

Seminar

INDICATORS TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE

Venue: Irene Country Lodge, Irene

Date: 2 November 2007

Aims of the Meeting

The 1997 White Paper on Higher Education Transformation and the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education indicated that the South African government would develop steering mechanisms, involving planning and funding, to assist with the transformation of the public higher education system. The steering mechanisms which have been developed since 2001 have been a new funding framework, processes for the approval of academic programme mixes, and processes for the approval of student enrolment plans. The student enrolment planning process has involved these steps:

- The Minister of Education sets indicative national student input and output planning targets for the public higher education system.
- The Department of Education considers plans and proposals submitted by each institution, in the context of the indicative national planning targets. After account has been taken of the views of each institution, institution-specific student enrolment and output targets are approved by the Minister.
- The input and output targets approved by the Minister determine, for each public higher education institution, what its levels of government funding will be for at least a five-year planning cycle.
- The Council of each higher education institution is asked to confirm that it accepts the Minister's targets.
- A final Ministerial Statement on Student Enrolment planning is then published.
- The performance of institutions, relative to the Minister's published input and output targets, is monitored on an annual basis by the Department of Education.

If this process of steering by planning and funding is to function effectively, it is crucial that University Councils understand what is implied by the Minister's targets, and understand further how performance will be measured by the Department of Education. Chet's experience has been that this will not be an easy task for many university councils. Currently very few institutions produce data sets which enable council members to engage meaningfully in discussions about the performance of the institution they are entrusted to govern.

Because Chet has been involved since 2000 with various aspects of performance indicators, it has decided, with the financial assistance of the Ford Foundation, to produce a further report setting out ways in which university Councils can begin to assess the performance of their institution relative to the Minister's targets, and to their own institutional missions. This report will have these two main sections:

- The one section will contain a standard profile of each of the 23 public higher education institutions in South Africa. The profiles will present data for 2000-2006 on student enrolments and outputs, staffing



inputs and outputs, and key aspects of the income and expenditure of each institution. Where this is appropriate, the performance of each institution will be related to performance measures used by the Department of Education. This section will enable a university Council to compare the performance of its institution to that of any other public higher education institution.

- The second section will consider ways in which the 23 institutions can be clustered into peer groups, to enable a university Council to compare the performance of its institution to the average performance of similar institutions.

In an independent, but related exercise, Professors Melck and Vermeulen have embarked on a project to improve information for the Council of the University of Pretoria, by developing a set of indicators that relate to the strategic plan of the institution. This is a more complex quantitative and qualitative exercise than that of Chet, but together these two projects could provide the beginning of the development of templates that could contribute to the improving of institutional governance.

Participants will be required to pay their own travel and accommodation costs, but the seminar costs will be sponsored by Chet and ITS. Each institution can send TWO participants.

2 November 2007

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| 08h45 | Opening comments: Ministry of Education |
| 09h15 | Proposed institutional profiles: examples and methodology <i>Nico Cloete and Ian Bunting</i> Chair: Molapo Qhobela |
| 10h15 | Tea |
| 10h45 | Measuring institutional performance within a peer grouping: examples and implications <i>Nico Cloete and Ian Bunting</i> Chair: Larry Pokpas |
| 12h30 | Lunch |
| 13h30 | Measuring institutional performance relative to a strategic plan: a case study of the University of Pretoria <i>Antony Melck and Pieter Vermeulen</i> Chair: Mvuyo Tom |
| 14h45 | Discussion and summing up <i>Pundy Pillay/Penny Vijenvold and Ingrid Miller</i> |
| 15h30 | Closure |