

## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN (UCT)

### ACADEMIC REVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (ADP)

The review of the ADP took place during November 2010. The panel, chaired by PJ Schwikkard was constituted as follows:

#### **External panellists:**

Ms Nasima Badsha (Cape Higher Education Consortium)

Professor Vaneeta D'Andrea (University of the Arts London)

Dr Brenda Leibowitz (University of Stellenbosch)

#### **Internal panellists:**

Dr Brandon Collier-Reed, Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment (EBE)

Dr Cynthia Sikakana, Faculty of Health Sciences (HS)

In attendance: Ms Lindi Tlou, Institutional Planning Department (IPD)

### **A. Executive Summary**

#### **Commendations**

The ADP is to be commended for the proactive leadership role it has taken both at UCT and at a national level in the field of academic development.

The Faculty of Commerce's Academic Development Unit (EDU) is to be commended for its proactive approach to academic development and its ability to raise the status of the academic development programme in that faculty.

The University is to be commended for facilitating a structural arrangement for the work of ADP that both supports the work that ADP does and recognises the importance of the academic status of the personnel in its organisation. ADP is commended for its vision in implementing best practice in its organisational structures.

The ADP is to be commended for the credibility that its highly qualified and experienced staff enjoy within faculties/departments. Furthermore, they are to be commended for the high level of staff morale within these faculty-based units.

The ADP is to be commended for successfully securing funding and managing to convert much of their requirements to the general operating budget (GOB), helping to ensure the sustainability of their operation.

## Recommendations

### It is recommended that:

- \* the University supports the development of a comprehensive and unified approach to teaching and learning via the proposed new Senate Teaching and Learning Committee which it is anticipated will be responsible for coordinating all University activities in this area.
- \* the role of the ADP in Faculties is clarified so that there is a better understanding within the University of the respective roles and responsibilities of the ADP and faculties for academic development.
- \* a new Advisory Committee be established to amongst others, inform new developments within ADP and to promote its work.
- \* the ADP pay particular attention to the issue of staff succession planning and recruitment.
- \* the ADP considers mechanisms to enable the participation of key stakeholders in its budgeting process.
- \* faculties indicate, an AD income and expenditure line in their annual budget.
- \* the ADP further investigates means of increasing the graduation rates in ADP programmes in order to improve equity of outcomes.
- \* the ADP increases its assistance to faculties to identify and address gaps and weaknesses in the extended programmes (including uneven throughput and graduation rates across different faculties) and to strengthen the interaction with mainstream programmes.
- \* in the areas of educational development where the ADP units are involved in work outside of UCT, there is a need for them to find a good balance between their national commitments and the need to support teaching and learning at UCT.

## B. Terms of Reference (ToR)

The panel was provided with the following the terms of reference:

### Terms of Reference for the ADP 2010 Review<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Defining ADP

- a. What is AD and what is it not?
- b. What has been the focus of ADP's efforts to date;
- c. To what extent are the ADP's mission and central goals relevant to the current goals and needs of the HE sector? And of UCT in particular?
- d. How do individual ADP units contribute to ADP's overall mission and goals?

#### 2. How does ADP undertake its work?

- a. What models of AD have been adopted?

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<sup>1</sup> All questions are 'is' questions (looking back to the past & present) except No.10 which will be captured in the Improvement Plan (looking forward to the future)

- b. To what extent are the ADP's curriculum, course and intervention models fit for purpose?
- c. What student groups are the ADP's target groups? What are the implications for the size and models of ADP interventions?
- d. What theories of change/ learning underpin these models of AD? How have these evolved or changed? To what extent are these theories articulated and communicated to students and staff?

### **3. What has been the impact of ADP?**

- a. To what extent has the ADP contributed to equity of access at UCT?
- b. To what extent has the ADP contributed to equity of outcomes at UCT?
- c. What is ADP's contribution to mainstream educational development in terms of (a) goals, (b) strategies, (c) organisational structure and (d) curriculum?

### **4. What is the organisational structure of ADP?**

- a. Is it effective? To what extent is it the product of its history and context (and is this restrictive or enabling)?
- b. How confident do ADP staff members feel about their standing in the faculties or their areas of work?
- c. In relation to the faculty-based programmes, how effective is the current model of seconding staff to departments?
- d. What is the relationship of ADP to other CHED units?
- e. What is the relationship of ADP units to other ADP units?

### **5. Governance and ADP**

- a. How is decision-making and resource allocation managed in ADP? How involved are key internal and external stakeholders in these decisions – how transparent are they, and how are conflicting demands (if any) resolved?
- b. How are decisions, achievements, challenges etc communicated to the university community and beyond?

### **6. Staffing ADP**

- a. To what extent is AD viewed as a career, and how satisfactory are the career tracks within it?
- b. AD has been called an 'accidental career' in that there are few direct qualifying routes – given this, what induction and training processes are provided to realise staff potential?

### **7. Funding ADP**

- a. How is ADP currently funded and how effective is this?
- b. To what extent does ADP contribute to the financial stability of UCT?

### **8. ADP and research**

- a. What is the role and impact of research in ADP? Does this differ from the role of research in mainstream disciplines?

### **9. ADP's external impact**

- a. What is ADP's role in educational development (a) regionally and (b) nationally? What is ADP's relationship to educational development internationally?
10. What are the constraints and opportunities forthcoming for improving the effectiveness of ADP? What are the focal points of the ADP improvement plan? In the light of the review findings, how should ADP's mission and goals, target group(s) and models be revised to serve the needs of the changing HE & UCT contexts?

## Introduction

ADP provided the panel with a vast amount of documentation. The panel found the self-review portfolios of the individual units within the ADP of great assistance; they showed a high degree of self-reflection which accords with the underlying purpose of academic reviews at UCT.

The Review Panel acknowledges that due to time constraints and the major focus of the ADP review that it was not possible to fully engage with the individual self-review portfolios of all units in the ADP. Hence the panel proposes that the IPD and Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) discuss whether there is a need for any additional processes to round off the review. The panel was also unable to consider the role of ADP in relation to the broader work of CHED and its other components, which could have provided a useful perspective on the mission of ADP.

The panel was also able to interview a wide range of people (see attached scheduled) who were in most instances well positioned to assist the panel in addressing the issues raised by the Terms of Reference. The following discussion is focused on those questions which we considered most relevant to the review and on which we would wish to comment or make recommendations.

### Re 1: Defining ADP

In the ADP's self review report the following HEQC definition of academic development is adopted:

A field of research and practice that aims to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in higher education, and to enable institutions and the higher education system to meet key educational goals, particularly in relation to equity of access and outcomes. Academic development encompasses four interlinked areas of work: student development (particularly foundational and skills-oriented provisions), staff development, curriculum development and institutional development.

The ADP identifies its mission as having two inter-related elements:

- To promote continuing transformation in the student body by developing, implementing and disseminating educational strategies that foster equity of access and outcomes...
- In conjunction with other CHED departments, to promote effective teaching and learning, quality of outcomes and responsiveness to contemporary conditions in UCT's academic programmes, through providing the University with specialised educational contributions in the interests of all students.

The panel found that the historical focus of academic development in the ADP was the access and success of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, particularly at the undergraduate level. This is reflected in the nature of the units that make up the ADP, namely the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP); writing, numeracy and language development centres, as well as the faculty AD programmes. However, during the period under review, the work of the ADP had expanded to include broader curriculum design (e.g., support for the curriculum revision in the Faculty of Health Sciences) as well as support for postgraduate students (e.g. the writing centre).

Nevertheless the core target group remains black students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. This seems to be the priority, rather than an approach which seeks to enhance conditions of teaching and learning across the University for all students. This would appear to be a response to resource constraints, particularly in light of the degree of support required by students from disadvantaged schooling backgrounds. It is also based on a model which has historically been adopted, where ADP focused on directly teaching disadvantaged students, rather than on providing systemic support for the enhancement of quality teaching across the University.

The final issue raised under the heading of defining ADP in the ToR pertains to the relevance of the ADP. ADP's mission and goals are patently relevant to the current goals and needs of the higher education (HE) sector and UCT. All units contribute to the ADP's overall mission and goals. This is facilitated by the way in which ADP is structured as well as a consolidated depth of knowledge and expertise held by academic staff. (See further discussion of the ToR below.)

## **Re 2: How does ADP undertake its work?**

The ADP self review report indicates that a "holistic approach to student development" is endorsed and this entails collaboration with the Department of Student Affairs (in particular the counselling services provided by the department). This is in line with national and international best practice. However, there are questions about the resources and capacities available to implement truly effective 'wrap around'<sup>2</sup> and direct support to all students.

The panel was unable to ascertain the extent to which theories of change and student development had been communicated to students and staff. Academics interviewed by the panel expressed views that ranged from a narrow expectation that ADP should solve the problem of student under preparedness to a broader one in terms of which ADP was expected to assist in promoting the development and success of all students.

The model employed by the ADP is a partially decentralized one. The centre being held by academic staff members physically situated in CHED with those working in the faculties constituting the de-centralized 'branches'. The ADP working model is also a hybrid between providing support for an integrated student-centred curriculum and providing what might be termed "add on" or preparatory support for disadvantaged students. The variation in form between units and their presence in faculties appears to depend on a number of factors: history, faculty leadership, and the quality and style of work of particular individuals.

Appreciation was expressed for all the specialised ADP units; however, particular praise was expressed for the Faculty of Commerce's Academic Development Unit which has significant credibility amongst students and staff alike. **The Faculty of Commerce's Academic Development Unit is commended for its proactive approach to academic development and its ability to raise the status of the academic development programme in that faculty.**

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<sup>2</sup> This includes material, academic and emotional support.

The present model, with the exception of the approach take in the Health Sciences Faculty, focuses predominantly on students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. It is noted in the self review report (at p19) that “[o]verall – but again with notable exceptions – it can be said that notwithstanding change in the student body and the environment, there has not been substantial change or innovation in UCT’s mainstream educational thinking and practices’.” **It is recommended that, given the recognised need to increase the overall pass rate of all students that the ADP and University’s future planning take into account the resources needed to enhance the success rate and quality of the learning experience of all students.** This may require a shift in the present academic development model with its emphasis on teaching on specific modules to a focus on programme and instructional design. (There is a precedent in the Faculty of Health Sciences). The ADP has experience in curriculum design and innovative teaching methods, developed over years of practice which can be garnered for this purpose. It could also draw on precedents of collaboration with HAESDU and the Centre for Education Technology.

In summary, the ADP is ‘fit for purpose’. It has an appropriate vision and set of goals with an appropriate combination of central and faculty-based structures to service its mission. However, in order to fulfil its mission it needs to increasingly consider how the wealth of expertise which resides in the ADP can be used in the interests of all students.

### **R 3: What has been the impact of ADP?**

The ADP’s goals include the following:

- 1) To facilitate access for talented but disadvantaged students by providing a developmental selection testing service, expertise in entry-level assessment, and foundational courses that enable such students to succeed in making the transition to higher education.
- 2) To foster equity of outcomes, and thus improvement of overall completion rates, by developing effective extended curricula in the main undergraduate programmes in all faculties.
- 3) To foster educational development in mainstream provision with the aim of building the faculties’ capacity to accommodate diversity in educational background.
- 4) To offer leadership, professional support and specialised teaching in providing for the development of key academic skills and literacies (language development and numeracy) in extended and mainstream curricula, both as tools for learning and as graduate outcomes.
- 5) In conjunction with other CHED departments, to facilitate continual improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in mainstream degree programmes through professional contributions to curriculum and course design and the development of teaching approaches that are effective in the UCT context.

The impact of the ADP was reviewed in relation to its mission, goals and objectives as quoted above.

In line with the first two goals above, the ADP has developed foundational courses and established extended programmes in many undergraduate degree programmes. The question is whether the establishment of these extended programmes has contributed towards promoting continued transformation in the student body by fostering equity of access.

In order to answer this question, the data provided by the Institutional Planning Department (IPD) for 2001-2004 first year intake into major degree programmes in the faculties of Commerce, Engineering and Built Environment (EBE) and Science were analysed (see attached table of data). The data showed that the contribution of the extended programmes towards the total number of students entering degree programmes ranged from 12% for Commerce, to 24% for EBE and 27% for Science. However, the contribution of the extended programmes towards the number of South African Black students entering degree programmes was much higher and ranged from 34% for Commerce, to 52% for EBE to 67% for Science.

Therefore, admitting students into extended programmes not only widened access to students who would otherwise not have been admitted into these degree programmes, but also changed the racial composition of the intake cohorts.

**The ADP is commended for its significant contribution to UCT's goal of equity of access.**

It is important to consider whether the admission of students into extended programmes and the progression of these students through degree programmes contributed to equity of outcomes.

In order to answer this question, the graduation data for the 2001-2004 intake cohorts were analysed.

- i) The graduation rates after 5 years (6 years for EBE) for mainstream students were: 78% for Commerce, 73% for Science and 63% for EBE. Corresponding figures for ADP students were much lower at 41% for Commerce, 36% for Science and 29% for EBE.
- ii) In all cases the graduation rates for SA Black students were generally very low but were higher for the mainstream compared to the ADP. Figures were 67% vs. 42% for Commerce, 58% vs. 35% for Science, and 44% vs. 28% for EBE.
- iii) In all cases the contribution of the ADP to the number of SA Black graduates is quite significant. It ranges from 24% for Commerce, to 40% for EBE to 55% for Science.
- iv) In all cases the racial distribution of graduates showed a greater diversity for mainstream + ADP when compared to mainstream only. This occurred in spite of a drop in the overall retention for mainstream + ADP when compared to mainstream only. The drop in student retention ranged from 4% for Commerce to 10% for Science.
- v) In all cases, a significant number of students were still studying after 5 years (6 years for engineering). The fraction of the intake which was still studying was higher for ADP compared to the mainstream. Figures were 7% vs 4% for Science, 16% vs 4% for Commerce and 17% vs 10% for EBE.

While the ADP has made quite a significant contribution to the number of SA Black graduates produced, the graduation rates for SA Blacks are still very low both in the mainstream and in the ADP. In order for the ADP to improve its contribution towards equity of outcomes, graduation rates for the ADP need to improve substantially because in some faculties (e.g. Science) the ADP produces the majority of SA Black graduates.

Several staff members who were interviewed (including Deans, Deputy Deans, non-ADP and ADP members of staff) suggested that in part, the improvement in graduation rates could result from (i) better articulation of foundation years of the ADP with senior years of the mainstream programme, and (ii) incorporating academic development throughout the programme, *i.e.* in mainstream courses.

**It is recommended that the ADP further investigate means of increasing the graduation rates in ADP programmes in order to improve equity of outcomes.**

ADP's contribution to mainstream educational development is more difficult to quantify. It is clear that in certain instances ADP's influence on the mainstream has been significant. Some of the non-ADP members of staff who were interviewed felt that the devolution of ADP staff to the faculties had a great influence on other staff in the department and that ADP staff encouraged non-ADP staff to explore different ways of teaching. This was particularly evident in departments where ADP staff members were highly respected. A number of AD staff were integrated into departments and participated in both the teaching and examination

of mainstream students. Some ADP lecturers from units, such as the Language Development Unit and Numeracy Centre, that are not part of degree programmes, do a large part of their teaching in mainstream courses. A large part of their involvement in mainstream teaching is at the invitation of staff members responsible for particular courses.

In some departments lessons learnt from ADP teaching have resulted in changes in mainstream courses.

On the other hand interviews with ADP lecturers suggested that while there was some collaboration between them and members of staff who teach in mainstream courses, the extent of collaboration was variable and generally low. This was probably largely dependent on the individual members of staff involved; there was no systematic approach to it. Therefore, there was potential for more interaction between mainstream and ADP teaching. The involvement of the Language Development Unit and the Numeracy Centre in mainstream teaching is largely dependent on invitation. These units probably could be used more extensively than they are currently.

It therefore appears that there is an inconsistency between faculties as regards the integration of AD staff and their impact on the academic development of mainstream students.

#### **Re 4 and 5: Organisational structure and governance of ADP**

In its self-evaluation report the ADP (at p1) describes itself as follows:

The Academic Development Programme (ADP) at UCT is a teaching, research and educational development unit with the status of an academic department. It is located in the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED), which has the organisational status of a Faculty.

It is our view that the organisation of the ADP, as an academic unit within the University structure, is in line with best international practice. Locating academic development work within an academic unit has been identified by studies in this field as best practice (D'Andrea & Gosling 2005<sup>3</sup>). At UCT this is achieved by the ADP's location within the CHED Faculty and with the majority of staff being employed on academic conditions of service. This structural arrangement can contribute to the success of academic development activities because it provides the ADP the credibility to work with academic staff. This was further confirmed in the interviews with ADP staff who said: "Academics need to have many sources of evidence to convince them of the value of anything and this applies to ADP work as well."

It was also clear to the Panel that this approach is a considered vision of the ADP leadership. In our interview with the Director of ADP he noted that it was his view that: "Academic status is more important than money as compensation. It produces behaviour changes and creates the intellectual content of the work of ADP." In our view this vision is a noteworthy dimension of the structural arrangements.

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Vaneeta-marie D'Andrea and David Gosling, *Improving teaching and learning : a whole institution approach*,

Maidenhead, England ; New York : Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, 2005.

The ADP Self-Review also notes (at p23) that: "...the primary responsibility of the ADP is developmental, in relation to educational processes, policy, curricula and staff as well as students. Its role and identity are therefore distinct from those of a regular academic department." Thus, it further needs to be noted that although ADP staff are mainly academics with the full range of traditional academic commitments in both teaching and research they also engage in educational development work. This combined portfolio of work is also a structurally sound arrangement for the same reasons as above; however it also means that the ADP staff make a significant additional contribution to the University through their development work.

We would agree with the ADP Self-Review that the key to the success of ADP work is its relationship with the faculties. Although these relationships are quite varied, due to historic funding reasons, there has been a consistent strategic approach from the ADP's earliest days to carry out this work on the basis of partnership and complementarity. This was best summed up by the Programme Director in our interview with him: "the focus of the ADP work is to achieve disciplinary integrity as well as educational integrity."

For example, where Educational Development Units have been established in faculties these have been created as joint ventures of the Faculty and the ADP. Where there are links with faculties they are strong; this helps to embed the work of ADP throughout the University and should pay dividends to the staff, students and the University as a whole.

The work with faculties, with the exception of the law faculty, is done via secondments from ADP to faculties. The ownership of posts and selection of people to take the ADP educational mission forward is with ADP. ADP has a say in all academic choices of the Faculty representatives. Five faculties have ADP secondees.

This arrangement is supported by ADP staff interviewed, for example, when asked about the structural arrangements of the ADP, one replied:

The current model works well...the [previous] centralized model did not work well...the discipline specific secondment model allows students to be given specific support and sitting in the department makes that possible to get into the mainstream...the current structure evolved for a good reason. It helps [ADP staff] to understand the department and what is valued by the department. To be based in the departments provides us with the specialist knowledge needed and is key to helping students...it would be harder if I were away from department. The students see us as local support and that helps them and us.

Specific examples of the effectiveness of this structural arrangement were also noted within particular faculties. In the Commerce Faculty, one interviewee indicated that the level of "integration of ADP within the Faculty [is so complete] that there is little awareness that the ADP members are different from anyone else in the department". In the Sciences, one interviewee said: "They [ADP staff] are respected as academics in the department and therefore have a direct and (sometimes indirect) impact on the rest of the members of the department." However, the level of integration would seem to vary substantially between faculties.

The Deans we spoke with also supported the secondment structure and were generally positive in their responses to the Panel's questions about the ADP work in their faculty. This is to be expected because the ADP provides a service that the faculties would otherwise have to provide if ADP did not exist. Thus, working together is seen as a win-win situation for both the faculty and the ADP. Having the support of the senior leadership in the faculties who push and reward ADP work is essential to ADP's success.

**The University is to be commended for facilitating a structural arrangement for the work of ADP that both supports the work that ADP does and recognises the importance of academic structures in its organisation. ADP is commended for its vision in implementing best practice in its organisational structures.**

Nevertheless, the leadership of ADP agree they could do more to link up the work of the various secondees. Although the “devolved structure is a strength, the devolution is also a weakness because it does not allow for synergies between the different faculties. Lots of good things are happening at local levels that don’t get shared out across the University.”

One structure that has been put into place to deal with this need is the new ADP Forum. In reference to this Forum one interviewee said it “...is important because this is how I see myself as an Academic Developer...interdisciplinary work is key to all the work that ADP staff do.”

Another structural conundrum is that the ADP staff are accountable to two different places, CHED and the Faculty. A consequence of this is that ADP staff expressed the view that as well as having two masters, this often means double the committee work. However, the Director of ADP felt that for many staff the only real duplication was in respect of Faculty Board meetings. It is suggested that ADP undertake an audit of committee membership to address the concerns of ADP staff.

Again the panel sees the strong links between the ADP and the faculties as a positive dimension of the structural arrangements for carrying out the work of the ADP. The strengths of this model are linked to the academic focus of the relationship between staff in the ADP and in the faculties.

Given that the faculties are the main site of educational development work, ADP staff said to us that they also “see it as essential that teaching-and-learning committees with focused terms of reference be established at Faculty level, with organic links to the proposed Senate committee”.

The main governance issue in our view is the lack of support available to the ADP in the form of an Advisory Committee. It is our understanding that such a group existed until the creation of CHED. Such a group could provide a useful sounding board for new ideas and promote the work of the ADP across the University. Thus, we would wish to recommend that it is time to consider re-establishing this group.

**It is recommended that (a) the University support a comprehensive and unified approach to teaching and learning via the proposed new University-wide Teaching and Learning Committee which will have an overview role for coordinating all University activities in this area; (b) work is carried out to clarify the role of ADP to the faculties so they better understand what ADP does and does not do; (c) for future decisions regarding new developments within ADP and to promote its work that a new Advisory Committee of relevant beneficiaries is re-established.**

#### **Re 6: Staffing ADP**

The review documentation states that “[t]he main model that has been used for the Faculty-based units is that the posts belong to the ADP staff establishment but the staff are fully seconded to the relevant Faculties and in some cases to particular departments.” It goes on to indicate that “as AD work has become more embedded, new organisational arrangements

are evolving, with higher levels of partnership.” Interviews with staff suggest that they value this structure and benefit from the close relationships that form between the staff in the individual units and the faculties/departments within which they reside.

**The ADP is to be commended for the highly qualified staff within these AD units as well as the credibility these staff have achieved within faculties/departments. Furthermore, they are to be commended for the high level of staff morale within these faculty-based units.**

A number of ADP unit heads acknowledged the danger of “silos” emerging given the true embeddedness of the various operations. There was a strong sense that this embeddedness was a strength of the current model, although the ADP lecturers themselves felt that more opportunities could be provided for the broader ADP to interact – possibly in a different way to the current meetings that take place. Furthermore, the ADP unit heads located outside of the Hlanganani Building collectively felt a strong sense of autonomy from CHED, while those within displayed a greater degree of integration into the general CHED activities. The Director indicated that “about 60%” of this autonomy was planned, but that with this autonomy comes the potential for units to take on “faculty/departmental positions that could possibly be in conflict with the AD agenda”. The review panel notes that there was a view expressed from an ADP Faculty-based unit lecturer that they “live, work and move” within their host department and that “CHED is a foreign place – they only pay me”. The panel supports the positive move of the ADP management to address the perception of autonomy and for creating further opportunities for members of the ADP to have a forum where they can share issues related to their activities.

The review panel notes that the Law Faculty is anomalous in its relationship with the ADP. It is recognised that this is a historic situation, but it is **suggested** that the integration of the Law AD unit into the ADP be investigated.

The Director of ADP suggests that there is an ongoing tension between the operational requirements of teaching in the ADP units and the requirements of rate for the job/standard academic salary package (RFJ/SASP) and promotion. However, it was quite clear during discussions with staff that most see research as a necessary component of being an academic – not only for the purposes of RFJ and promotion, but also as an important aspect of developing credibility within the faculties/departments where they work.

#### *Academic development and career paths*

The deans and their representatives indicated that they fully support AD as a legitimate career path but do point to the tension brought about by the different RFJ and promotion criteria between faculties and CHED. This, they say, results in the potential for there being different performance levels required of two staff in one department depending simply on the source of their salary. ADP lecturers also suggest that they are not following an accidental career as they typically “have always been interested in and purposefully pursue working within this area”.

A perceived difficulty is that during recruitment, the desired candidate for a position should typically be someone who is both an AD specialist as well as a subject specialist given their ultimate embeddedness within a faculty/department. The CHED transformation committee commented that employment equity candidates who apply for AD-related posts are often

from universities with poor research backgrounds making their appointment within the UCT structure, as it currently exists, quite difficult.

The review panel notes the concern expressed by staff in the ADP that a large number of the key ADP members – including the Director – are nearing retirement. The Deputy Director of ADP is currently overburdened as a consequence of a key post in AARP remaining unfilled – this had impacted on ADP’s capacity to increase the interaction between its units. **It is recommended that the ADP pay particular attention to the issue of succession planning and recruitment.**

New academic appointments to the ADP are required to participate in the New Academic Practitioners Programme and where appropriate, academic staff participate in the Emerging Researchers Programme. Collectively, these appear to be the only formal induction and training offered. ADP lecturers do however speak highly of the informal “*mentorship*” from the staff within CHED – in some cases more so than from the departments to which they have been seconded. It is **suggested** that the benefits of a more formalised induction and training process be investigated.

### **Re 7: Funding**

An issue raised by the Dean of CHED, the Director, as well as some ADP staff, involved the perception of the budgeting practices employed by the ADP. The Dean described how the budget is developed “through a series of bilaterals” between parties – “sustainable, but not necessarily the best way and should rather be part of a [more holistic and structured] strategic decision about who gets what”. The perception would appear to exist that ADP units receive differing levels of funding with questions raised about how this differentiation was determined. Although this is understandable, communication around process and outcome of the budgeting process is important. **It is recommended that the ADP considers mechanisms to enable the participation of all stakeholders in the budgeting process.**

In the supplement to the self-review report: ADP FUNDING, the following is stated:

“The balance of the ADP’s budget comes from Council funds. However, this is offset by fee and subsidy revenue generated by the ADP’s extensive credit-bearing teaching, mainly in foundational courses in the extended curriculum programmes, in other specialised undergraduate courses in academic and quantitative literacy, and in postgraduate courses. The actual fee and subsidy revenue accrues to the Faculties in which these courses are formally located. This results from a longstanding agreement – made in the interests of disciplinary integrity, clear lines of academic accountability to Senate, and shared responsibility for AD work – that all ADP teaching will be under the auspices of regular academic departments or Faculties. The ADP continues to favour this approach because it is academically sound and has thus far been financially fair. It is, however, important that the ADP’s contribution through fee and subsidy income should be taken into account in UCT’s understanding of the ADP’s actual cost to the University.”

The review panel recognises the importance of a holistic view of the cost of the ADP to the University.

Furthermore, it would appear that there is no formal measure of the combined spend by the University on AD-related activities. Concern was raised about the practice of faculties diverting funds allocated to AD activities to areas deemed to be more important. It is

**suggested** that the ADP develop an annual high level report on each faculty's (and thus collectively the university's) use of AD funding.

Given that UCT recognises the importance of the AD enterprise in helping many students gain access and ultimately to be successful in their studies, the review panel **recommends that faculties indicate in their annual budget an AD income and expenditure line.**

The review panel notes that if an effective Senate Teaching and Learning Committee were to be established this could have budgetary implications and **suggests** that the importance of such a committee should not be underestimated in making allocations in the University budget.

The ADP review documentation states: "After an early period of considerable dependence on external donor funding, the ADP is now virtually fully funded by a combination of University funds, largely offset by revenue generated by fees and teaching subsidy, and dedicated funding for extended programmes provided by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) as part of the higher education funding framework."

**The ADP is to be commended for successfully sourcing funding and managing to convert much of their requirements to the GOB, helping to ensure the sustainability of their operation.** The Director goes as far as suggesting that they "*do cover costs – possibly even overheads*" with the funding that they bring into UCT from the DHET and elsewhere. This is a remarkable achievement and should be recognised as such by the University.

## **Re 8 Research**

ADP research, while located within different approaches and paradigms, is focussed on deepening the understanding of teaching, learning and assessment in higher education and on the development and analysis of higher education policy at institutional and national levels. It provides the scholarly basis for informing ADP practice within faculties and across the University. The increasing research profile of the ADP over the past years has also contributed to the credibility that it enjoys as an academic department within the University.

The formal research output of the ADP far exceeds that of most other comparable entities in South African universities and can be attributed, in part, to the comparatively large proportion of staff within the ADP that have attained doctorates in recent years. The ADP staff are also active in the production of commissioned policy papers for national agencies.

Given the particular mandate of the ADP and especially in the context of its location within a research led university, it is not surprising that a tension exists between its research and development roles and identities. The ADP clearly does not see itself moving towards becoming a department of higher education studies but strives to retain a balance between its developmental role and responsibilities within UCT (and beyond) and its conventional research agenda. The review panel believes that this approach is appropriate given the vision and mission of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) within which the ADP is located and in line with UCT's expectations of the ADP and the roles it performs to widen student access and promote success.

The review panel noted that most of the ADP lecturers (located in faculties and units) who were interviewed did not support proposals currently under discussion in the University to

create a category of “teaching academics” as they felt that, if ADP lecturers were placed in this category, it might threaten the space that they currently have to undertake research, which, in turn, might also impact negatively on the credibility that they enjoy within the University.

Notwithstanding this, there are some ADP staff whose level and intensity of engagement with developmental work, especially within faculties, is such that there is little time for them to undertake formal research. The review panel suggests that the ADP could consider ways in which this developmental work might be better disseminated (other than through conventional research publications) and rewarded. Proposals in this regard could be taken into the wider discussions taking place within the University on recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching and learning.

On the whole, ADP lecturers expressed the view that there were adequate opportunities and networks to support their research endeavours but, in some areas, they reported difficulties in attracting and registering postgraduate students. The review panel suggests that this is a matter which warrants further investigation by CHED, in particular, to determine the extent of the problem.

The review panel also supports the proposal made in the ADP self review report that the impact of AD research should be the subject of a systematic investigation.

## Re 9 external impact

One of the goals and objectives of the ADP is:

To contribute to national and regional initiatives and policy development relating to educational development.

**The ADP is to be commended for its contribution both regionally and nationally.** It has been instrumental in DHET providing dedicated funding for extended programmes. The panel interviewed a representative of DHET who described the ADP’s national impact as follows:

- (i) The ADP at UCT has been a very important driving force in getting the government to understand the needs of the higher education sector and the importance of foundation programmes.
- (ii) The ADP at UCT has pioneered the establishment of extended programmes and had assisted other institutions to do the same.
- (iii) The government has recommended that other institutions look at extended programmes at UCT so that they can set up similar programmes in their institutions.

The major impact of the availability of DHET funding was the opportunity it created for many institutions including UCT to either establish or grow and develop their extended programmes. The ADP played an important leadership role in making this possible.

Similarly the representative of CHE interviewed recognised the impact of the ADP nationally and made the following observations:

- (i) The ADP had conducted a study on the “Improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in South Africa”. The study tracked the progress of the 2000 and 2001 intake cohorts at all universities and universities of technology in the country. This was seminal work.
- (ii) The ADP did a lot of work on the length and content of the Bachelors degree in South Africa. The fact that this work was not complete was a CHE problem and was not due to failure by the ADP.

### *AARP*

As indicated in the goals of the ADP quoted under ToR 3, one of the goals was “to facilitate access for talented but disadvantaged students by providing a developmental selection testing service and expertise in entry-level assessment”. This work led to the development of the AARP which was founded in the 1980s.

The self-review report explains that the AARP tests which cover domains of academic literacy, mathematics, quantitative literacy, and scientific reasoning came to be used not only by UCT applicants, but by applicants for other South African universities.

In an interview with the head of the AARP unit, he indicated that the testing service had grown so much because of national commitments that the unit had to exercise caution in order to strike a good balance between their national and UCT role in educational development.

The ADP has played a leadership role in academic development at both a local and national level. **It is to be commended for the proactive leadership role it has both at UCT and nationally. It is recommended that in the areas of educational development where the ADP units are involved in work outside of UCT, there is a need for them to find a good balance between their national commitments and the need to support teaching and learning at UCT**

### **Re 10: Conclusion: constraints and opportunities**

There is little doubt that the ADP has played and continues to play an important role within UCT to promote the access and success of students, particularly those from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who do not meet UCT’s mainstream admission criteria. As indicated in the Self Review Report, “foundational provision and extended programmes have formed the cornerstone of UCT’s equity strategy for the last two decades”. Despite concerns about the stigmatisation of black students in programmes outside of the mainstream, those who proceed into the mainstream acknowledge the importance of the entry level interventions and, in some faculties such as Commerce, even those who qualify for mainstream entry are seeking a place in the extended programme given its excellent reputation.

The review panel therefore supports the view of the ADP that the extended provision model(s) is, in the foreseeable future, likely to remain the mainstay of ADP interventions. However, while major changes to the extended programme offerings are unlikely, the review **panel recommends that the ADP should step up its assistance to faculties to identify and address gaps and weaknesses in the extended programmes (including uneven throughput and graduation rates across different faculties) and to strengthen the**

**interaction with the mainstream.** While fully recognising and supporting the need for faculty specific interventions, the ADP could, in the light of its extensive experience and with the advantage of its university-wide perspective, identify the core elements of successful extended programmes (and interfaces with the mainstream), which could, in turn, inform faculty developments in the coming years. Through such engagements, attention should also be paid to strengthen structured relationships between the ADP and faculties in ways that are less dependent on the good will of individuals.

Alongside the strengthening of the extended programmes, the review panel supports the view that the ADP should expand its role in supporting teaching and learning in the mainstream. The review panel **recommends** that the ADP should consider the following:

- Its role (in collaboration with other CHED departments) in supporting curriculum and staff development in the mainstream;
- Its role in enhancing the position and status of teaching and learning in the University. In this regard, it has an important role to play in supporting the work of the proposed Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning.

The need to expand the reach of the ADP is informed by the growing concern amongst UCT academics that one of the main challenges facing the University is its ability to respond to the needs of under prepared students, including those who meet UCT's admission criteria but who struggle to meet the academic demands of university study.

The quality of schooling for the majority of pupils has not shown any significant improvement and national higher education cohort studies continue to point to poor performance by the majority of students, with few managing to qualify in minimum time. This has led to concerns that the traditional degree structures and curricula are not meeting the needs of students, many of whom would benefit from extended provision. At a national level, a debate on restructuring the three year formative undergraduate degree into a four year programme with appropriate curricula interventions has been underway for much of the past five years or more but no decisions in this regard have been made.

At UCT, there is also growing concern about the failing 'tail' in mainstream programmes; these are students (including increasing numbers of black students) who are either failing or only achieving marginal passes. It is becoming increasingly evident that these students are likely to benefit from foundational/extended programmes or other similar types of interventions.

While the review panel acknowledges that it is difficult for a single institution to make any radical move towards extended provision for the majority of students outside of changes in the national higher education qualification and funding frameworks, we **recommend** that the University leadership, supported by the ADP, should institute a process to investigate the steps that UCT should be taking to improve student performance in the mainstream.

The review panel also suggests that the University Executive could consider the establishment of a competitive fund to make grants available for curriculum (and associated) development initiatives, as an incentive to stimulate innovative teaching and learning practices which address improving mainstream student performance.

Based on our discussions with the Deans and other faculty, we believe that the prevailing climate at UCT is particularly conducive to these engagements. While the view may persist in some quarters that it is the job of the ADP to 'fix' students and prepare them for the mainstream, we were impressed by the level of commitment to a shared responsibility to deal with student under preparedness.

Given the scale of the undertakings at UCT itself, a careful balance will have to be struck in the coming years between the continued contributions of the ADP to national policy debates and processes and the need to lead and support UCT in its efforts to provide equitable access and to enhance student success.

Submitted by:

PJ Schwikkard 21/1/11