept a student and she could start with her degree online, while we wait for the formalities to be completed. Some of these external processes can take up to nine months longer than expected, resulting in students risking losing their bursaries.

Obviously, adjusting these processes would require formal discussions and agreements with various role-players, such as SAQA, the Department of Higher Education and Training, and professional bodies. Using the opportunity to move components of different programmes online, and being flexible with regard to individual circumstances, will enable UP to take the lead.

That will only be possible if we continue to ensure that UP is the leading research institution in Africa, with a global impact. By building a reputation based on existing networks of academics, institutes, and faculties, and nurturing not only our achievers, but also ensuring that research excellence is maintained across all disciplines, we can consolidate this leading position.

The radio star might have to record a video, but they are still capable of producing a stellar performance.

A university of the city: shifting classrooms, emerging solutions, deepening change

Prof Stephan de Beer, Centre for Faith and Community, Faculty of Theology and Religion & Prof Jannie Hugo, Community-Oriented Primary Care (COPC) Research Unit, Faculty of Health Sciences

Ours can be a University in the city, without being a University of the city.

In their work, *The University and the City*, Goddard and Vallance[1] explore the extent to which the university is *in* the city, or part of the life *of* the city in a way that actively contributes to city-making. They then explore the different forms that a relationship between the university and the city could take. They argue for much stronger connections between policy, practice, and theory, if the potential of the university as an urban institution is to be optimised.

The university has to discern its vocation contextually. The world has changed and became more complex. Over the past three decades, South Africa has experienced immense transitions. And yet the more that things change, the more they seem to stay the same. Our own society is still marked by deep socio-spatial and economic inequalities, with historic wounds that threaten to tear our country and our cities apart, whilst the quality of service delivery in the cities declines.

It is in changing, complex, wounded, and unequal contexts like ours, that we have to imagine the future of the university. We[2] dream of an institution[3] that opted in 2021 to make a number of deliberate shifts in responding to social change:

- from being in the city, to learning how to become a university *of* the city
- from 'the death of the classroom' to the 'city as classroom'
- from being 'experts' to being listeners and collaborators, and
- from rhetoric about transformation, to city-making engagement that

1 Goddard, J. & Vallence, P. 2013. T*he University and the City*, London & New York, Routledge,*https://www.routledge.com/The-University-and-the-City/Goddard-Vallance/p/book/9781138798533*

2 Authored by Stephan de Beer, Centre for Faith and Community, Faculty of Theology and Religion, and Jannie Hugo, Community-Oriented Primary Health Care (COPC) Research Unit, Faculty of Health Sciences.

3 We drafted this opinion piece to contribute to reimagining the future of the University of Pretoria.

produces concrete and measurable change.

In so doing, we are mindful of the sheer precariousness of the city's most vulnerable populations and communities, who remain perpetually 'outside the gate of the city'.

In reimagining our university, we should strongly consider prioritising such communities as key interlocutors for how we choose to reshape and recommit ourselves, and then, in the classrooms of the city, consider how best to bring to bear our institutional gravitas, networks, resources, and knowledges, in order to effect fundamental change, transforming vulnerability into resilience, making the city functional, and serving the common good of all the people of the city.

Critical disruptions that changed the world: engaging complexity creatively

Specific disruptions have changed the world over the past decades. We consider just three.

Traditionally, the role of governments and bureaucracies was to negotiate and distribute resources to people and communities through public service systems. The efficacy of these systems has eroded significantly, as was evident in the most recent public audits of South African municipalities. There are no signs of change in the immediate future. This manifests in intractable deterioration of functional cities and towns. Civil society, of which the university is a major institutional resource, will have to take co-responsibility for the effective, just, and equitable negotiation, management, and distribution of resources and services to people and communities.

In the context of fluid and complex African cities, there have already been marked shifts in terms of understanding (urban) governance[4]. Instead of an emphasis on top-down governmentality by those in political power, there is increasing appreciation for the necessity of governance that is broad-based, participative, and inclusive, allowing for civil society – and ordinary urban dwellers – to take a much more active role in the creation and management of urban futures.

4 Smit, W., 2015. 'Urban governance in Africa: An overview.' In Amman, C. & Förster, T. (eds), *African Cities and the Development Conundrum*. Leiden & Boston, Brill Nijhof, pp. 55-77.

A second disruption of the world as we know it involves the multiple ways in which the fourth industrial revolution is virtualising the world. One of the results is the democratisation of knowledge and information. The university and its 'experts' no longer have a monopoly on knowledge, nor are they alone privy to the best information resources, which can then be shared with students in academic classrooms. Both the creation and consumption of knowledge have changed. In addition, the insights of de-colonial thinking subvert the idea of one-way knowledge transfer from the north to the south, from the privileged to the poor, or from the 'experts' to the masses. Geographies of reason have shifted, and the experiential knowledges and insights of communities and practitioners are recognised and validated alongside academic knowledge.

A third disruption occurs through pandemics. Covid-19 clearly demonstrated the interconnectedness of everything, and how the dominant ways of humans interacting with each other and with nature, have rendered us vulnerable. Imagining 'normalcy' once Covid-19 is 'over' is a fallacy. The next pandemic is looming and the devastating effects of climate change are real. Ethnic and interreligious strife and violence are not diminishing, and mechanisms for sustainable peace seem to be perpetually precarious.

We need to find new ways to interact with each other, with the worlds around us and with nature; we need new knowledge to live and new ways of finding and sharing such knowledge. If our desire to know does not arise from love, but from a need to control others, and control the earth, it is violent[5]. Such knowledge needs to be countered by a knowledge expressed in love for others, the world, and the planet.

Today we are much more aware of complexity in the world. The disruptions that change the world, and the complex challenges resulting from such change, require complex solutions and practitioners who can engage with complexity creatively. In complex situations, new knowledge and solutions can emerge from the ways in which people retrieve information, and wisdom from the contexts in which they find themselves. New knowledge and solutions for real-life problems are not necessarily found in the academic classroom, but rather in the city and its communities. Students need to develop competencies preparing them for living well in the face of complexity, and such competencies are best nurtured

5 cf. Parker Palmer. 1993. *To Know as We are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*. San Francisco, Harper San Francisco; p. 25.

through being immersed in real-life situations. Lecturers and researchers need to be similarly immersed, both to listen and drink from the wells of knowledge and wisdom present in local communities, but also to accompany students as their preconceived ideas are disrupted in the classrooms of life.

It is in response to these critical changes in our world – the disruptions and complexities – that we reimagine the university, making a number of deliberate shifts.

The city as a classroom

Universities are disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic with the 'death of the classroom'. Cities are disrupted by financial constraints, lack of capacity, and corruption.

In the middle of the pandemic, the classroom has been superseded by web-based learning. This has a place, but can clearly not replace the classroom as the place of learning and sharing. This is where we propose the city and its functional structures become the 'classroom', meaning that it holds together the core of learning. Learning while participating in the city's functioning becomes a core activity and not a form of 'outreach' (or 'community engagement').

This creates an opportunity for a major reset: the city becomes a classroom and studio for the university, and the university becomes an active implementation partner for, and with, the city.

This reset will be made possible and fast-tracked by implementing solutions in selected communities in the city, in partnerships between local government, universities, and communities. This should include non-government organisations (NGOs), religious communities, and private partners.

Leadership will be crucial to provide the vision and framework for such collaborative city-making processes. Leaders in the academy, civil society, and government should create new, innovative, and truly trans-disciplinary spaces to find solutions for real-life problems[6].

Innovative collaborations could assist to mobilise resources from a broader base, through demonstrating with clear and measurable examples, how systems, communities, and lives are being transformed.

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6 cf. Klein, J.T., et al. (eds). 2001. *Transdisciplinarity: Joint Problem Solving Among Science, Technology and Society. An Effective Way for Managing Complexity*, Basel, Birkhäuser Verlag.

Twenty-first century African cities require collaborative leadership, able to transcend bureaucratic and technocratic impossibilities – grounded in a solid value-base, aimed at solution-driven urban responses, and characterised by a visionary, entrepreneurial, and justice-seeking ethos. In the City of Tshwane, our university is an ideal institution to broker and facilitate such collaborative approaches.

This could be an extension of some proven successes. One is the partnership between the Gauteng Department of Health and the University of Pretoria. This partnership is the key factor in the excellent performance of the Steve Biko Academic Hospital, Tshwane District Hospital, Kalafong Hospital, and the Pretoria West Hospital during Covid-19.

Similarly, a new approach to street homelessness and substance use, which saw local government, various civil society organisations, and departments at the University of Pretoria collaborate during Covid-19, not only reduced the risk for more than 1 800 homeless people during this time, but also contributed to innovative and solution-based homeless interventions, operationalising the City's policy, and informing policy at both provincial and national levels of government.

None of the above would have been possible had different sectors stayed within their silos.

Diane Peters[7] reflects on a number of universities in Canada that have a deliberate self-understanding as *urban* universities, deeply connected to the cities in which they find themselves. The city becomes their classroom and urban neighbourhoods become live studios in which theory and practice are in constant dialogue with one another. Peters writes, 'And by transforming the cities around them, universities are transforming themselves'[8]. And they are doing so through hybrid spaces of learning in which university and city becomes intertwined:

Indeed, as city-building projects get more sophisticated and universities grow creatively into their surrounding neighbourhoods, the lines blur. No one knows where a campus begins and ends[9].

Ryerson University's Cherise Burda says that their university is 'of the city':

7 Peters, D. 2017. 'Universities are helping to shape city development.' *University Affairs / Affaires Universitaires*, 4 October 2017, *https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/universities-playing-big-role-development-cities/*

8 Idem.

9 Idem.

'It's not just a little fortress; it's integrated into the city'[10]. The city became their classroom.

A listening university

As an expression of epistemic justice, such a reset is not merely about the university offering its staff, students, resources, and knowledge *to* the city, as if we know all the answers; it is also, and firstly, about the university, its staff and its students, listening well and humbly, to *the city*, drawing on the deep wells of knowledge and experience residing *in* the city – with a specifically attentive ear to listen to those communities and people who are so often shunned, rendered invisible, or made out to be illegitimate.

In reflecting on the approach of the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town, Edgar Pieterse[11] speaks of how 'an experimental research institute grew into a leading intellectual voice in global urbanism'. But this growth was preceded by a deliberate shift from being 'experts' to becoming listeners:

> ... as researchers, academics, and students, we stepped outside traditional roles towards a deliberative context where we were not the experts. In short, we had to learn how to ask better questions.

The African Centre for Cities became a global leader, not through ticking boxes to assess whether it had done well in terms of internationalising or Africanising its scholarship – it was through their deep immersions into local urban contexts. Some 80-90% of South Africa's waste removal and recycling is undertaken by informal waste pickers. Annually, they save municipalities between R300 million and R750 million in landfill costs[12]. They are the heroes of our streets, carrying the seeds of a global best practice for waste management, yet are hardly recognised, and often vilified. In their classroom, thinking about sustainable economies is forever altered.

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10 Idem.

11 Pieterse, E. n.d. 'How we put African urbanism on the map', *Times Higher Education*, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/cn/hub/university-cape-town/p/how-we-put-african-urbanism-map

12 Godfrey, L., Strydom, W. & Phukubye, R. 2016. *Integrating the Informal Sector into the South African Waste and Recycling Economy in the Context of Extended Producer Responsibility. Key Findings*. Pretoria, Human Sciences Research Council.

The sophistication of entrepreneurial networks created by transnational migrants in South African inner cities is an indigenous knowledge infrastructure not facilitated by academic textbooks, but which results from extreme forms of hardship and precariousness. The classrooms of the streets and transnational migration birthing socio-economic-spiritual networks, the university needs to lean into, listen to, and learn from.

Countless examples of innovative social entrepreneurs, creating solutions for impossible urban problems, bypass the knowledge systems of the university to create ground-breaking new urban patterns. We neglect retrieving from their classrooms at our own peril.

Careful listening to communities, urban social movements, religious leaders, urban policymakers, and urban developers would help create clear research agendas that are connected directly to life-and-death urban issues.

Prioritising urban vulnerability: a key shift

Nelson Mandela[13] wrote, 'A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones'. As a critical institution in shaping citizenry for a healthy society, this measure should also be applied to the university.

As a key public institution tasked to shape future citizens and neighbours, prioritising the city's most vulnerable populations not just theoretically or rhetorically, but in embodied and concrete ways through a scholarship of citizenship, would be a bold demonstration of care, but also a key investment in a sustainable, well-functioning, and healthy society.

A few years ago, the great German political theologian Jurgen Moltmann received an honorary doctorate from our University. Moltmann[14] wrote: 'Society is always as strong as its weakest links. So to respect and strengthen these weak links means to strengthen the whole society.' Without a deliberate emphasis on transforming vulnerability into resilience, we place our entire city at risk, and render it vulnerable in terms of our collective future well-being.

Someone once said, 'If the city does not care for its poor, the poor will not care for its city'. We have seen this starkly as a South African nation during the lootings, violence, and killings of July 2021.

13 Mandela, N.R. 1994. *Long Walk to Freedom*, New York, Back Bay Books.
14 Moltmann, J. 1981. *Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, London, SCM Press.

Our vocation should not only be found in the transfer of rational knowledge, but also, and critically, in how we foster character, consciousness, integrity, community, justice, and care.

These are ethical traits or virtues, which feminist practical theologian Elaine Graham[15] suggests are best fostered, not through conversations about ethics or care, but through learning to practise these virtues together.

In Graham's mind, fostering knowledge about care, justice, or collaboration has to be embodied in caring, just, and collaborative actions. It is in so doing that such knowledge is anchored and written into the soul of the university. Embracing vulnerable urban spaces as classrooms provides an opportunity to foster ethical virtues in conjunction with theoretical knowledges, through collaborative actions.

In making a shift to prioritise urban vulnerability – the most vulnerable populations and communities in the City of Tshwane – it becomes possible for the University to contribute even more tangibly to urban change, not through aloof academic work, however sophisticated and relevant it might be, but through embodied pedagogies and evidence-based research, aimed at strengthening the city's weakest links and most vulnerable spaces, until these too are able to function as self-reliant, proud, and included parts of the urban body.

The city as contested space: rethinking scholarship, practising just citizenship

The city is never a neutral space, particularly not in the type of unequal society which South Africa is. Urban land, urban spaces, and urban properties are contested. Urban gentrification displaces the poor, and housing backlogs perpetuate urban fragmentation.

An example of an urban research agenda that is acutely aware of urban contestation is the Urban Studio in the University's Centre for Faith and Community. The Urban Studio is journeying with six urban sites, through fostering long-term relationships, doing engaged research connected to local challenges, supporting the aspirations of local community activists, documenting local narratives, and supporting these communities through appropriate capacity-

15 Graham, E.L. 2017. 'On becoming a practical theologian: Past, present and future tenses', *HTS Theological Studies, 73*(4), a4634, *https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4634*

building interventions.

Course work of undergraduate students is tailored to engage actively with these communities, and postgraduate students from different disciplines contribute to an understanding of these communities through research, addressing issues identified by the communities.

This is transdisciplinary work in which various disciplines – theology and religion, health sciences, built environment studies, social work, geography, and occupational therapy – collaborate with practitioners and communities, acknowledging the diverse knowledge and experiences of all participants, in solutions to make long-term change possible.

Themes which emerge from these sites include long-term housing solutions for backyard shack-dwellers, informal settlement upgrading in upmarket neighbourhoods, optimising vacant public land for socially inclusive redevelopment, socially inclusive inner-city management, harm reduction approaches to substance use, and 'housing first' solutions for street homelessness.

The Urban Studio project has similarities to the CityLab programme in the African Centre of Cities at the University of Cape Town[16]. Their CityLab focuses on the co-production of knowledge – on issues such as healthy cities, urban violence, safety and governance, and sustainable human settlements – through collaboration between researchers, civil society, and government officials, in order to inform and transform urban policy and practices. It is an approach in which experimental approaches to urban research deliberate about the co-production of knowledge are fused with more traditional research approaches, combining the best of conceptual theorising, policy considerations, and solution-driven scholarship[17].

These examples acknowledge the city as a classroom, in which mutually transformative processes become possible for all participants – researchers, community leaders, practitioners, and city officials.

In contested, divided, and unequal urban spaces where access to health care, secure housing, water and sanitation, education and an income cannot be taken for granted, a different kind of scholarship is required. The university's

16 African Centre for Cities. 2021. Mistra Urban Futures: CityLab Programme, *https://www.africancentreforcities.net/programme/mistra-urban-futures/citylab/*

17 Pieterse, E. 2009. Exploratory notes on African urbanism, African Centre for Cities Seminar Paper, 6 June 2009, Cape Town, *https://www.africancentreforcities.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/exploratory_notes_on_african_urbanism_06june091.pdf*

corporate citizenship, as a large and resourceful public institution, needs to be reframed and remodelled into just citizenship or scholarship as citizenship for social justice. At the University of the Free State, 'community engagement' was transformed into 'engaged scholarship', fusing engaged research, engaged pedagogy, and engaged citizenship[18].

Paul Farmer writes, 'In a world riven by inequity, medicine could be viewed as social justice work'[19]. The cost of inequalities and perpetual socio-spatial-economic exclusions, now mostly carried by the urban poor, will become increasingly unbearable for society as a whole. It means being at war with ourselves. It is simply unsustainable.

Suddenly, none of our disciplines are neutral, and all of our disciplines can be seen as social justice work. Contested urban spaces plagued by the 'urbanisation of injustice'[20] asks of a university and its researchers to practice engaged, just, and ethical citizenship.

Our scholarship, in a society at war with itself, has to be scrutinised and fundamentally reconsidered. We have to reconsider the nature, locale, and commitments of scholarship, the methodologies of our research and pedagogies; and the choice of interlocutors who will help us 'see' a city we often do not see.

An ethical *commons*: Measuring change through mutual accountability

In shifting from being a university in the city to being a university of the city, we can identify specific neighbourhoods, places, populations, and themes that present particular challenges for collaborative work. This could constitute an ethical 'commons' of ideas, exchange, and innovation as solutions are found for urban problems.

The reset mentioned earlier can now take effect. In relation to clearly identified areas of focus, collaborative approaches can be designed, including evidence-based research, incubating small-scale interventions, strategic resourcing, continuous evaluation, documentation, and – when successful –

18 University of the Free State. 2000-2020, 'Community engagement model transformation at the UFS', *https://www.ufs.ac.za/supportservices/departments/community-engagement-home/community-engagement-at-the-ufs/engaged-scholarship*

19 Farmer, P. 2004. *Pathologies of Power. Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Oakland, CA, University of California Press.

20 Merrifield, A. 1997. *The Urbanization of Injustice*. New York, New York University Press.

replication and scaling.

Whether our collaborative approaches, evidence-based research, and incubation of urban interventions really facilitate deep change[21] needs to be measured. Too many self-serving interventions are executed in perpetuity by government, universities, and civil society, without necessarily breaking cycles of poverty, transforming socio-spatial patterns, or reviving ethical forms of governance in all spheres of society.

Measurement is about accountability, mutual respect; strive towards excellence in what we do together, as well as authentic resolve to make change. Without mutual accountability, based on some form of social contract, deep and sustainable change will remain elusive. Such accountability should take various forms.

The university has to be accountable to the city and its citizens. Do we equip students for citizenship that will help build flourishing African cities, starting in Tshwane? Are our pedagogies and research approaches contributing to urban change-making? Do we steward our resources of people, facilities, intellectual property, and programmes well, in the interest of a flourishing city for all its inhabitants? Considering the ethics of our research, it has to also ask how much it contributes in tangible and measurable ways to actual urban change.

Chatterton, Hodkinson, and Pickerill define the goal of research not as 'the interpretation of the world, but the organization of transformation'[22]. Our research and the university's vocation have to be fleshed out in relation to how it effects individual, communal, institutional, and systemic change and wholeness.

Local government has to be accountable to the inhabitants and institutions of the city. Our critical scholarship as a university *of* the city should take different forms. It should include the university leadership engaging the city's leadership critically-constructively; recommendations made in research reports; consciousness-raising through academic and popular writings; critical urban consciousness being fostered pedagogically; working in solidarity with local communities to counter unjust and exclusionary urban patterns; investing human and

21 'Deep change' here refers to change that is personal, communal, institutional and systemic; irreversible and sustainable; radical in how it addresses the roots of a challenge; and resulting in high levels of individual and societal freedom and well-being.

22 Chatterton, P., Hodkinson, S. & Pickerill, J. 2010. 'Beyond scholar activism: Making strategic interventions inside and outside the neoliberal university', *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 7/1/2010, *9*(2), p.61.

intellectual resources in addressing specific urban challenges; technical and disciplinary contributions to urban policy formation; and our volunteering in civic organisations to work for the good of the city.

Practising just citizenship would require, at times, that the university not be silent in the face of grave urban injustices, but choosing instead to be a voice of reason, conscience, and memory, offering an imaginary of a good, inclusive, and just city. If the university is to contribute to the collective freedom of our city, and nation, then the assertion of Bali[23] is important:

> the end goal of critical thinking is to challenge the status quo in order to achieve social justice, collectively raising consciousness of conditions promoting oppression in order to achieve liberation.

A very practical mechanism could be the development of indicators for measuring good urban governance[24], creating regular public platforms for assessment, public debate, and critical dialogue; involving diverse urban citizens and stakeholders concerned with the good of the city.

Civil society and community leaders have an equal responsibility to be accountable for the ways in which they foster and practise good citizenship. In various urban classrooms we will discover inspiring examples of agency being practised and innovations being fostered in relation to grave urban challenges. At the same time, the university could support local communities and institutions to design and implement simple but effective systems of accountability, driven by ethical leaders. This could be backed up through popular education and evidence-based research.

A concrete example where scholarship is practiced as just citizenship – in an evidence-based manner that measures change through mutual accountability – is the work of the UP COPC Research Unit. This Unit is leading the establishment of the UP SAPRIN INSPIRE site in Atteridgeville and in Melusi, a fast-growing informal settlement in Pretoria West.

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23 Bali, M. 2013. 'Critical citizenship for critical times', *Al-Fanar Media*, 19 August 2013, *https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2013/08/critical-citizenship-for-critical-times/*

24 Stewart, K. 2006. 'Designing good urban governance indicators: the importance of citizen participation and its evaluation in Greater Vancouver', *Cities*, *23*(3): pp.196-204, DOI: *10.1016/j.cities.2006.03.003*

SASPRIN, financially supported by the Department of Science and Technology, creates a research platform where key demographic and health indicators are monitored over a period of 20 years and longer, and hosts a wide range of research. The network conducts studies and compares data in diverse communities. It creates a dataset that monitors the health and well-being of people over time, in order to gather new information on the situation of poorer South Africans. All data sourced by SASPRIN is validated and provides sound evidence to inform the strategies of the Departments of Health, Social Development, Home Affairs, Basic Education, and others.

SASPRIN has three rural sites and has now added urban sites in Gauteng and Cape Town. In Gauteng, comparative data assessment will be done between an inner-city site, an established township site, and a fast growing and formalising informal settlement (Hillbrow, Atteridgeville, and Melusi).

This offers the university community a concrete opportunity for significant community-based trans-disciplinary research that contributes to evidence-based change. This was the first successful research proposal of The Gauteng Research Triangle (GTR), an initiative taken by the three vice-chancellors of UP, Wits, and UJ.

A university *of* the city ...

Becoming a university *of* the city, and, even more, embracing the *city as university*, requires not only a moral and intellectual commitment on paper, but comprehensive stock-taking of every element of the institution, in order to re-shape what it needs to become. We dream of *five deliberate shifts*, and recommend a number of *strategic interventions*.

We started off this essay by articulating a dream of a university that shifts from being in the city, to becoming a university of the city; embracing the city as a classroom; becoming listeners instead of 'experts'; replacing transformation rhetoric with engaged city-making processes, producing concrete, measurable, change; and finally, prioritising urban vulnerability as a key interlocutor for reimagining ourselves.

In becoming a university of the city that embraces the city as a university, the following key interventions should be considered:

- Identifying and rallying behind academics and students currently trail-blazing innovative responses to urban challenges, through finding ways to broadcast, resource, replicate, and share their lessons learnt.
- Identifying specific urban themes and neighbourhoods in the City of Tshwane – in conjunction with local government and communities – for engaged scholarship and citizenship.
- Supporting trans-disciplinary action through removing institutional obstacles that perpetuate narrow disciplinary confinement.
- Encouraging and incentivising urban innovation, investing the University's own resources and brokering further resources, particularly focused on some of the neighbourhoods and themes presenting the greatest challenges in the City of Tshwane.
- Rethinking *community engagement* as scholarship committed to engaged, just, and ethical citizenship.
- Re-assessing how the University's land and properties are utilised – and optimised – in service of the city. The 'death of the classroom' opens up opportunities for our various campuses to serve as incubators for social enterprises; clusters for creative industries; night schools and vocational academies; and catalysts for local transformational change.
- Optimising access to education for people in under-resourced communities where the University has a footprint, but access remains elusive. Creative mechanisms should be found, such as the proposed Pre-University Academy, or a University of the Streets, serving the city's 6 000 homeless persons.
- Supporting the introduction of appropriate research chairs committed to the idea of a *university of the city*, or the *city as university*.
- Considering the creation of a strong collaborative mechanism (an urban cluster/urban consortium/urban institute) with other institutions of higher education and research in the City of Tshwane, serving the vision of a good, inclusive, and just city, through engaged scholarship. Although we are in the nation's administrative capital, the City of Tshwane – unlike Johannesburg or Cape Town – lacks such a vehicle for collaborative urban scholarship.

Dying to the old ... ushering in the new

In daring to reimagine the university, how free are we 'to imagine and articulate a real newness in our situation'?[25]

Such newness might require dying to some old habits and ideas of the university. Instead of only importing ideas from elsewhere, it is in the vulnerability and contestations of *our city* – as classroom – that we might discover our vocation anew, as a transforming African university *of* its city. We will be transformed as we contribute concretely to the socio-economic transformation of the city that holds us.

Morrison[26] writes, against the backdrop of the 'death of the university',

> The hidebound, authoritarian, hierarchical, self-reverential university is dying. But progressive educators and innovative reformers can still revivify the institution, using rapidly maturing information technologies and building upon the timeless values of scholarship, collegiality, open dialogue, and intellectual integrity to create a post-industrial university that will be capable of reaching both new heights of academic excellence and new breadths of community access and social utility. And that would be a death-bed conversion worth cheering.

In reimagining our collective future, the voices of the city, the voices of the vulnerable, and the voices of the diverse community at the university need to be listened to carefully – to discern what we need to die for; and what we need to embrace. Such an embrace should be aligned to the contextual realities, cries, and demands of the city that hosts us hospitably.

In the classrooms of the city we might find fresh clues for our future.

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25 Brueggemann, W. 1978. *The Prophetic Imagination*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, p. 44.

26 Morrison, J.L. 2002. 'The university is dead! Long live the university!' Discussion paper, 24 September 2002, *http://horizon.unc.edu/projects/seminars/futurizing/The%20University%20is%20Dead.asp*

Imagine if ... We *rise* with tomorrow's challenges

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What does it mean to learn across boundaries, borders, and institutions? This is not to imply that such approaches should be withdrawn or abandoned, but rather that they should be re-defined, given the rising funding restraints and the remarkable technological opportunities the recent pandemic has inspired.

As an institution, the University of Pretoria aspires to be 'a future-focused, leading African university' that 'makes today matter' by encouraging our students to think critically while finding 'their own voice and passion'. We pride ourselves on our ability to teach 'a hybrid curriculum that provides ... equitable access' and prepares students for their future by 'encouraging innovation' and interdisciplinarity 'across platforms and various [not all] faculties'. Our goal is to produce sustainable 'African solutions for global problems' and to do so 'by empowering our communities'. We purport to teach 'responsible leadership and inclusivity' that is ethically bound and grounded in compassion. This all-encompassing *UPWay* statement is so bloated with marketing buzzwords that it sounds clichéd and borders on being impossible to achieve, now or ever.

Or is it?

Recycling our past

Given our current teaching and learning predisposition, the goals of the *UPWay* is certainly something that might be beyond our fingertips, or at least so within my own Faculty. To achieve these lofty aims, we will need to re-conceive the nature of our faculty, and perhaps even our institution, to compel a rethink in how we teach, research, and learn.

The current system was built to address the challenges of the past, reinforcing a hierarchy of disciplines that entrench the importance of the hard sciences, and an algorithmic logic base above all else. This is, after all, how we were trained to become productive members of the workforce. The words 'if you possess a scientific genius, you will be guaranteed gainful employment' seem to have echoed down through the ages.

There was a certain logic to this approach, and it has certainly served us as an institution and our alumni well over the past century or more – at least in terms of our rankings and the earnings of our staff and students. But there are two very important factors that seem to be missing from this equation – the *human being* and the *future* that human being will have to navigate and, with our help hopefully, create.

The current system supports a very systematic approach that trains students to specialise in one area. Under this system we have successfully graduated students that are tailored to fit specific job profiles, often very well-paid ones at that, within industries focused on manufacturing, technical prowess, or policy. And in the twentieth century such training helped those of us who rose within it, to cope with a particular set of circumstances. This is also an era that expected humans to join an organisation, to remain loyal to it, and to then retire from it with a golden handshake.

Things look very different now, and our language reflects it. The past year has seen terms such as 'a new normal', 'business unusual' and 'fit for purpose' creep into our lexicon. We have heard more about climate change, and have certainly been overwhelmed by uncertainty and the precariousness of this moment. In our enforced isolation, we have resorted to our pre-programmed coping mechanisms – to be suspicious of all things new and to reinforce the inequity, intolerance, and injustice embedded deep in our psyche by the generations that have gone before (Anderson, Rainie & Vogels 2021). Like it or not, this mentality contributes to behaviour such as vaccine hesitancy.

We have, however, unwittingly contributed to our students' demand for solutions from others, instead of looking for possible solutions from within themselves.

Historically this institution, like so many others in this country, has relied on a rigid standardised curriculum that produces students who are eager to conform. They are taught to excel within a specific area by painting very carefully within clearly specified lines. Generalists are frowned upon, if not condemned, and the interests these students developed as children are weeded out in favour of skills that will help them endure employment. In other words, this is a system that was fit for one purpose; to make a person employable in a setting best suited for a bygone era.

The questions are: are these skills adequate to help today's students *rise with* the challenges of tomorrow? A tomorrow that most of us in today's academia will

never see, and simply cannot imagine?

There are those who will say that we have persevered despite the hardships the past few years have foisted on us. To a degree this is true, but at what cost?

As we emerge from this period of prolonged isolation, we have changed in ways that may never be reversed. As staff we will have to cope with our students', and indeed our own, deteriorating mental health, physical atrophy, and an ever-growing range of anxieties (Kreider 2021: 2). Our limited reserves of resilience have been depleted, and what we have left is being drained by the effort of just making it through today, with the distant hope that tomorrow will be just that much better.

But this solitude has also given us time to think, and our thinking could possibly upset the status quo.

Re-sourcing for the future

Students are opting to spend more time walking the now virtual halls of tertiary institutions, while they wait for an economic uptick that will open up new employment possibilities.

According to Treharne (2020), globally 38% of young people now attend tertiary education institutions. This is an increase of 14% on the figure for 1990. Within the next ten years, current projections are that half of all young people will be accepted to study, and some countries will see graduates 'constitute two-thirds of the workforce'. As Francis Green and Golo Henseke (2020) explain, given the increasing cost of higher education and the underemployment of the graduates the current system produces, some are questioning the purpose or competitive edge that higher education institutions offer.

To cope with this student influx, academics are encouraged to embrace the convenience of online and digital learning technologies with their standardised assessments at the expense of a more personalised, more human approach.

If the future is to be driven by technology and algorithms with its propensity to distribute misinformation and 'tele-everything', as a Pew Research Report suggests (Anderson, Rainie & Vogels 2021; World Bank 2019: 9), then tomorrow's students are at risk of becoming similarly mechanistic and even more materialistic (Butler 2020). Under such conditions, there is certain to be a rise in anxiety, in social inequity, and in authoritarian tendencies, each of which serve to compromise the very fabric of our society.

Such template-drive conditions could easily see the value of critical enquiry relegated to a 'lower-order' research status. In doing so, our students could lose the ability to provoke and appreciate different and often contentious perspectives in response to uncomfortable scenarios. Intolerance of opinions that differ, and the blanket acceptance of every statement as fact, will continue to foster compliance at the expense of principles and, indeed, of our humanity.

These are some of the challenges that our individual courses must equip students to counter.

Technology is evolving into a future workplace that will include new job portfolios focused on increasing productivity and improving service delivery (World Bank 2019: 9) at a pace faster than we could ever imagine. This means that the new workplace demands employees that are tech-savvy and able to problem-solve on the fly. But to thrive in this pressured environment, people will need to balance these harder skills with softer sensibilities such as perseverance, collaboration, and empathy. These cannot be acquired overnight; they must be embedded as part of a holistic curriculum that embraces human complexity, promotes innovation, and, in essence, redefines our understanding of intelligence and ability. In short, students need to learn to work with uncertainty, be encouraged to make their own mistakes, to use their experiences to fortify their natural resilience, and to develop their own solutions to the challenges they encounter.

This is a tall order, and one that depends on awakening each student's curiosity and imagination. Technical prowess builds functionality. But to be good problem-solvers, our students will need to tap into their right brain neuro sequences and learn from disciplines that explore the creative.

We need to create conditions under which we teach students to embrace interdisciplinarity, to see further and to experiment with directions that are not always orthodox. To ask questions that draw on their own lived reality and to challenge established methods. In this way, a student will benefit from a cross-disciplinary input and will contribute towards re-mapping our traditional disciplines which will, in turn, broaden their perceptions both within a classroom and extramurally (Butler 2020).

To undertake such an expansive initiative requires a curriculum that creates conditions for our students to flourish. A system that recognises that collaboration is key and that mistakes breed original and imaginative ideas that have value; value that shapes and re-shapes a future rather than confining it. Such a system

should tap into a team of different aptitudes and experiences, and be guided by a unit of mentors that provoke new lines of enquiry and stimulate a climate rich with possibility.

Rising with our challenges

> We can succeed only by concert ... The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise – with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.
>
> Abraham Lincoln, 1 December 1862[1]

Abraham Lincoln's address came almost two years into a civil war, when he was desperate to find a way to rekindle hope amongst his political and military allies, and stop a nation from tearing itself apart, family member by family member. And while we do not have to wage war in the same way as Lincoln, as teachers and researchers we must help our student's battle their own challenges in the months and years ahead. Part of this battle is to help students build their inner confidence and hone their natural need to make their mark.

These fundamental drivers are what feed our academic curiosity and compel all of us to push our conceptual boundaries. We are searching for a way to harness this natural disposition to solve some of our society's most compelling issues. We need an approach that urges students to do the same – an approach that will help them challenge the things we take for granted to, in Lincoln's words, 'disenthrall ourselves' of the 'dogmas of the quiet past' that are 'inadequate [for] ... the stormy present' and reflect on the experience and effect of our actions so that we can 'think anew, and act anew'.

It is from these 'seeds of discontent', to quote Oscar Wilde (2001: 259), that a new system has been tested that leverages technology and engages students in a multidisciplinary collaborative project to solve complex, real-world problems. Aspects of this approach are what UP's Department of Political Sciences, together with its Global Classroom partners in Brazil (FAAP), France (Le Mans), and the US

1 This statement concluded Lincoln's annual message to Congress, in which he proposed controversial measures such as remunerative emancipation (Hay & Nicolay 2009, 401).

(University of Akron), have been experimenting with for the past four years: an approach that could help us all truly achieve the ideals of the *UPWay*.

A challenge-based curriculum and a global classroom

The Global Classroom partners have designed a module that teaches our students not only to collaborate across borders, languages, and cultures, but also across disciplines. Past classes have incorporated guest presenters from literature, politics, geography, business, and science backgrounds to tackle a variety of topics, ranging from the effects of misinformation, to critical feminist approaches, to decolonial texts, to the business of politics, to the complexities of reversing the global climate crisis. The last two years under the pandemic lockdown have spurred collaborative student-led classes that investigated various lockdown measures and their effect on issues of equality, social justice, and human contact (or the lack thereof). Under these circumstances, students have worked alongside each other and the course's team of lecturers to study these topics and share their findings.

Through some trial and error, the class has managed to collect enough data to evolve its approach to engage more community experts. This helped students to compare their data with that of their colleagues in the other four countries, and adapt their findings to make more of a difference in their specific communities. The goal has been to create a learning environment that mirrors the 21st century workplace described earlier. But our efforts are still limited to our specific networks that are primarily based in the humanities. Nevertheless, what the class and its lectures did instinctively, almost reflexively, has been developed into a more holistic teaching and learning model known as challenge-based learning (CBL).

Used extensively through the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU), CBL classes look to explore topics from many angles by working in collaborative groups (but not on group projects), use widely accessible technology to tackle challenges faced by their communities, nations, or globally, by drawing on the perspectives, skills, and data from very different disciplines. And most importantly, the students are encouraged to write up their research as individual papers that are shared with other students for further discussion and debate.

This means that lecturers must change their mindset from being the sole repositories of information, to being facilitators. They must evolve from driving their own perspectives to helping students understand and apply a range of approaches to develop questions and new ideas about problems that are closer to the students' lived experiences. This power shift takes teaching away from rote learning and grows a student's ability to work collaboratively with others across disciplines, cultures, and languages, and to take responsibility for their own learning while triggering their more creative insights and empathetic sensibilities.

The approach also encourages students to work their way through the natural research process, and practise thinking in a critical yet structured manner. They work with their lecturers, tutors, and fellow students to understand the assumptions and questions that underpin a particular challenge, and then develop appropriate guiding questions to help them collect data. Students can then hone their internet and library searching skills, and draw on the gathered data to help them formulate an answer to the challenge before sharing it with their colleagues. Where it is possible, and this is certainly not always viable, the solution can be piloted within a smaller community within established university regulations, and then assessed for its applicability and replicability. Students are then urged to use the comments offered by their lecturers and colleagues to refine their approaches before submitting their work for publication. Being able to reflect on a range of assessments and refine their work positively reinforces the learning process. The more regularly these discussion sessions happen, the easier it is for students to manage critique.

There are tools available to facilitate collaborative workspaces, and it would be good to see how UP students can evolve some of these platforms to suit their particular needs. There are also a variety of media that they can use, such as narrated PowerPoint presentations, challenge proposal videos, and simply writing up a document with their plans and procedures to beta-test solutions — perhaps in the near future UP students will develop isomorphic projections that can interact with viewers and capture their live commentary!

One last but very important component to be included in this interdisciplinary curriculum should be a session that encourages some type of physical movement that can tap into the facilities that TuksSport has, or inspire new modules in movement such as dance or drumming. Movement viscerally helps humans process what they have learnt, and it is equally important for staff and students' intellectual, mental, and physical well-being.

On a very small scale, we have learnt that exposing students to different communities and disciplinary angles helps them appreciate how different subjects connect, which may not always be obvious, and helps them generate new answers and approaches to intractable problems.

Making today matter

If we are to achieve the lofty ideals outlined in the *UPWay* campaign mentioned earlier, this institution will have to re-define what it means to be collaborative and mobile, and our staff will have to embrace a new role as mentors and facilitators.

If we are to equip our students to create new perspectives, then each course should ask staff from across our faculties to present how a challenge affects their specific area of study. The effect, for example, on a sustainable supply of natural resources such as food, water, energy and air; public health and the rise of threats such as pandemics; the health and wellbeing of humans and animals; economic fluctuations and our ability to grow the fiscus; how these challenges reshape our sense of personal and cultural identity; and, the role they play in provoking/mitigating conflict and tapping into the very best and worst of our human nature.

Ultimately, each course will train students to adapt to a range of roles, many of them unfamiliar that will help them navigate the ever-evolving world of work. Their roles as researchers, collaborators, scientists, writers, interviewers, publishers, photographers, videographers, and actors will help them become genuine actors of change.

Adopting such an approach will help UP evolve into an institution where students can acquire real-world knowledge, solve real challenges that are present in their communities, and embed life-long skills that they can use to solve the more complex problems that await them in the future. In short, we can truly deliver on our pitch to *Make Today Matter* and in the process help develop *A World of Answers*.

Re-conceiving curricula

As we look to reimagine this institution, we need to appreciate the challenges our students will likely face. They are products of a secondary education system that emphasises rote learning instead of tapping into their true interests, and helping them to find their own unique voice. We need to help them overcome this.

They will need these aspects of their own personalities to help them understand problems, and conceive of solutions that are so distant, that most of the people teaching them will never see. We need to remember that at the heart of this academic project – regardless of the discipline – are human beings with all our foibles and flaws, but with a very real fortitude.

Add to this the fact that the nature of work, as the recent pandemic has shown, has changed to emphasise technology that threatens to intensify current inequities, injustices, and more importantly, intolerances. Our task as university teachers is to provide a curriculum that addresses these circumstances in a manner that fires our students' imagination and gives them a more holistic training that appreciates the technical as well as the ethical, a training that awakens their very human sense of compassion, resilience, and curiosity.

Over the years the Global Classroom has experimented with aspects of such a holistic system and redefined how we ready our students for their professional futures. We have taught them to appreciate different cultures without leaving, certainly in the past year, their own homes. For us each week, students can spend time in three other continents and problem-solve with students from different cultures, who speak different languages, and who hail from vastly different disciplines. This is a new kind of mobility scheme that costs significantly less, yet that opens up a wealth of opportunity.

My proposal is to adopt a challenge-based system across the institution, starting at third-year level, to offer our students a holistic collaborative curriculum of substance at a cost that is affordable.

This will pose its own challenges for most lecturers. We talk about transforming an institution to appreciate different languages and cultures. In the process, we also need to grow an institution whose staff can escape their disciplinary silos and appreciate the importance of each other's talents and potential input, and not be threatened by it. We must 'think anew, and act anew'.

The humanities, for instance, needs to recognise how mathematical equations influences musical play, linguistics, and political ambition. While engineers need to exercise their creative talents, as their students already do, and the composition of the Camerata Choir suggests – many of the choir members have been male engineering students. We all need to be reminded of the legal precepts that guide us, but we need to balance this with the compassion and understanding of

those who are differently-abled, both physically and mentally. And our students need to appreciate that their ability to communicate and convey their insights might depend on an algorithm that feeds the latest smart phone app as easily as it depends on their proficiency in language and movement. Nature depends on all our abilities to innovate solutions to protect and renew our biosphere, while we feed the desire that fiction and fantasy have sparked to boldly explore new frontiers. And we must encourage such explorations with a set of principles that prize empathy, respect, and justice above all else.

We should use the technological tools at our disposal (and some we are yet to create!) to offer each of our students the breadth of what this institution has to offer and produce well-rounded individuals that will shape humanity's future, not just work in it.

> *Imagine if* ... each course was conceived to help students understand a problem, and that to contextualise this problem, they were exposed to how different disciplines interact with and perceive that problem?

> *Imagine if* ... those perspectives taught students not only essential technical expertise, but also to appreciate the impact these technologies have on humanity?

> *Imagine if* ... students could *rise with the challenge* to incorporate these different perspectives and develop their own solutions to these problems?

> And then, *imagine if* ... they could collaborate and discuss these solutions with students around the world?

Perhaps through such imagination we can achieve the *UPWay?*

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Person-centered approaches for functional learning in professional programmes

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South Africans face complex challenges due to various biological, environmental, and economic risk factors (Black et al. 2017). The cumulative effect of these risks has resulted in the classification of the Quadruple Burden of Disease (QBD) in South Africa (Basu 2018). The QBD includes HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, violence, and injury, maternal, new-born and child health, and non-communicable diseases (Basu 2018). Students within professional programmes, such as speech-language pathology and audiology, who enter the workforce, are consequently tasked with providing services to populations that are affected by the QBD. Within their scope of practice, they provide a wide range of communication-enabling services to populations from young to old who may experience challenges in interacting with others in their everyday contexts. Research has shown that for meaningful outcomes for individuals to be achieved, service delivery needs to be tailored not only to the condition or associated difficulties, but also to individuals' personal circumstances (Snyman et al. 2016). It is essential that graduating students demonstrate a holistic, person-centered approach when interacting with the populations they serve.

Over the past few decades, professional training programmes tended to prioritise biomedical topics (e.g. site of lesion/diagnosis and management/rehabilitation frameworks) over engagement with clients' psychosocial concerns (Ekberg et al. 2014). This is due to the immense technical knowledge required in professional programmes, and is compounded by the profession-specific accreditation criteria, which primarily focus on technical skills and training. Focusing solely on these skills risks creating a workforce ill-prepared for the person-centered, integrated models of care needed to address global health priorities (WHO 2015). Academic preparation focused on facilitating person-centered care (PCC) is vital to ensure students are able to face real-world challenges and play a key role in shaping the future professional body.

PCC is recognised as the cornerstone of quality health-care delivery and is associated with positive health outcomes (Gary et al. 2020). The Institute of Medicine (2001) defines *patient*-centered care as a partnership among

practitioners, patients, and their families. Currently, there is a move to refer to individuals as clients, rather than as patients, highlighting the move away from the biomedical perspective and outlining the responsibility of health-care professionals to serve those they treat. Person-centered approaches ensure that the decisions made respect clients' wants, needs, and preferences, and that clients have the education and support they need to make decisions and participate in their own care, as well as participate in quality improvement efforts. This approach aligns with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (WHO 2001), which provides a framework for implementing person-centered approaches.

To practice PCC, priority needs to be given to students learning how to communicate effectively and build sincere empathetic relationships with the individuals and families they treat (Kitson et al. 2013). Teaching and training of PCC through interaction, modelling, and application are scaffolded across year groups. In general, this has been challenging to achieve due to a number of reasons. One example is the lack of confidence of educators in their own knowledge about teaching PCC, and since many educators did not have the training themselves, Silverman aptly puts it as 'the blind leading the partially sighted' (Silverman 2009). This is compounded by lack of resources, such as funding limitations for training academic lecturers and clinical educators, inviting guest lecturers, or employing additional staff to train students in PCC. These challenges have been identified across both high- and low-income contexts (Tai et al. 2018). Challenges can impact role-modelling by lecturers and result in a gap between theory and practice, where academic teaching does not necessarily equate to real-life clinical environments. Students in professional programmes need to be trained to provide evidence-based practice that is guided by research, that they are competent to apply and that meets the needs of the population served, i.e. person-centered (Figure 1).

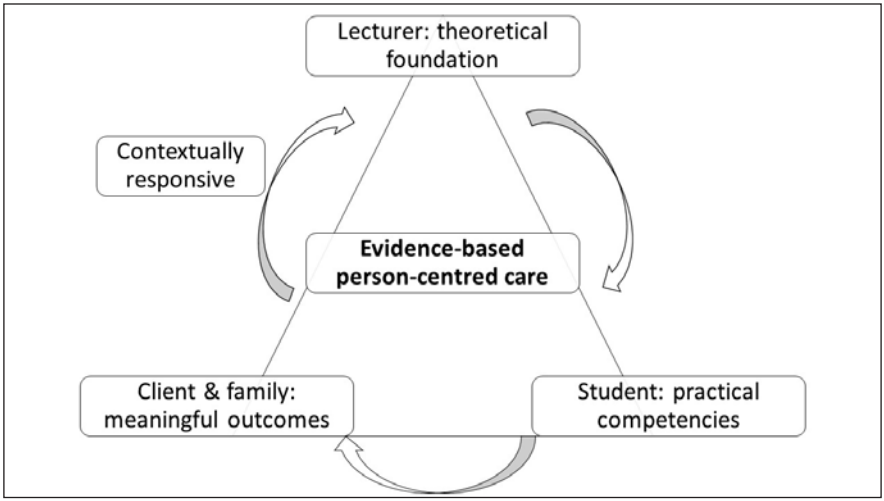

Figure 1: Proposed model for a person-centered approach for functional learning in professional programmes

Before facilitating students' person-centered perspective to service delivery for their clients, lecturers have to apply a person-centered approach to engaging students (Figure 1). This requires the reimagining of 'traditional' teaching approaches. The University of Pretoria has recognised this as important, and implemented it through the advocating of inquiry-based learning (IBL), problem-solving, and flipped classrooms, encapsulated by the FLY@UP campaign. These strategies have aimed at increasing students' engagement in their own learning. Engagement has always been a central focus of successful teaching, but the person-centered focus led to the increased focus on cognitive and agentic engagement (Reeve 2013). Cognitive engagement is the use of higher-order questions that are complex and challenge students to explain, justify, and rationalise *with* lecturers and their peers (Jamaludin & Osman 2014). Agentic engagement goes a step further where self-learning is proactive before, during, and after learning activities, and is facilitated with the support of the lecturer (Reeve 2013), thus aligning with IBL principles. These approaches open the space for students' perspectives to be considered within their learning environment. Facilitating this person-centered approach can, however, be challenging for lecturers even under traditional teaching situations, such as in classroom learning.

Despite these challenges, within the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology curricula (University of Pretoria), fostering PCC amongst lecturers and students is an ongoing priority. Many lecturers and clinical educators have received PCC training through freely available online courses, including the IDA institute located in Denmark, and in-house training workshops. Student PCC training is scaffolded with face-to-face theory classes provided in the first two years of study, and implementation of PCC approaches practised in clinical settings in the senior years (third and fourth years). On a theoretical level across modules, lecturers use the ICF framework to teach students how to move beyond the biomedical model that focuses on clients' conditions, to a biopsychosocial model. Students learn how disability can differ between clients, even if the same degree of condition is present, due to person-specific facilitators and barriers that impact participation in their various contexts. Lecturers in professional programmes need to provide students with condition-specific knowledge, while facilitating a person-centered approach. Students need to have a strong theoretical foundation to managing clients' condition-specific challenges, while implementing a person-centered treatment plan. This requires students to demonstrate an intricate continuum of skills, which can only develop with the support of lecturers that follow a person-centered teaching philosophy when conveying content and interacting with students. Clinical encounters are achieved either through role-play or through authentic clinical appointments. This format of training has been helpful for students and clinical educators to engage in PCC and reflect on the experience. This direct interaction and feedback creates individualised learning activities for students and highlights areas that require refinement.

The mandate to flatten the curve through social distancing as a result of Covid-19 resulted in a global shift to use technology, which has driven widespread educational reform, shifting expectations of teachers and students towards technology-mediated education, student-centered, simulated, and team-based learning. This raised additional challenges and limitations for lecturers to implement a person-centered teaching approach. Students struggled because developing person-centered therapeutic skills require repeated practical opportunities to practise and refine these skills. The national lockdown meant that in-person theoretical teaching and practical learning opportunities were suspended. Students, however, still required practical opportunities to practise developing their theoretically sound intervention abilities in a way that would

prepare them to deliver PCC to complex and diverse South African populations. Additionally, students in the speech-language pathology and audiology programme are required to deliver services to the public and accumulate a minimum of 400 clinical hours, in order to register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. It fell to lecturers to find solutions to these complex problems.

Complex problems require coordinated, multi-tiered solutions that access as many entrance points as possible (Jones et al. 2015). Innovative approaches are required in low-resourced, high-risk situations, but evidence-based methods are often lacking (Engle et al. 2011). Lecturers in the professional programmes of speech-language pathology and audiology had to be innovative in identifying various approaches for continued practical learning for the students during the Covid-19-related national restrictions. Online platforms were accessed to reach students across the country. To facilitate PCC skills within the online space, the flipped classroom model has been used at first- and second-year levels, in terms of which students are responsible for their own learning. With the flipped classroom approach, students' first exposure to PCC material occurred before class, typically by means of prescribed reading, followed by an online lecture and multimedia materials with online live class time being interactive, dedicated to assimilating, applying and progressing understanding to higher levels. The majority of the current student cohorts are from the 'generation Z' group and have an innate readiness for technology-mediated learning, which may have made them more receptive to these changes, although accessibility had to be a consideration.

In terms of clinical training at a senior student level, simulated learning was used. Simulated scenarios cannot replace practical in-the-field learning, but considering the national lockdown restrictions, dynamic approaches to teaching and practical training were required. This approach allowed teaching and learning that replicates real-world practice environments, in safe, immersive learning spaces. The lecturer developed real-world case studies and during a virtual session, would role-play as the client so that students could engage and practise their PCC skills. Although stressful and initially unfamiliar, the students enjoyed this process, including the immediate feedback and discussion that followed. The sessions were also recorded, allowing students to watch themselves again, and identify possible strengths and limitations. Video essays were an additional avenue used to develop person-centered communication

skills through multimodal experiences, allowing for the expression and creation of self-knowledge. Final year speech-language pathology and audiology students were required to record themselves explaining a profession-specific concept to a non-speech-language pathologist or audiologist. Considering the nation-wide lockdown, the person had to be someone they were living with. Concepts included complex conditions, such as auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder, or intervention techniques, such as auditory highlighting for language facilitation. Students were required to explain these concepts appropriately, while demonstrating counselling and person-centered techniques. They then had to demonstrate a contingent intervention activity conducted within an everyday routine. This encourages students to maintain a functional person-centered approach in intervention, so that progress is individualised and applicable to the client and family.

Lecturers encouraged a person-centered approach to their practical teaching by also including a reflection report section as part of the video essay assessment, so that students' perspectives of the assessment format could be collected and considered. For the video essay assignments, final-year speech-language pathology and audiology students obtained an average of 70.8% (SD ± 8.2) in a shared, early-intervention-focused module. Reflective feedback that was gathered highlighted three main themes, namely clinical application, skills obtained, and challenges. All students reported that the video essay assisted them in achieving a better understanding of the profession-specific concepts and improved their ability to explain them to clients, thus enhancing their ability to provide person-centered services. Many of the students reported that they had the opportunity to develop their clinical skills, but they found the method of assessment to be challenging. Innovative teaching and assessment approaches, such as video essays, may be effective to encourage inquiry, problem-based learning when in-person engagement is not feasible. Video essays were successful in helping students to develop person-centered intervention skills, as they were able to reflect on their service delivery abilities, and identified aspects they felt needed to improve, thereby developing their clinical skills through a person-centered teaching approach. Going forward, such approaches to practical student learning should be considered as part of a hybrid-approach to teaching and learning in professional programmes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has not only affected the way in which we, as lecturers, teach but also the way in which treatment is provided in healthcare.

In accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4, education and training needs to focus on equipping students with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to create a sustainable future. To this end, students should cultivate critical and creative thinking skills, engage in authentic interdisciplinary learning activities and develop a value system that emphasises responsibility to self, others, and the planet. To equip our students with what may be the future of clinical practice, we exposed the senior students to developing their PCC skills through telehealth. Telehealth is the delivery of health-care services by health-care professionals where distance is a critical factor, through using information and communication technologies (ICT) (Monaghesh & Hajizadeh 2020). In line with the HPCSA regulations, students provided intervention to clients using telehealth mediums, including WhatsApp, telephone, and virtual platforms (Zoom, Microsoft Teams). This allowed the maintenance of client-clinician therapeutic alliance and continued service delivery.

There are a number of challenges in achieving successful online teaching and learning in general, which are compounded when training students to develop clinical skills such as PCC. The online format of teaching and learning requires students and clients to have access to a workable device, a power source, and a stable internet connection. Many of our students initially struggled due to the lack of resources. However, with the support of the University to secure devices for students in need, as well as Tshwane and Johannesburg municipal WiFi projects, the majority of the students were able to access and participate in online learning. The long-term sustainability of such projects; however, remains a major concern. According to a Cisco white paper report (2019), as an emerging economy, South Africa is considered to be less 'digitally ready' than its peer middle-income countries. Besides the lack of infrastructure, the general affordability of access to, and usage of, technology for the general public remains a growing concern. Costs of airtime, data, and electricity are increasing, and the lack of growth of the economy leads to further inaccessibility and unavailability of tools (Marivate et al. 2021). The future success of online teaching, learning, and training in South Africa is also very much affected by the erratic electricity supply in the country due to load-shedding, and the lack of electricity in more rural areas. Is saying that this is the best we can do in the current circumstances good enough for our students and clients?

Although various institutions and institutional bodies have been supportive, and have provided access to online systems and training, the bandwidth

required does not always make it feasible to use in order to provide certain class discussions or telehealth intervention sessions. Thus students may need to provide services through WhatsApp or over the telephone. This may be more accessible for the families served, but could create confusion amongst students when applying treatment protocols across diverse platforms. Furthermore, the continuous updating of the software results in additional difficulties for lecturers, students, and clients as they have to continuously learn and become accustomed to new settings.

Students have also reported that they find online learning 'boring' because they cannot interact directly with peers and lecturers. Online learning formats remove the socialisation and networking opportunities typically offered at the higher education level. Students experience online fatigue and tired eyes from staring at smartphones or laptop screens every day, all day long (Laili & Nashir 2021). It was also mentioned that online learning is more complicated because the number of assignments from lecturers increases and requires students to send photos and videos, download materials, and upload tasks once completed. These tasks take a long time and require stable internet connections.

Conclusion

Although we support online teaching and learning, lecturers should tread with caution as one size is not always suitable for all. This may be especially true in professional programmes where face-to-face interaction is still necessary to develop students' technical and PCC skills. Students must be able to provide dynamic person-centered services to diverse populations across multiple settings, be it online or in-person. Ultimately, it is each lecturer's responsibility to reflect on whether they have prepared sufficiently to do this.

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Institutional culture needs to change: What can a restorative justice model offer to address sexual harassment in South African institutions of higher education?

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Introduction

Sexual harassment in institutions of higher education has been described as a global 'epidemic'[2]. In South Africa, recent #EndPatriarchy, #Endrapeculture, and #MeToo protests at our universities[3] drew attention to the high prevalence of sexual harassment and gender-based violence (GBV) at our institutions of higher learning.

Sexual harassment in institutions of higher education has been well documented: it is systemic and cultural in nature, but continues to be treated as an individual and private issue by the neoliberal university[4]. Policies and interventions are typically designed to ensure that the overall organisational culture never comes under scrutiny, but instead it becomes the responsibility and burden of victims to advocate for their own safety. Offenders are at times scapegoated in order to mask the institutional crises that gave rise to toxic gender relations in the first place.

As Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020) describe it, 'Precarious working

1 The author would like to thank Mike Batley, director of the Restorative Justice Centre in Pretoria, for his assistance in articulating some of the ideas in relation to restorative justice.

2 Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – A systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

3 Gouws, A. 2018.'#EndRapeCulture campaign in South Africa: Resisting sexual violence through protest and the politics of experience.' *Politikon*, *45*(1), 3-15, DOI: *10.1080/02589346.2018.1418201*

4 Brorsen Smidt, T., Bondestam, F., Pétursdóttir, G.M. & Einarsdóttir, Þ. 2020. 'Expanding gendered sites of resistance in the neoliberal academy.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(2), 115-129.

conditions, hierarchical organizations, a normalization of gender-based violence, toxic academic masculinities, a culture of silence and a lack of active leadership are all key features enabling sexual harassment'[5]. Yet, in their extensive systematic review of the literature on sexual harassment in higher education for the period 1966 to 2017, they found that few studies paid attention to organisational factors. This is somewhat surprising, given that such factors play a critical role in research on sexual harassment outside of institutions of higher education.

In addition, most institutions of higher education engage in interventions that are ad hoc, unsystematic, rarely measured for efficacy, and most alarmingly, have limited impact. Despite the significant increase globally in a variety of interventions in higher education institutions, these have not led to a reduction in the prevalence of sexual harassment[6]. These findings appear to be consistent worldwide.

Policymakers' understanding of sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning tends to be reductionist and technical, rather than responsive to the experiences of those most affected. Emphasis is placed on determining what actually 'counts' as sexual harassment, rather than on unique experiences of sexual harassment in the complex intersection of race, age, language, and hierarchies of power[7].

The punitive approach in response to offenders of sexual harassment, at best, or the fear of reputational damage, at worst, often results in offenders being 'shifted' from one institution to another without any attempt at rehabilitation. This results in offenders repeating their problematic behaviour at the next institution, whose organisational culture is likely as supportive of the toxic environment that allows sexual harassment to continue as the last one was.

In this occasional paper, I focus specifically on sexual harassment of students by members of staff, in order to comprehend what happens when there is a clear, hierarchical power differential. In this context, I explore restorative justice as an alternative model to the punitive, individualistic, and a-contextual ways in which sexual harassment is generally dealt with in institutions of higher education,

5 Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – A systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

6 Ibid.

7 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else.' *Agenda*, *23*(80), 7-21; Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – A systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

both in South Africa and globally. A restorative justice model has the potential to position misdemeanours in their organisational and societal contexts, and thereby hold organisations and individuals accountable. Furthermore, it allows for complex understandings and experiences of sexual harassment to be voiced. Finally, it allows for the potential rehabilitation of offenders, and provides an opportunity for victims to engage offenders in ways that have been identified as meaningful in the victims' healing process.

Sexual harassment – a systemic and cultural problem in higher education

Although few studies have been undertaken at South African institutions of higher learning to determine the prevalence of sexual harassment, the published research suggests that it is as high as 45% amongst women students and 10% amongst men students[8], and 10% amongst women members of staff (however, as the authors themselves point out, actual prevalence is likely to be much higher).[9]

The issue of sexual harassment in universities was on the agenda in South Africa in the 1990s during the transition to democracy, due to the broad impetus to address the legacy of apartheid. However, Bennet (2009) suggests that after an initial spree of revisions (or formulations) of sexual harassment policy, attention died down around 1997. Between 2003 and 2009, the research focus shifted to sexual harassment at primary and secondary schools[10]. As a result of the 2016 protests, there has been an increase in research on sexual harassment and gender-based violence at universities in South Africa. However, most studies focus on peer-to-peer incidents, rather than sexual harassment by members of staff.

During the 2016 student protests on South African campuses, which included the #Endrapeculture and #EndPatriarchy protests, students accused university management of 'perpetuating a rape culture through policies which

8 Oni, H.T., Tshitangano, T.G. & Akinsola, H.A. 2019. 'Sexual harassment and victimization of students: A case study of a higher education institution in South Africa.' *African Health Sciences, 19*(1).

9 Joubert, P., Van Wyk, C. & Rothmann, S. 2011. 'The incidence of sexual harassment at higher education institutions in South Africa: Perceptions of academic staff.' *Acta Academica*, *43*(1).

10 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else, *Agenda*.' *23*(80), 7-21; Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – A systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

reinforced victim-blaming and protected offenders of sexual assault'[11]. This was bolstered further by the 2017 #MeToo protests, but again the focus was on student offenders, rather than offenders who were members of staff. The power differential, together with fear of the impact that reporting sexual harassment might have on education and employment opportunities, continues to silence students who experience sexual harassment by their lecturer or professor.

Already in the 1990s, when sexual harassment policies at universities were developed, the inevitable link between gender inequality, sexual harassment, and sexual violence was evident[12]. This would include, at the most basic level, the gender ratios of not only students, but also staff, and not only staff numbers, but the relative power that those staff members have at their disposal. In South Africa, a significantly greater number of white men still occupy management positions than women or people of colour do[13].

Not much has changed since 1997. A 2019 study found that even when women were in positions of power, there was a high turnover of women staff members, and one of the 'most serious contributory factors' to this was 'hostile institutional culture' and 'patriarchal practices that led to oppression and dominance, which made it difficult for them to cope in the senior positions they held'[14].

In an article in *The Lancet,* McCall (2019)[15] reports on interviews with women academics about the institutional culture that sustains sexual harassment globally. She says that a common form of harassment that is reported at universities is 'a quid pro quo sexual bribery or threat scenario, whereby a professor promises a good grade to a student if they will participate in a sexual act or threaten a fail if they do not'. One of the individuals she interviewed was Amanda Gouws of the University of Stellenbosch, who has overseen several quid pro quo cases because of her position on the Sexual Harassment Task Force.

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11 Orth, Z., van Wyk, B., & Andipatin, M. 2020. ''What does the university have to do with it?': Perceptions of rape culture on campus and the role of university authorities.' *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *34*(2), 191-209.

12 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else.' *Agenda*, *23*(80), 7-21.

13 Ramohai, J. 2019. 'Women in senior management positions at South African universities: Their movement in, out and across universities.' *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *34*.

14 Ibid.

15 McCall, B. 2019. 'Taking the battle against sexual harassment in global academia online.' *The Lancet, 393*(10171), 512-514.

McCall draws attention to the fact that students feel powerless because 'the academic establishment preferentially protects academics and has poor grievance policies and procedures'. In addition, 'PhD students just want to finish their doctorate without causing a fuss. If there's a bad interaction with the supervisor, that might compromise the next step in their career, and if they speak up about bad behaviour, there is usually little official protection from many universities.'

Another telling insight reported in *The Lancet* article was, 'In academia, nobody wants to speak up and rock the boat. There's a culture of subservience to a supervisor or senior team member, coupled with a gender imbalance. That's not a great environment for quiet voices that can't see a way out.'

The article points out that in an environment where women feel voiceless and unheard, it is unsurprising that some might turn to 'digital vigilantism', as was the case at Rhodes University, where the names of 11 alleged rapists were posted online when women students felt nothing had been done to address the recurrent crisis of the university's 'rape culture'[16]. The danger with digital vigilantism is, of course, that due process is not followed, and innocent people's lives may be harmed through the dissemination of rumours or half-truths.

Central to the problem globally is that policies and procedures which address sexual harassment remain vague, and victims are rarely informed about the outcomes of official processes: 'When no justice is seen to have been meted out, harassers are emboldened, and potential complainants are dissuaded from coming forward as nothing appears to happen.'[17]

This is what protests in 2016 and in subsequent years have attempted to draw attention to. These protests, together with other demonstrations relating to the need for 'transformation' at institutions of higher education across a broad range of issues, points to the intersection of gender-based violence with race, class, and continued colonial and apartheid legacies[18]. They have led to universities implementing 'transformation' initiatives and revising anti-

16 Gouws, G. 2018. '#EndRapeCulture campaign in South Africa: Resisting sexual violence through protest and the politics of experience.' *Politikon*, *45*(1), 3-15.

17 McCall, B. 2019. 'Taking the battle against sexual harassment in global academia online.' *The Lancet, 393*(10171), 512-514.

18 Ngabaza, S., Shefer, T. & Clowes, L. 2018. 'Students' narratives on gender and sexuality in the project of social justice and belonging in higher education.' *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *32*(3), 139-153.

discrimination policies. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, some of the momentum has been lost. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the fact that students have not been on campus during the pandemic does not necessarily mean that they have been protected from harassment. In fact, reports about universities in South Africa and other countries worldwide suggest that students were more vulnerable during lockdown[19], increasing the likelihood of them being victims of harassment by their professors.

Sexual harassment policies and interventions

While institutions may have established transformation offices and revised their policies, these steps do not seem to have translated into significant protection of women students. One of the reasons for this is the protectionist attitude of institutions of higher education, because of the risks of legal action and of reputational damage. The 1997 Labour Relations Act made sexual harassment in the workplace an institutional risk because of the possibility of 'vicarious liability'. Bennet (2009) describes how this should have ensured that workplaces had zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind; instead, the legislation had the opposite effect of 'making the route towards voicing discrimination or violation so taxing, tortured, or inaccessible that no one ever takes it'[20].

There are few university-specific South African studies of sexual harassment. However, Bennet (2009) describes a 2008 study which compared the Universities of Botswana, Stellenbosch, and the Western Cape. Significantly, it was noted that the University of the Western Cape had the oldest policy framework and the best support structures to address sexual harassment. Although a small group of feminist scholars at Stellenbosch University had lobbied for and developed a strong policy framework, this was largely ignored, and victims were unaware of how to access support. Bennet (2009) writes, 'The research hinted strongly at the 'disappearance' of gender as a key concern within the (very high-profile and well-resourced) university engagement with transformation'. This is likely to have also been the case at other high-profile and well-resourced universities across

19 For example, during lockdown students may have been unable to access resources on campus such as computers, so they might have required additional financial support to secure a laptop or pay for data, in order to continue with their studies at home.

20 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else.' *Agenda*, *23*(80), 7-21.

the country.

According to Bennet (2009), none of the universities took implementation of policy seriously:

> ... As a core strand of their university's interest in building cultures of democracy. There was a widespread sense that most campus constituents perceived policy statements and structures as marginal to their own theorisations of gender, sexuality, and violence. In addition, very few complaints had been reported through policy procedures[21].

The study listed several challenges in relation to meaningful implementation of sexual harassment policies. Procedures for reporting were obscure, and deciding whether an incident 'counted' as sexual harassment was largely the responsibility of human resource officers with minimal training in the 'philosophical nuances of legal definition'. The interaction of university policies and national policy frameworks, particularly in the case of rape, added an additional layer of complexity[22].

More recently, in response to protests at Rhodes University, a Sexual Violence Task Team was set up in 2016 to 'explore how a counter culture to the rape culture may be implemented at the University'[23]. The task team published a 158-page report with extensive recommendations, which included retributive and restorative justice processes to deal with sexual harassment. However, it is unclear whether or not any of these recommendations were taken seriously or whether they were implemented.

How restorative and retributive justice are defined

Bennet (2009) speaks of formal and informal processes, where the formal process involves a legal procedure, which leads to criminalisation and sentences involving expulsion, disciplinary warnings, or public disgrace, while the informal

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Sexual Violence Task Team. 2016. *'We will not be Silenced': A Three-Pronged Justice Approach to Sexual Offences and Rape Culture at Rhodes University/UCKAR*. Grahamstown, South Africa: Critical Studies in Sexualities and Reproduction.

process is potentially more 'rehabilitative, privileging non-punitive explorations of activity, assuming the possibility of re-harmonising an acrimonious situation, and open to the possibility of both 'mutual responsibility' and 'forgiveness' as part of the process'[24].

A restorative justice approach would fall into the 'informal' category, although it may be quite regulated, and it can be differentiated from a retributive approach. Retributive justice tends to be primarily concerned with rules that have been broken, allocation of blame, and choosing appropriate punishment. Restorative justice is more concerned with 'making things right and healing', and rebuilding trust, not necessarily with the offender, but with the institution or society at large[25].

A more adversarial and legal route, or 'criminalisation', as Bennet (2009) refers to it, can intensify the offender's 'rage, frustration or anxiety', with consequences for the complainant's safety. Apart from this, a criminal process can be 'traumatising', resulting in complainants either failing to report incidents or withdrawing their complaints. Beyond this, Bennet (2009) describes how 'breakdown of health occur[s], people drop out of university or move, and long-term bitterness and 'sandpaper grief' – usually targeted as much at the university as at the offender – is the result'.

It is well evident in the literature that a criminal, adversarial approach does not address sexual violence adequately. Apart from the fact that such an approach is time-consuming and potentially traumatising, it requires extensive evidence, with an emphasis on technical aspects (including, for example, what 'counts' as sexual harassment) and it rarely results in a conviction[26]. Furthermore, it does not allow for the story to be told on its own terms.

Although Bennet (2009) makes an important critique of the rehabilitative approach, which will be discussed in the next section, I advocate for this approach because, as stated earlier, a restorative justice model has the potential to situate misdemeanours in their organisational and societal contexts, and thereby hold organisations as well as individuals accountable. Furthermore, it allows for the

24 Ibid.

25 Zehr, H. 1990. *Changing Lenses*. Scottdale, USA: Herald Press.

26 van Wormer, K. 2009. 'Restorative justice as social justice for victims of gendered violence: A standpoint feminist perspective.' *Social Work*, *54*(2), 107-116; Cyphert, A.B. 2018. 'The devil is in the details: Exploring restorative justice as an option for campus sexual assault responses under title ix.' *Denver Law Review*, *96*(1), 51-86.

expression of complex understandings of sexual harassment, including giving voice to victims' experiences. Finally, it allows for the potential rehabilitation of offenders, and provides an opportunity for victims to engage offenders in ways which have been identified as meaningful in their own healing process.

A restorative justice approach to sexual harassment

The restorative justice literature is broad and diverse. However, the main tenets of this paradigm may be defined as follows: encounter, reparations, and transformation[27]. Of major importance are the relational dimension, the victim's voice and the community voice, as well as creating space for encounter and dialogue. A restorative view holds that harm cannot be addressed through the imposition of pain and suffering on the offender. Rather, the restorative approach looks for acknowledgement of responsibility by the offender and a willingness to make amends for the suffering inflicted on the victim. This is taken further by addressing the underlying causes of the incident, which include the offender's own impaired personhood and needs. This becomes framed within the overarching goal of contributing to a more just society, understood holistically.

Cyphert (2018) discusses how restorative justice theory is 'predicated on an expanded understanding of who is harmed by wrongdoing' and 'an expanded understanding of who is responsible for causing and repairing harm' by placing the harm in the context of a whole community or society[28]. Misconduct, he states, harms not only the victim but has 'ripple effects' throughout the community. In a context where students on South African university campuses report that they feel unsafe, that they experience a sense of alienation[29], and where research has firmly established that it is organisational culture that contributes to sexual harassment, an intervention that involves transformation of the entire institutional culture makes sense.

There have been arguments that women might choose a restorative process because of 'gendered expectations', including the idea that 'good girls forgive',

27 Johnstone, G. & Van Ness, D. (eds). 2007. *Handbook of Restorative Justice*. US & Canada: Willan.

28 Cyphert, A.B. 2018. 'The devil is in the details: Exploring restorative justice as an option for campus sexual assault responses under title ix.' *Denver Law Review*, *96*(1), 51-86.

29 Ngabaza, S., Shefer, T. & Clowes, L. 2018. 'Students' narratives on gender and sexuality in the project of social justice and belonging in higher education.' *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *32*(3), 139-153.

a compulsion to protect the offender, or in order to maintain a 'bridge to their position in the heteronormative, hierarchical, patriarchal system in which they perceive themselves to belong'[30]. Bennet (2009) for example, describes the mediator in a restorative approach as 'a benign third-party who will refashion the (hurt, feminised, silent) body back into language through reconnection to a communicative, even conciliatory, masculine presence (the perpetrator)'.

However, Cyphert (2018) importantly distinguishes between mediation and a restorative justice approach, saying that while a mediation process involves no assignment of guilt, in a restorative justice process 'the requirement that the responsible person accepts responsibility [is] a pre-condition of participation as opposed to neutrality toward the parties'. She describes how a restorative justice approach seeks to answer three key questions: '(1) Who has been harmed?, (2) What are their needs?, and (3) Whose obligation is it to meet those needs?'

Although the danger exists that when confronted with the power differential, women, particularly students who have experienced harassment by a staff member, will 'give in' to a restorative justice approach and its outcome, the process is more likely to lead to a satisfactory outcome for the victim than an adversarial approach.

Using standpoint feminism as her starting point, Van Wormer (2009) describes how a restorative justice approach supports the following standpoint feminist concerns: 'reliance on the woman's personal narrative for truth-telling, acceptance of a holistic, non-dichotomised view of reality, including a merging of the personal and political, a focus on choice and options, an understanding of the gendered nature of power relations in society and an emphasis on personal empowerment and respect for personal dignity'[31]. Van Wormer emphasises that a restorative justice process is guided by the choices that a victim makes regarding how they wish the process to unfold.

The most relevant restorative justice process is victim-offender conferencing. Van Wormer stresses that this is not mediation, which assumes a 'dispute between equals', but a facilitated dialogue where the power differential between victim and offender is clearly understood, and where the victim tells their story

30 Cyphert, A.B. 2018. 'The devil is in the details: Exploring restorative justice as an option for campus sexual assault responses under title ix.' *Denver Law Review*, *96*(1), 51-86.

31 van Wormer, K. 2009. 'Restorative justice as social justice for victims of gendered violence: A standpoint feminist perspective.' *Social Work*, *54*(2), 107-116.

and the offender listens[32]. The intention of such a process is that the offender should come to a full realisation of what they have done, develop empathy for their victim, and potentially connect with their own past victimisation (although the latter should not become the responsibility of the victim).

Cyphert (2009) describes the stages that should be followed. The first stage is referral and intake, where the choices available to the victim should be made clear, including that they can withdraw from the process at any time. The offender is invited to participate – their participation is also voluntary. The second stage is the conference, which requires a highly trained facilitator, who works with a 'carefully developed script that structures the dialogue and order of questions' in order to best support and protect the victim. The conference begins with the survivor sharing their story, with an emphasis on the impact of the harm done. This is followed by an exploration of how the harm could be addressed and what could be done to rebuild trust. An agreement is reached about how to repair the harm done, which includes clear tasks and a timeline of 'restoration and reintegration'. This could, for example, include restitution, and could also include an agreement that the offender leave the university environment permanently, or for a specified period[33]. The third and final stage is monitoring and reintegration, which requires that the offender stay accountable to someone within the university environment, to ensure that the agreement is followed. Survivors need to be informed of progress and offered ongoing support when necessary.

Having said all of this, it is critically important that victims are given a choice between retributive and restorative approaches.

Victim-offender conferencing places the onus on the individuals involved and does not necessarily address systemic problems or the organisational culture. Adaptations of restorative justice practices, such as healing circles or community reparations, could address these gaps.

The idea of healing circles within the practice of restorative justice originated in North American native communities, where a whole community engages in a ritual which includes telling stories about the trauma. There are also examples of this kind of practice throughout the African continent. Karp et al. (2016)

32 Ibid.

33 Cyphert, A.B. 2018. 'The devil is in the details: Exploring restorative justice as an option for campus sexual assault responses under title ix.' *Denver Law Review*, *96*(1), 51-86.

specifically encourage the use of circles as a key tool in restorative justice practices in educational institutions, stating that:

> Restorative practice is rooted in the basic human impetus to sit together and deliberate the issues ... Circle practice offers an innovation in the prevention education arena through its unique emphasis on the intersection of information sharing, education, reflection and community building ... The circle is designed so that participants engage in an inclusive and non-hierarchical way, typically in a circle formation with no obstructions (no conference tables or desks) and passing a talking piece around the circle repeatedly to ensure that everyone has a voice[34].

Adaptations of this in the university environment enable students to share experiences in a broader context. Typically, workshops on sexual harassment and gender-based violence allow for the telling of stories and sharing of experiences in this way, without ritualisation of the process. But beyond this, for a university as an institution to choose to support a series of healing circles can serve as a powerful signal that it wants to 'heal' a harmful organisational culture, and initiate a genuinely transformed culture.

Another restorative practice is community reparations, which normally refer to interventions by, say, a government after a period of war, to address large-scale war crimes, including sexual crimes, and involve making a public apology and, in some instances, offering of compensation to those who are affected. If a university wished to show its commitment to bring an end to the 'epidemic' of sexual harassment and gender-based violence, an intervention of this nature would speak volumes.

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34 Karp, D.R., Shackford-Bradley, J., Wilson, R.J. & Williamsen, K.M. 2016. 'Campus Prism: A report on promoting restorative initiatives for sexual misconduct on college campuses.' 2-3. Available at *www.SkidmoreRJ.org* This is also discussed in Batley, M. 2018. *Introduction to Responding Restoratively to Situations of Sexual Misconduct: A Resource Manual.* Pretoria: The Restorative Justice Centre.

Conclusion

There are clearly too few studies at South African institutions of higher education that involve sexual harassment and policy frameworks to address sexual harassment[35]. A key reason is likely that it is a minefield for an academic to undertake research on this topic at their own institution or at a 'neighbouring' one. If university management was to commission such research, this could serve as a clear indication of management's commitment to meaningfully address sexual harassment, using empirical data, rather than responding in the ad-hoc, a-contextual, non-evidence-based, current ways.

Bennet (2009) also draws attention to the fact that most universities have closed down their gender studies units (many had already done so by 2009), which is a worrying trend. A deep engagement with gender dynamics, and understanding the intersectional relationship of gender with race and class, is critical to support the interventions of committees or offices delegated to deal with sexual harassment. Following the letter of an official policy in a technical and mechanical fashion cannot replace engaging with the complexity of gender, power, and sexuality as it unfolds in a particular organisational culture.

Apart from the 'deeply private shame'[36] experienced by those who have survived sexual violence, sexual harassment has 'physical, psychological and professional consequences'[37], leading to long-term health challenges, including anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, physical pain, and sexually transmitted disease. It can result in students dropping out of their studies or underperforming, with a direct impact on their career opportunities.

Beyond this, even observing or hearing about sexual harassment has consequences for the organisational culture of institutions of higher learning, including increasing tension between colleagues, and between staff and students.

As already reiterated, sexual harassment is a symptom of organisational culture, and the hierarchical, patriarchal, systems that control universities in

35 As Borsen Smidt et al. (2018), argue, in the global context '[t]here is clearly a gap between neoliberal, bureaucratic policy and critical knowledge on experiences of sexual harassment in a normative academic culture'.

36 Bennett, J. 2009. 'Policies and sexual harassment in higher education: Two steps forward and three steps somewhere else.' *Agenda*, *23*(80), 7-21.

37 Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M. 2020. 'Sexual harassment in higher education – a systematic review.' *European Journal of Higher Education*, *10*(4), 397-419.

South Africa and globally, so that if one is a direct victim of sexual harassment, the culture as a whole has a negative impact on one's well-being and one's ability to thrive.

Although sexual harassment policies need to support retributive and restorative approaches to justice, a restorative justice model has the potential to situate misdemeanours in their organisational and societal contexts, thereby holding organisations and individuals accountable. It also allows for the voicing of complex understandings and personal experiences of sexual harassment. Finally, it allows for the potential rehabilitation of offenders, and provides opportunities for victims to engage with offenders in ways that are meaningful in their healing process.

Breaking silos to bring innovation

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Introduction

In July 2021 the tinder box of South African society was set alight. Rioting and looting by millions of South Africans from all walks of life occurred. Groceries, toiletries, electronics, and alcohol were amongst many items stolen from big and small businesses alike. No one was spared.

During these dark moments, I thought of the young girl from Tsolo in the Eastern Cape, or the unemployed matriculant without parents from Eshowe in KwaZulu-Natal. For them, a better life is a bridge too far. In these times we need to think about education and understanding. Many in the population do not perceive the long-lasting impact of their actions.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi: 'Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.'

To improve South Africa, innovation by Generation Z is of utmost importance. For too long, South Africa has relied on old methods or old tools used in the developed world to attempt to combat problems unique to South Africa. Policies and laws will not change century-old ways of thinking in areas such as race, gender, and sexuality. Neither will financial debt nor the national health insurance fix underlying health problems found within communities. The crises are issues such as food insecurity, polluted air, and poor water quality, amongst others. Solutions for the South African problem need to come from within, from the institutes designed and created to help better South Africa. For this, we need to allow innovation to be foremost in our strategies, and to start training thinkers and innovators, in addition to training technicians.

In 2011, the University of Pretoria (UP) created a strategic plan for 2025 that outlined various indicators and goals that it aimed to achieve. It was hoped that through these goals, the university would transform itself into a world-class institute, creating knowledge and tools to help improve the current status quo in South Africa and the global south.

This paper will address three different areas. The first undertaking will be to evaluate the status quo of the university. In order to understand the status quo, the current structure of the university will be looked at, with a focus on both undergraduate and post-graduate degrees and the make-up of the student body. The structure of the faculties and departments, together with staff across the university landscape, will be critically evaluated to identify potential gaps.

The second aspect that will be investigated is how current teaching and learning is conducted within the university. We will delve into the new methods of teaching and learning that have been developed, and evaluate whether these methods are needed within the university.

The third area of enquiry will be to look at the need for the breaking of silos between different professions to further enhance and ready students for the working world. The importance of working across disciplines will be discussed; together with creating an understanding of how each profession fits into society and the role that each can play. The role that the university plays in ensuring that graduates are employed will also be evaluated.

The status quo

UP can trace its origins back to 1908, with the establishment of the Pretoria campus of the Transvaal University College. Since then, the university has expanded to seven distinctive campuses. UP currently has nine faculties, viz. Humanities; Law; Education; Theology; Economics and Management Sciences, Natural and Agricultural Sciences; Engineering, the Built Environment, and Information Technology; Health Sciences; Veterinary Sciences; and a Business School.

The original idea behind the university was that it would be a repository and creator of knowledge. However, modern universities have become institutions, with the purpose of enabling school leavers to be further educated so that they can gain viable employment.

In 2020, UP had 53 430 enrolled students, of whom 36 547 (68%) were undergraduates and 16 883 (32%) were postgraduate students. The racial breakdown of the student population has hardly changed, with 28 886 students (54%) being African in 2020, compared with 27 537 (52%) African students registered in 2018. This represents an increase of just two percentage points over the two-year period.

An essential indicator of 'decolonising education' is the increasing number of individuals who were marginalised by the colonial system, and who are now entering the higher education system (Mzangwa 2019). The idea behind 'decolonising education' is removing barriers that prevent the marginalised from entering institutes of higher learning. To help redress the underlying socio-economic woes of the country, those that were previously excluded need to be provided with sustainable ways of entering the economy to uplift homes and change lives.

The importance of a changing demographic is essential to help both the country and the institution to grow, and to enhance the country.

Each faculty has a distinct management structure, with one dean and two deputy deans, and support staff. The faculties are further divided into separate departments, each with its head of department, academic staff, and support staff. Departments are spread across the seven faculties, with some solitary faculties on a single campus, such as the Faculty of Veterinary Science on the Onderstepoort Campus.

This highly siloed approach, at department and faculty level, leads to a lack of knowledge of what colleagues at the same institution are working on. This is evidenced by the number of research projects with similar objectives being conducted independently of each other within faculties and within the university. The effect of this is that many researchers compete for the same research funds, and there is no holistic view of an issue in which many departments are interested. The current structure perpetuates working in isolation and poor understanding of other staff members' roles in the broader teaching community, resulting in students receiving an education which is not holistic.

This siloed approach leads to barriers, such as difficulties in transferring innovative teaching methods between faculties that have shared experiences or similar programmes. The siloed approach means that it is challenging to identify and solve systemic problems within UP, as there is little sharing of experience between faculties.

Most of the research at university can be described as grant-driven, with limited impact-led research being conducted. There are many reasons for this, with two main drivers being performance management structures and the absence of strategic partners at research staff level.

Performance management at the university is geared towards achieving a goal on one's own; staff members are disadvantaged when they work with colleagues,

whether in terms of joint publications or joint funding requests. When the goals of academics are to obtain grants and publish in high-impact global journals, the capacity of top researchers to find solutions to local problems are limited.

At the executive management level, multiple strategic partnerships with government and the private sector exist. Unfortunately, at an action level, these partnerships are ineffective, and the objectives of these partnerships are not integrated within broader research themes.

Pedagogy in a new world

Just as the Covid-19 pandemic has reshaped the global economy, politics, and values, it has also accelerated the reshaping of higher education.

With higher education moving into the online world, understanding of how to effectively teach is changing. It is now a pre-requisite for institutes of higher education to evolve to stay relevant. For this reason, the institution needs to critically reflect on the foundation of the broader teaching and training philosophy employed at the university.

An important part of this is that the university has primarily been a research-intensive institute that seeks to drive research and innovation at a postgraduate level. At the undergraduate level, the focus has been on transferring knowledge from renowned researchers to students, through the creation of comprehensive lecture notes and slideshows of information about a topic. This has led to limited time and focus on allowing undergraduate students to seek out knowledge or to innovate during their degree studies.

In an unfortunate twist, taking this approach with undergraduate students led to stifling of innovation through the creation of barriers. These barriers range from time-intensive lectures to the teaching of outdated methods within specific fields. There is limited focus on integrated thinking. The focus is rather on 'regurgitation' of information.

Teaching and training need to be understood as comprising an ever-evolving set of tools which students are encouraged to master, and through which the university seeks to ensure that undergraduate students are more prepared for the working world today. However, UP focuses its teaching and training on the twentieth century, and not on the twenty-first.

To achieve change and to remove barriers to innovation, the university needs

to change its teaching and training philosophy. It needs to focus on ensuring students seek and understand information acquired via online sources, while allowing them to innovate in the creation of solutions.

Undergraduate students in the field of health science should have artificial intelligence (AI) tools embedded within their curriculum. The health science fields are among the fastest-growing areas of AI innovation, and they will be part-and-parcel of healthcare in the future. Ensuring students are introduced and comfortable with AI will help ensure that those graduating from UP will develop new tools to combat health challenges.

Education in new spaces

UP is a leading research institute globally, but for historical reasons it has focused on having students physically present on one of the many UP campuses in Pretoria.

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged the norm of expecting students physically present on campuses. During the pandemic, students worked across the country, the continent, and the globe to attend classes and to write tests. This forced lecturers to learn and use different methods of engaging with students. The methodology has centered on the motto of 'Prepare, Engage, Consolidate', and online applications such as BlackBoard have been fundamental to its success. Asynchronous and synchronous teaching has been used to ensure understanding of the work, and to increase engagement between students and lecturers.

For students, online teaching has created flexibility within daily routines, whilst shifting responsibility from lecturers to students. Although the teaching methodology has been adapted, the content of modules has remained the same. The new approach has enabled students to work to earn in order to pay for tuition fees, while many students have been able to stay at home, substantially reducing the costs of a university degree. This is extremely important for marginalised students, who historically have been oppressed by political systems such as apartheid and colonialism.

When evaluated in a silo, the impact of being able to study from home instead of having to reside in Pretoria in order to attend the university is small, but within the larger system, the impact is potentially massive.

For lecturers, Covid-19 has helped to free up time in busy schedules that are routinely filled with research activities, academic writing, student supervision, lecturing, and marking. It has given academic staff the flexibility to create in-depth lectures in their own time, improve engagement with students, and evaluate their knowledge through different tools available via the BlackBoard application.

Overall, moving online has been relatively seamless. It has enabled students to be taught at the same level in many faculties, and it can be considered a success for UP.

Whilst it has been a success for students currently attending UP, the online teaching environment has opened up the possibility of higher education for many more people around the country. This can be looked at in the context of growing unemployment within South Africa, with the youth most affected, and where the current political and economic situation provides no opportunity of escape.

As part of its vision to contribute to improving the country and assisting the global south, UP can play a role in expanding access to education. By reaching into areas that have not previously had access to institutions like UP, there is an unlocking of human potential to develop solutions to the unique challenges experienced in the global south. When discussing and considering where to expand, it is important to consider that ultimately, we need to consider the young girl in Tsolo, or the unemployed matriculant in Eshowe.

Lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic are transferrable to those who have limited access to higher education due to their socio-economic problems. Using lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, the UP can propel its research, innovation, and social impact to new levels.

The author proposes the creation of hybrid campuses in rural areas of South Africa to open the doors of education to the marginalised that were previously excluded from institutes of higher education. This will also foster a knowledge-seeking drive within the youth in these communities, due to the physical proximity of these campuses.

The campuses should consist of IT infrastructure to allow students to access online lectures and engage virtually with students from other campuses across South Africa. They should focus on teaching first- and second-year students enrolled for various degrees. For a short period during the year, students from these hybrid campuses should be brought to existing campuses to satisfy the

practical requirements of their degrees.

Through the creation of hybrid campuses, the university will be at the forefront of education, and it will play a major role in the upliftment of society and in innovation.

Innovating in old spaces

South Africa is one of the most unique countries in the world. According to the Biodiversity Finance Institute (BIOFIN), South Africa is the third most biodiverse country, and it hosts over 95 000 known species. It embraces multiple biomes, such as deserts, forests, and an exceptionally unique biome called *fynbos*. This diverse environment supports the economy through tourism, fishing, and farming. Despite incredible biodiversity, South Africa is burdened with a multitude of social problems that require unique and innovative solutions.

To arrive at inventive solutions, an innovative and changed university is needed. Changing the university requires old structures to be deconstructed systematically. Deconstruction of a structure is achieved by allowing all those involved in the structure to openly self-reflect on their experiences within the structure. It requires those leading the process of deconstruction to critically evaluate shared ideas and perspectives, to fully understand the root causes of the problem, and to ensure that an echo chamber is not created.

Through the process of deconstruction, the university can incorporate aspects of old structures into a new structure, based on the founding principle of being a trailblazer in innovation. Looking at the current set-up within the university, a system-wide problem is the complete separation of departments and faculties from one other. This leads to limited engagement and hardly any interaction between those from different professional backgrounds. Specific events are necessary to ensure interaction.

To accomplish this, the university needs to focus on the improvement of transfer of ideas, experience, teaching, and research between what have been historically divergent faculties spread across various campuses. It also should focus on ensuring that both staff and students understand their roles in society. By ensuring that these two aspects are fundamentally adressed in both the system and in staff members, solutions developed within the university will have all these aspects in mind.

Greater cross-pollination between historically separate faculties

Before determining how to improve cross-pollination, a clear understanding of what cross-pollination involves needs to be developed.

Cross-pollination can be defined as the process of applying the pollen of one flower to the pistils of another flower (Crespel & Mouchotte 2017). In the academic context, it can be defined as the process of moving information from one professional context to another. In the university setting, this can be described as the moving of knowledge, experiences, skills, or perspectives from one department or faculty to another.

Cross-pollination in flowers occurs to help improve genetic diversity, and ultimately produces improved plants. In the university setting, the aim would be similar, to improve the outcome and impact of initiatives across the university.

The 'water cooler effect', which helps people build social networks, has been described as an everyday opportunity to improve productivity and increase engagement (Wu et al. 2011). The reason for this is that during random encounters at water stations, people engage with each other, and share ideas and problems experienced during the day. These types of discussion can help spark new relationships, improve existing initiatives, and address challenges through joint problem-solving and sharing of experiences.

Space and time are the main barriers to bringing about these types of engagement between colleagues. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the absence of 'water cooler' talk has been described as one of the most important reasons for the reduced productivity of those working from home.

Currently, the universities' organisational structure has inadvertently created physical barriers between colleagues from different backgrounds. These physical barriers involve staff members situated in offices divided by faculties and departments, and not organised in terms of their common shared interests.

The university has identified this as a problem and has started working towards changing this through the creation of the 'Future Africa' centre and campus. The campus is to serve as a node for people to build and improve existing national and global networks. One of the aims of the centre is to provide a high-level structure to connect professionals from different backgrounds across Africa, but there is a limited focus on connecting people within the university with one another. Although this initiative is a start, its impact is likely to be limited, as there is a marked absence of continuous engagement between colleagues.

Combatting the siloed structure at the university level requires radical, but slow change. While moving away from the current structure, it is important to remember that not all levels of staff within the university can or need to be involved in breaking down physical barriers.

An initial step should involve defining the objective of moving away from the siloed structure, and deciding how such change will be measured.

From the author's perspective, the aim should be to create a culture involving cross-pollination of ideas, projects, and problem-solving between disciplines. The process should be initially directed at academic staff, filtering downward to post-doctorate students and post-graduate students, in defining the objectives and intricacy of research proposals. Finally, undergraduates will reap the greatest rewards, because they will learn in innovative classes, taught by lecturers with different professional backgrounds, further enhancing cross-pollination.

Measuring the impact of a strategic shift in the structure of academic staff across the university is likely to be difficult. The author, through his master's research project, proposes a standardised baseline to evaluate the impact of the shift. The baseline will consist of a systematic review of publications output per department and per faculty. The baseline should consist of three indicators: (1) the total number of publications from the respective department and faculty; (2) the number of authors per publication from different departments, faculties, and institutions; and (3) the professional backgrounds of the identified authors.

A comprehensive analysis of academic staff should be conducted to determine where their research and teaching interests lie, which will allow for clustering of academic staff on the basis of these interests. Staff clustered in terms of a particular interest should be assigned offices in the same building, which will lead to increased engagement and subsequent cross-pollination across professional backgrounds. This will ultimately filter into integrated research proposals.

While the structural shift will involve physical movement and mixing of departments and faculty staff members, the intention is for cross-pollination to filter down to undergraduate students. Undergraduates are the main clients of the university. The exchange of ideas at undergraduate level will occur mainly through the creation of integrated lectures between students from different degrees and faculties. It will allow for students to be taught by academic staff from different professional backgrounds.

The cross-pollination will lead to undergraduate students having new input to innovate through their degrees and later, in their working lives.

Enhancing the employability of students

The main business of the university is to produce graduate students. Ensuring that the university is continuously growing and attracting potential clients, it should aim to produce graduates who are employable. For this to occur, students must be ready to enter employment as soon as they leave the university, which means they must be knowledgeable and effective in their fields.

From a student perspective a degree is no longer sufficient (Tomlinson 2008), there needs to be a broader focus on making students ready for the world of work. Soft skills (Bhagra & Sharma 2018) and being able to apply theory practically (Avramenko 2012) are recognised as two evolving areas which can help make students employable.

In the view of the author, for an improvement in these two areas to occur, students need to have a better understanding of their roles within their professional fields and in society. This means they need to understand how they can contribute to both improvement and digression in society.

For this to happen, cross-pollination is vital to enable students' minds to be exposed to new ideas and different points of view.

A reimagined UP

The aim of the 'Reimagined UP' should be for graduates to play a pivotal role in the improvement and success of South Africa. UP sits at the intersection of the past and the future, in an environment consisting of social and economic problems. Along with these problems, there is vast untapped potential, and a need for innovation of new and engaging solutions to tackle the problems that are not unique to South Africa, but shared by the global south.

To achieve this, UP needs to reflect on its current aims, organisational structures, and pedagogy.

The aim of the university should be to improve access to education to marginalised communities, and to help decolonise the university. This should occur through the creation of satellite hybrid campuses in areas where higher education was never previously accessible. This will create a positive environment

for youth in these communities. The innovation should focus on making students ready for work by emphasising the development of soft skills and the application of theory in real-world situations.

To help accomplish these aims, UP must focus on breaking the physical, social, and academic silos that currently exist throughout the academic staff of the university. This must be done by enabling continuous and informal dialogue between staff from different backgrounds, through the breaking down of physical barriers.

UP already has the intellectual capacity and infrastructure necessary to accomplish these goals and to make it a leading university globally in terms of innovation, research, and teaching. All that is lacking is continuous and strong leadership to take a risk to be number one.

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The neoliberal university is dead. What if this is something worse?

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In this preliminary reflection on a reimagined university – and specifically, on a reimagined University of Pretoria – I consider some aspects that precede reimagining. Inevitably, some important aspects fall outside of the scope of this current reflection, such as the place of the university within the city (e.g. J. Goddard and Paul Vallance (2013)), and specifically within Tshwane, and the publicness and accessibility of spaces such as Future Africa.

Memes to inform us

The memes shown in Figures 2 and 3 below appeared on social media (specifically Twitter) during the first six months of 2021.[1] These memes point to several related concerns that constrain a reimagining of educational institutions, and encapsulate the amplification of online teaching and learning, as well as the inflated significance of university rankings. In the first instance, the Twitter account University Wankings retweeted the following meme. While the meme speaks to a British context, the important take-away here is the mismatch between pandemic *lived lives* and pandemic *imaginaries*. In academia, and in considering the 'necessary changes' required by pandemic conditions, it is indeed important to identify the realities and parameters of lived lives, and not imaginaries.

The second Figure 3, a popular meme format ubiquitous in the early months of 2021, points to a double consciousness in how universities may consider the world rankings as a necessary, if troublesome, part of contemporary academic life.[2] The frames are taken from *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones*, and show the morally conflicted Anakin Skywalker in conversation with his paramour, Padme Amidala. Skywalker, as we know, will eventually become the major arch-antagonist of

1 Attempts to identify the authors of these memes have been fruitless.

2 Scholars such as Stefan Collini have written extensively about rankings and other concerns of academic life, and I will not rehearse those arguments here. Please see *What Are Universities For?* (2012) and *Speaking of Universities* (2018), which should be read in tandem with Franco 'Bifo' Berardi's (2009) *The Soul at Work,* with its focus on capital, labor and estrangement.

the *Star Wars* fictions, Darth Vader, whose use of 'necessary evils' allows the Empire to expand in territory and influence. This image captures, then, Anakin Skywalker's understanding that university rankings are 'deeply problematic', yet he persists in using them, as Padme suggests, in 'marketing materials'. (One of the risks of university rankings is that universities who rank higher on these lists than in the past might take these rankings more seriously than previously).

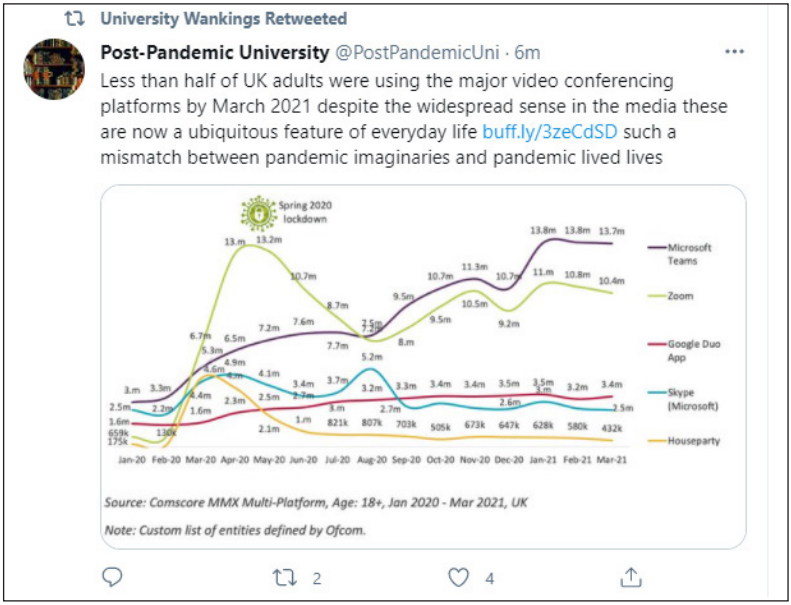

Figure 2. Perceptions of online activity, Source: Ofcom Online Nation 2021 report

Figure 3. For the better? Ranking meme

A preliminary reimagining

The memes in Figures 2 and 3 set the tone for a tentative engagement with key issues inhibiting a process of institutional reimagining.

It is likely that the Covid-19 pandemic killed the dominant model of the neoliberal university that existed prior to the pandemic. Even if this model had been on its way out, the pandemic sounded its death knell. In the period ahead, in which the transmission of the virus will gradually slow down before the virus reconstitutes itself yet again, universities will continue to think of ways to sustain the academic project, comprising (mostly, but not exclusively) teaching, learning and research. For the title of my paper I have taken my cue from the work of cultural theorist McKenzie Wark. The title cautions those of us who have grappled with the neoliberal university model (or its neoliberal character), that we should anticipate more challenging long- and short-term shifts and changes in the times ahead. Such changes have to do with how the University of Pretoria positions itself, and how it conceives of, and relates to, its staff and students. In this relationship, it is often academic staff who operate as a missing centre, as they have to maintain pedagogic and research productivity and, like students,

had to (and possibly still have to) occupy primary caretaking responsibilities at home.

To say that the neoliberal university is dead is not to say that it has vanished. There is no way we can predict the duration of its rigor mortis and the manner of its decomposition. There is no sure way to anticipate the means in which this dead entity facilitates, through the fruit of its passing, a vital new organism which seeks to *entangle* the world in sometimes similar, and sometimes different and more problematic, ways. This new entity may be more optimally suited to an environment which threatens to outpace it, or it could be even more of an alien in this world as it struggles with the non-negotiable, undeniably sheer humanity of those who populate the institution's hallways and classrooms.

Reimagining an institution is a considerable institutional and institution-wide activity and responsibility. Reimagining cannot occur outside of specific parameters, for instance the inevitable limitations on available funding due to social realities, and the less-inevitable encroachment of bureaucracy on daily academic life. *Bureaucracy delineates many of these parameters.* Bureaucracy is anathema to the building of trust. Bureaucracy ensures an unproductive slowness, which runs counter to the productive slowness that often characterises thinking and reflection in the humanities and in the arts. *At other times, bureaucracy paradoxically hastens certain processes and decisions that require more time for thoughtful consideration.* Often slowness is an indicator of depth, and not a mark of failure. Slowness is a necessary component of academic work, with academic work understood to include the creation of art or works of art. According to the late French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, art is linked to transcendence. Art is value within 'not needing ... something without a use' (2019, 15). Such art is the result of, and is part of labour – hence 'art *work*', as Nancy emphasises. If the neoliberal university *and its particular bureaucracy* struggled with productive slowness as an aspect of its constitutive humanity, a re-imagined university should embrace this mode of productivity.[3] It is with great concern, for instance, that we see reports about universities in the United Kingdom shutting down academic departments that have art and humanity as their focus (e.g. Archaeology and Anthropology),

3 There must be *evidence-based* accountability for performance, but there the performance management system itself, from its interface to its pre-populated content, *is likely due for a reimagining*.

with little or no discourse or stakeholder engagement.

For the purposes of this paper, my focus is on the possibility of reimagining the university outside of some conceptual misnomers, which include empty cope-speak such as the phrase 'the new normal'. Here, reimagining is not yet a proposal of concrete short-term and longitudinal changes to the status quo. Instead, as a crucial first step, this paper proposes a *de-anchoring* from selected ideas that currently weigh down what and how we think about the University of Pretoria. Reimagining is here best conceived as the university and its staff operating within the parameters of the possible. When Aimée Lê and Jordan Osserman (2021:63) wonder, '*Who will survive the university?*' they identify workers' transitional demand as 'a "reasonable" goal that workers can agree on, yet which is unlikely to be accommodated by the existing constraints of the situation, pointing towards structural flaws around which a transformative movement can be built'. What can change within the University of Pretoria should be reasonable; a reimagining is a reasonable activity that should, in this context, result in a reasonable proposal for change. With this in mind, the clichéd instruction to 'think outside of the box' can paralyse the thinker as there is always 'a box' in some shape of form – e.g. a global pandemic; limited resources – whose affordances must be taken into account. To reimagine, then, is to understand these parameters not only as limitations on the possible but as the shapes and contours in which tangible institutional change could occur.

The (death of the) neo-liberal university and what comes after

Although traditional universities in South Africa are public institutions, they are often neoliberal in culture and character. Rafael Winkler (2018), who has taught in South Africa as well as the United Kingdom, writes that the effect of neoliberalism is '[the commodification of] higher education and [the production of] a new kind of social identity. This is the identity of the self as entrepreneur'. With this conceiving of the student as entrepreneur, Winkler says, '[n]eoliberalism has converted education from a public good to a personal investment in the future, a future conceived in terms of earning capacity'. Within this identity, there is little emphasis on the creation of new knowledges and on ways, for instance, to challenge current business models and policies on national levels. Alex Usher (2017) recommends that analysis of the neoliberal university should address four key aspects requiring critical reflection, and are worth quoting at length:

> the role of markets, the role of competitions (in higher education at least, a broader notion than markets), the role of performance data and the role of management. And with respect to each, the analysis would ask: have universities changed very much over time, or have they always been this way? Are there now or have there ever been models of universities which operate in a different way? And to what extent are the effects of these four things beneficial or detrimental?

In critically and honestly evaluating the beneficial or detrimental effects of 'the way things are', we turn to the humanity that underscores all academic activity.

The university, the student, and the academic staff member

Labourers in the knowledge economy are often told to 'work smarter, not harder'. This advice is similar to 'if you love what you're doing, you'll never work a day in your life', in that both aphorisms place any labour discontent at the feet of the worker by suggesting that any dissatisfaction with work is because these individuals do not work smartly enough, or because they are not sufficiently invested in the work they do. The structures within which the labourer performs their work are not considered in these *demoralising* statements. If academic staff buy into those statements as accurate approaches to work-life, '[we] convince ourselves that our excessive working hours are either a result of personal insufficiency/inexpediency, or in the service of personal development and therefore uncompensatable' (Lê & Osserman 2021:65). Academics may find themselves 'driven to narcissism in order to self-promote and make ourselves employable' while also 'inhibited in our ability to work, ridden with guilt and anxiety' (ibid). To quote Patrick Stokes (2014): The belief that our work-lives should fulfil us also opens the door to a particularly damaging psychological phenomenon', a particular despair related to 'a fundamental desire not to be oneself'. Reflecting on this advice to 'work smarter, not harder' in the enduring and delimiting presence of Covid-19 (the virus and its variants; the regulations; the protocols), it is increasingly clear that this recommendation leaves a crucial part unspoken: work smarter, not harder, with fewer resources under constraining circumstances *that have further destabilised the already precarious work-home binary*.

Reflecting on Bill Reading's (1996) pivotal *The University in Ruins*, John Higgins (2007:121) sees the 'state-centered view of higher education promoted by the Afrikaans establishment' sustained (possibly intensified) in post-apartheid South Africa. This neoliberal approach demands that 'education and higher education need to be carefully controlled and directed, and tailored (sic) ... to the dynamics of the economy'. This approach echoes the institutional advancement of the student as entrepreneur. Later, Higgins (2014) also foregrounds the importance – and need for greater institutional and public salience of – NAIL disciplines. NAIL here stands for Narrative, Analysis, and Interpretation, and (visual-digital) Literacy (2014:78-80). *NAIL disciplines require time for thought*.

As Maggie Berg and Barbara K Seeber (2016) argue in *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*, '[c]orporatization has compromised academic life and sped up the clock. The administrative university is concerned above all with efficiency, resulting in a time crunch and making those of us subjected to it feel powerless'. In transnational cinema, a movement known as slow cinema allows viewers sufficient time to hone in on objects and focus on aspects of the image in a way not dictated by the camera shot or duration of the shot. This deliberate slowness results in a rich engagement with the many formal qualities of a film (such as its composition and texture). Similarly, slow academia facilitates a cerebral yet embodied encounter with knowledges and the materials of intellectual life that inform the creation of new knowledges. (In her review of Berg and Seeber's slow manifesto, Colleen Flaherty (2016) notes that the authors do not only value rigorous intellectual practice of a certain duration, but also emphasise the necessity of students' physical shared class presence).

Berg and Seeber '[argue] that teaching is an undeniably emotional activity for which one should be physically present, and that students also benefit from working face-to-face with their peers' (Flaherty 2016). Presence and pleasure, then, are an important part of the humanity that drives the academic project and the institution's aims. While the cope-speak of a 'new normal' engages with a particular pandemic imaginary, Berg and Seeber remind us that presence and pleasure constellate where students share a physical space with their peers and their lecturers.

Reflections

To reimagine the university is to rethink and then envision systemic and structural change, as well as the content of these structures. In this instance, the university is first reimagined as relieved of its immediate tangible fixedness and associations, and secondly reimagined within an alternative framework (conceptual and tangible) in which the creation of new knowledges can be reconceived and facilitated. As Philomena Essed once remarked at a Flexible Futures conference when commenting on the call to decolonise, processes such as decolonisation can only meaningfully happen when the systems and structure in which these processes take place are rethought and reconstituted.[4]

Where does this leave the post-neoliberal (or whatever it might be labelled) university and its relationship with staff and students? In reimagining the university, we need to think of an institution that offers the conditions for *knowledge originality* beyond the *replication of knowledge*. The former allows domain-and-discipline autonomy; the latter, monotony. With this distinction in mind, a reimagined UP acknowledges the contexts and diversities of the ever-rising, exponentially multiplying university rankings and sub-rankings without accepting university rankings as master signifier. World rankings make for numerous opinion pieces and *double-edged* marketing materials, and as many others have noted, these rankings are relentlessly oblivious to access to resources. One of the problems with university rankings is that the better an institution performs in a ranking, the more seriously one might begin to take the rankings exercise.

We need to retire some of our most popular phrases and expressions related to university life. The idea of the ivory tower is, at least in South Africa, surely a term that must be put out to pasture, especially since the Fallism of 2015 and beyond, as events have demonstrated that universities (its spaces, management, and staff) are deeply affected by socio-political events such as #FeesMustFall. The ivory tower has been replaced, maybe, by a sphere of precarity. This sphere is a possibly exciting, likely vulnerable, space. In this sphere, academics labour to maintain academic processes and integrity while dealing with a profound increase in student mental health issues, political upheaval, and a global pandemic. Whereas the ivory tower suggests an image of power in and of isolation from

4 How decolonised, for instance, is the current performance management system?

the non-ivory (the 'real world'), the image of the sphere of precarity emphasises the 'confinedness' of the contemporary academic space. Here, precarity is more constant than any 'protection' or distance an ivory tower might provide.

It is in further consideration of the above that we subsequently retire the phrase, 'the new normal'. Often employed in popular media to indicate the scope and depth of the ramifications of Covid-19 on the world, this phrase suggests (a 'new') sustained shift in operational standards and procedures, when the evidence proposes the absence of such predictably. Something is new, yes, but it is not 'normal', and it is not a sustained standard in and along which academic activity can predictably take place. In the world of research-intensive tertiary education, we were already cautious about the connotations of 'the normal'. There is now a double-speak (or maybe a double-bind, psychologically speaking) in how the university communicates with its stakeholders: teaching modalities must necessarily adapt to this 'new normal' in which all kinds of distance (not only physical or social) are foregrounded and ostensibly collapsed. This signals to staff and students that necessary change is at hand. At the same time, and against these profound tangible changes in teaching and learning, the 'new normal' is not very new after all: students must pass, staff must publish, and rankings matter.

There have been notable shifts in how the university sees and positions its students. Broadly, this positional shift occurred across three categories. The first category is the student-as-client, as captured in the renaming of Client Service Centre (CSC). This category followed the neoliberal logic of student as capital-delivering subject, a subject endowed with the privileges of claiming the right to 'speak to the manager', as it were, if dissatisfied with decisions made by lecturing staff about assessments, grades, or course content. Here, the idea of the academic-as-expert suffered a further decline as the client-centered approach inevitably eroded the barrier between pretend-curiosity-about-a-subject and academic expertise in a specific domain and discipline.

The second category followed a return to the student-as-student, as a subject pursuing knowledge creation within a tertiary training and education context (hence the return to the Student Services Centre, or SSC). This repositioning did not cross over into institutional discussions of the student-at-work, as demonstrated by increasing reports and feedback required on student throughput rates, and the increase in administration that academic staff are responsible for, from identifying at-risk students at different stages of presenting

a module, to recording and uploading additional audio-visual material to orient students on how to approach the content of a specific module. The third shift – where we are now, although this is not a publicised, marketable shift – is a (latent) repositioning of *the student as palliative subject*. As a colleague at the University of Cape Town commented in 2019, students have become profoundly uninterested in the content of the work they are studying. At the same time, these students are increasingly anxious about the mechanics of course content delivery (e.g. if the TurnItIn link could be made available a bit earlier than initially arranged; how much to despair if the similarity index is 3%). The palliative subject is regularly reminded that they are fragile and vulnerable. Their conditions-of-life are streamlined and optimised for them in an institutional version of helicopter-parenting. This image of the student stands in contrast to the multiple demonstrations of agency, capability, and ownership that students perform in their public and private lives. Against the dynamic agency exhibited by most students, institutions often imagine students to have become subjects to be soothed and to be consistently monitored for risk. If UP emphasises a ready-for-work institutional environment which prepares the student for work conditions that can radically change at short notice, this position must be reconsidered.

If we are sincerely invested in embracing crises as opportunities for a positive intervention in moving away from the dehumanising (or at least, humanity-denying) aspects of neoliberal university practices, reimagining UP means reimagining how the institution itself conceives of its students and, as pointed out earlier, how the institution conceives of the academic staff, their labour, and the parameters (institutional ranking requirements; pandemic conditions) in which such labour is, and ought to be, delivered.

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Reimagining the University of Pretoria: Engaging in the realisation of the circular economy as a transformative approach to a sustainable global future

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Introduction

Universities are under pressure from multiple sources to change. There are demands that higher education institutions should be more inclusive (Trisos, Auerbach & Katti 2021), that curricula be decolonised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015), transformed, and integrated, that students be better prepared for the future world of work (Kupe 2021a), that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) be starting points for all teaching and research (Kestin, Van den Belt, Denby, Ross, Thwaites & Hawkes 2017), that learning be blended, and that universities play a more active role in rebuilding the economy (Kupe 2021b; Petersen 2020).

The University of Pretoria is already responding to a lot of these pressures. It has initiated processes for cultural transformation, curricula transformation, and blended learning. It is building a Centre for the Study of the Future of Work. It is actively pursuing transdisciplinary research as a new approach to solving complex social problems. It is building new networks with African universities through the African Research Universities Alliance (Kupe 2021a).

Such responses are important. However, universities should not just be responsive; they also need to encourage the practice of experimentation, to try new ideas in the hope of building better futures. Universities not only mirror society, they are also instrumental in building the types of societies in which we hope to live. It is with this perspective on the role of a university that I present this input to the broader discussion on 'reimagining the University of Pretoria'.

Directionality and the second deep transition

Environmental collapse and social inequality are the two most important challenges for the modern world. Barely a day passes without a news item on the consequences of global warming such as devastating fires, floods, cyclones,

or droughts. In its pre-release of the Sixth Assessment Report, the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that unless there are immediate and sustained reductions in the emissions of greenhouse gases, global warming will cross the 1.5 °C threshold within 20 years and no region will escape one of its several consequences, including heatwaves, loss of habitats, and flooding (IPCC 2021).

Similarly, the Covid-19 pandemic has pushed millions of people below the poverty line and deepened inequality (Buheji, da Costa Cunha, Beka, Mavric, De Souza, da Costa Silva, Hanafi & Yein 2020; World Bank 2020). The events of the last two years have reinforced the importance of addressing economic inequality and climate change, whilst making it more difficult to do so. The SDGs adopted by the United Nations as a blueprint for a future without poverty and environmental degradation (UN General Assembly 2015) seem more remote and unattainable than in the five years from 2015 to 2019, when global economic growth reached 3%.

One possible solution is to reconfigure the meta-rules and underlying values of global socio-technical systems, as suggested by the principles of the Second Deep Transition (Kanger & Schot 2019). The revision of society's meta-rules, in accordance with the SDGs, will introduce a new 'directionality of development', steering it towards circular, low carbon, and resource efficient practices, reflected across a broad range of socio-technical systems (Schot & Kanger 2018). In this context, socio-technical system refers to a 'configuration of actors, technologies, and institutions' fulfilling a specific societal function such as mobility, energy, and food production (Kanger & Schot 2019: 3). The adoption of alternative meta-rules will expedite the emergence of new and more sustainable systems, disrupting the historical patterns of consumption and exploitation.

Within a university context, such a reconfiguration will induce a redirection of the teaching and research activities towards the circular economy (CE). In the next section, the concept of CE is explained.

Overview of the circular economy

The exact origins of the concept of CE are somewhat unclear, as is its precise meaning (Kirchherr, Reike & Hekkert 2017). The idea appears to have emerged from the theoretical contributions from several disciplines, including industrial ecology and environmental economics (Ghisellini, Cialani & Ulgiati 2016). It was

first reported in the academic literature in the late 1990s (Zhu 1998), and became formally accepted as a new development model for China in 2002 (Dajian 2008; Yuan, Bi & Moriguichi 2006).

In this article, CE is used to refer to a systemic shift in patterns of production and consumption from 'take, make, and dispose' to 'recover, repair, refurbish, and recycle', the latter known as the 4Rs of CE (Stahel 2019). Such an approach to the use of natural resources is illustrated in Figure 4.

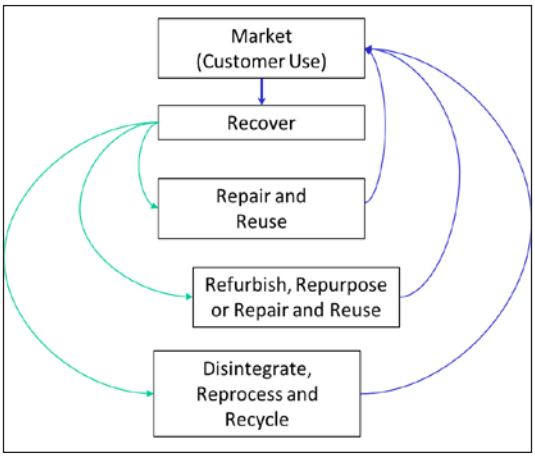

Figure 4. The 4Rs of the circular economy

The potential impact of CE is significant and appealing, given its close link to the priorities of environmental sustainability and social justice. It can address many of the SDGs, especially SDG 7 (access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production).

However, most of the technologies which will be required to give materiality to CE have yet to be developed. Industrial processes for the production of green hydrogen or the refining of metal ores without the use of coal, or the manufacture of bioplastics have only been validated at small scale, and are presently costly relative to the fossil fuel-based routes. Moreover, in sectors such as electricity generation, although the renewable technologies are competitive, there are many technological problems still to be resolved before global energy systems

can become totally reliant on energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and hydro.

Universities and other public research organisations will need to play a major role in the development of technologies to support the emergence of CE. In the next section, further proposals as to how the University of Pretoria could become a leading organisation in such programmes are outlined. The proposals are divided into areas relating to research (Section 4) and teaching (Section 5).

Priorities for new knowledge generation (research)

Implementation of CE within socio-technical systems will require extensive new knowledge, generated in transdisciplinary spaces at public research organisations such as the University of Pretoria. Already, research on CE has attracted widespread attention and interest is growing exponentially, as shown in Figure 5.

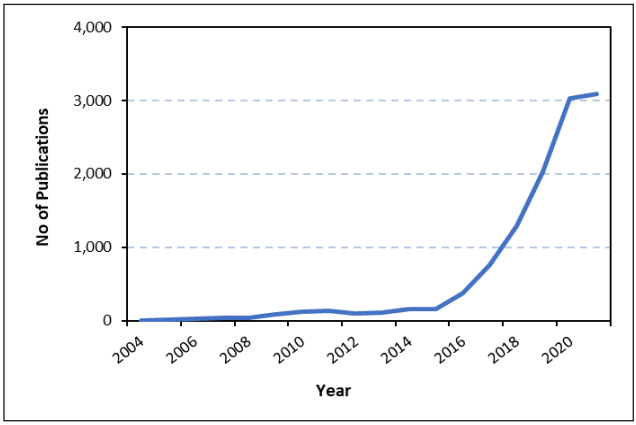

Figure 5. Scientific publications on the circular economy (2001 to 2020)

Several areas of opportunity for the university are now presented; the ideas are drawn from a number of sources and personal insights of the manufacturing sector (Iacovidou, Geyer, Kalow, Palardy, Dunn, Hoellein, Xiong & Chen 2021; Dewick, Bengtsson, Cohen, Sarkis & Schröder 2020; EU Circular Cooperation Hub 2020; Mendoza, Gallego-Schmid & Azapagic 2019).

All of the areas share three underlying values or principles: first, the importance of transdisciplinary research; second, the conduct of research as

'an agent of change', and third, the framework of *Ukama*, which considers that human existence has meaning only in relationship to the well-being of other forms of existence and the physical world (Swilling 2019). Together, the three principles endorse a post-modernist perspective that knowledge is contextual and situated. In their methodological decisions, researchers therefore have an obligation to ensure not only that their research questions are aligned with broader imperatives for change, but also link directly to processes that can facilitate this change.

Area 1: Design for circularity

Design is a cross-cutting activity which includes aspects of architecture, industrial engineering, business science, accounting, creative arts, and materials science. Design for circularity is a holistic approach which focuses on how a product can be more easily recovered, separated into components, and then either repaired, refurbished, or recycled, depending on the extent of its malfunction or redundancy (Medkova & Fifield 2016).

Examples of this approach to design include eco-design and the six strategies of circular product design, namely product attachment and trust; product durability; standardisation and compatibility; ease of maintenance and repair; upgradability and adaptability; dis- and re-assembly (Medkova & Fifield 2016).

Area 2: Transition studies and research activism

The adoption of CE will require fundamental changes to individual behaviour, and the engagement of citizens in the transition process will be critical. Based on the theoretical framework of the social construction of technology, cultural practices and norms are inseparable from the technologies, the producers, and the users. Furthermore, prior studies have shown that household consumption is responsible for 72% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Dubois, Sovacool, Aall, Nilsson, Barbier, Herrmann, Bruyère, Andersson, Skold & Nadaud 2019). It is apparent that changing patterns of consumption at household level will be fundamental to an overall reduction in carbon emissions. Disappointingly, changes through voluntary means will result in an estimated 50% reduction relative to the required levels (Dubois et al. 2019). Forced changes seem inevitable.

Using the methodology of action research, social scientists can support the development of new cultural practices relating to many parts of CE, including waste management, recycling, second-hand markets, upcycling, and resource utilisation. The objective of this research area would be to understand processes of transition, and also to train new generations of research activists, who will facilitate the development of new cultural practices to support the goals of CE.

Area 3: Circular materials and decarbonisation

In most cases, the manufacturing and construction sectors rely on raw materials obtained through energy and carbon intensive processing. In some cases, these materials are being rapidly depleted. The refining of metals, the production of cement, and the manufacture of plastics all require the use of coal or oil, and emit large volumes of carbon dioxide. The decarbonisation of these processing routes and their conversion to CE is an important research topic, the pursuit of which could place the University of Pretoria as a leading CE research organisation.

Examples of high priority areas including the commercialisation of bioplastics, and the decarbonisation of steel production, cement manufacture, pulp and paper production, and chemicals manufacture (Nurdiawati & Urban 2021). Addressing these challenges could be achieved in a transdisciplinary initiative across the university, with the involvement of several faculties.

Area 4: Recovery technologies and waste management

Many manufactured items, such as motor vehicles and electronic equipment, use a complex mixture of primary materials including metals, plastics, glass, and chemicals. At the end of life, these individual components need to be separated and recovered. There are two main approaches to this challenge, a priori design for recovery and then the use of sophisticated sorting equipment. In terms of the latter, there are existing technologies based on physical, electromagnetic, and other properties of the materials, including X-ray diffraction and moisture content (EU Circular Cooperation Hub 2020).

However, these technologies are only an initial step towards CE. Another potential area is the use of blockchain technology to trace and recover precious metals, to monitor household level consumption, and to find opportunities for

enhanced recycling technologies (Upadhyay, Mukhuty, Kumar & Kazancoglu 2021; Kouhizadeh, Zhu & Sarkis 2020).

Priorities for education

In terms of tertiary education, CE will require the development of new modules, new educational materials, and new degree programmes. Most significantly, it will be an opportunity for the university to experiment with novel transdisciplinary programmes that allow students to combine courses from different disciplines in order to prepare themselves for a new economy, based on the principles of CE.

For example, an undergraduate programme resulting in a bachelor's degree in CE design could include courses from industrial engineering, fine art, business science, and materials science. Similarly, programmes in CE transition studies could draw on modules from sociology, political science, engineering, and the built environment.

Public education organisations need to educate students not only to prepare them for employment, but also to enable them to take decisions based on evidence and the principles embodied by the SDGs, including the need to address issues of environmental and social justice. In addition to domain-specific skills, educational programmes also need to include the development of core skills in hermeneutics (analysis, interpretation, understanding, and communication); the issues of *Ukama* and social justice; the concept of the public good (contributing to the development of capabilities in areas that will lead to necessary changes); development of self-confidence and capability (making sense of their lives and realising their goals); and creativity (finding novel solutions).

Ultimately, one of the most important benefits of a university education for a student is the development of capability to function, or the enhancement of agency through the development of individual capabilities, resulting in the realisation of functionings (Walwyn & Combrinck 2021). The model derives from the work of Amartya Sen, who considered that development was primarily an issue of education (Sen 1999), as illustrated in Figure 6.

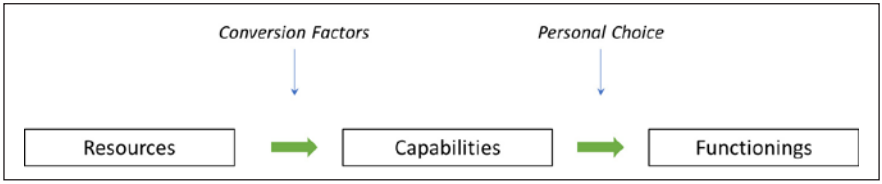

Figure 6. Conversion factors, capabilities, and functionings

Conclusion

The transition to a circular economy will require fundamental changes to the way that natural resources are accessed, manufactured into technological products, recirculated, and replenished. The University of Pretoria can support this transition through its research, teaching, and outreach activities.

It can establish new research themes in important areas such as circular design, transition studies, circular materials, and waste management. It can introduce new transdisciplinary qualifications, especially in post-graduate degree programmes, that combine modules from different disciplines so as to provide students with marketable skills in CE.

It will not be able to achieve these outcomes on its own. It needs to build university industry clusters at local and continental level, support social innovations like living labs, the training of entrepreneurs, and engage in partnerships with other universities. The university must also be part of the change process. In this way, it will not only provide the knowledge and skills for CE, it will also be a model for the type of society within which we want to live.

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The evolving landscape of higher education

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Introduction

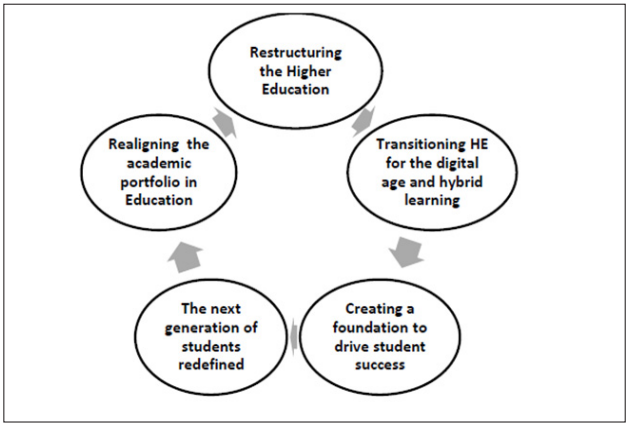
Globally, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has ensured a mandatory shift away from traditional forms of education to online education platforms (Abelskamp & Santamarinam 2020). International consensus is that during the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, universities were particularly affected. Students experienced a great deal of stress due to being unsettled, especially owing to a breakdown of the structural environment. This included physical classes being moved online; semester exams, tests, and assignments being postponed; and examination times being adjusted. In addition, students in rural areas, poverty-stricken communities, and remote settings experienced difficulty with internet connectivity, poor internet coverage, and an intermittent electricity supply (Anifowoshe, Aborode, Ayodele, Iretiayo & David 2020; Owusu-Fordjour, Koomson & Hanson 2020).

These challenges, together with students being confronted with an unexpected shift to online teaching, prompted researchers to focus particularly on the emotional wellbeing of students. Many research questions were posed regarding students' wellbeing during the pandemic, when in fact, prior to Covid-19, South African universities had already begun to investigate the well-being of students, families, and broader communities through addressing societal inequality and overcoming the ravages of apartheid (Eloff & Graham 2020). While we continue to redress socio-economic disparities, globally we face an outbreak of the pandemic in which, according to Aristovnik, Keržič, Ravšelj, Tomaževič and Umek (2020), we need to closely collaborate and urgently pay attention to vulnerable student groups, whilst attempting to ameliorate the diverse and negative effects and consequences of prolonged Covid-19 measures around the world.

Having said this, there is an urgent need for in-depth exploration of ways to uplift our universities with their existing challenges, and to subsequently move towards an effective approach in which our students can flourish, and at the same time, meet global outcomes for creating alternative pathways to support

our students' progress with learning. The figure below outlines our discussion to support the initiative of reimagining the University of Pretoria (UP) in a more innovative world.

Figure 7. Reimagining the University of Pretoria



Restructuring higher education

According to Selingo (2013), two important aspects in higher education (HE) need to be addressed, the first being effective online delivery of learning content and the second, a more vocational focus that aims to facilitate training for a specific job or skill. In line with our department, our teaching module provides a strong theoretical foundation for teaching and learning. This is followed by a practical module where prospective teachers visit school sites as interns, and their theoretical knowledge is assessed in a real-life context. Post-Covid-19, our university can create an online tutorial centre where potential teachers can gain competence at a trained facility. This online tutorial service can be offered to schools across the country at nominal cost. Creating a digitised platform can generate greater demand, especially when teachers under close supervision provide such a service. Such teachers can then be hired on a permanent basis to support teachers in training in this way ensuring job security, as well as providing an incentive to choose this degree at UP.

When considering potential Masters Students drawn from the Department of Educational Psychology, training should focus on online psychometric assessments and tools, as most countries around the world have adopted these

online tools, which facilitate easy scoring. A centre within the Department of Educational Psychology can focus on competency-based courses that can support Masters Students and professional psychologists to gain knowledge and acquire competency skills on an annual basis. These processes can be facilitated at the university, rather than students having to pay for courses to acquire CPD points outside the institution. The Department has trained psychologists who can offer workshops to our students, but can also extend this service outside the University for a nominal charge. In-house training can also cater for the broader market. This type of support can enhance the student-for-life concept, in terms of which UP students continue to learn, develop, and remain up to date in their professional careers.

Transitioning higher education for the digital age and hybrid learning

Sledge and Fishman (2020) reflect the consensus that HE can appropriately meet the demands of the current digital era and of today's tech-savvy students if it uses the cloud, social networks, mobile computing, and big data to create digital learning ecosystems that serve entrepreneurial learners, enabling them to design their own educational paths based on their personal learning goals. Similarly, the associate director of the Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute, George Siemens, states, 'The way we learn should be our most personalized experience because no two people process information the same way.'

Stanford University has embraced reimagining higher education of students by partnering with the online learning platform Khan Academy. This initiative piloted a blended learning 'flipped classroom' biochemistry course, allowing students to watch video lectures online and then spent class time solving problems, maximising the time that students were able to spend with lecturers. This partnership was extended to the medical school, enabling Stanford medical students to watch core curriculum videos online, and freeing up class time for students to engage with the curriculum together with their peers and professors, and to explore areas of interest which had been identified earlier in childhood (Ferenstein 2012; Straumsheim 2013). A similar concept can be adopted by our department to support our students to learn in an innovative way. They can learn within a global network which is easily accessible.

Creating a foundation to drive student success

According to Sledge and Fishman (2020), to successfully adapt to the forces impacting on HE, colleges and universities should make the following strategic choices to enhance their effectiveness (see Table 1 below).

Who do we want to serve?	
Customer segment(s)	• Department of Education • Potential educators • Trained educators • Special needs educators • Educational psychologists • Counsellors with specific competencies in place, allowing them to provide support
What products and services do we provide to students?	
Product(s) or service(s)	• Specific degrees • Different modules taught • Digital competency • Developing other competencies By clearly defining products and services provided to students, UP can better articulate their unique value as competition across the higher education industry continues to increase.
How do we provide products and services to students?	
Channel(s)	UP can tailor their products and services to provide customised learning models, integrating components of just-right education for the targeted student segment. Education can be delivered in person, online, or as a hybrid of both.
Who do we need to partner with to deliver products and services to students?	
Partnership(s)	With defined products and services, UP can seek partnerships to support student success. These partnerships could be with employers, educational tech companies, or even with alternative education providers.

Table 1. Strategic choices to enhance effectiveness

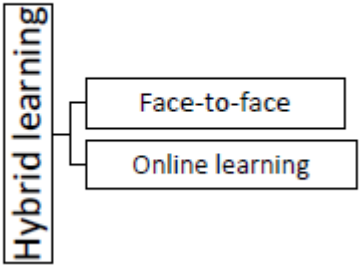
The next generation of students redefined

The 2021 Senate meeting of the University of Pretoria spoke to the next generation of students who will think, teach, learn, and create knowledge in meaningful ways to become effective leaders. Developing competencies is one way to fast-track students for the professional world. Developing competency-based learning, which can be aligned to a specific degree, will enable students to gain practical skills within their professions. The Department of Educational Psychology has launched the Badges4EDU initiative, involving competency-based activities which allow students to complete a particular task and gain competency in digitisation, evidence-based content to enable competencies within their field of study, and lastly improve their emotional well-being. We would like students to be awarded these competencies, based on hours of learning, as well as based on skills level. These competency-based skills can show-case their talent, and provide an advantage when these students apply for prospective employment.

These competency-based courses or learning skills can be introduced as a separate course within the Department, enabling students with different levels of knowledge to learn in innovative ways, to progress at a variable pace. According to Deloitte University Press (2017), instead of using the number of hours completed as a yardstick for success, competency-based degree programmes can focus on whether students actually master the materials. This idea derives from the work of Jeffrey Selingo (2013), who explains that degrees should be based on how much students know, not on how much time they spend in lecture halls. Competency-based learning can reward prior experience and measure learning through demonstrated proficiency, once skills have been demonstrated. Such courses can cater for diverse students from different backgrounds who face financial challenges. Such students may not be able to afford to study for a full degree, but they can progress through individual courses at their own pace, reducing or expanding the time period required to complete their degree. The number of institutions offering competency-based degrees has expanded in recent years to include large public universities, including the University of Wisconsin, Purdue University, the University of Texas, the University of Michigan, and Northern Arizona University.

Realigning the academic portfolio in education

A recent study of excellence in higher education (Selingo, Clark, Noone & Wittmayer 2021) highlighted the following post-Covid-19 strategies for creating a hybrid educational institution, which would enable a lifetime of learning and success:



Hybrid learning	Online learning	Face-to-face
Academic programmes can be provided as individual courses	Experiential learning	Theoretical aspects in module
Rethink the academic calendar to cycle students beyond traditional semester schedules.		
Build virtual communities		
Develop flexible academic programmes		
Create alliances with other universities to share courses in low-enrolment, critical areas		
Mobilise human talent in hard-to-reach communities		
Create professional developmental programmes		
Employ external training opportunities for faculty members		

Table 2. Post-Covid-19 strategies for creating a hybrid educational institution.
Source: Inspired by the work of Selingo et al. (2021).

Conclusion

Looking ahead, HE is evolving, and as an institution we need to welcome new methods of instruction, and award new certifications of competencies in line with high standards of teaching and learning. Covid-19 has taught us to step out

of our comfort zones and adapt to change, seize opportunities, and embrace the continuous and extraordinary innovations taking place. Establishing a standard of excellence in this new era will take work, but we have already made significant progress by delving into hybrid learning and teaching. Next we need to reinvent and create a strong foundation to conceptualise how the landscape for HE can continue to evolve in the years ahead.

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Accommodating religious identities in the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty

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Introduction

Religion is a sensitive issue in most workplaces. In secular work environments, employees may not understand why some colleagues choose to foreground their religious identities. Employees may present their religious identities upfront if faith is a key aspect of their core identities. They may choose to behave in particular ways in the workplace that align with their faith (such as praying or fasting) if such rituals are a critical aspect of their day-to-day existence. The religious affiliation of some employees manifests at every juncture. For example, Muslims will pray before work, while at work, when they leave home, when they travel, etc. Employers should, therefore, make an effort to be inclusive within their respective work cultures. They should try to accommodate employees with different religious affiliations, as well as staff members who do not subscribe to any formal expression of religious belief.

In this paper, I highlight some of the steps that have been taken by the Heads of Departments within the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty to accommodate employees of different faiths. Furthermore, I highlight aspects of the EMS Faculty work which still need to be addressed to ensure inclusivity of employees and visitors of diverse religious backgrounds.

I begin with a discussion about rights and labour legislation, namely, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission), the South African Charter of Religious Rights and Freedoms, the Employment Equity Act of 1998, and the *Protection of Personal Information (*POPI) Act of 2013.

Legislation and national policies

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities

In the mid-1990s the South African Constitution established a number of bodies known as 'Chapter Nine institutions' to safeguard democracy in South Africa (Carrim 2016). The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (the CRL Rights Commission) is one of these bodies (South African Constitution 1996). The objective of the CRL Rights Commission in terms of Chapter 9 section 185(1) of the Constitution is to promote respect for, and further protection of, the rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities; to promote and develop peace, friendship, humility, tolerance, national unity among and within cultural, religious, and linguistic communities on the basis of equality, non-discrimination, and free association; to promote the right of communities to develop their historically diminished heritage; and to recognise community councils (South Africa 1996). The CRL Rights Commission is therefore tasked to take care of people's religious freedom on a macro level. It still has unresolved issues, evidenced by the protests of a number of religious groups that certain Christian festival days are deemed official public holidays, but the same privilege has not been extended to the important religious celebrations of all faith groups (Carrim 2017).

South African Charter of Religious Rights and Freedoms (SACRRF)

The charter was developed by South African religious and civil organisations with the intention of defining the religious rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of South African citizens (South Africa 2021).

Employment Equity Act of 1998

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 prohibits unfair discrimination in employment and aims to encourage the recruitment, selection, and retention of a diverse workforce. Section 6(1), Chapter 2 of the Act deals with the prohibition of unfair discrimination and states explicitly that no individuals may be discriminated against in the workplace because of their religious beliefs (South Africa 1998).

Protection of Personal Information Act of 2013

The Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act of 2013 aims to ensure that the personal information of all individuals is protected. The POPI Act grants individuals certain rights of protection, and the option to limit access to their personal information (South Africa 2013).

Section 26 of the POPI Act refers to a particular category of personal information designated 'special personal information'. Section 26 includes, amongst others, personal, religious, and philosophical beliefs (South Africa 2013). The PoPI Act grants individuals the right to share such special personal information only when, and to the extent that they wish to do so unless it is necessary to disclose such information in terms of the law or for research, historical, or statistical purposes (South Africa 2013). Thus, within the workplace, a manager may not compel an employee to disclose certain types of personal information, such as religious beliefs, unless it is necessary to do so.

Code of Conduct and Anti-discrimination Act, University of Pretoria

All staff at the University of Pretoria are required to sign an online Code of Conduct which stipulates that employees cannot be discriminated against on any grounds. The University also has an anti-discrimination policy, which stipulates that employees will not be discriminated against on any basis.

Methodology

I sent a questionnaire regarding departmental accommodation of diverse religious beliefs to the Deputy Dean (Research) in the EMS Faculty, Prof Karin Barac, asking her to pass on copies to the Head of the EMS Departments (HODs), and request the HODs to complete and return the questionnaire. The questionnaires requested HODs to complete a table (shown below), and to answer various open-ended questions, which follow:

HODs were given the following instruction: Please complete the table and indicate the number of employees in your department who follow a particular religion or do not follow a religion (see Appendix A).

Table 1

Department	Religious identity / Non-believers / A-religious					
	Muslim	Hindu	Christian	African religion	Other	Non-religious/a-religious

Open-ended questions

A. How are the following addressed in your respective department? Please elaborate.

1. Religious celebrations

2. Religious activities (for example, fasting, prayers)

B. How are non-religious/a-religious people accommodated in your respective department?

The HODs in the Faculty responded to the questionnaire. I will now discuss the range of responses that were received. I also mention the remarks of three staff members, who belonged to minority groups in the Faculty, regarding accommodating religious differences in the EMS Faculty.

HOD responses regarding religious accommodation

Not all HODs were comfortable disclosing the actual numbers of staff members of different faiths in their respective departments. I was, therefore, unable to ascertain the number of staff members in the faculty who belonged to particular religious groups, or the number of staff members who did not have religious beliefs. For example, HOD A commented:

> I take note of the question below that requests me to list the number of staff for each religion. I do not think that I know exactly what religion each and every staff member practice[s]. I do know who requires *halaal* food, vegetarian food, sugar-free food, and wheat-free food, but not all staff request this because of religious reasons. I do know that some staff are Christian, Muslim, and Hindu because we have discussed this, and also because staff request leaves for

specific religious holidays, for example, Ascension Day (Christian), Eid (Muslim), and Diwali (Hindu). I also know that some staff believes that there is no God, and also that others believe in a universal God, as we sometimes have private philosophical debates. Some staff, however, like to participate in these debates and debates from various perspectives. Staff also request leave for personal rituals related to the African religion. I will, therefore, only list the presence of each religion in the Department, but not the numbers.

Religious diversity in departments

Some HODs responded that they had staff members with diverse religious backgrounds, while others said that they had a limited range of staff members with different religious affiliations. One HOD indicated that staff represented just one religious group.

HOD M responded as follows:

> Our department has a diverse staff component – Christian, Muslim, and Jewish religions, to name a few.

HOD T commented:

> ... We are all Christian in our department.

HOD M remarked:

> Currently, we have a relatively homogenous religious cohort in the department. [The] staff are from one religious group only.

Visibility of religious identities

HODs had different ways of ascertaining the religious identities of staff. HOD B shared the following response:

> A fascinating aspect of the world of work and always experienced as being sensitive and a 'please let's not go there' topic. The absolute contrary occurred when I approached my staff to discuss religion in the workplace, concerning *recognition*, *conception* (which is a critical

> issue), and *accommodation*. The Department of B is an extensive academic unit in our Faculty and in total [has] close to 60 staff members (permanent, part-time, assistants, and tutors). I've included the whole spectrum as we all interact, engage, and share. Our scope and representation in terms of religious diversity include[s] the following: Islam; Christian (Protestant, Catholic, Pentecostal, and African-initiated churches); spiritual but church agnostic; and atheists. An attempt to open a discussion inclusive of *recognition*, *conception* and *accommodation* was not found to be suitable in a formal departmental meeting. We followed a phased process:

Phase 1 – An anonymous submission of 'tell us about your religion.'

Phase 2 – An open and one-on-one discussion with the HoD on what matters, what worries [them], and what can we change in the workplace (reflecting on your religion and linked principles, values, and beliefs).

Phase 3 – Manage the workplace to accommodate via open discussion (and addressing workload, scheduling, and time off pertaining to specifics, e.g. *Ramadan* and announce and celebrate, for instance, *Eid al-Fitr/Eid al-Adha*[,] not only Christmas and other global religious highlights).

Phase 2 was an absolute highlight in the process of comprehending, and likewise strategising, the future of inclusiveness and accommodation (e.g. the planned establishment of a reflection room or 'quiet' room). It was the first experience for many and more than productive, insightful, and filled with compassion. Not a single staff member experienced religious bullying at UP, but [they] seek much more understanding of especially traditions and even shared values (e.g. benefitting humanity and unselfishness). Phase 3 is an ongoing process and will evolve in more practical terms once we move back to the office environment.

One must manage a fundamental principle pertaining to newly appointed staff members and accommodate religion from the first day of employment towards recognition, inclusiveness, and open communication.

HOD M remarked:

> The Head of Department has a discussion with every employee (upon appointment) regarding their religious background, and what this means for the individual in their working environment. In the past, colleagues in the department were made aware of special religious commemorations such as *Diwali*, Easter, *Ramadan,* and Christmas, and the staff was free to congratulate one another on these special occasions. Currently, we have less discussion about religion because, while diverse in terms of race, culture, and country of origin, staff have similar religious backgrounds at the moment (for example, we do not currently have staff members that celebrate *Diwali* or *Ramadan*). Overall we have a very open culture where staff are free to share their beliefs – often during our voluntary departmental tea times.

On the other hand, HOD H pointed out:

> Some colleagues are unconfirmed or unknown. I believe religion is a personal part of a person, and if they wish to share with me as line manager their personal voice or belief (in a one-to-one or in the group) then they are open to doing so. I personally feel it invasive to ask someone point-blank about their religion or spiritual identity without being invited to do so (you need to show self and social awareness and sensitivity in this case). Religion is part of a person's personal life, and if the colleague wishes to share their beliefs and discuss them (in a group or one-to-one), I am open to it. It pertains from individual to individual.

HOD E voiced their opinion as follows:

> The majority of people in the department do not really feel it is any of our business to ask.

Religious celebrations

Most of the HODs responded that staff members are given leave to observe their religious festival days. For example, HOD F noted:

Staff have been accommodated on their religious requests regarding leave and non-attendance of certain functions for religious reasons.

HOD H noted:

> Although I am a Christian, I should not impose my personal views and celebrations on others. As a line manager, I make sure to use general terminology, and not-labelled – For instance, not saying 'Christmas party', but 'Farewell party'. Also, 'Enjoy the holidays!' and not 'Happy Christmas!', etc. Be aware that throughout the year, different religious celebrations occur. As far as possible, try not to schedule meetings or functions during that period when you are made aware of it, but if unavoidable, excuse the colleagues from work commitments.

HOD T commented:

> During birthday celebrations, spring day, and year-end functions a prayer will be said, taking into consideration that we are all Christians in the department.

Dietary requirements

The HODs noted that they tried to accommodate the dietary needs of their staff as far as possible.

HOD H had the following to say:

> You need to cater for everyone's needs, therefore, make sure to cater and be sensitive to the dietary needs of all colleagues. If you do not know the exact dietary needs of colleagues, make sure when an invitation is sent out, that it requires to indicate dietary needs from colleagues. If a colleague specifies dietary needs, be open to catering to the needs of the colleague as far as possible. Although it is not possible to cater 100% to each colleague's dietary needs, as far as possible, you need to be sure there is an inclusivity (shared) component of food between all, and they also cater to individuals who requested specific food due to their dietary requirements.

Religious activities

HODs indicated that where possible, they take cognisance of diverse religious activities.

HOD A pointed out:

> When somebody dies or somebody's relative dies then the Departmental group is vocal with 'We are thinking of you', 'You are in our prayers and thoughts'. Fasting is not accommodated only in the sense that we try to be sensitive not to eat around people who are fasting. We know that we have Christians and Muslims in the Department who fast for specific periods of time. We do not pray as a team, but we allow for quiet time if people would like to pray, meditate, or think about somebody during a difficult time.

HOD H noted:

> Colleagues should feel they can practise their faith as it suits them, and according to their religious practices. Like religious celebrations, be aware and be open when it is shared with you by a colleague who may be from a different religion and belief or faith practice. Accommodate colleagues as far as possible not to schedule meetings or functions during that time, but if not avoidable, then give the option to the colleague to be excused.

HOD F remarked:

> The Department accommodates staff for religious activities. However, such activities have to be brought to the attention of the HOD in order to be accommodated.

Accommodating non-religious and a-religious staff

HODs felt that they accommodated non-religious and a-religious staff in the same way that they managed employees who belonged to diverse religious faiths.

HOD H commented:

> As a line manager, you need to avoid certain religious terminology. For instance, do not say when you talk to the group, 'We pray for a full recovery', [but] rather say 'We are thinking of you during this time'.

HOD F commented:

> Non-religious/a-religious groups are treated fairly. Each staff member is treated and respected in the same manner.

HOD A reflected:

> We do not accommodate any person differently from another person. But we also do not exclude staff when we allow for quiet time after, for example, the death of somebody the whole team knew. Maybe we should, but I must admit, I have not thought to do it in the past. We very much follow the method used during graduations and we might still have to reflect on this.

128 HOD M said:

> The general notion in the Department is that staff need to be respectful of each other's beliefs and practices. The Department currently does not celebrate any form of religious celebration/activity at work; thus there is no difference between how 'religious versus non-religious' individuals are managed. No staff member is forced to participate in, or engage with, religious expressions such as prayer, rituals, or written or oral accounts.

Staff anecdotes

Two staff members noted that they could be accommodated further in terms of their religious beliefs, but one was satisfied with the way in which she had been embraced in her Department.

Staff member H, a woman who belonged to the Hindu faith, stated:

> I am accommodated in my Department in terms of my religious beliefs.

Staff member D referred to a Jewish visitor's dietary requirements. He mentioned that he had requested the departmental administrator to arrange for *kosher* food to be delivered to his office for the visiting academic for lunch. Unfortunately, the administrator was unable to procure *kosher* food from the list of university vendors. Also, he could not find *kosher* food in the campus cafeteria.

Staff member X mentioned that while there were Muslim vendors on the procurement list, *halaal* food was not purchased for social functions. Rather, non-*halaal* vendors would buy *halaal* chicken from Woolworths and cook it in their own containers. Staff member X pointed out that the chicken would no longer be *halaal* as the dish that the chicken was cooked in had previously been used to cook non-*halaal* food, and so the container would contaminate the food.

Departments within the EMS Faculty need to take cognisance of venues where *kosher* and *halaal* food can be purchased, since food purchased at non-*halaal* or non-*kosher* eateries cannot be regarded as *kosher* or *halaal*.

Colleague M from the Diversity and Inclusion Committee believed that HODs should allow staff with different religious beliefs to express these within the workplace. Also, when prayers had to be conducted, for example before eating or at a meeting, then this should be done silently and individually, and religious beliefs should not be imposed on people who were not religious.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have described some of the opinions of HODs and staff in the EMS Faculty regarding attitudes to religious faith in the workplace. The comments described do not represent the official views of the University of Pretoria.

It is nevertheless evident that more could be done in the EMS Faculty to accommodate staff and visiting scholars in terms of their religious beliefs.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Prof Karin Barac and Michel Tshiyoyo of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee at the EMS Faculty for their constructive comments on this piece. I would also like to thank the HODs and staff for their valuable input during the data collection phase.

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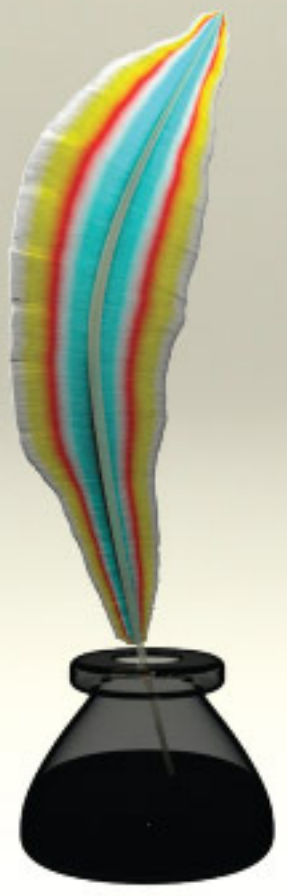
INSTITUTIONAL CURIOSITY

Edited by Mary Crewe

This is the first collection of writing by various UP academics about reimagining UP and how it may look in the future. These are opinion pieces, thoughts and reflections about the University and other collections will be published as contributions are received.



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