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RESTRUCTURING STUDENT AFFAIRS IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION:  
UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN  
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Ph.D. degree in Educational Administration

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**RESTRUCTURING STUDENT AFFAIRS IN HIGHER EDUCATION:  
UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

**By**

**Christina Joann Lunceford**

**A DISSERTATION**

**Submitted to  
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## ABSTRACT

### RESTRUCTURING STUDENT AFFAIRS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

By

Christina J. Lunceford

Student affairs plays a major role in the retention, attrition, and student experience in tertiary institutions. The current transformation in South Africa presents the opportunity to shape the entire system of higher education. Some universities are reexamining the role divisions of student affairs play in the student experience on campus and success, however defined.

The purpose of this study was to explore organizational change within student affairs in South African higher education viewing students as key stakeholders. With this study I hoped to (a) understand and inform other institutions about the role students play in organizational change and (b) add to the understanding of student affairs and services in South Africa. I studied the context of change, the process of change, and the role stakeholders played in the change in order to understand the process and outcomes of change, understand stakeholders' perceptions of students and student affairs, and determine if the change met expectations and intended outcomes.

This study was a case study of a single Historically Black University (HBU) in South Africa. I used a qualitative research design that involved interviews and document analysis. I interviewed 4 university administrators, 11 staff, 14 students, and the outside consultant involved in the change.

Key findings were individuals' leadership styles and behaviors had the largest affect on change and outcomes within the university; a shift in focus within the student

affairs division from administrative support to student development increased the student involvement on campus, student leadership development, dedication to staff development, research capacity within the division, visibility of the division, and overall student support; and formal student leaders had different perceptions of the student experience than other stakeholder groups.

Implications include the importance of shifting student affairs divisions from one of conflict management and mere administration to an educative and developmental unit, the importance of staff development and professionalization, the importance of individual leadership style in organizational change, and the need to explore the current role and actions of formal student leadership (i.e., Student Representative Councils) in South African higher education. Suggestions for further research are provided.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The current system of South African higher education is undergoing intense restructuring. In 1997, the first democratically elected South African government issued an official report and framework for the “transformation” of the higher education system as “planned, governed, and funded as a single national coordinated system” in an effort to “create a learning society which releases the creative and intellectual energies of all [South Africans] towards meeting the goals of reconstruction and development” (Bengu, 1997, p. 3). In 2002, the national restructuring plan called for mandatory mergers between institutions of higher education in an attempt to help even out the fragmentation, unequal distribution of resources, and “inefficiency” of the apartheid establishment. What was a system of 36 institutions since the 1980s began a process of merging into a 21-institution system. In some cases, colleges and universities with different structures, missions, clientele, academic programs, language of instruction, and legacies are being forced to merge into a single institution. When the mergers are complete, the system of 21 universities and 15 polytechnics will consist of 11 universities, 5 polytechnics, and 5 institutions that are new to South African higher education: comprehensives (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). Today marks not only a time of transforming existing structures, but the opportunity for South Africa to create new forms of education.

Higher education plays a large role in the economic growth in South Africa, for individual advancement as well as the nation’s economy and place in the global market. A prominent concern in developing countries, however, is that systems of higher education typically serve only the elite and wealthy of the nation (Altbach, 2001; Coleman & Court, 1993; Ludeman, 2001). Equalizing access, resources, and degree

attainment to all current and potential tertiary students will provide more opportunity to historically marginalized groups (the vast majority of South Africa) and prepare individuals to contribute to the country's overall economic development (Arno, 2003).

Access to higher education for historically excluded groups alone will not provide the change needed in South Africa; students must be included in the entire function of the system of higher education. Students need to be engaged on campus throughout their programs of study--in the curriculum, campus life, and university community, and included in the process of change to help individuals and groups of students persist and graduate (Austin, 2001; Mabokela & King, 2001).

In order to improve the process of transformation and the experiences for historically disadvantaged students, it is important to create incentives to encourage stakeholders to participate in the transformation process and to provide continuous and frequent opportunities for community members to engage in open conversation regarding the "pace, process, and progress of change" (King, 2001, p. 165). Without frequent opportunities for stakeholders to be included in change and transformation, the likelihood that equity of opportunity will ever be accomplished is minimal (Austin, 2001; Mabokela & King, 2001). Students are key stakeholders in higher education; without student attendance there would be no institutions of higher education. Therefore, it is important that students are included in this process.

In 2003, the Center for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) and the South African Department of Education (DOE) emphasized that student services play a key role in the transformation of South African higher education and provide a means to rectify imbalances developed under apartheid, create equity, and deracialize individual

postsecondary institutions and higher education as a system (Mandew, 2003). During the *Effective Governance Project*, CHET and the DOE reported that student services were “central in the life of campuses, not primarily for political reasons but for contributing to the core business, namely student development, student learning and student success” (Mandew, 2003, p. 122) and continued, “it is against such a student-centered approach that the effectiveness of the division [of student affairs] should ultimately be judged” (Mandew, 2003, p. 122).

Student affairs and services have been embedded in complex political dynamics throughout the history of South African higher education. CHET reported that student affairs has been political within the local contexts of individual institutions or regions, as well as in the national arena (Mandew, 2003). It is crucial that researchers, practitioners, and policy makers understand the contexts of support services, as they play a key role in student retention and persistence in higher education. If we, as researchers and practitioners in higher education, fail to study students and student affairs in higher education, we are merely guessing what is important and what is needed, particularly as institutions are being restructured (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Identifying student needs and understanding issues they face, as well as their unique perceptions and experiences, help stakeholders make better projections of the policies and services needed to help students be successful in higher education, however success is defined by the individual and institution.

The current changes and transformation in South African higher education present the opportunity to make effective sustainable change in the nation. The restructuring of former institutions and creation of new institutions present the opportunity to mold



individual universities, as well as the entire system, into what the nation deems successful, needed, and valuable. In order for the restructuring to be successful, however, it must include a key stakeholder in the process: students. The restructuring of higher education will have a major impact on students; the policies, system of operation, and culture of the institution will determine the student experience at individual colleges and universities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the change and restructuring of student affairs in South African higher education viewing students as key stakeholders. With this study I hoped to (a) understand and inform other institutions about the role students play in the process of restructuring and organizational change and (b) add to the understanding of student affairs and services in South Africa. Mandew (2003) reported that there is currently “no overtly articulated philosophical framework or explicit theory that informs practice in the field of student services” in South Africa (p. 21). Also, the International Association on Student Affairs and Services called for institutions to produce research on students and student affairs in order to create a shared understanding of student affairs as a division and explore best practices in a global forum (Ludeman, 2001). I designed this study to inform practitioners in higher education and contribute to the understanding of student affairs as a profession.

Literature on change in higher education centers on the subject matter surrounding the change, factors related to the change outcomes, and the environment in which change occurs. Little empirical data has been presented on the process institutional stakeholders undertake to facilitate change (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). This study was

designed to understand the context of change, the process of change, and the role stakeholders played in the change.

### Research Questions

Including students in the restructuring of colleges and universities and their everyday operation is essential to effective, sustainable change, and student success (Mabokela & King, 2001; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Exclusion and frustration of students lead to student unrest, protests, non-involvement, and resistance (Yamane, 2001). Students are key stakeholders in the transformation of higher education and need to be understood and included in the process.

The questions that guided this study were: (1) How do university stakeholders view students and student affairs at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)? (2) What role(s) do university stakeholders play in organizational change within student affairs at UWC? (3) How have the structure and delivery of student affairs changed from before to after the recent restructuring of student affairs at UWC? and (4) What are the intended and unintended consequences of the restructuring of student affairs at UWC?

### South African Higher Education

There is a common theme throughout the literature on higher education in South Africa: it plays a key role in not only creating, but once created, maintaining a truly egalitarian and just society (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Mabokela & King, 2001; Mandew, 2003). Through legal segregation, the South African government was able to use education as “an instrument of both exclusion and social control” and to create and develop an “exploitable workforce” (Armove, 2001, p. vii). Although the first South African university, University of the Cape of Good Hope, was established in 1873, non-

White people were not included or provided access to the system. It was not until 1959, through the Extension of the Universities Act, that legally separated universities for Black Africans, Coloureds, Indians or Asians, and Whites emerged. It was at this time that apartheid systems of Historically Black Universities (HBUs) began to emerge. The system of higher education and the individual institutions were divided by race, language, culture, gender, and access to resources (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Mabokela & King, 2001).

The Universities Amendment Act in 1983 legally ended racial segregation in postsecondary education. By this time there were 36 separate and unequal institutions of higher education in South Africa: 21 universities (10 HBUs, 11 Historically White Universities or HWUs) and 15 Technikons (7 Historically White Technikons or HWTs and 8 Historically Black Technikons or HBTs)<sup>1</sup>. While the historically advantaged institutions (HWUs and HWTs) offered a large range of academic programs, had plentiful resources, and produced a variety of young professionals, the historically disadvantaged institutions (HBUs and HBTs) were established as teaching universities to generate the workforce in teachers and skilled laborers. The differences in resources and the legacies of these institutions systematized the inequities in South African higher education that many educators are trying to resolve today (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001).

The 2001 South African Census estimated 44.8 people in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2004). Today, many institutions are still tracking students using the historical “population groups:” Black African, Coloured, Indian or Asian, White, and

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<sup>1</sup> Historically Black Universities and Technikons will be referred to as Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs) and Historically White Universities and Technikons will be referred to as Historically Advantaged Universities (HAUs) when statements reflect both types of institutions.

Other. Although Black Africans made up 79% of the total population in South Africa, they comprised only 52% of the postsecondary student population in 2001. White South Africans made up only 10% of the total population, but 35% of postsecondary students. To add, although the difference between the proportion in the total population compared to that in higher education is slight, Indians and Asians are overrepresented in higher education and Coloureds are underrepresented (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001).

Cooper and Subotzky (2001) tracked student enrollment and a profile of staff at postsecondary institutions to explore trends from 1988 to 1998. In the past 16 years there has been a major shift in the student composition in higher education. Total enrollments by gender and race completely reversed; White males were historically the majority group of students in higher education, followed by White females, Black males, and then Black females. By 1998, enrollment was in the reversed order; Black females were the largest population of college students, followed by Black males, White females, and White males<sup>2</sup>. There has been a steady decline in White student enrollment, particularly at English-speaking HAUs.

The numbers were also skewed depending on institutional type and program of study. By 1998, Black Africans made up the majority of undergraduate students, but were largely underrepresented in all graduate programs, in all HAUs, and in certain undergraduate programs of study, such as math, science, and technology at most institutions. Cooper and Subotzky (2001) determined that the skewed trends were in favor of privileged racial and gender groups who have historically had access to higher education.

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<sup>2</sup> In the 2001 Census, Black females comprised 41.3% of the total South Africa population, Black males 37.7%, White females were 4.9 %, and White males were 4.6% (Statistics South Africa, 2004).

Shifts in student enrollment and composition present numerous problems for single institutions. Cooper and Subotzky (2001) reported a 40% decline in total student enrollment at all six African HDUs between 1996 and 1998. (Roughly 96% of students at these institutions were Black Africans.) The causes of the shifts were believed to include (1) finances, such as more strict requirements for a timely payment of fees as well as a decrease in available student financial support; (2) a decline from the mid-1990s in the total number of Black African high school graduates nationwide who obtained the necessary requirements for university entrance; (3) reluctance by some students to register for broad general degrees in the social sciences, humanities, and education--historically the most important fields of enrollment at the HDUs; (4) increased attractiveness of technikons due to lower cost, generally lower admission requirements, and vocationally-oriented programs; (5) the possible increase in Black African enrollments at private institutions; (6) increased motivation by many Black African students to register at HAUs due to their possible perceptions of better quality degrees offered, academic and administration problems, and political disruptions at HDUs; (7) the rural isolation of the six HDUs; and (8) the impact of HIV/AIDS (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001).

While there was significant transformation in the racial and gender demographics among students, there was little change in the staff. From 1988 to 1998, Black African staff members increased from 31% to 35% and White staff decreased from 54% to 51%. There was little change in the composition of Coloured and Indian staff. In addition, the proportion of professional staff to non-professional staff was much higher at HAUs (42% to 58%, respectively) in 1998 than HDUs (37% to 63%, respectively) due to trends

influenced by apartheid (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). The apartheid system limited access of Black Africans to gain credentials to become certified academicians, and also blocked access to such positions with legal segregation. As a result, the faculty and academic staff across the higher education landscape remain disproportionately White (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Mabokela & King, 2001).

Cooper and Subotzky (2001) determined that in order to truly understand student retention, persistence, and graduation rates, and identify trends and patterns within and across institutions, there needs to be a better system to disaggregate data by race and gender. CHET and the South African DOE identified additional research needs for higher education in the *Effective Governance Project*: the need to conduct applied research to capture the diversity of students in institutions, and to establish and understand the current personal, social, and educational needs of the students; to train student affairs practitioners on how to conduct research and how to translate and apply findings to practice; to collaborate and communicate across institutions to share resources and not duplicate or waste resources; and to publish research in local and global journals (Mandew, 2003). The *Effective Governance Project* also emphasized the need for “emerging student services researchers to be supported and mentored by more experienced researchers, whether they be local or from abroad” (Mandew, 2003, p. 122). Many of these specified needs are tied into the roles and duties of student affairs.

### *Student Affairs in South Africa*

Although there is some debate about the role and purpose of student affairs in South African higher education, a general understanding is that student affairs includes

the vast range of facilities, services, and extra-curricular<sup>3</sup> programs that work in support of student learning and development by addressing student needs (Harper, 2004). As previously mentioned, some of the key South African higher education organizations (e.g., CHET and DOE) view student affairs as a central part of colleges and universities. Along with the physical structural changes in colleges and universities, there have been changes in the role of student affairs and student services in South Africa.

In the past decade there has been a major shift in the presence of student affairs and student services in South African higher education. Most South African institutions have designated student affairs sections within their universities. In addition, discussion about and action towards professionalizing student affairs (e.g., the leadership and management of practitioners, and the delivery of programs and services) began at the national level in 1996 with the National Commission on Higher Education (Harper, 2004). Also in this movement was the establishment of the Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) and the National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV).

In fall 2002, higher education leaders collaborated with representatives from three major student affairs and higher education associations in the United States: the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). After extensive consultations through a collaborative project among the United States and South African higher education associations and institutions, a major area identified as being crucial to strengthening the role of student affairs and student

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<sup>3</sup> In the U. S. student affairs programs are now typically referred to as “co-curricular” or even “curricular” programs to emphasize their comparable value to postsecondary education as the formal academic curriculum.

services in South Africa was the “need for student affairs staff to conduct applied research and assessment along with those in academic affairs” (Harper, 2004). With limited graduate student affairs programs in South Africa, there are few individuals who are trained or have the time to conduct the amount of research needed to capture the many elements of the shifting higher education system in South Africa.

The first formal Division of Student Services was established at the University of Natal in the fall of 1992. The University of the Western Cape (UWC) was the most recent institution to restructure its organizational structure and create a separate and formal unit of student affairs. In fall 2003, UWC combined all of the student services to create a formal unit with a single reporting line. To head this unit, UWC created and filled a new position on the Executive Board: Vice Rector of Student Support and Development (O’Connell, 2002b). UWC was the unit of analysis in this study.

#### *University of the Western Cape*

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) was established as an “ethnic college for ‘Coloured’ students” after the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 (University of the Western Cape, 2000, p. 2). UWC had its first class of 166 students in 1960 and was granted academic autonomy in 1970. UWC was viewed by the government as being “oriented to the training of Coloured and Indian ‘middle classes’” (University of the Western Cape, 2000, p. 2). In 1984, UWC was granted full autonomy from government control, which made it one of the first universities to control its finances and academic departments (University of the Western Cape, 2000).

UWC is one of two non-Black African Historically Disadvantaged Universities, the other being the University of Durban-Westville in the KwaZulu-Natal Province.



These two institutions have had the largest transformation in their racial composition of any HDUs. From 1988 to 1998, Black African students became the numerical majority in the student population. Coloured and Indian students in the Western Cape Province have moved to neighboring HAUs, such as the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Cape Town (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001).

Cooper and Subotzky (2001) also explored trends in South African higher education by specific institution. At UWC in 1988, Coloured males made up the largest race-gender group at UWC (49% of the student body). By 1998, this number fell to 17%. Coloured females decreased from 33% to 19%. Enrollment among Black Africans increased. Black African females and males increased from 6% to 36% and from 7% to 23% (respectively) of the student population. Cooper and Subotzky (2001) stated that shifts in student composition at UWC may have been caused by increased recruitment and financial support for academically advanced Black African students to the neighboring HAUs; misperceptions by potential students that a degree in social sciences (which was traditionally emphasized at UWC due to historical trends in program enrollment by race) will not be valuable in the job market; increased difficulty in gaining access to UWC due to increased percentages of historically underrepresented groups with adequate admission qualifications; and increased options such as studying at technikons or private colleges, or immediately entering the job market.

UWC has taken a lead in designing methods to explore and study their current and potential students in an effort to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. UWC claims to have “a more inclusive, transparent, and democratic system of governance...with representatives from all interest groups in the university community

taking part in decision-making” (University of the Western Cape, 2004, ¶ 3). As an institution, UWC has recently redesigned and restructured their student support services. An outside consultant familiar with UWC and student affairs in South Africa interviewed the leadership and staff at UWC prior to the structural changes, and researchers and staff at the university recently created surveys to measure experiences of other members in the university regarding the student experience on campus. What is not clear is the role students played in the change process and if the changes made were in line with students’ needs and desires.

In November 2000, UWC revealed the *University of the Western Cape: Strategic Plan 2001-2005* (University of the Western Cape, 2000), which listed student development and support as major foci. A major goal in the Institutional Plan was to “support the development of students” (p. 6). Major objectives of the Institutional Plan that impacted the student development and services at UWC included: (1) A safe and supportive dynamic learning environment that respects and values student diversity, equity, and service delivery to realize UWC’s enrollment, management, student development, and strategic objectives; and (2) A culturally inclusive and diverse student body.

UWC is one of the few tertiary institutions in South Africa that has placed the division of student affairs and services as a priority in the university, and has made a major shift in the division of student affairs. UWC has also taken a lead nationally in helping to integrate and improve research in higher education and to professionalize student affairs and student development. The Center for the Study of Higher Education at UWC (formerly the Educational Policy Unit, or EPU) is known as one of the top higher

education research institutes in South Africa. Last year, UWC also started the second student affairs administration graduate studies program in South Africa. UWC is one of the leading institutions to study students and student development, both in- and outside of the classroom.

### Framework for Study

Four concepts created the framework for this study. First, change is seen as the intent to improve, not simply as a shift. Jackson (2005), of the Higher Education Academy, wrote, “The concept of change includes the idea of enhancement which is generally understood as improving something that is already pretty good” (p. 4). Change in this study involves the notion of improvement.

Second, colleges and universities are seen as open organizations that are complex adaptive social systems. In complex adaptive systems, behavior or movement towards a goal is not predictable or linear and the organization as a “system” is not stable, it is constantly changing and adapting (Eoyong & Olson, 1998). Stacey (2000) wrote the following:

[Complex adaptive systems] consist of a large number of agents, each of which behaves according to its own principles of local interaction. No individual agent (e.g., teacher or administrator), or groups of agents (e.g., teaching team or departments) determines the patterns of behavior that the system as a whole displays, or how these patterns evolve, and neither does anything outside the system. (p. 8).

The theory of higher education institutions as open systems was used to frame the context and process of organizational change.

The third concept I used to create the framework for this study was student development theory. Student development theory is a tool that supports practitioners in understanding the maturation of individuals during the college years. It provides a framework for describing and prescribing human development that leads towards complexity over time. Human development, particularly during the college years, is often described in clusters that identify students' development in specific domains. These domains have typically included cognitive-structural, psychosocial, person and environment, typology, maturation, and moral and ethical development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Student development theory also includes development in racial identity, sexual identity, and faith (Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002). The theoretical clusters share characteristics common in student development in that they move from simple to complex, they are time sensitive, and they do not necessarily occur in a sequential pattern.

Individuals in college experience development as a result of the challenges encountered with self, and self in relationship to others, the environment, and the curricula (formal and informal) while in college. Theory explains, predicts, and is useful as a tool for assessment of students' needs. It can also support the evaluation of effective practice in programs, services, and curricula, and guide student affairs professionals in working with diverse students (Guido-DiBrito & Chávez, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In this study, data was analyzed using existing theories as a comparative tool and to help ground the data in a theoretical framework and understanding. Student development theory was used to help evaluate the student experience in higher education

and to identify whether or not the organizational change occurred to support the development of students and improvement in the student experience at UWC.

Finally, I used grounded theory as the methodological framework. The purpose of grounded theory is to clarify and help explain a certain area or phenomenon; it involves theory building rather than theory testing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Strauss and Corbin (1990) emphasized the importance of “theoretical sensitivity” when conducting research. Theoretical sensitivity is the researcher’s ability to recognize and detect what is viewed important on the topic studied based on literature in the field and the researcher’s background and past experience. I used grounded theory to see if a theoretical understanding of college students’ roles within their institution (particularly in a time of restructuring and change) can be inductively derived from the data collected and ultimately related in a cumulative pattern that relates to what previous theories and studies have been able to explain (Creswell, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

#### Definition of Terms

Some of the terms used in my study have multiple meanings and others may be new to some readers. The definitions of terms for this study are as follows:

- **Apartheid:** A system of legal racial segregation in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 at which time people were legally classified into racial groups and geographically separated from each other based on this legal classification (Mabokela, 1998).
- **Black African:** Individuals who can trace their race to the indigenous people of Africa (Mabokela, 1998; Statistics South Africa, 2004).

- **Change:** I viewed the concept of change as including the intent to improve or enhance something that was already established, change as including the process of change, such as making something different; transforming, adapting, or converting something that already exists; replacing or exchanging something; or becoming different (Jackson, 2005).
- **Coloured:** South Africans of mixed-race heritage, typically Dutch, Khoisan, Black African, and Malay heritage. In the Western Cape, the Cape Coloured and Cape Malay are descendants from the slave trade in South Africa and introduced Islam to South Africa (Mabokela, 1998; Statistics South Africa, 2004).
- **Indian/Asian:** People of Indian, Chinese, Korean descent. Japanese were excluded from this category and were classified as “honorary Whites” due to financial standing (Mabokela, 1998; Statistics South Africa, 2004).
- **Student Affairs:** The overall organizational structure on college campuses that is responsible for providing services and programs to support and augment the broader higher education experience” (Mueller, 2002, p. 587). For the purpose of this study “student affairs” is an established division on campus.
- **Student Services:** The specific administrative activities created and implemented to support the overall function of student affairs (Komives et al., 2001).
- **Technikon:** Equivalent to an Institute of Technology (Koen, n. d.). In the U. S. technikons would also resemble community colleges.
- **White:** People of European descent. In South Africa this largely refers to individuals of Dutch and English heritage (Mabokela, 1998; Statistics South Africa, 2004).

## Conclusion

Altbach (1987) summed up the nature of universities well when he wrote, “Universities are, in a sense, a sum of their parts and it is necessary to look carefully at the various elements of the academic community--and particularly at students and teachers because it is they who determine the nature of the academic equation” (p. 3). In a time of major restructuring and change in South African higher education, it is crucial to understand the role and experiences of students as key stakeholders in postsecondary education. Recently, student protests resulting from frustration and exclusion from the process of change in their colleges and universities have lead to temporary closing of whole institutions and government intervention (Harper, 2004; King, 2001; South African Press Association, 2004). Students do play a role in institutional change; the particular role they play may have an impact on single institutions as well as members at large. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature to help position this study in student affairs, organizational change, and higher education. Chapter 3 includes the procedures and methodology. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are the findings of the study, and chapter 7 is the discussion.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As I outlined in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to explore the change and restructuring of student affairs in South African higher education viewing students as key stakeholders. I reviewed literature and designed this study to add to the understanding of student affairs and services in South Africa, and understand and inform other institutions about the role students play in the process of restructuring and institutional change. The purpose of this literature review was to investigate conditions that influence student affairs and organizational change, and possible outcomes of organizational change.

I begin this literature review with the context of South African higher education, including a brief overview of the history and shifts in student and staff composition. Second, I explore institutional governance in South African higher education and the role students have played as stakeholders in postsecondary education. The third major section is on student affairs and services in higher education. I present the basic foundation and principles of student affairs as a profession and an overview of the units and practices that make up student services in higher education. I explore student affairs from a global context then move specifically to the context of student affairs in South African higher education. The final major section is on organizational change. Through this review of literature I demonstrate how this study adds to the current literature on the restructuring and organizational change in higher education and the role of students and student affairs in South African higher education.



## Higher Education in South Africa

Higher education plays a critical role in the individual advancement, deracialization, balance of equal opportunities, and economic growth in South Africa. In an effort to explore the value of higher education for developing countries, a joint study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development found that the growth of national economies increases as more people study in higher education (Bollag, 2003). While economic growth is imperative to South Africa's health as a nation and position in the global market, key South African constituents (e.g., the Department of Education) stated the importance of developing "lifelong learners who will provide leadership in the application of knowledge and technology for the objectives of freedom, equality, justice, and equity" (Mandew, 2003, p. 122). The Center for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) and the South African Department of Education described the five functions of lifelong learners as (1) the preparation of individuals for the management of their adult lives, (2) the distribution of education throughout an individual's lifespan, (3) the educational function of the whole of one's life experience, (4) the identification of education with the whole of life, and (5) a fundamental transformation of society so that the whole society becomes a learning resource for each individual (Mandew, 2003). Whatever the focus of higher education for South African constituents, the success of creating an effective system of higher education is dependent on whether or not the education system works within the context of the changing nation.

Massive increase in postsecondary students, diversification in the types and functions of institutions and of the study body, and limited funding have marked

contextual changes in higher education in many countries (Brennan & Shah, 2001). These global trends coupled with the unique challenges brought on by the end of apartheid resulted in major shifts in South African higher education and the role individual institutions played within the system. The national shifts caused by expansion and diversification in South Africa included mandated mergers of institutions, the creation of new institutions, and various changes at individual colleges and universities. It is important that researchers, practitioners, and policy makers in South African higher education have shared understanding and knowledge of the history that shaped South African higher education, the current status of higher education, and goals for the future of South African higher education; shared understanding may assist with creating an effective, collaborative system of higher education that supports the nation as a whole and helps identify future trends and needs to maintain an effective system (Barr & Upcraft, 1990).

### *A Brief History of South African Higher Education*

The South African system of higher education has its roots in both the British and Dutch educational systems and was established to train young White men to become colonial civic leaders (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). The first formal university in South Africa, University of the Cape of Good Hope, was established in 1873. In the early 1900s, White women had access to higher education after the establishment of Huguenot College (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). In the late 1950s apartheid systems of Historically Black Universities or Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HBUs or HDUs, respectively) began to emerge; these universities were also referred to as “homeland” or “bush” universities (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Moja & Cloete, 2001). The Extension of

University Education Act of 1959 formally instated the establishment of Black postsecondary institutions (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). The South African system of separate and unequal education was legalized and institutionalized.

By the late 1980s the full South African higher education system of 36 institutions was completed. South Africa had more higher education institutions than any other country with a population under 50 million people (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). The composition of the 36 institutions included 21 universities and 15 technikons. To add, there were 18 Historically Advantaged Institutions (11 universities and 7 technikons) and 18 Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (10 universities and 8 technikons).

Educational institutions were legally divided by race; there were further divisions within racial groups by language, culture, and gender (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Mandew, 2003). Cooper and Subotzky (2001) reported that non-White educational institutions had less financial support, fewer resources (e.g., qualified instructors and adequate facilities), and a sub par academic curriculum, particularly in math and science, as compared to their White institution counterparts. Furthermore, apartheid job reservation policies channeled certain races and genders into specific types of jobs. All of these variables had a large impact on the course of study students “chose” (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001).

The Universities Amendment Act in 1983 legally ended racial segregation in postsecondary education. Since this Act, there have been major demographic shifts in students and staff. It was imperative in this study to understand how the demographics among students and staff have shifted, as the shifts may have affected the institutional

culture and relationship dynamics at individual institutions. The following two sections illustrate recent demographic shifts in South African higher education.

### *Students in South African Higher Education*

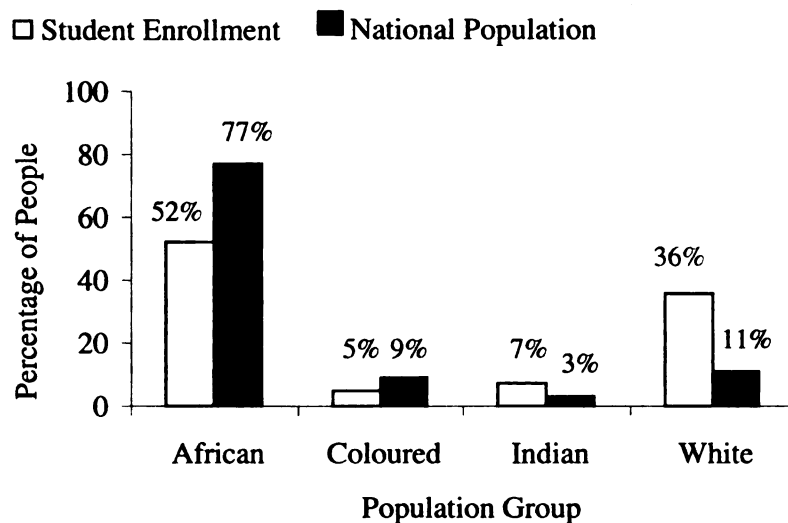
Few research efforts have captured the demographics of South African higher education. Most of the information in this section relies on Cooper and Subotzky's (2001) work titled *The Skewed Revolution: Trends in South African Higher Education: 1988-1998*. During my time in South Africa I was told by Senior Researchers at the Center for the Study of Higher Education that the South African government was in the process of building a solid database to track trends in higher education. Most of the data on trends in South African higher education was collected by the Center for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE, formerly the Educational Policy Unit or EPU); the data used in CSHE documents was from the South African Department of Education and reconstructed at the CSHE (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001).

In this section I present a brief overview of postsecondary student trends in all of South Africa and then more specifically at the University of the Western Cape. It is important to understand the entire context of South African higher education to understand the role the University of the Western Cape played in this context. Where possible, I present data by race and gender.

Cooper and Subotzky (2001) compared South African census data with higher education data on student enrollment and found that White and Indian students were overrepresented in higher education and Coloured and Black African students were underrepresented (see Figure 1). In 1988, Whites made up 11% of the South African population and 55% of the student population (32% White males and 23% White

females). Over the next 10 years, although there were not major shifts in the total percentage of White South Africans in the population, the student demographics shifted. In 1998, Whites comprised 36% of the student population (18% male and 18% female). Indians made up 3% of the total South African population and 7% of student population; Coloureds made up 9% of the total population and 5% of the student population; Black Africans made up 77% of the population and 52% of the student population.

Figure 1. Comparison of Postsecondary Student Enrollment and National Population



Source: Cooper & Subotzky, 2001.

Cooper and Subotzky (2001) reported a 40% decline in student enrollment at all six Black African Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs) between 1996 and 1998. Reported reasons for the decline included: (1) stricter requirements for timely payment of fees as well as a decrease in available student financial support; (2) a decline from the mid-1990s in the total number of Black African high school graduates nationwide who obtained a high school diploma; (3) reluctance by some students to

register for broad general degrees in the social sciences, humanities, and education (cited as historically the most important fields of enrollment at the HDUs) due to perceived difficulty in obtaining jobs with these qualifications; (4) increased attractiveness to technikons, in part because of lower fees, generally lower admission requirements, and vocationally-oriented programs; (5) possible increase in Black African enrollment at private institutions; (6) increased motivation of Black Africans to register at Historically Advantaged Universities (HAUs) due to perceptions of better quality degrees offered, and perceptions of academic and administration problems and political disruptions at HDUs; (7) rural isolation of the six Black African HDUs, none of which is closer than 125 miles from any major city; and (8) the impact of HIV/AIDS (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). A major focus of colleges and universities is attracting, retaining, and graduating students. It is important to explore reasons students chose whether or not to attend or persist at their respective institutions.

Black African enrollment at Historically Advantaged Universities increased from 673 in 1988 to 31,004 in 1998 at Afrikaans-medium universities and from 4,759 in 1988 to 17,533 in 1998 at English-medium universities (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). These increases may have been the result of deregulated admissions policies (Mabokela, 1998), new equity-driven admissions and financial aid policies, as well as an increase in academic support for underprepared students (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). Major shifts in the student body composition within universities resulted in the need to explore race relations in order to have successful change and transformation at institutions (Mabokela & King, 2001).

### *The University of the Western Cape*

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) is one of two Historically Disadvantaged Universities that was not established to serve Black Africans; the University of the Western Cape was established in 1960 to serve the Coloured population and the University of Durban-Westville was established that same year to serve the Indian population. These two universities had a larger shift in their racial composition than any HAU. From 1988 to 1998, Black African students became the numerical majority in the student population at UWC. Cooper and Subotzky (2001) reported that Coloured and Indian students moved to the two neighboring HAUs in the Western Cape Province: the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Cape Town.

From 1988 to 1998, the student demographics at UWC completely reversed. In 1988, Coloured males made up the largest race-gender group at UWC at 49% of the student body composition, followed by Coloured females (33%), Black African males (7%), and Black African females (6%). By 1998, Black African females represented the largest race-gender group at 35% of the student body, followed by Black African males (23%), Coloured females (19%) and Coloured males (17%) (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001, see Table 1). These major shifts in student composition may have impacted the culture and function of the university.

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (Ludeman, 2001) emphasized that “the most important knowledge required of staff working in the area of student affairs/services should be a thorough knowledge of the students with whom they work” (p. 18). This section explored the shifts of student demographics in South African

higher education, and more specifically at UWC. This next section highlights shifts in staff in order to gain an understanding of the context of student affairs staff.

Table 1. Student Enrollment at UWC by Race and Gender

	1988				1998			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
African	749	7%	649	6%	2494	23%	3773	35%
Coloured	5192	49%	3570	33%	1808	17%	2043	19%
Indian	258	2%	120	1%	276	3%	285	3%
White	84	1%	39	<1%	72	1%	81	1%

Source: Cooper & Subotzky, 2001.

### *Staff in South African Higher Education*

My study involved students and staff in higher education. Staff composition may have played a large role in the context of the study, as well as the process of change in student affairs. I present here an overview of the shift in staff demographics to illustrate the historical relevance of staffing trends and lay the foundation for possible future trends for student affairs in South African higher education. During my data collection at UWC, I was unable to get demographic data from the university; I was told by UWC researchers that they were in the process of compiling demographic data of staff.

From 1988 to 1998, Black African staff members increased from 31% to 35% and White staff decreased from 54% to 51%. More specifically, in executive management positions, Black African staff increased from 3% to 12%, Whites declined from 94% to 81%, and Coloured and Indian racial groups slightly increased. Black African staff were underrepresented in professional personnel categories (13% in 1998) and were



concentrated in non-professional personnel categories (50%). In 1998, White staff comprised 79% of professional staff and 31% of non-professional staff. There was little change in the composition of Coloured and Indian staff (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001) (see Table 2).

Changes in student demographics typically influence the staff composition at universities (Upcraft & Barr, 1990). Important to this study, while there was significant transformation in racial and gender demographics within the student demographics at UWC, there was little change in staff. Cooper and Subotzky (2001) found little change in the composition of Coloured staff.

King (2001) stated that in order stop the racial stratification of opportunities people were able to pursue during apartheid, South Africa must take aggressive measures to change racial trends in institutions. Issues around the need to attract, retain, and prepare qualified staff are important in higher education (Upcraft & Barr, 1990), and very relevant in the context of South Africa.

#### *Institutional Governance in South African Higher Education*

Institutional governance in South African higher education has recently been given much attention in terms of restructure, research, and publication. In 1996 the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) published *A Framework for Transformation* which called for a shift in South African higher education governance from a state supervision approach to a model of cooperative governance, where interests groups and stakeholders work together to influence the decision-making process (Cloete & Mohamed, 1995; Harper, Olivier, Thobakgale, & Tshwete, 2002). Harper et al. (2002) reported that this model of cooperative governance aimed to enable all university

Table 2. Staff Members in South African Higher Education by Race

1988	Personnel Category	African		Coloured		Indian		White		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Professional	Exec/Admin/Manag.	22	3%	9	1%	8	1%	611	94%	
	Instruction/Research	542	6%	205	2%	267	3%	8,649	89%	
	Specialist Support	77	6%	52	4%	50	4%	1,203	87%	
	Technical	171	8%	244	12%	202	10%	1,396	69%	
	Crafts/Trades	98	11%	222	25%	36	4%	533	60%	
Non-Professional	Non-Professional Administration	820	14%	442	8%	299	5%	4,143	73%	
	Service	8,109	74%	2,172	20%	275	3%	357	3%	
	<b>1988 Total</b>	<b>9,839</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>3,346</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>1,137</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>16,892</b>	<b>54%</b>	
	Professional	Exec/Admin/Manag.	96	12%	32	4%	21	3%	641	81%
		Instruction/Research	1,364	13%	284	3%	492	5%	8,298	79%
Specialist Support		258	14%	73	4%	98	5%	1,452	77%	
Technical		363	19%	251	13%	239	13%	1,050	55%	
Crafts/Trades		228	30%	122	16%	21	3%	392	51%	
Non-Professional	Non-Professional Administration	2,153	28%	828	11%	476	6%	4,135	54%	
	Service	6,674	77%	1,427	17%	281	3%	236	3%	
	<b>1998 Total</b>	<b>11,136</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>3,017</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>1,628</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>16,204</b>	<b>51%</b>	

Source: Cooper & Subotzky, 2001.

stakeholder groups to “participate in determining the future of teaching, learning, and research at higher education institutions” (p. 9) and that the cooperative governance model “gives recognition to the significant role that could be played by all stakeholders in turning around adversarial relations on campus through the development of a sense of collective responsibility and trust” (p. 8).

The South African Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 legislated that the NCHE model of cooperative governance be put into practice in higher education institutions through four main structures: the Council, the Students’ Representative Council (SRC), the Institutional Forum, and the Senate (Harper et al., 2002). The NCHE stated that these institutional structures and the relationships among members within these structures should operate under the assumption that (1) no single entity will have the authority to determine the policies and priorities of the higher education system, (2) needs and interests from all groups must be recognized, (3) participation by stakeholders and effectiveness must be accounted for and balanced, (4) distribution of power, shared accountability, and responsibility require cooperative behavior from all participants, (5) the government will play a steering and coordinating role with the participation of higher education stakeholders, and (6) “higher education must become part of a cooperative and coordinate state in which participating constituents and actors maintain their identities, remain autonomous, and have a variety of powers and functions ranging from decision-making to complementation and monitoring” (Harper et al., 2002, p. 10).

It is important to highlight that students and student groups are seen as, and included as such, key stakeholders and interests groups in the cooperative governance model in South Africa. In an extensive literature review on student governance and

student leadership in African higher education, Luescher (2005) found that how students are conceived at a university determines governance implications; if students are seen as clients or consumers of higher education, students, as clients, may be involved in the institutional governance. The legislated governance structure in South Africa higher education suggested that students are formally seen as stakeholders in the education system.

### *Student Involvement in Institutional Governance*

Luescher (2005) believed there were five main forms of student governance in African higher education: student governments on campus, representation of the student body in certain structures of the university governance, involvement in institutional or national student organizations, formal student participation in the policy-making process, and democratic rights of students as citizens. Although Munene (2003) argued that students historically have had little decision-making power in African higher education, Luescher (2005) found that, even though formal student involvement at the system level of African higher education governance was scarcely documented, there was clear evidence, particularly in the formal position structures and mandated representation of students on university committees, that students in South African higher education were formally involved in the governance of their universities. Luescher (2005) continued to report, however, little is known of the extent to which formal placement on university committees determined active participation in key governance functions, aside from merely sitting on committees.

Students historically played a significant role in the state of education in South Africa, particularly in areas of access, finances, and equity (Cele, 2004; Cele, Koen, &

Mabizela, 2005). Studies of student involvement and governance in Africa have typically been centered on student protest and unrest, with negative connotations attached to both of these terms (Luescher, 2005). Student protest and activism in higher education should not necessarily be viewed as negative; student activism had positive influence on and played a large role in improving the standing of students within institutions (Cele et al., 2005; Luescher, 2005). For example, In the 1980s students at UWC protested and conducted demonstrations that lead to productive negotiations with university authorities to achieve students' objectives (Luescher, 2005).

Student involvement and governance in higher education has changed over time in terms of structure and methods of influencing the university, particularly at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In the 1980s student involvement at historically black institutions was characterized by student uprising, demonstrations, and protests (Cele, 2004; Cele et al., 2005; Koen, 2004). Student governance played a large role in improving communication between students, staff, and administration in order to reduce the incidence of student protests, unrest, and at times, violence (Luester, 2005).

In the 1990s national student political organizations redefined their role in institutions of higher education and student involvement was increasingly characterized by participation in governance structures of universities (Cele, 2004; Cele et al., 2005; Koen, 2004); upon the end of apartheid in 1994, student activism changed from direct confrontation to engagement and participation in institutional governance structures. Cele (2004) found that change in institutional governance processes and change in student activism were related; as student governance structures became more centralized and formally added to the legitimate structure and function of universities, students began to

see their role on campus as being responsible for student participation and engagement in the everyday business of the university, rather than as activists.

Although involvement of student organizations in institutional governance may have contributed to political stability within the university (Koen, 2004), Cele (2004) found that student participation in institutional governance structures resulted in few positive outcomes for students. The incorporation of students into university governance increased the bureaucratization of students clubs and organizations (Cele et al., 2005). In addition, Koen (2004) reported that although students adapted their governance structure and organizations to give them a formal position in the governance structure within the institution and policy-making process, the restructured organization of student committees resulted in these same student committees contributing to the “educational sorting and social stratification and class production that occurs as a result of selection and exclusion practices at higher education institutions” (p. 1). Koen (2005) went on to report, “Student organizations and leaders have increasingly accepted criteria that contribute to the financial exclusion of students whose access they demanded in previous times” (p. 1).

The centralized form of student governance and student power in higher education institutions were in the creation of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) at institutions (Cele et al., 2005; Harper et al., 2002). At each university, the SRC is officially recognized as the “institutional executives of the student body” and has a dual function of “representing the students’ interests in institutional (and national) governance” and “overseeing the political and social activities of students and student organizations on campus” (Luescher, 2005, p. 8). Cele et al. (2005) found that SRCs and

other formal student organizations (i.e., Faculty Councils and Residence House Committees) have recently established or strengthened networking contacts on regional and international levels in order to improve their organizational practices and gain broader experiences and perceptions. Others (Cebekhulu, 2004) found that the mandated mergers and state of transformation in higher education have caused student leadership to be “paralyzed” and uncertain about their role in the process of institutional change. It appears that, like many other entities in the South African system of higher education, student involvement and governance is defining its roles in the systemic mergers and transformation.

#### Student Affairs in Higher Education

Student Affairs is “the organizational structure on college campuses that is responsible for providing services and programs to support and augment the broader higher education experience” and “has the responsibility for managing a variety of campus facilities and budgets, participating in policy decisions that affect the campus, responding to campus crises that affect the lives of students, and fostering the out-of-class education and development of college students” (Mueller, 2002, p. 587). Student affairs administration encompasses a majority of the out-of-class experience in colleges and universities, such as student counseling, advising, safety, recreation, and cocurriculum, and as an institutional division, student affairs must adapt to and accommodate shifts in student demographics and institutional missions (Mueller, 2002). In this section I present the foundation of student affairs as a profession and explore student services in higher education.

Student affairs as a profession has its roots in American higher education (Ludeman, 2001). Key documents typically acknowledged as the foundation and guiding principles of student affairs (Barr & Upcraft, 1990; Hamrick et al., 2002; Nuss, 2001) include the *Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937), *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education* (Brown, 1972), *A Perspective on Student Affairs* (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1987), *The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs* (American College Personnel Association, 1994), and *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators & American College Personnel Association, 2004). The common themes in these key documents are the importance of the holistic development of students and the importance of placing learning at the center of all aspects of higher education (Nuss, 2001; Schroeder, 1996).

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) emphasized that effective student affairs and services placed students at the center of higher education by “supporting students in their academic endeavors and enhancing their social, cultural, and cognitive development” (Mandew, 2003, p. 7). IASAS also listed desired outcomes for student affairs and services as:

A high quality, well rounded learning experience; improved higher education access regardless of ability/background; better retention and progress toward graduation; higher graduation rates; enhanced career/employment prospects and lifelong learning interests; and a life as a responsible, contributing community member and citizen. (p. 7)



King & Baxter Magolda (1999) wrote:

One of student affairs' strengths is sensitivity to the developmental issues that underlie the process of education...Just as our faculty colleagues offer an intentional curriculum, student affairs needs to intentionally identify learning goals, assess students' capabilities related to the goals, offer a developmentally oriented process through which to meet them, provide support to students to meet the goals, and evaluate students' progress on the plan. (p. 604)

Student affairs must be intentional in design and must take the lead in addressing the personal and developmental needs of students as human beings (Ludeman, 2001).

Throughout its history, higher education has changed along with student demographics, the job market, public policy, and societal trends. Although the type of student services provided shifted over time and student affairs continued to evolve alongside historical trends, two factors remained consistent: (1) student affairs' commitment to the development of the whole student and (2) student affairs' support of the academic mission of the institution, whatever the mission of the institution (Nuss, 2001). Nuss (2001) viewed these two factors as strengths and evidence of student affairs as a profession.

Student affairs researchers and practitioners continue to recognize the need for professional development of staff (Barr & Upcraft, 1990; Komives & Woodard, 2001; Ludeman, 2001). IASAS emphasized the importance of effective management in student affairs; having an "overall manager" responsible for coordinating student programs and services within the context of a student affairs vision and mission; allocating appropriate resources and budget; providing regular assessment and strategic planning, human

resources, and professional development of staff; recruiting and retaining diverse staff; technology infrastructure and training; and marketing (Mandew, 2003). An increase in size of student affairs as a profession and the increase in specialization in the field of student affairs have led to an increase in student affairs staff pursuit of a master's degree in student affairs administration and participation in professional organizations (Mueller, 2002). Mueller (2002) reported, "Many student affairs professionals find that involvement in professional associations serves to enhance their administrative and professional skills" (p. 588).

### *Student Services in Higher Education*

Student services are the specific administrative activities created and implemented to support the overall function of student affairs (Komives et al., 2001). The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) reported that the primary purpose of student services was to contribute to students' emotional and physical well-being and to their intellectual, cultural, and social development outside the context of formal instruction (Ludeman, 2001). IASAS organized a comprehensive list of student services at various postsecondary institutions around the world. The list ranged from college preparatory programs to service learning, and included the purpose and function of each service, as well as typical activities included in each area. This international manual on student services provided opportunity to create shared understanding of student services in a global context and ideas for new programs and services at individual institutions (Ludeman, 2001).

### *Student Affairs and Services in South African Higher Education*

I explored student affairs and services in South African higher education to better understand the context of the student affairs profession at the University of the Western Cape. The most recent and seemingly comprehensive source of written information on student affairs and services in South Africa was a joint effort by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) and the Department of Education Effective Governance Project titled *Guide to Student Services in South Africa* (Mandew, 2003). Mandew (2003) wrote, "There is no overtly articulated philosophical framework or explicit theory that informs practice in the field of student services in South Africa" (p. 21). Mandew (2003) defined student services as "A specific integrated group of departments and units providing support and welfare services and programs for students in higher education institutions" (p. 3), and described student affairs and services in South Africa as rooted in the British system of higher education, developed into South African innovations, and staffed with faculty and nonacademic personnel. Mandew's definition of student services does not differentiate between "student affairs" and "student services;" his definition better parallels what the international community would refer to as "student affairs," the overarching structure of the administrative division (Ludeman, 2001; Mueller, 2002).

A limitation to the *Guide to Student Services in South Africa* was that Mandew (2003) described the history of student services in South Africa specific to the University of Cape Town. Services included residence houses, cafeterias, sport facilities, financial aid, and student representative councils (student government). An important finding in Mandew's (2003) review was an increase over time in the participation of different

university constituents in “the life and development of students outside the classroom” (p. 12). In addition, Mandew (2003) described student services as being outside the core business of the institution, and yet he also stated that student affairs officers were responsible for student recruitment, enrollment planning, and student admissions, and had the authority to implement major institutional policies.

Mandew (2003) reported that in South African higher education there was a debate on the definition and scope of “student development” in South African higher education. The *Guide to Student Services in South Africa* stated that student development should be a key concern for every department or unit within the student services division and all units within the division should play a supportive and facilitative role regard to student development and learning (Mandew, 2003). Mandew (2003) summarized, “There is a growing consensus emerging that the area [of student affairs and services] is wide and does need a specialized focus with a centralized student development unit playing a coordinating, facilitating and delivery role” (p. 59).

### Student Development

Student development is the ways students grow, progress, or increase their developmental capacities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education (Guido-DiBrito & Chávez, 2002; Rogers, 1990). Student affairs as a profession is grounded in and guided by student development theory (Guido-DiBrito & Chávez, 2002; Hamrick et al., 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Upcraft & Moore, 1990). Student development theory is a tool that helps individuals explain, predict, and explore student development and provides a framework for the maturation of an individual that leads to complexity over time (Guido-DiBrito & Chávez, 2002). It is important that student affairs

professionals understand student development theory to “proactively identify and address student needs, design programs, develop policies, and create healthy college environments that encourage positive growth in students” (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 5).

Student development theory emerged from many disciplines such as psychology, sociology, human development, and human biology (Ludeman, 2001). Although many countries have not conducted research to study student development as a concept or theory, there may be research conducted on college students that truly parallel studies labeled in the United States as “student development.” It is important that the higher education community creates a global body of research and understanding of student development (Ludeman, 2001).

Student development theories are typically presented in clusters: psychosocial, cognitive-structural, typology, and person-environment (Evans et al., 1998; Guido-DiBrito & Chávez, 2002; Hamrick et al., 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; 2005). A commonality within the different types of student development theories is that they are all used to explore factors that impact the student experience in postsecondary education (i.e., student learning, retention, persistence, and so forth). In the encyclopedia of higher education in the United States, Guido-DiBrito and Chávez (2002) explained that each cluster, or perspective, of student development theory examines student growth through a unique lens and described student development theory as “central to the preparation and practice of student affairs administrators” and “a powerful tool to help those who teach in and administer colleges and universities understand the multifaceted impact of higher education on its students” (p. 596).

There is no shortage of empirical evidence on how college affects students. In 1991, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) published a synthesis of over 2,600 empirical studies on student development in higher education. As the student body in higher education shifted and expanded, so too did the research; Pascarella and Terenzini expanded their collection and synthesis and published again in 2005. Extensive research has been completed on college student persistence and retention (Astin, 1993; Cabrera, Nora, & Castaneda, M., 1993; Tinto, 1993), overall change in students (e.g., Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, Andreas, Lyons, Strange, et al., 1991), student preparation for transition out of the university (Gardner & Van Der Verr, 1998), the affect of racial and ethnic composition of institutions on students (Watson & Kuh, 1996; Watson, Terrell, Wright, & Associates, 2002), and the impact of finances on student persistence (Cabrera, Nora, & Castaneda, 1992). Empirical data and evidence may help explain the context of South African higher education.

Student persistence and retention was a major concern at UWC. Cooper and Subotzky (2001) reported that in South African higher education, there is a lack of information available on student retention and graduate rates and a need for a better national system of tracking and assessing students, as well as a better understanding of student and institutional characteristics that impact persistence and graduation rates. Furthermore, Ludeman (2001) wrote “student affairs and services is one of the most appropriately positioned entities in universities to collect meaningful student data” (p. 22). My study was designed to add to the literature on the student experience in South African higher education.

## Organizational Change

The final component of my study was organizational change in higher education; more specifically, change and restructuring in student affairs. The previous sections included literature on South African higher education and student affairs in higher education. In this section I explored literature on organizational change within the context of higher education and evaluation of change in higher education.

Jackson (2005) stated that “change is a subject worthy of intellectual exploration in order to understand and do it better” (p. 4). I viewed the concept of change as including the intent to improve or enhance something that was already established. In my study, the “something” studied was the student experience and student affairs in South African higher education. I also viewed change as including the process of change, such as making something different; transforming, adapting, or converting something that already exists; replacing or exchanging something; or becoming different (Jackson, 2005). I evaluated change in institutional outcomes as well as a process.

How an individual experiences change is personal and context dependent; peoples’ perceptions of whether or not a change is an enhancement or improvement are typically connected to and involved in the process in which the change occurred (Jackson, 2005). Therefore, it is imperative to understand the context in which change occurs.

### *Organizational Change in Higher Education*

Higher education institutions are complex, adaptive organizational or social systems (Jackson, 2005; Morgan, 1997; Senge, 1990; Tierney, 1991, 1993). Stacey (2000) explained that in complex adaptive social systems (1) there is a large number of

agents; (2) each agent behaves according to his or her own principles of local interaction; and (3) no individual agent (e.g., student, staff, or administrator), group of agents (e.g., department or unit), or anything outside the system (e.g., national policies, community board, or even university unit outside the specific system) determines the patterns of behavior that the system as a whole displays, or how patterns evolve. There are certain characteristics and dynamics within institutions of higher education that influence how change occurs (Jackson, 2005).

Radical shifts within an organization may impact the organization's ability to maintain or create vitality and progress (Simsek & Louis, 1994). There are, however, many factors to consider in the function of any organization. In a complex organizational system, such as an institution of higher education, the process of how it functions is guided by the persons in leadership positions, the communication between individuals, how individuals make sense out of daily activities and events, how and what decisions are made, and how organizational change may occur (Morgan, 1997; Senge, 1990; Tierney, 1991, 1993).

It is important that members of an organization understand the context and culture in which change occurs (Jackson, 2005; Morgan, 1997). Morgan (1997) described institutional culture as being the shared values, beliefs, meaning, understanding, sense-making, and "the process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways" (p. 138). Change or restructure within an organization may disrupt the already established norms and practices of an institution; if disruption occurs, "constructed reality" and the assumptions and norms by which individuals act and make decisions may inevitably



break down and be redefined (Morgan, 1997). Change often mandates a shift not only in how an institution operates, but in how members of the institution make sense out of events and activities that take place in their environment (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Simsek & Louis, 1994). It is important to identify and understand how change may or may not impact the culture of an institution.

In order to make a smooth and effective change within an institution of higher education, the campus community must be involved and communication must be effective (Senge, 1990; Tierney, 1993). In the “transformation” at the University of Port Elizabeth in South Africa, Austin (2001) found that negotiated transformation and collaboration across the university were key factors to foster inclusion and participation by major university constituencies. Mabokela and King (2001) stated that creating and maintaining non-hierarchical race relations was important in the negotiation process.

If members of the organization do not agree with or buy into the changes in the organization, the change will most likely not have the effect that is intended (Morgan, 1997). Including the campus community in establishing the process of decision making may increase individuals’ satisfaction with how their institution operates, which may lead to a positive impact on the reception of organizational change and operation (Simsek & Louis, 1994). To add, what motivates change may impact or influence individual perception and reaction to the change (Jackson, 2005). Individuals must have clear understanding of the purpose for the change.

#### *Evaluating Change in Higher Education*

Jackson (2005) stated, “Knowing something about change helps us to anticipate and interpret what is happening, respond more wisely to things as they emerge, and not

do things that are unlikely to work” (p. 1). Eoyong and Olson (1998) reported that the majority of evaluation processes in complex adaptive systems were based on performance against predicted goals and developed for organizations assumed to be closed, stable, and predictable. Eoyong and Olson (1998) and Jackson (2005) highlighted the need to create new tools, techniques, and methods that explore organizations while they are in advanced phases of complex change. My study was designed to add to the literature on the exploration of organizational change during an advanced phase of the process of change. I used grounded theory to identify patterns that emerged from the data.

Jackson (2005) emphasized it is difficult to evaluate change in higher education because change effects in one area of change typically modify practice, behavior, or thinking in another area of change. In addition, change may be difficult to identify. Physical change, such as the removal of a structure or reposition of the organizational chart, is easier to identify. Behavioral changes, such as changes in thinking, attitudes, and beliefs which may result in behavioral changes are not easily recognized and quantified (Jackson, 2005).

### Conclusion

Scholars who studied the history of student affairs in higher education (e.g., Barr & Upcraft, 1990 and Komives & Woodard, 2001) determined that the development of student affairs paralleled the development, shifts, and trends of higher education as well as society at large. The foundation of the South African system of higher education, societal trends, student development, and shifts in student and staff demographics may help explain the context for the student experience, student affairs, and organizational

change. In Chapter 3 I present the design and methodology I used to study organizational change and the role students played in the restructuring at UWC.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the change and restructuring of student affairs in South African higher education viewing students as key stakeholders. I designed this study to explore the impetus, process, and outcomes of restructuring; gain better understanding of university stakeholders' perceptions of students and student affairs before, during, and after the change; and determine if the change met expectations and intended outcomes. This study was a case study of a single institution, the University of the Western Cape (UWC), and I used a qualitative research design.

In this chapter I present the rationale for using case study methodology, benefits of using UWC as a single case study, my role in the study and relationship to UWC, data collection, participant sample, data analysis process, and criteria for assessing the integrity of the study. The questions that guided this study were: (1) How do university stakeholders view students and student services at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)? (2) What role(s) do university stakeholders play in organizational change within student services at UWC? (3) How have the structure and delivery of student services changed from before to after the recent restructuring of student services at UWC? and (4) What are the intended and unintended consequences of the restructuring of student services at UWC?

### Case Study Method

I used a qualitative case study method to understand student affairs and the process of organizational change in South African higher education. A case is "a unit of analysis" and is defined as "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25); in a case study there is a unit of focus and a boundary

that defines what will and what will not be studied. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that case studies may include a single individual, a small group, an organization or community, a role that defines a specific context (e.g., the role of a team captain in her specific team setting), or “events or processes occurring over a specified period” (p. 26). The unit of analysis does not have to be a physical thing; it could be a process as well.

Yin (1993) and Miles and Huberman (1994) expanded the concept of a case study as a single unit of measure, to include what these authors call subcases. Examples of subcases were as follows: “A case study of a school may contain cases of specific classroom; a case study of a hospital may have cases of specific doctor-patient relationships within it” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 26). In addition, Stake (2000) indicated that a case study is “both the process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry” (p. 436). Therefore, although a study may be classified as a single case study, it does not investigate only one thing. At the very least, a single case study investigates two things: a single individual, small group, organization, role, and so forth; and the setting or context in which it occurs.

Qualitative researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2000; Yin, 1993) emphasized that case studies are used in and beneficial for investigating both the phenomenon and the context in which it occurs, particularly when what is studied is not easily distinguishable from its context and when what is studied should not be studied outside of its context. Yin (1993) explained that case studies investigate both the phenomenon and the context either because “the context is hypothesized to contain important explanatory variables about the phenomenon or...the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 31). This study was a single case

study of organizational change at the University of the Western Cape. The context of this case study investigated was student affairs and student experiences, and the phenomenon studied was the process of organizational change. I did not use a single unit of measure.

*The University of the Western Cape as a Case Study*

I used the University of the Western Cape (UWC) as my case study due to recent changes in the division of student affairs. UWC is a medium-sized university located in Bellville, South Africa, a suburb of Cape Town. UWC has roughly 15,000 students; 62% are from the Western Cape Province, 33.9% are from other South Africa provinces, and 4% are international students (University of the Western Cape, 2000). Although UWC was founded to serve Coloured South Africans, student demographics have shifted remarkably over the past 10 years. In 1998, Black African females were the largest race-gender group (36%), followed by Black males (23%), Coloured females (19%), and Coloured males (17%) (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). Seventy seven percent of the student body is undergraduate and 80% is full-time.

In 2003, UWC hired a new person to assume the position of Vice Rector for Student Affairs. There were major factors that lead to the hiring of a new Vice Rector. My study explored the entire process of restructuring student affairs at UWC, from the impetus of change to the division, to the outcomes of the change. Once again, organizational change was the phenomenon and UWC (student affairs and student experiences) was the context.

The strength of using qualitative case studies in research is the opportunity to create depth of the description and data analysis (Yin, 1993). Although the purpose of a case study is “not to represent the world, but to represent the case” (Stake, 2000, p. 448),

findings can be transferred to and useful in other contexts. Members of the global higher educational community (e.g., the International Association of Student Affairs and Services and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development) emphasized the importance of using single institutions to contribute to a global understanding of higher education. The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2002) stated that while issues in higher education need to be explored in the context of individual countries and circumstances, there is value in sharing knowledge and experiences on the same issues in order to increase our understanding and add depth to a specific topic. The International Association of Student Affairs and Services also believed that while it is important for countries to develop higher education within the context of national identities, “there are universal values that transcend individual cultures and their political context” (Ludeman, 2001, p. 11). Findings from this single case study may not be generalizable to the higher education community at large; however, they may add to the understanding of students, student affairs, and organizational change in higher education.

#### Role of Researcher

I visited the University of the Western Cape in September 2003 to co-teach a master’s program on Student Affairs Administration. Two Heads of Department (HOD) in the UWC student affairs division attended this course; one was a student in the course and the other was invited for a professional development opportunity. I established a rapport with these two individuals and kept in contact with them before I returned to UWC to teach again the following year. Our contact was mostly in the form of information exchange.

The coordinators of the Student Affairs Administration master's program at UWC asked me to return a second year to teach. I accepted their offer and decided to stay at UWC to conduct my research for my dissertation. Some of the student affairs HODs invited me to attend meetings and events in their respective departments. I was also invited to join certain celebrations, such as dinners in the residence halls to honor students. The HODs were eager to help me collect data and gain an understanding of the work they do. Some of the HODs wanted to show me the programs and services they offered to students. Over time I began to be included more in everyday events in many student affairs departments. My status as an observer changed to participant observer within some of the departments. I was also a graduate student who lived in an on-campus resident hall, and was therefore seen as a resident student to other students and staff members. I was able to experience life as a visiting residential student at UWC.

My race may have played a role in my study. My findings illustrate that race was important in the context of UWC, especially between the Coloureds and Black Africans. Individuals tended to form cliques by racial group status at UWC. The racial dynamics may have influenced people's perceptions of me or behavior in the interview.

To explain, I am biracial and would be classified as Coloured in South Africa. As a U. S. Citizen, however, I identify as an African American; in the U.S. mixed-race people have historically been classified as their non-White racial group (Renn, 2004). At UWC, I look very much like the local "Cape Coloureds." People often assumed I was from Cape Town and often started conversation in Afrikaans. During interviews, some individuals who would be classified as Coloured made comments such as, "You're one of us," implying that I had similar experiences as a Coloured person in South Africa.



Some Black African interview participants also saw me as “one of them.” A few students said comments such as, “You are African American; you know what it is like to be discriminated against.” It was evident that some members from different racial groups saw me as “one of them.” Individuals who felt I had similar experiences due to my racial background may have disclosed different details about the student experiences on campus.

## Data Collection

### *Permission to Conduct Research*

The Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) approved this study in July 2004 (see Appendix A). After I received approval from Michigan State I had to submit the *UWC Research Project Registration and Ethics Clearance Application Form* to Professor Renfrew Christie, Chair of the UWC Senate Research Committee, to get approval from UWC. The UWC clearance form included permission from the UWC Registrar to access students and staff, and the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support for permission to study this particular division within the university. In August 2004 I received clearance to conduct this study and immediately began data collection (see Appendixes B and C for UWC clearance).

### *Types of Data*

Scott and Gough (2003) recommended using multiple sources of data when organizations attempt to create sustainable change in a learning environment. Multiple sources of data provide the opportunity for more depth of the description and data analysis; to gain information on the historical, attitudinal, and behavioral factors that were helpful to understand the case study; and to verify data and enhance the

trustworthiness of data (Lincoln, 2002; Yin, 1993, 1994). I used one-on-one interviews with administrators, students, staff, and an outside consultant; direct and participant observation; and document analysis to collect different types of data, or evidence. I collected different types of data from different groups of stakeholders and sources to explore, in depth, whether or not the restructuring in student services at UWC resulted in meaningful change.

### *Interviews*

I conducted 29 semi-structured open-ended interviews between August and October 2004. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and each participant gave me permission to tape record the interview. I also took notes during each interview. I transcribed the interviews upon completion of each interview.

Participants chose the location of the interview. All but one interview was conducted on campus at UWC in staff offices, student residence quarters, or in my on-campus residence. One interview took place in the off-campus Dental School in Tygerberg.

I used a pre-determined set of questions to create structured interviews. I asked interview questions designed to explore why individuals chose UWC as their institution of higher education (to study or work), what the student experience was like at UWC, what changes (if any) took place within the division of student services at UWC, who was involved in change on campus, and what role(s) individuals played in institutional change. The research protocols for students, staff, and the outside consultant are located in Appendixes D, E, and F, respectively.

Language was a potential barrier to this study. Although UWC was an English-medium institution, English was not the first language for the majority of students and staff. To add, the English spoken in South Africa was different from that spoken in the United States; certain words may sometimes be used to describe different things or events. In order to address potential misunderstandings in words and spoken language, I asked interview participants to draw their perception of “the student experience” at UWC; more specifically, I asked, “What is it like to be a student at UWC? How would you describe the student experience to an outside person? Please describe your drawing.” I used these drawings as a tool to assist in explanation and dialogue; I did not include an analysis of each drawing in this study.

### *Observations*

I made direct observations and participant observations during my stay at UWC. I lived in an on-campus residence from July 2004 to October 2004. In addition, the Center for the Study of Higher Education (formerly the Educational Policy Unit, or EPU) hosted me during my stay and provided me with office space. As I became integrated into the university, I became not only an observer, but a participant observer (Yin, 1994). My status as resident and visiting graduate student at UWC allowed me to live and personally experience what I was studying: the student experience at UWC.

Similarly, I was asked on two separate occasions to attend events within the division of student affairs at UWC. First, the outside consultant, Ann Harper, who was a participant in my study, invited me to attend a two-day workshop with her (as the outside consultant), the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support, and the Heads of Department in the Division of Student Development and Support. I was invited to attend

as an observer. Second, the Head of Residential and Catering Services invited me to attend a two-day leadership retreat for the newly elected student House Committee members in the residences. By the end of each workshop, the session organizers asked if I would help facilitate the discussions. My classification as an “observer” was frequently changed to “participant observer” during my stay at UWC. I took notes to make sure I did not forget to observe and document while I participated<sup>4</sup>. This involvement was beneficial to truly understand the culture and context of my study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Yin, 1993).

### *Documents*

Document analysis was important to explore the events, intentions, and goals of the university in previous years, and to determine whether or not what was written and available for public view was an accurate representation of what actually happened within the university. The documentation I retrieved included: *Motivation for the Project with a Broader Student Support and Development* (Tshiwula, n. d.), *Feedback from Vice Rector (Student Development and Support) Based on A Harper’s Document and SDS Manager’s Report* (Tshiwula, 2004), *Planning Process for the Office of Student Development and Support* (Harper, 2003), *Report from the Chairperson of Institutional Forum* (Mdekazi, 2002), *Report from the Chairperson of Council* (Tyeku, 2002), *Senate Report to the Council* (O’Connell, 2002a), and *Report from the Vice-Chancellor* (O’Connell, 2002b).

I used constant comparative coding and analysis throughout my data collection. I coded data and separated data into themes by type of evidence presented and recorded

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<sup>4</sup> I typed my notes throughout data collection; the notes were included in my data analysis.

during data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I followed up my interviews and documents analysis with emails or phone calls when I needed clarification.

### *Participants*

Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that qualitative research involves “small samples of people, nested in their context and studied in-depth” (p. 27). I divided my participant sample into four separate groups: Administrators, Staff, Students, and Consultant. I used email to invite Administrators and Staff to participate in my study; I emailed the *Invitation to Participate in Research* (Appendix G). Many students at UWC do not consistently use the internet. Therefore, I invited Students via telephone or personal contact. Each individual had to read and sign the *Informed Consent Form* (Appendix H) to participate in the study. The signed *Informed Consent Form* included consent to audiotape each interview. Each participant also completed either the *Student Contact Sheet* or *Staff Contact Sheet* depending on his or her status at the university (see Appendixes I and J, respectively).

I asked interview participants to select a pseudonym to use in this study. Most participants declined to write a pseudonym and gave me oral permission to use their real names. In order to protect participants’ confidentiality, however, I created a pseudonym for those who declined to create his or her own.

During my data analysis, an important theme that emerged was the congruence in what members of the university reported as the main vision of their respective units and the overall university mission, and the actions and behaviors they demonstrated that consistently supported the university and department vision and goals. In other words, participants’ behavior clearly paralleled their understanding of the university mission and

their individual departments. In order to demonstrate the actual comparison of what individuals espoused in interviews and written documents to actual behavior, it was important that I was able to use real names in my dissertation. I asked the interview participants, who were also the authors of documents I used in my document analysis, for permission to use his or her real name in this study. I revised consent forms for these certain individuals and received permission to use real names where relevant (see Appendix K).

### *Description of Participants*

I describe the participant sample in the following section. I give an overview of the four stakeholder groups of my study and a description of demographics. I collected data on participants' year at UWC, their area of study (students only), native province, racial identity, residential status, and sex.

#### *University Administrators and Staff Participants*

The Administrators were university administrators. This group included the Rector, two other top administrators who worked in the Office of the Rector, and the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support (SDS) (see Table 3 for the administrative divisions and staff offices represented in my study). I viewed comments from the Vice Rector of SDS in relation to her role as an administrator and as the Administrator in charge of SDS.

Staff included 7 participants who worked in the division of student affairs and 4 participants who worked in units that provide services for students, but are not located in the division of student affairs (Table 3). There were 6 Heads of Department (HODs) from the division of student affairs and one coordinator of a main section within Residential

and Catering Services, the largest SDS unit. Other Staff worked in the Gender Equity Unit, Writing Center, and Academic Learning Programme.

Table 3. Administration and Staff Offices Represented

	n (Total = 15)	% of N
<b>Administration (total n=4)</b>		
Office of the Rector	3	20
Student Development and Support	1	7
<b>Student Affairs Staff (total n=7)</b>		
Financial Aid	1	7
Institute for Counseling	1	7
Residential Services	1	7
Sports Administration	1	7
Student Enrolment Management	1	7
Student Development	1	7
Students with Disabilities	1	7
<b>Other Staff (total n=4)</b>		
Gender Equity Unit	2	14
Writing Center	1	7
Academic Learning Programme	1	7

University Staff and Administrators had a combined total of 174 years of experience at the University of the Western Cape. When I conducted my study, the new Vice Rector, Professor Tshiwula, had been at UWC the least amount of time; she had only been in her permanent position at UWC for eight months at the time of our interview. Seventy four percent of the combined Staff and Administrator groups (n=7) had worked at UWC six or more years. Twenty seven percent (n=4) were Administrators, 47% (n=7) were SDS staff, and 27% (n=4) were non-SDS staff. (See Table 4 for the demographics of Administrators and Staff.)

I asked participants to self-identify their racial or ethnic background and sex. Seventy three percent (n=11) were Coloured, 20% (n=3) were Black African, and 7% (n=1) were Indian. There were no White South Africans in the Administrator or Staff groups. There was nearly a balance between female and male Staff and Administrator participants; 53% (n=8) were female and 47% (n=7) were male.

With regard to participants' level of education, the majority (67%, n=10) received their bachelors degrees from UWC. Others attended the University of South Africa (UNISA), University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), Peninsula Technikon, or University of Witwatersrand (Wits) (n=1 and 7% for each institution). One Head of Department (HOD) in an SDS unit received a teaching diploma from Peninsula Technikon. Three out of the four Administrators and one Student Development and Support HOD had advanced degrees (see Table 4).



Table 4. Demographics of Staff and Administrator Participants

	n	% of N
<b>Year at UWC</b>		
1-5	4	27
6-10	3	20
11-15	3	20
16-20	4	27
21+	1	7
<b>Position</b>		
Administration	4	27
Student Affairs Staff	7	47
Other Staff	4	27
<b>Province</b>		
Western Cape	10	67
Eastern Cape	1	7
Guateng	2	14
Kwa Zulu-Natal	2	14
<b>Racial Identity</b>		
Black	3	20
Coloured	11	73
Indian	1	7
White	0	0
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	8	53
Male	7	47
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Diploma	1	7
Bachelors	10	67
Advanced Degree	4	27
<b>Universities Attended</b>		
UWC	10	67
Peninsula Technikon	2	14
UNISA	1	7
UPE	1	7
Wits	1	7

### *Student Participants*

The Student stakeholder group was comprised of Formal Student Leaders, who were in title-specific positions, such as officers in the Student Representative Council (SRC), and Non-Formal Leaders whom students, staff, and administrators identified as student leaders. There were 7 Formal Student Leaders and 7 Non-Formal Student Leaders in my study. Students represented eight different leadership areas at UWC (e.g., SRC, student House Committees in the residences, Sports Administration) (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Student Groups and Organizations Represented**

	n (Total = 14)	% of N
Central House Committee (CHC)	1	7
Faculty Council	1	7
House Committee	6	43
Law Student Body Representative	1	7
South African Students' Congress (SASCO)	7	50
Student Representative Council (SRC)	4	29
Sports Administration Structure	1	7
United Student's Front (USF)	1	7

Student participants had attended UWC anywhere from one to nine years. Most students were in their second or third year at UWC (n=5 for each year and a total 72% of all student participants). Two students (14%) were in their first year at UWC, one student (7%) was a fourth year student, and one student (7%) was in his ninth year. The “Year at

UWC” category does not represent students’ total years in higher education; three students transferred to UWC from other postsecondary institutions (see Table 6).

The student sample represented six of the seven faculties (i.e., colleges) at UWC. Five students (36%) were in Law, three (21%) in Economic and Management Sciences, two (14%) in Community and Health Sciences, two (14%) in Natural Sciences, one student (7%) in Arts, and one (7%) in Dentistry. The Education faculty was the only faculty not represented in the student participant sample.

Eight of the nine South African provinces were represented in the student sample. Three students (21%) were from the Western Cape Province; two students were from the Eastern Cape, Guateng, and Kwa-Zulu Natal Provinces (14% respectively); and there was one student represented from each of the Free State, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape Provinces (7% respectively). There was one international student participant from the Northern Province in Cameroon.

The racial identities were as follows: 9 students (64%) were Black, 4 (29%) Coloured, and 1 (7%) Indian. Similar to the non-student sample, no White students were represented in the sample. Four students (29%) were female and 10 (71%) were male.

Most of the students (n=12 and 86% of student sample) lived on campus. Only two students (14%) lived off campus at the time of this study. It is important to note that two students in the “on campus” category lived off campus during their first year at UWC. These students described their experiences living on and off campus.

Table 6. Demographics of Student Participants

	n	% of N
<b>Year at UWC<sup>a</sup></b>		
1	2	14
2	5	36
3	5	36
4	1	7
9	1	7
<b>Faculty</b>		
Law	5	36
Economic & Management Sciences	3	21
Community & Health Sciences	2	14
Natural Sciences	2	14
Arts	1	7
Dentistry	1	7
<b>Province</b>		
Western Cape	3	21
Eastern Cape	2	14
Guateng	2	14
Kwa Zulu-Natal	2	14
Free State	1	7
Limpopo	1	7
Mpumalanga	1	7
Northern Cape	1	7
Northern Cameroon	1	7
<b>Racial Identity</b>		
Black	9	64
Coloured	4	29
Indian	1	7
White	0	0
<b>Residence</b>		
On Campus <sup>b</sup>	12	86
Off Campus	2	14
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	4	29
Male	10	71

<sup>a</sup> Three students transferred in from other universities. <sup>b</sup> Two on campus students previously lived off campus.

### *Outside Consultant*

The outside consultant, Ann Harper, was a former Dean of Students at the University of KwaZulu Natal and was a consultant for the South African Department of Education and other social agencies at the time of this study. Ms. Harper is a specialist on organizational change and student affairs in higher education, and was involved in restructuring the student affairs division at UWC from the initial stages. I asked the outside research consultant to participate in my study because she had an outside view of the context of UWC and the restructuring process.

### Data Analysis

Lincoln (2002) discussed the difference between qualitative data and qualitative evidence when conducting research: qualitative data is simply information, where qualitative evidence is the data analyzed through the theoretical lenses and experiences, and in relation to the guiding questions. It is important to be able to identify what data truly provided evidence and was useful to this study. Data analysis relied on the convergence and triangulation of multiple sources of evidence (Creswell, 1998). The main objective of this study was to explore the change and restructuring of student affairs in South African higher education viewing students as key stakeholders, and to better understand and explain the role students play in the process of change. For my overall data analysis I used explanation-building pattern matching to determine if data reflected theoretically significant schemes or patterns (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I used a 3-level coding system consistent with grounded theory methodology to analyze my data.

## *Grounded Theory*

In grounded theory methodology a researcher does not begin with a theory by which he or she analyzes data and interprets findings; a researcher begins with a certain area to examine and identifies what emerges from the data process as relevant to the questions asked and patterns that have evolved (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory involves constantly comparing one unit of data with another in order to derive conceptual elements of the theory, even if the goal may not be to develop a theory (Merriam, 2002). I used trends in institutional change in higher education and factors affecting student affairs and development as a lens to view the data.

The grounded theory methodology in my data analysis involved three levels of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In open coding, I analyzed the interview transcriptions line by line and coded single ideas and incidents. I also labeled and coded written documents and events and happenings I captured through observation. As this process evolved, I constantly compared data as it unfolded, grouped the codes by association, and began to form categories.

The second step in my interview data analysis was axial coding. I used open coding to break down and deconstruct individual happenings; I used axial coding to reconstruct the groups and categories into core areas or themes. Strauss and Corbin (1990) view this process as “putting data back together in new ways by making connections between categories and subcategories” (p. 97). Connections between the categories created in open coding emerged and themes and core areas became lucid.

The final step in my data analysis was selective coding. In selective coding I integrated the themes and core areas that emerged from axial coding to form some

conceptual elements and analytical schema of the student experience and organizational change in student affairs at UWC (Creswell, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I looked for patterns that explained or accounted for variations in patterns. The categories under the themes and core areas were crucial elements of each concept.

### *Integrity of Study*

Creswell (1998) recommended that at least two measures of verification and trustworthiness be used to establish credibility and integrity in a qualitative research study. I used four procedures to assure quality and verification in my study: triangulation (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994), prolonged engagement and persistent observation (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), peer review or debriefing (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and member checks (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995).

### *Triangulation*

Merriam (2002) stated that triangulation of data is the most often used method to increase the trustworthiness of the data collected and analyzed. I triangulated data collected from my interviews, observations, documents, and informal conversations to provide corroborating evidence to support emerging themes and concepts and to confirm my interpretation of the data (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln, 2002; Lincoln & Guba; Merriam, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995). The multiple sources of data I analyzed in open coding helped determine whether evidence illustrated sporadic or consistent patterns (Yin, 1994). Triangulating the data verified that different sources of evidence suggested similar patterns or themes.

### *Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation*

The duration of time I spent at UWC allowed me to build relationships and trust with people, understand the culture and context of UWC, and clarify or further explore inconsistent data. All of these elements helped verify data and confirmed that my data were dependable and reliable (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### *Peer Review or Debriefing*

Creswell (1998) wrote, “Peer review or debriefing provides an external check of the research process” (p. 202). By sheer design, a doctoral dissertation has the element of peer debriefing; my dissertation committee, more specifically, my dissertation chair played devil’s advocate throughout my research design, data collection and analysis, interpretation of findings, and writing. Peer review provided an external check of my study and served to keep me honest and maintain a clear understanding of my work as it unfolded. I was challenged to clarify my methods, interpretation of findings, and meaning making of data; these elements make up peer debriefing sessions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### *Member checks*

One of the best procedures for establishing credibility in qualitative case study research is conducting member checks (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995). I used member checks throughout my study when data collected was unclear and when I needed further clarification of certain findings. After I coded data I also presented my preliminary findings through an open forum at the Education Policy Unit at UWC. The campus community responded with feedback and offered insight into my findings. I



was able to test the accuracy of my data and interpretations of data through member checks.

### Conclusion

This study was a single case study of the University of the Western Cape, designed to investigate the context of UWC as well as the process of organizational change within Student Affairs. I used four procedures to establish credibility and guarantee the trustworthiness of the data I collected and analyzed. In chapters 4, 5, and 6 I present the findings of my study.

## CHAPTER 4: CASE DESCRIPTION

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are the findings of this dissertation. In order to understand student affairs, restructuring within the division of student affairs, and the role students play in organizational change, I needed to gain an understanding of the student experience and the role student affairs played at UWC. It was crucial for me to analyze the change process in relation to the context of the university. I used a case study to investigate the phenomenon and the context. UWC documents, participant interviews, and direct and participant observations were my sources of data.

In this chapter I describe the University of the Western Cape and the student experience at UWC to shape the context of the organizational change, student affairs at UWC, and the student experience at UWC. In addition, I answer Research Question #1: How do university stakeholders view students and student affairs at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)? In Chapter 5 I present the stakeholders' roles in the restructuring and organizational change at UWC. In Chapter 6 I describe the process of the organizational change.

### University of the Western Cape

Five major themes emerged as key factors that defined UWC. An overwhelming majority of interview participants, regardless of stakeholder group, identified the five same factors as they described UWC. My observations and document analysis also supported these themes. The five emerging themes were: UWC was a mission-driven university, UWC was strongly defined (internally and externally) by the history and reputation of the university, UWC was an open university, UWC had a diverse student body and was inclusive of previously disadvantaged racial groups, and UWC was marked

by limited resources and financial challenges. The following sections are the emerging themes that describe the context of UWC.

### *UWC as a Mission-Driven University*

A major strength of UWC is that as an organization it had a thorough understanding of the mission and strived to act in line with its mission statement. Most of the staff and administrators explained that UWC is “mission-driven” and that “[UWC] holds true to its mission.” In addition, the university community believed strongly in the content of the mission. Like many higher education university missions, UWC stated that the university “is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research” (University of the Western Cape, 2000). What made UWC unique is the university’s commitment “to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition” and its “distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society” (UWC, 2002, p.2). Even more noticeable were the critical and creative ways the university addressed the needs of the South Africa society.

Students, staff, and administrators listed the mission most often as a positive characteristic of UWC and many listed the mission as the reason they chose to work at or attend UWC. The UWC Rector described the UWC Mission as “clear,” “visionary,” and “deeply embedded in many practices” (O’Connell, 2002b, p. 28).

The following is the UWC Mission:

The University of the Western Cape is a national university, alert to its African and international context as it strives to be a place of quality, a place to grow. It is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurturing the

cultural diversity of South Africa, and to responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition. Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society. In particular, it aims to:

- advance and protect the independence of the academic enterprise;
- design curricula and research programs appropriate to its southern African context;
- further global perspectives among its staff and students, thereby strengthening intellectual life and contributing to South Africa's reintegration in the world community;
- assist educationally disadvantaged students gain access to higher education and succeed in their studies;
- nurture and use the abilities of all in the university community;
- develop effective structures and conventions of governance, which are democratic, transparent and accountable;
- seek racial and gender equality and contribute to helping the historically marginalized participate fully in the life of the nation;
- encourage and provide opportunities for lifelong learning through programs and courses;
- help conserve and explore the environmental and cultural resources of the southern African region, and to encourage a wide awareness of them in the community;

- cooperate fully with other stakeholders to develop an excellent, and therefore transformed, higher education system. (University of the Western Cape, 2000)

Throughout this study I found that the UWC Mission was not only talked about, but visible in the daily happenings of the institution. Not only did people specifically list the mission of the university as a critical component of UWC, the other three themes that described the university were also strongly grounded in the university mission. When participants talked about UWC's strong and positive history and reputation, many made reference to the mission of the institution. In addition, all stakeholder groups described UWC as open and accessible; this description illustrated the university mission in practice. UWC also provided access to many students who had limited finances. As a result, UWC was less expensive than most tertiary institutions and had more lenient payment policies for attendance. Although reduced cost and lenient payment policies increased access for many students, these practices also lead to financial challenges and limited resources for the institution.

#### *UWC Marked by History and Reputation*

Students, staff, and administrators often linked the university mission to the history and reputation of the university. The UWC mission had a strong emphasis on supporting the educationally disadvantaged. The university supported the educationally disadvantaged by opening its doors to those historically excluded from other institutions which helped build UWC's reputation and win support and admiration from many South Africans. The mission also stated that UWC had a "proud experience in the liberation struggle." The university community is aware of UWC's historical role in the liberation

struggle, its role in building a post-apartheid South Africa, and its commitment to historically disadvantaged people. Participant comments included, “Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society” and “[UWC] aims to assist educationally disadvantaged students gain access to higher education and succeed in their studies.” UWC’s reputation still affects the university today.

The history and reputation of UWC was the second-most listed reason for attending UWC. UWC’s political reputation as “the University of the Left,” its history and its role in South Africa’s liberation movement, and its reputation as an “open university for ‘previously disadvantaged’ groups” were commonly mentioned as reasons students chose UWC. When I asked students why they chose to attend UWC, a common response was:

Because of the political connotation. UWC is a certain institution for certain people. It’s an historically Black school and with the question of finances, parents could afford it. I chose it because of its history and the role of UWC in our country. Many of the people who were in the first national cabinet were from UWC. (Student)

When I walked with students and staff members across the campus, many would point to buildings and say things such as, “That’s where they had the secret meetings during the movement” and “That is where they secretly began drafting the new [South African] constitution.”

A few participants, including the outside consultant, suggested that UWC's reputation has so far saved the institution from being forced to merge with other institutions. One interview comment was as follows:

UWC was virtually untouched by disruptions caused by the mergers at other universities and so were grabbing the opportunity to assert their position with the higher education landscape and leave behind some of the downside of being perceived and self-defined as the "struggle" university. (Consultant)

University staff and administration also stated that "the political ideology and mission is very much alive today" (Student Affairs Staff). When asked why she chose to work at UWC, one staff member stated:

The political and ideological framework and ethics associated with and offered at UWC, and facilitated here. Here, students feel validated. UWC does not dismiss who [students] are, particularly students of color. UWC does not silence around the difficult issues within post-conflict. For the most part, the hard things are named, defined, and talked-about. (Student Affairs Staff)

#### *UWC as an Open University*

Interview participants described UWC as an "open university." More specifically, UWC allows access to students who could not afford to attend most other institutions of higher education and to students who do not meet the more strict academic requirements of other universities. In the *Report from the Chairperson of Senate*, O'Connell (2002a) wrote that UWC has a "strong commitment to providing access to higher education" and it is the "University's mission that all deserving students with the capacity to take full advantage of higher education should be supported educationally" (p. 2). This

commitment to provide access is evident in the student body composition and university policies and procedures. Moreover, the data illustrate that UWC has worked hard to create and maintain students' ability to take "full advantage" of the university, by not only providing entrance to the university as a student, but inclusion in campus life and support for academic and personal needs.

Open access strengthened the university by maintaining a well-respected positive reputation and position in South Africa, as well as institutional integrity (i.e., the university practices support its mission). The strengths included diversifying the student body in terms of race and socioeconomic status, and educating students who may have been otherwise excluded from higher education and the economic advantages a college education may provide. UWC was open in terms of making racial and demographic groups welcome and included in the university, and in terms of accepting people who needed flexible payment options in order to attend.

Cost was the most common factor students listed as why they chose to attend UWC. Many clarified that although UWC costs less than most South African universities, it maintained a high quality of education. Throughout my visit at UWC, I continually heard UWC described by all stakeholder groups as "a world-class education at a lower price." Other comments were:

UWC accepts you whether or not you can afford higher education. Here, the gates of education are open to everyone who has the potential to study. It's just nice (Student);



I'm from the Northern Cape. If you must continue education, you're really forced to come to UWC. It's an open university. Its past influenced me. I had an option to go to [the University of] Stellenbosch but came here instead (Student); and

The accessibility of this place to previously disadvantaged students [listed as a positive characteristic of UWC]. It is more accessible to individuals with less finances. People look after them much more here. It's not too expensive compared to other universities. (Student Affairs Staff)

Students, staff, and administrators listed accessibility for previously disadvantaged students as a positive characteristic of UWC and the reason many students chose to attend the university. Participants stated that UWC not only provided students access into the university, but it also provided bridging programs for academically underprepared students. In addition, some students reported that lecturers (i.e., faculty members) at UWC are more accommodating to students' diverse needs than at other institutions. Open access at UWC definitely had an impact on the diversification of the student body.

### *Diversity and Social Inclusion*

All stakeholder groups listed diversity and social inclusion as positive characteristics of UWC as well as reasons students chose to attend UWC. Students emphasized that although there was a diverse student body, people were divided by differences. I will expand on the division of groups later in this chapter in *The Student Experience at UWC*.

Despite the division of groups on campus, there was a feeling of inclusion at UWC, a feeling that was different from other higher education institutions. One of the Staff members described the atmosphere at UWC in stating, “Often when students come here they feel welcome. When I meet students at orientation, they say there’s a different vibe here. They feel freer here. I think it comes down to the race card.” Other student comments included, “I like the university itself, despite the facilities we have. It’s a nice, intimate university and it didn’t take forever to get to know people” and “You don’t feel left out socially. There are a lot of people you can relate to you here. There are a lot of people from the Eastern Cape and from JoBurg. People are very friendly.”

Three student participants transferred to UWC from other South African institutions. All of the students who transferred into UWC stated that UWC was more diverse and inclusive than their previous institutions. Student comments included, “Stellenbosch is White-dominated. The language is in the language of oppression. It excludes you from the world outside” and

What I like about UWC is that they allow different types of people to do what they want to do. They understand that we are from different backgrounds or whatever and they’re making room for everybody. I like that a lot. Here I feel safe and here I can [long pause] just breathe.

Inclusion of all people and the university reputation also influenced administrator and staff decisions to work at UWC. As I stated in chapter 3, the majority of administrators and staff in my sample earned baccalaureate degrees from UWC. Many of these participants (all people of color) commented on the inclusion of all people at UWC and level of comfort in the campus atmosphere. Many of the administrators and staff in

my study were also involved in the liberation movement while attending UWC. A typical comment from staff and administrators was, “As a student here [at UWC] I was involved in the [liberation] movement. This was a coming home.”

One of the Heads of Department in Student Affairs who did not attend UWC as a student stated:

I was at a historically White institution and was very alienated. UWC is extremely nurturing, there is accorded value- not just intellectual or academic, but the ability to acknowledge my personal identity and how it shaped my thinking and academic performance. It allows me space to [long pause] it feels like home, I found myself at home when I came to UWC, and that allowed me to feel ultimately valued in academics and as a whole.

UWC’s history, reputation, and mission statement demonstrated a strong foundation for the university. The university access policies, campus demographics, and social inclusion illustrated positive practices and atmosphere. The major challenge that emerged that described the university context is financial challenges that result in limited resources.

#### *Limited Resources and Financial Challenges*

Open access lead to unique challenges that many South African university may not experience. The Rector reported that the financial situation of UWC “deeply affected the institution’s ability to respond adequately to all the demands made on it to support the new academic and student development projects” (O’Connell, 2002b). The challenges included limited resources for the institution (e.g., library holdings and hours of operation, university staff, residential and recreational facilities), financial jeopardy of the

institution (e.g., some academic units have had to merge with other universities to help maintain financial stability), and unique student needs (e.g., daily food for a large number of students, inability to purchase textbooks, need to live on-campus, inability to pay registration fees, and so forth).

Some participant comments on limited resources were, “We need more access to the library in terms of time and materials” (Student), “The library closes at 10 p.m. and computer labs close. We have nowhere to go to study. The lab and the library are limiting students. Most students at UWC are not getting experience researching” (Student), and “There are very little resources here. We have a long way to go for the ideal. I think we can do a lot more” (Administrator). It is clear that limited finances and resources were a challenge for students at UWC.

Administrators, staff, and students stated, “[UWC] makes meaningful use of limited resources.” One administrator added to that comment and said, “If this becomes part of our students’ life philosophy that would be great.” Student concerns about the limited resources included, “It’s good that they try to accommodate lower privileged people, but the labs here, we don’t have a full benefit to have computer labs. They try to cut costs and resources,” “Students are not taking their responsibility to pay their fees,” and “I don’t see the university attracting enough sponsors and making sure students are financially okay. The university in this regard is failing dismally. We cannot depend on national financial aid alone.”

Despite limited resources, participants from all stakeholder groups felt that limited resources and financial challenges did not impact the overall education students received. Students and staff commonly described UWC as “A world-class education for

half the cost.” Interview participants specified that although the cost of UWC was significantly lower than most South African universities, the quality of education was on par with the other universities. Students said, “The fees here are significantly lower than Stellenbosch and UCT [University of Cape Town], for the equivalent degrees. Our mission is to serve economically and academically disadvantaged students” and “[UWC] has a great reputation. Everyone thinks we are in a high place. It’s the home of the Black intellectuals. We get a world-class education at a lower price.”

### The Student Experience at UWC

Interview data and observations helped me explore the student experience at UWC. A main component of my study was to explore what it was like to be a student at UWC and if there were different perceptions of the student experience by stakeholder group. My findings were consistent across most stakeholder groups. The largest difference in perception of the student experience was in the Formal Student Leader group; overall, formal student leaders’ perceptions differed from the rest of the stakeholder groups on racial division and social activities on campus. The student experience and differences in perception by stakeholder group are identified throughout this section.

When I asked students to list the positive characteristics of UWC and the challenges students experience at UWC, participants listed more challenges. I gained a lot of insight about what it is like to be a UWC student from the explanations of participant drawings. It appeared that students were eager to talk about their experiences as a student and many believed the drawing was a successful tool in illustrating the student experience on paper. The main themes that emerged were: Difficult Transition into the

University; Diverse Student Population, Divided by Demographics; Dissatisfaction with Accommodation; Lack of Entertainment and Social Activities; Limited Finances for Students; Academic Barriers; Poor Administrative Services; and Personal Growth of Students. I present these themes in the order of most prevalent to least prevalent. For example, students listed difficulty transitioning into the university and division of students most often when describing the student experience at UWC. Poor administrative services and personal growth of students emerged as themes in the student experience, but less frequent than the other themes.

#### *Difficult Transition into the University*

Students, staff, and administrators indicated that students' transition into the university was a major challenge. Students reported difficulty learning how to study in a university setting and how to study for university courses, adapting to an increased academic workload, having many teachers at one time, making new friends, and being on their own and away from home. All stakeholder groups suggested that UWC needs better support for students' transition into the university. A student comment that summarized many responses was:

It's hard to make the transition from high school to varsity. The workload...the performance is different; you have your family there [at high school]. Here you're alone in a big place. I was an "A" student in high school. In high school you could study anytime. I was studying the same as high school. It's hard to stick to a study table here. I was missing home. I realized during finals I had no planning. I didn't succeed my first term. (Second Year Non-Formal Leader)

One administrator suggested, “Students may be overconfident at the time of enrollment.” This administrator specified that UWC “needs to help students realize realistic expectations upon arrival.” Other suggestions were to improve new student orientation for first-year students, help students learn to balance school and social life, and teach students the importance of self motivation to improve their success.

### *Diverse Student Population, Divided by Demographics*

Participants listed student diversity and the opportunity to interact with a variety of people as positive characteristics of the university and as a reasons they chose to attend UWC. Although there was a diverse student population, students indicated that there was little interaction between students across demographics, more specifically by race, religion, and residential status (on campus versus off campus students). One comment that summarized this theme was, “[Diverse student groups or cliques] are segregated, but the structures [i.e., formal student organizations] are trying to work on that. The opportunity to interact with other cultures is here” (Non-Formal Student Leader).

A majority of student participants and some staff listed “tribalism” and bridging the divide between students as challenges for students at UWC. Comments included, “Tribalism is a huge problem at UWC” and “Management must be involved as well. The segregation of students makes us weak.” Other comments were:

The cultural differences are big barriers between people. People speak so many different languages and sometimes we don’t understand each other. There is a lot of misunderstanding because of that. And although I think that at this institution there’s more integration and I said that people mix, if you look at the cafeteria during the day, it’s only a certain patch of a certain group of people sitting there,

and at night it's finally open for other people again. There's a lot of imbalance.

(Non-Formal Student Leader);

We can have friendships with people across groups. If UWC students worked on friendships, we will have a better society after [we all graduate from university].

We have different views, but we'll work together. How can we function as a society if we're divided? If we unite, we can make UWC a place of quality and place to grow<sup>5</sup>. We need to concentrate on showing people who they are and their role. We believe in student leadership. (Non-Formal Student Leader);

Bridging the divide between the commuter students and the resident students [is a challenge for students at UWC]. There's a perception that all commuters have money. Not all commuters have money. We have similar problems as students who live on residence. If we deal with this problem and unite, we can deal with students effectively. (Formal Student Leader, Non-SRC); and

There are also racial comments. Here it is Coloured versus Black competition. The Coloureds are in the student center and the Blacks go to class. No one is doing anything about that. Most of the employees are Coloured; the Blacks feel that they are not important and disadvantaged. (Administrator)

It is important to note that most commuter students were Coloured and the majority of students who lived in the residences were Black African.

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<sup>5</sup> "A Place of Quality, A Place to Grow" is UWC's motto, or branding. Branding a division is very frequent at UWC. This branding was important in increasing awareness of Student Development and Support at UWC.



There were also differences in perceptions of preference given to specific racial groups. Coloured students reported, “The Coloured students are not treated well by Blacks” and “Priority is given to Blacks. Lecturers feel sorry for them and give them certain priorities.” One Black participant said the opposite, “Lecturers give priority to Coloured students and the Whites. [Coloured students] don’t have to go to class; they have time to hang out all day in the Student Center.”

To add, one Coloured student reported that it was difficult for her, as an “outsider,” to break into the Coloured community at UWC. She said:

Coloured people in different places in South Africa are raised differently...In the Eastern Cape, we accommodate people, people are very down to earth, and you’re able to connect to other groups easily. But people in the Western Cape are different. In Cape Town, there are groups and it’s hard to break into the groups. It’s hard to make friends here. And the language, people assume you speak Afrikaans.

Many of the Formal Student Leaders talked about the positive qualities of having a diverse student body. However, unlike the other stakeholder groups, a majority of Formal Student Leaders (all of the Black Formal Student Leaders) did not present a division of students as characteristic of the student experience at UWC.

#### *Dissatisfaction with the Residences*

The majority of participants also listed accommodation as a challenge for students. Most of the concerns listed had to do with facilities, such as “old buildings,” “few toilets,” and “lack of hygiene.” Students reported that they washed their dishes where they bathe. Safety and security in the residences were also mentioned as a

challenge at UWC. A few students reported difficulty getting access to accommodation on campus. Student comments included:

As far as support services, the residences are as bad as they come. In Cassinga [Residence Hall], there's no hygiene. The residential services need to be restructured. Cassinga has to be livable. They need a kitchen and more toilets. That accounts for how dirty it is. I don't know why there can't be more residences. There is a lot of land. We can build new residences.;

Crime, [pause] there are rape cases, vandalism, theft, we need new showers, and some residences don't have hot water all day. It's a serious problem. [Students] are trying to study and we are paying for [this] accommodation. UWC is a historically disadvantaged university, but that shouldn't be an excuse.; and

Oh, and the buildings! These buildings are so old. Most of the administrators never come to see where we live. In the residences the living conditions are not good. It's difficult when you share with so many other people. There are real problems with hygiene.

Dissatisfaction with accommodation played an important role in regards to the UWC student experience.

#### *Lack of Entertainment and Social Activities*

Students, staff, and administrators listed lack of things to do on campus as a challenge for students. Interview participants stressed the importance of students having a

balanced experience while at UWC; students were to work hard in their studies, but also enjoy the social aspect of college as well. The social aspect was a challenge at UWC.

All Formal Student Leaders in the Student Representative Council (SRC) had perceptions that differed from the other stakeholder groups. The SRC stated that the student body enjoyed having major “bashes” (i.e., large parties that consisted of music, alcohol, dancing) as a form of “release” and “entertainment;” other participants indicated that the bashes did not accommodate all students and students wanted other forms of social engagement as well<sup>6</sup>. Student comments included: “Campus is far from everything and there is no transport. Sometimes I have money for a movie, but not for transportation” (Non-Formal Student Leader), “At UWC it’s just about partying, which doesn’t cater to everyone’s preferences. Not everyone listens to the same music. Some people who don’t listen to certain music don’t feel welcome at the bashes” (Non-Formal Student Leader), “We want something other than bashes” (Non-Formal Student Leader), “We need to reduce the number of bashes. We can use that money for so many other things that are needed more” (Non-Formal Student Leader), and

The major challenge is the quality of experience, having things to do aside from class. We want students to have a quality education and a quality experience; we want to move from just coping to excelling. [UWC] is not just filling the minds of students. (Administrator)

Comments from the SRC were represented in one student comment, “We have everything here--political, social, sports, religion, and societies. As far as social goes, we

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<sup>6</sup> In 2004 the SRC spent 45% of its expenses on “Non-Academic Functions” (Student Representative Council, 2004).

have the Barn [on-campus pub] and bashes.” There was a clear difference in perception between the SRC and other stakeholder groups.

It is important to note that many students did attend the bashes. It seemed that the major emphasis that students wanted to place on the bashes was the importance of having a variety of social events and not spend what they described as “all” or “majority” of the SRC money on bashes. When I asked a non-SRC member what he did for fun, he stated, “I go to competitions, bashes, opening and closing functions [bashes as well, and funded through the SRC] for the residences...As much as we want to study, we want to grow as young people as well.”

One administrator indicated that the Office of the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support was responsible for providing students a well-balanced experience. He said, “UWC is not surrounded by cultural centers and other types of leisure activities. [The Vice Rector of Student Development and Support] needs to create those types of experiences. The location [of the university] does not automatically provide entertainment.”

#### *Limited Finances for Students*

A common phrase stated by all participants during my interviews was, “Students don’t have money.” The UWC policy to allow access to students who do not always have financial support adds unique challenges for the university. Many students at UWC are from poor, rural areas. Many interview participants stated that a large number of UWC students do not have enough money to buy food regularly and that “purchasing one’s own textbook is considered a luxury at UWC.” Other comments included, “Students are also hungry. Some walk 5km and eat bread and sugar. If we had more money, we can help

students” and “There are challenges that are big issues, located within the context of UWC--language, social issues, HIV/AIDS [participant’s eyes began to water as she spoke], poverty...students are in desperate need, not for counseling, but for bread to eat.”

A few students also had difficulty receiving financial assistance, were worried about accruing financial debt, and believed that UWC should offer more bursaries (grants) instead of loans. A student comment that summarized this theme was, “It’s difficult to acquire financial assistance. They have bursaries at Stellenbosch, but here they have loans. We will have big debts to pay off.”

### *Transportation*

Students and staff listed transportation as a challenge for students. UWC is located in a suburb and is not near any major city or entertainment center. One must take some form of transport to get anywhere off campus. Comments included:

The transportation system...some of us are from the Eastern Cape and we can’t use the bus or the train to get home. To take the train from Cape Town, you’re exposed and it’s not safe. The transport designed for this, the SRC Ventures, is not being used properly. [The SRC] is employing students to drive around; they’re either late or they don’t show up. No one oversees them. We book [the Ventures] at the SRC or at [the Office of Residential Services]. And the drivers...no one is punishing them or making sure they are doing what they’re supposed to do. They used to have 4 cars. One was stolen in Kayalitcha. And the drivers are using the vehicles for their own purpose.

and

We had a career day for Law at [the University of Cape Town]. There was a group of us scheduled to attend. I called 3 times to make sure we were booked, including the day before, and reminded them about the time. They were 3 hours late and said they didn't have any record of a booking. We missed all of the introductions and a large part of the event. The event was over at 3 p.m.; they didn't pick us up until 6 p.m. This is a problem. I don't know where to go to fix this stuff and deal with the issues. Everyone knows [the drivers] will get away with what they're doing; no one will say anything.

Transportation was a large problem for students and it played a large role in students' experience at UWC.

#### *Academic Barriers*

Academic barriers presented as challenges for students at UWC included an inadequate academic support system on campus, poor academic preparation of incoming students, and a large number of first-generation college students. Some interviewees listed these concerns as they related to the retention and persistence of students. Some comments were, "We need more tutors and academic support" (Student), "We need a stronger academic support system" (Student), "Students are not well prepared for varsity" (Staff), "Students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds and first generation college students need more support" (Administrator), and "Access is more than admission. Students need adequate preparation and support to succeed. We have a high failure rate of first-year students" (Student).

One student reported that UWC was losing good students; students entered UWC because they knew they could get in, and these students took courses at UWC until they

were admitted into their “school of choice.” This student said, “We are losing good students to other schools. We need to make UWC a school of choice and not as second best or last resort. These are the type of students we need to keep.”

The language barrier was also brought up as a barrier to academic success among the students at UWC. UWC is an English-medium university; for many students, however, English was not their first, second, or even third language. Some students truly struggled in the classroom due to language barriers. A typical student comment was, “Language is a huge challenge. English is my third language.” To add, one staff reported cultural barriers in the classroom as a challenge for students. She stated, “We have a Eurocentric curriculum. We need a program to translate the different culture to the [Black] African students. How do we bridge that gap? What programs do we offer?” These issues may need to be addressed to improve student success.

#### *Administrative Services*

Students, staff, and administrators listed poor communication between departments, “negative attitude of administrative staff towards students,” and “long queues” as challenges. Comments on the challenges regarding the student experience at UWC included, “Lack of connection and communication between departments, especially between residential services and central administration” (Student), “Poor relationship between the House Committee and Residence Coordinators” (Student), and:

There is a lack of connection between [Administration] departments. Students are so confused. They are also so negative, it makes us feel stupid. They don’t know what’s going on. Staff treat us differently, not management, but staff. In main

administration, they are ready to go home, are tired, always in a hurry to finish helping you, and they don't listen. (Student)

A few staff members also stated that some of the staff at UWC treated students poorly and had negative attitudes towards students. One comment included, "Recently, up to 2002, staff saw students as a hindrance, etcetera. Now students are seen more as customers. The reason why we're here is for students." (Staff)

### *Personal Growth of Students*

A few students stated that UWC fosters personal growth of students. A major component of the changes within Student Development and Support was to improve the personal development of students and more specifically, the leadership development of students. It was evident that UWC was affecting the personal and leadership development of students.

Students reported that one of the positive characteristics of UWC was the opportunity to explore and grow further as an individual, academically, and socially. Student comments included, "I never knew I had leadership skills. Before, I was not involved as a student. In this environment, there are always places to explore further as an individual" and "One's personal capacity is not quieted by managers [Heads of Department]."

### Student Affairs at UWC

It was crucial to explore stakeholders' perceptions of student affairs and services to fully understand the organizational change at UWC. In Chapter 3 I explained the physical make-up and composition of the Student Development and Support division (SDS). In Chapter 5 and 6 I will describe the role SDS played in the process of change



and specific outcomes of the change (respectively). In this section, I describe the context of the division, more specifically, how people perceived student affairs and student services on campus.

I conducted my research at UWC after the name of the student affairs division was changed to Student Development and Support (SDS). I did not specify that I was exploring the SDS division throughout my study; I identified emerging themes as interview participants described the student experience and where students went for assistance as challenges arose. I also gained insight from documents written by SDS staff and the Consultant. Data illustrated that, overall, the staff members of the student affairs division were committed to the development of students, not merely student support; dedicated to the history and mission of the university; committed to their positions and the work they do; accomplished tasks with few resources; and valued training and professional preparation for staff.

#### *Development of Students*

It was very clear that the division of student affairs emphasized, and wanted to make clear to others that it emphasized, the development of students. In one of her first documents written after arriving to UWC, Professor Tshiwula, the new Vice Rector for Student Development and Support wrote:

Student development is compromised under such educational philosophies which advance the belief that personal responsibility, interpersonal skills, teamwork, integrity, trust, civility, the art of expression, taste, discrimination, and resilience are qualities one can acquire through teaching...the accumulation of course

credits or receipt of a qualification is not an adequate substitute for qualities of a well-rounded and educated citizen. (Tshiwula, n. d., p. 2)

Tshiwula (n. d.) went on to explain that the major purposes of SDS were:

Student service; student development; community development; high quality services to students, the university, and the community...promoting the social, cultural, intellectual, emotional, ethical, physical, educational (both theoretical and experiential), and career development of students...and the creation of a friendly and accessible university community that helps students set and attain realistic life, educational, and career goals, fosters an understanding and appreciation of diversity, and instills a sense of social and community responsibility. (p. 3)

The documents Tshiwula wrote provided a strong foundation for the SDS division; it was clear that the words were not merely stated, but visible in practice as well.

During interviews, SDS staff typically stated comments such as, "Student development is very important." Tshiwula described her personal views on student development in her interview:

As far as my view of student development, it's presumptuous that I can "develop" [hand gestures to indicate quotation] a student. I want to send the message to UWC that strengths are innate. I want [students] to know what they need to help foster that. I tell people that the resources are within you. I stopped using words like "need." I don't want to make students dependent; I want them to see that a lot of what it takes is within each of them.

These concepts of innate strengths and the role of staff in helping students identify and develop their innate talents were visible throughout my data collection, particularly in the brand of the SDS division, “You Are Your Future.” Staff worked to integrate new ideas about student development into their already established ways of practice. SDS staff grounded their strong ties to the mission and history of the university with an increased focus on development.

*Dedicated to the Mission and History of the University*

The majority of non-student participants (n=10 and 67%) were UWC alumni who returned to work at their alma mater. For most SDS staff interviewed, UWC was the only institution they had experienced. Many staff reported that working at UWC was a “coming home.” Staff talked about their individual participation in the liberation movement as students and listed the mission of the institution as the top reason they chose to work at UWC.

Staff were very proud to work at UWC. Many tied this feeling to the mission and UWC’s role in the antiapartheid movement. Some staff comments were, “I’ve been here since 1988. Most staff who left have been very successful nationally and internationally. They’re everywhere,” “I was very involved politically and UWC was the place to be. We made changes as individuals for my people. UWC had a role to play and I wanted to be part of that,” and “I started here with my studies...when I got my degree, I taught. We’ve got a role to play. Students at UWC were in the height of politics in the 1970s.”

SDS staff also reported that their division was responsible for serving a diverse population of students and that, as emphasized in the UWC mission statement, they were dedicated to serve a population often excluded from other tertiary institutions. To

illustrate, the new Vice Rector for Student Development and Support indicated that UWC had an ethical obligation to create proper support services for the diverse group of students at UWC. Tshiwula (n. d.) wrote, “Given [UWC’s] enrollment policies it can be argued that for UWC the matter of access, both formal and epistemological, is as much a moral one as it is technical as we make *the case for Student Support and Development*” (p. 1, italics in original text). This statement demonstrated that the SDS staff acknowledged their role in serving the UWC student population and SDS had the moral obligation to do so. Other staff comments included, “UWC serves a unique population, one I can relate to. It’s so exciting” and “At UWC you can’t get bored on campus; it’s so dynamic. We’re seen nationally as making a significant contribution to pre- and post-apartheid. I studied here in the early 80s and there was protest and unrest. I was involved in the movement and this was a sort of coming home.”

A few participants, however, indicated that people’s energies at UWC were more scattered than in years past. These participants explained the danger of not keeping a united front and not having one key goal or issue to address. One participant stated:

Before 1994, UWC was a very close-knit university; there was a sense of oneness and unity. That has been lost. UWC has grown and it has lost a lot of personal contact with students. There is no longer one goal to unite us; the energies are scattered. We used to fight for freedom, now there needs to be a fight for academic freedom. Somehow the motivation is different. People are more individualized. (SDS Staff)

### *Committed Staff*

SDS staff recognized that not all people are fit to work in student services. As in many professions, there are certain personal qualities that contribute to the success of SDS staff. Staff explained during the interviews: “We’re not here just to make money, but make a difference in what we’re doing. Change is dramatic; there is no easing them into it” and:

Student service professionals are certain types of people; they are sensitive, understanding, and responsive. There is much to the university vision, the leadership is inspiring and understands what the issues are. We can conceptualize and enable staff to enable a positive student experience. With Professor Tshiwula, so much has been her particular contribution, not just a title or a vision.

Staff understood that their positions were not about making money, but serving people.

### *Limited Resources*

SDS was also characterized by limited resources. Staff talked about limited resources as being finances, personnel, and time. Essentially, these were all connected. Limited finances lead to inability to hire additional staff and assistance, which lead to limited time. Most of the student services units operated with one Head of Department and one office assistant. Most staff members listed limited resources and financial challenges as characteristic of UWC. Some comments from staff were, “Many staff work at a tremendous pace and with tremendous load. We are very understaffed,” “We’re not 100%, we have many weaknesses, but we work with limited resources. Many staff are students,” and “While we want to be involved [in the changes taking place], it’s hard. We

don't have time to read up on new things in our field. I don't feel I want to sacrifice my family and my health anymore."

SDS staff talked about "realigning priorities" when they responded to comments on limited resources. One Head of Department stated, "We need to think about our priorities, especially as a one-person unit. That goes for quite a lot of people, such as the HODs in other SDS units." Tshiwula also clarified the importance of prioritizing SDS in stating, "When realigning units, although units ask for funds, I said we needed to look at our priorities, see how we can be efficient with money, and then we'll allocate funds to individual units. We need to be strategic."

There were some examples of SDS utilizing the resources they had: students. During data collection and my participation with the campus community, I saw students doing much of the work that is done by staff members in U. S. higher education. When Tshiwula began her position at UWC, she sent some members of the Student Representative Council (SRC) to find out students' needs on campus and explore what was happening with students in the residences. The SRC members discovered that some of the students in the residence halls saw some of their classmates struggling with certain courses. The students in the residence halls went to their classes to recruit tutors for their fellow students and organized a tutoring schedule for those who needed extra assistance in their coursework. Tshiwula explained what occurred:

The house units are already organized by themselves. We found ways to reward students who are tutoring other students. I spoke to [the Director of Residential and Catering Services] and we are trying to formalize rewards and supports for the program. We want to support what [the students] are already doing.

Students, particularly in the residence, were already organized and providing programs that were typically housed in student services. Staff member in SDS began to identify, reward, support, and institutionalize student work, as the staff believed programs to be needed and important, but undoable for fulltime staff members due to limited resources.

### *Training and Preparation for Staff*

In order to fully understand the process and outcomes of the change at UWC, it is important to know that SDS staff valued training and professional development. Staff reported an increased interest in current research in the field of students in higher education, in understanding student development as a body of literature and knowledge, and successful practices at other institutions.

In interviews with staff I asked what prepared them for their position in student affairs. Some listed their major discipline of study as an undergraduate student, typically social work or psychology; others listed practical experience. Practical experience included working with youth, involvement in student clubs and organizations while a student, and getting experience working in student services. Two staff members listed professional development opportunities that included the Policy Analysis, Leadership, and Management (PALM) master's program at UWC and the Annual Conference for the National Association for Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV). Residential and Catering Services was most involved with professional development specifically related to student affairs.

Administrators supported the professional development of staff. One administrator stated, "We are looking to build support for staff. We supported [Tshiwula] and the strategic plan. There was a shift from student affairs to student development and

support.” During my time at UWC, I also saw Tshiwula work to increase professional development opportunities within the SDS division. Tshiwula offered support for HODs to attend a leadership institute, and national and international conferences. She also encouraged HODs to present at conferences and work on building research capacity within their respective units. Tshiwula emphasized the need to “infused research into [SDS] work to assure accountability” and to “contribute to the individual and collective growth of students and staff as critical resources for our people” (Tshiwula, n.d., p. 1).

#### *Additional Finding*

It is important to note that it was clear that students did not know which university units, programs, and services were in the Student Development and Support portfolio. I asked all interview participants who or where students went for support on campus. A few students listed the Institute for Counseling, a few mentioned the “matrons” in the residences, a few listed the Office of the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support, and a couple mentioned the Student Representative Council. Most students listed themselves as who they went to for assistance, or “the Lord.” It was important to understand where students went for support and development due to the fact that the SDS division underwent changes to meet the needs of students.

#### *Conclusion*

The Vice Rector for Student Development and Support argued for a “student-centered approach, enhanced by a strong student support and development thrust to help build educated, critical, and well-skilled citizens” (Tshiwula, n.d., p.2). This emphasis in a student-centered approach in the student affairs division was evident in the context of student affairs and the process of organizational change. The next two chapters are the



finding for stakeholders' role in the organizational change at UWC and the process of change at UWC.

## CHAPTER 5: STAKEHOLDER ROLES IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Chapter 4 explored the context of this study and described how university stakeholders viewed students and student affairs at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Chapters 5 and 6 explore the process of organizational change at UWC. This chapter specifically addresses Research Question #2: What role(s) do university stakeholders play in organizational change within student affairs at UWC? In Chapter 6: *Process of the Organizational Change*, I describe the specific changes that occurred over time.

Interviews and university documents were the two main sources of data used in this chapter. In this section I describe the roles that various stakeholders played in the organizational change in student affairs at UWC. The interview questions that helped me to explore the role(s) of various stakeholders in the organizational change were: What prompted the change? Who played key roles in the change and what role did they play? and What role did students play in this change? The stakeholders included University Administrators, Consultant, Vice Rector for Student Development and Support, Student Affairs Staff, and Students.

The antecedent to the entire organizational change was the hiring of the new Rector, Professor Bryan O'Connell. Although very few interview participants listed the University Council as playing a role in the restructuring and organizational change at UWC, university documents repeatedly emphasized the importance in hiring the "appropriate staff" to assure institutional success. More specifically, in the *Report from the Chairperson of Council*, Tyeku (2001) wrote, "Fundamental to long-term success is the recruitment, retention and progression of appropriate staff and students; recognizing

them as key resources and creating an environment and practices conducive to their development” (p. 14). In addition, other university documents (Mdekazi, 2002; Tyeku, 2002) clearly stated that national legislation prompted the UWC Executive Council to search for a Rector who would place students at the center of higher education and emphasize the retention and persistence of students. It was evident that national legislation and the University Council played a large role in the change. As I describe below, the leadership and character of the individuals hired played the largest role in the restructuring of student affairs at UWC. It was evident that the Council hired a strong candidate for the position.

#### University Administrators

The University Administrators consisted of four UWC executives; three participants worked in the Office of the Rector and one participant worked in the Office of the Vice Rector for Student Affairs. The Rector was the single-most person listed by all stakeholder groups as the person who played the key role in initiating the organizational change in Student Affairs. The Rector played the largest role in shifting the focus of the student affairs portfolio and gaining approval from the University Council to restructure it, not only in management personnel but in the reporting lines within the portfolio.

The Rector’s strong leadership capabilities and experience prior to his arrival at UWC, as the Vice Rector for Student Affairs at a neighboring technikon and then Director of Education for the Western Cape Province, appeared to have influenced his success at gaining approval to take action on his plans and effectively implementing his agenda. Interview participants indicated that the Rector’s former position in student

affairs influenced his role in shifting the focus of Student Affairs at UWC. The Consultant strongly believed, “[The Rector] has big ideas for UWC and the personality and connections to make it happen.”

Typical students and staff comments were, “The Rector, Professor O’Connell, realized an office that would put more focus on the challenges of students on the ground. [The Division of Student Affairs] needed to be more relevant” (Student) and “The Rector wanted to change the [Student Affairs] objective, mission, and strategic process” (Staff). Many stated that the change within Student Affairs was the vision of the new Rector and listed him as “What prompted the change in Student Affairs.”

The Consultant stated that the Executive Assistant to the Rector and Institutional Planner, Bill<sup>7</sup>, also played a large role in the change and restructuring of Student Affairs at UWC. While the Rector provided leadership and played a large role in initiating and implementing change on a large scale, Bill took the lead on actualizing many details in the restructuring. The consultant stated that Bill “opened doors and got decisions actioned quickly.” Bill was not mentioned anywhere else in the interviews. However, during my observations at a strategic planning workshop for Student Affairs, mention of Bill created panic amongst the Heads of Department (HODs) when the consultant asked if the staff were ready to show the new Student Affairs plan to administration; the HODs indicated that they wanted to make sure all of their ideas and budget projections were in order before presenting to Bill. It was clear that the HODs knew Bill had the power to influence change.

Some participants simply stated that “Administrators” or “Executive” played a large role in the change. A few interview participants did not mention specific people or

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<sup>7</sup> Name changed to protect anonymity of participant.

positions. One comment was, “There was a growing concern for a lack of leadership and vision in this area. There was a concern that the priority for support for students was being neglected. The Executive was looking more carefully at the position [of Vice Rector for Student Affairs] and actively searching for leadership to take this on and make this happen.” The Administrators played a large role in the restructuring and change at UWC.

#### Outside Consultant

The outside consultant, Ann Harper, played a critical role in aligning the student affairs division to the University strategic plan, helping the division create its own strategic plan, and assuring a smooth transition of the new Vice Rector into position. Ms. Harper’s style as a consultant and group facilitator, knowledge about student affairs and services in higher education (in South Africa and abroad), and her experiences on the frontlines of student affairs during the liberation movement and the transformation of post-apartheid higher education, helped her connect with the administration, staff, and the new Vice Rector. Her primary role was to facilitate a successful transition and help set the tone for the “new” portfolio. The administration, Student Affairs staff, and the new Vice Rector listed Ms. Harper as a key component in the planning and transition phases of the restructure.

#### New Vice Rector for Student Affairs

While the Rector was listed as the key person who initiated the change in Student Affairs, the new Vice Rector, Professor Tshiwula, was named as the person who played the largest role in facilitating and institutionalizing the changes. Tshiwula’s background in social work and academic research on resilience in education helped her understand

the issues of students and how to assist individuals within institutions. Tshiwula also came directly to UWC from a university in the Eastern Cape; her background in human development and work in higher education helped prepare her for her new position and role at UWC. Professor Tshiwula's experience in leadership positions on international committees, such as the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, may have assisted her in her comfort and success as a leader.

All stakeholder groups talked about the importance of Tshiwula's positive characteristics as a person, which helped her to be effective in her role and position in Student Affairs. A typical comment from non-Student Affairs staff was, "We have a new Vice Rector. Things are geared more toward development and support. Things are more efficient." Student Affairs staff comments that summed up general notions were:

A lot of the changes had to do with [Tshiwula's] appointment, her drive, and vision.

What she has achieved these months has been amazing. The interrelations between departments have increased, the relationships have increased, services have increased.

We have more of a focus on what we do. For example, Sports Administration is not only sports, but student development and support. We have looked at how to facilitate student development through sports. Also, we previously felt very isolated. We now certainly feel we belong.

and

[The change] started on the Rector's side and the Executive Council's decision to appoint a new person, but it would not have been successful if they did not hire a good person. Her approach filters down, and the [HODs] play a role. She's really driving the process. She's not an authoritarian and she puts the emphasis on our goals.

Students also listed Tshiwula as the driving force in the organizational change.

Some student comments included:

There were changes because of Professor Tshiwula. She's the one. There have been changes because of her. Things are going to happen. She even came to see our program. I think there will be a lot of changes because of her. I don't know who was there before.

and

[Student Affairs] is different from the previous person. There's a change in focus. Now they are available and relevant to support students. When Prof. [Tshiwula] came in, she came to our events; the unit is becoming personal. This is someone that brings change.

#### Student Affairs Division

The Student Affairs division mainly included all the units directly in the Student Affairs portfolio. Representatives from a few other units designed to offer support and facilitate development (e.g., Gender Equity Unit, Student Learning Center, and Academic Writing Center) were also included in the interview sample. Almost all comments on the role that university units played in the changes and restructuring of the Student Affairs division suggested that only units directly under Student Affairs division played a role in the change process. One head of department (HOD) in a non-Student Affairs unit,

however, stated that she was involved in the change process; this HOD indicated that she met and talked with Professor Tshiwula prior to Tshiwula officially entering her position as new Vice Rector to discuss the role, function, and issues of her non-Student Affairs support unit.

Student Affairs staff also played a strong role in the organizational change. University administration, the outside consultant, and the new Vice Rector highlighted the role of the Student Affairs Heads of Department (HODs) as co-creators of the strategic plan of the Student Affairs portfolio and leaders in implementing changes within their individual units. HODs were also charged with instilling development in the function of their units and reassessing the support that their individual units provide for students. University Administration, the consultant, and HODs described Student Affairs staff as “wonderful leaders,” “very enthusiastic,” and “hard working.”

What also emerged from my data analysis was that the individual HOD within each unit determined the impact of the restructuring within each Student Affairs unit. For example, student workers and support staff had a better understanding of the changes that occurred, the new vision and objectives of the division, and the purpose of the SDS division if the HOD had talked about the change process and how the vision impacted the work of his or her individual unit. It was clear that although the Student Affairs staff played a role in the organizational change, the role varied per unit.

#### Students

##### *Formal Student Leaders*

All stakeholder groups stated that the formal student leadership, mainly the Student Representative Council (SRC), played some type of role in the restructuring of



Student Affairs at UWC. One student I interviewed was a member of the student group who campaigned against the 2004 SRC; this non-SRC leader stated that his organization was also involved in the change. The role of the student leaders was to represent the general student body in the hiring process of the new Vice Rector and make a recommendation for hire. A typical response from the SRC members was, “In the interview process, the SRC played a critical role in selecting the Vice Rector. We were representing students. We were very involved.” Another SRC member stated, “[The change] was a collective effort between the administration and student leadership.”

The SRC also played a role on the University Council. Tyeku (2001), Chairperson of the Council, wrote:

Council acknowledges with appreciation that much of the credit for the University’s academic successes can be contributed to the talented and creative leadership of the Student Representative Council. Despite fiscal constraints the student leadership, in their fiduciary capacity as members of Council, have demonstrated a maturity that promotes a productive relationship between students and the rest of the University community. (p. 9)

It was very clear, however, that views of the SRC were inconsistent across stakeholder groups.

The staff and consultant viewed the role and involvement of the SRC in the restructuring differently. Staff reported that students only played a role in the university setting when the issue at hand directly affects them. Many HODs reported that the SRC was invited to meetings, but rarely attended. One HOD said, “Students are supposed to be

involved in all of it, but they never pitch up at meetings. We've sent emails to the SRC, but they have never come for the past four years.”

The outside consultant, Harper, stated that student leadership was “a big issue” at the time of the restructuring of the Student Affairs portfolio. She ran “focused group discussions” with formal student leaders in the SRC, Residential and Catering Services, Sports Council, and the Faculty Councils. She reported that “there was little vision forthcoming and much complaining.” Harper also stated that very few members from the SRC showed up to her scheduled discussions. When I asked Ms. Harper to clarify she stated:

It was very difficult to get input from the SRC at the time. The [SRC] relationship with senior management and the Student Development officer was strained, to say the least, and my interviews were being set up through those offices. Also they were preparing for the next round of elections and busy with campaigning.

Harper continued to explain that in South African higher education today, non-SRC student organizations most often have a better understanding of broader student opinion. Harper stated:

It is not usual for students to spend longer than one year on the SRC, which was not the case in the past, and so lack of continuity means that the SRC position is very dependent on who is in office at the time. This is compounded by the fact that student organizations have tended to lose touch with the student body. So quite often it is easier to gauge broader student opinion from bodies like Sports Councils who are closer to their constituency.

In addition, many campuses allowed students to run for the SRC on political party lines. Many interview participants indicated that the SRC at UWC often represented its

political party views, rather than those of the student body at large. The extent to which the SRC truly represented the student body was unclear. Student Affairs staff summarized the views of many individuals across campus. Staff comments included:

The SRC does have an impact on campus. They have seats in faculties [department committees] and the Senate, the Institutional Forum, Council, and with the Vice Rector and Rector. To what extent they represent the students? I leave that up to them.

and

[The SRC] is supposed to play a role [in change]. One weakness is that when we refer to students, it's not broadly; we mostly refer to the student councils, and it's mostly the SRC. [The SRC] is now dominated by SASCO [national political party affiliate], and it really has SASCO views and not the general student views.

When I asked what role students played in change on campus in general, there was an overwhelming response of "very little." One student explained:

When it comes to management, only the SRC represents students. On the University Council, students get only 2 seats out of 28. We [the other student groups] only get a report when we lobby. The United Student's Front [the student organization that ran against the current SRC in the 2004 election] said we need to get a student parliament in place to communicate more with the SRC to get other voices heard.

I asked one post-graduate student if the SRC is effective on campus and if they truly represented students. He replied:

No. I have many friends in the SRC and many happen to be Black. Maybe the issues they want to address, it's not the time. A lot of things that they do are not visible. The SRC has an important role to play. The SRC hasn't done enough at UWC to prove to the Coloureds that they are relevant. They are not able to bring people together.

Other student comments were:

Only the residence students are involved. When [the SRC] has a meeting, it's not at a time that commuter students can come. We need to rethink the structure and how we do things. We need more students on council, more representation of groups.

and

I've never really understood [the SRC] role. They are supposed to help. The only thing they do is at the beginning of the school term, they throw a bash. At UCT, the food in the residence and dining areas is cheaper because the CHC [Central House Committee] and the SRC subsidize the food.

In addition to the SRC, UWC has nearly 28 Student Structures (i.e., student organizations) and each college is supposed to have a Faculty Council to represent students in the academy. Staff members reported that Student Structures are "dysfunctional" and the faculty councils are "non-functioning" or "non-existing." Only two Faculty Councils were functioning to some degree during my visit to UWC. Like the responses from the student organizations, the President of the Faculty Council I interviewed, Mark, explained that he had great difficulty communicating with the SRC and getting support from the university, outside of his college. Mark reported that the

SRC meetings were at inconvenient times for non-resident students and the SRC did not report information from the Council meetings to other student organizations. Mark no longer goes to the SRC for support; he said that if he needs anything he goes directly to the Rector's office, where he has been successful receiving assistance for his Faculty Council.

Both staff and administrators reported that students "must" have a role in change on campus. Many staff members and administrators stated comments such as, "We must never forget why we are here. Students must be represented." In spite of a strong belief in student involvement on campus and in organizational change, some staff and administrators were unclear about the extent to which students were actually involved. All interview groups noted concern regarding apathy in student leadership and the extent to which the current SRC represented the student body.

#### *Non-Formal Student Leaders*

There were also students who were not in formal leadership positions, but played a large role in change at UWC. Students who were not in formal student organizations made it clear that they did not want their programs and initiatives to be connected with the formal student leadership on campus or "involve politics." I asked two students, who were very involved in initiating programs to support students in the residences, why they spent hours of voluntary time helping others. The two responses were as follows:

Every time I go home [to the Eastern Cape] my father asks me, "What have you done this year? Not with your school work, I know you did fine with that, but what have you done for others this year?" The students need help and they are not getting it from anyone else. We must help each other.

and

I actually went home after the first week of classes my first term. I had a horrible time and needed to leave. I told my mom that I had some things to take care of at home and that we had some time off from school [which was not true]. I then looked at myself and told myself I had to go back for my education. I told myself, “I’m going to make a change at this campus, to help people feel like they belong and so no one would go through what I did my first week here [at UWC].

These students played a large role in facilitating change and improvement at UWC.

The general student body had the ability to have the ultimate impact in institutional change. The general student body selected and elected the student representation at UWC. The new Vice Rector received many negative comments from the student body regarding the SRC. Her reply was, “You must get involved and vote to get the SRC in office if you are not satisfied with their representation.” Students at large must organize to vote the SRC out of office and play a role in holding the SRC accountable. The important fact is that student politics clearly has a strong role in change at UWC.

### Conclusion

Each stakeholder group played a role in the organizational change and restructuring of student affairs at UWC. The change was initiated by university administration and formal university governing boards, largely designed and implemented by the outside consultant the Student Affairs division, and involved student participation. In the following chapter I present my findings on the process of change and further break down stakeholders’ participation in the organizational change at UWC.

## CHAPTER 6: PROCESS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AT UWC

This study was designed to explore the change and restructuring of student affairs in South African higher education and to understand the role students play in the process of change. In Chapter 4 I described the context of UWC to help illustrate the university structure and culture and to show where the change occurred. In Chapter 5 I described the roles of various stakeholders in the organizational restructuring and change. In this chapter I connect the context of UWC and the roles of the stakeholders to the process of change. This section is a description of how the structure and delivery of student services changed from before to after the restructuring of UWC and the outcomes of the restructuring of the Student Affairs portfolio. This section answers Research Question #3: How have the structure and delivery of student services changed from before to after the recent restructuring of student affairs at UWC? and Research Question #4: What are the intended and unintended consequences of the restructuring of student affairs at UWC?

The process of the organizational change over time, major stakeholders involved in the change process, and the themes that emerged from interview questions centered on the process of change are illustrated in a causal network (see Figure 2). Miles and Huberman (1994) described a causal network as “a display of the most important independent and dependent variables in a field study and of the relationships among them” (p. 153). The variables are shown in boxes and the relationship between the variables are shown with arrows.

I used a grounded theory framework in this study to examine and identify what emerged from the data process, rather than deduct patterns from a chosen theory or preestablished constructs. I used an inductive approach to build the causal network map

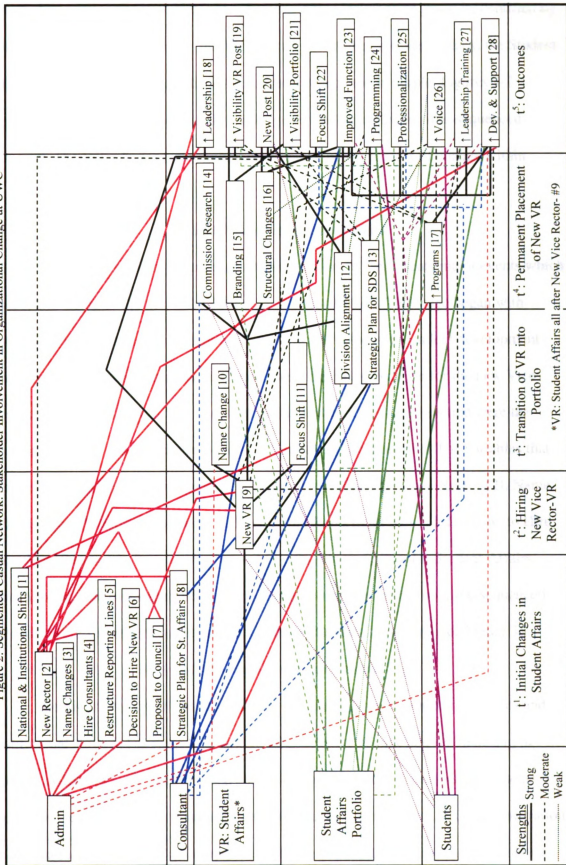
and to stay consistent with the grounded theory framework. I triangulated data to construct a causal network map that illustrated patterns that emerged (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The interview questions I used to gain insight into the process of change at UWC included: Have you noticed any changes to the student supports at UWC in the past five years?; What prompted the change?; Why do you think there were changes?; Who played key roles in this change and what role did they play?; Please describe the process of this change; and What, if anything, has changed from before to after the change took place? (Again, see Appendixes D, E, and F for the Students, Non-Students, and Consultant interview protocols.) Responses depicted clear connections between variables. Similar to quantitative statistical analysis, the causal network map does not necessarily show a cause-effect relationship between variables, but rather shows a relationship between variables (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The strength of the relationship between variables is identified by the type of line connecting each variable “—” represents a strong relationship between variables, “----” represents a moderate relationship, and “.....” represents a weak relationship.

I numbered each variable in Figure 2 to demonstrate the sequence of events which occurred in the change process. The network illustrates the restructuring process by variables that emerged within each stakeholder group, and across time. I divided the change process into 5 time-sequenced categories: (t<sup>1</sup>) Initial Changes in Student Affairs, (t<sup>2</sup>) Hiring of the New Vice Rector, (t<sup>3</sup>) Transition of the Vice Rector into the Student Affairs Portfolio, (t<sup>4</sup>) Permanent Placement of the New Vice Rector, and (t<sup>5</sup>) Outcomes. I color coded the lines connecting stakeholder groups to help depict relationships between



Figure 2. Segmented Casual Network: Stakeholder Involvement in Organizational Change at UW



stakeholder groups and variables<sup>8</sup>. The Administration stakeholder group is identified by red lines, the Consultant is blue, the Vice Rector for Student Affairs is black, the Student Affairs Portfolio is green, and the Student group is depicted in purple. Figures 3-7 highlight relationships between stakeholder group and variables by time-sequenced category. The following is a chronological narrative of the process of change within Student Affairs at UWC.

### Initial Changes in Student Affairs

The category Initial Changes in Student Affairs (t<sup>1</sup>) represents major events which lead to the hiring of the new Vice Rector for Student Affairs. This stage began with national movements and an institutional shift towards a focus on student development and services in higher education, and ended with the hiring decision for the new Vice Rector for Student Affairs. The variables in this first time-sequence section were the foundation for all changes made within the Student Affairs portfolio. The variables that emerged were: National Movements and Institutional Shifts [1], New Rector [2], Name Change One [3], Hire Consultant [4], Restructure Reporting Lines [5], Decision to Hire New Vice Rector [6], Proposal to Council [7], and Strategic Plan for Student Affairs Portfolio [8]. The two stakeholder groups that played a role in the first time-sequenced category were University Administrators and the Outside Consultant (see Figure 3).

### *National Movements and Institutional Shifts*

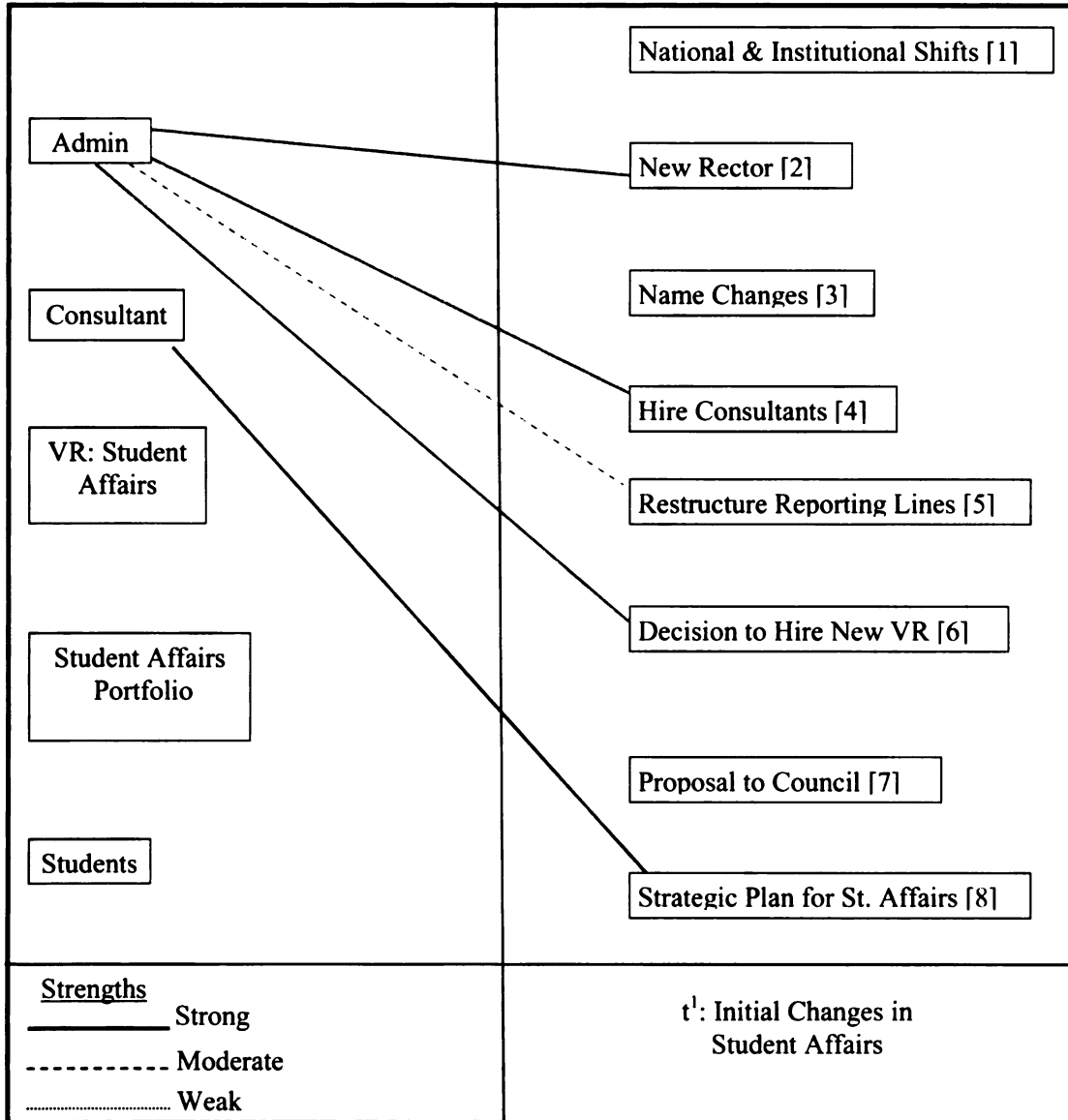
Administrators, staff, and the outside consultant listed national movements and institutional shifts [1] as main factors that influenced the change and restructuring of Student Affairs at UWC. Institutional shifts and the influence of national movements were also clearly identified in national and institutional documents. UWC Administration

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<sup>8</sup> I completed a *Permission for Color Images* form and submitted it to the Graduate School for approval.

and the outside Consultant reviewed national and institutional documents to help plan for the restructuring process.

Figure 3. Relationship between Stakeholder Group and Variables: Initial Changes in Student Affairs



*National Movements*

Administrators, Staff, and the Consultant reported that national policy and legislation called for a better student support system. These three stakeholder groups

specified that national policy and legislation prompted change within Student Affairs at UWC. In addition, in two institutional reports, the Chairpersons of the Institutional Forum and Council (Tyeku, 2002 and Mdekazi, 2002, respectively) stated that the South African National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) impacted the strategic plan of the university and the university's search to fill the vacancies in the senior management positions. Tyeku (2002) explained, "The University aligned itself, out of conviction, with the main thrust of the [*National Plan on Higher Education*]" (p. 6) and "A high priority for 2001 was that leadership be in place to profile and steer UWC in the process of transformation" (p. 8). The two senior management positions that were to be filled were Rector and Vice Rector for Student Affairs.

#### *Institutional Shifts*

Authors of UWC documents also called for a major focus on student development and support. The incoming Vice Rector for Student Affairs and the outside Consultant listed *The University of the Western Cape: Strategic Plan 2001-2005* (UWC, 2000) as the guiding document for restructuring the Student Affairs portfolio. The *Strategic Plan* listed student development and support as major foci. A major goal listed in the *Strategic Plan* was to "support the development of students" (p. 21). Major objectives of the *Strategic Plan* that impacted student development and services at UWC included:

- A safe and supportive dynamic learning environment that respects and values student diversity, equity, and service delivery to realize UWC's enrolment, management, student development and strategic objectives;
- A culturally inclusive and diverse student body...based on principles of equitable and epistemological access;

- Accepted campus-wide responsibility for student retention and a commitment to continuous improved throughout, time-to-completion and graduation rates and service delivery for all categories of student;
- Increase employability...and onward progression into the world of work...;
- Successful development, leadership capacity building and improved quality of student life...;
- A professional and integrated student (including faculty administration) with a capacity to deliver high quality student services. (p. 22)

These objectives were the foundation for the organizational change within Student Affairs.

There also appeared to be a shift in institutional focus on the retention and persistence of students, as well as increased concern for the first-year experience and how it relates to student resilience. When asked what prompted the changes in Student Affairs, students, staff, and administrators listed the institution's need to improve the retention and persistence rates of students. One administrator stated, "One challenge is the retention and the attrition rate. These are both becoming more and more the responsibility of the Office of Student Development and Support." Participants often listed the retention rates and persistence rates as means to improve the university's image to the public and therefore generate revenue. When participants reported concerns about retention and persistence rates, a common comment was, "The [organizational change] comes down to money and the recapitalization project."

### *Hiring of New Rector*

Students, staff, and the outside consultant listed the new Rector [2], Professor Brian O'Connell, as the person who initiated most of the changes in the restructuring of Student Affairs. The former Rector's contract came to an end in December 2000. The process of recruiting and appointing a new Rector was the duty of the Council (O'Connell, 2002b). The new Rector arrived at UWC in November 2001 on what Tyeku, Chairperson of the Council, referred to as "a joyous and festive occasion for the University community" (2002, p. 8). It appeared that the new Rector spearheaded the restructuring of the Student Affairs portfolio.

Professor O'Connell was formerly Vice Rector for Student Affairs at a neighboring technikon and then Director of Education for the Western Cape Province. It was clear that O'Connell valued the importance of student development and student support in higher education. Upon arrival at UWC, O'Connell wrote:

In its student development plan the university accepts that it has both a legal and an ethical duty to create an academic environment and a campus community in which students can develop to their full potential... The challenge to integrate student development into the university core business, remains a significant one for the future... UWC moves to marry the academic with the developmental, and responds to the particular needs and circumstances of the different sectors comprising the student community (mature, part-time, distance, differently abled, under- and post-graduate, international and residential students, female and male). (O'Connell, 2002b, p. 26)

The Consultant stated that Professor O’Connell was “very committed to student development” and “what has happened in the Student Development and Support portfolio is very tied up with [Professor O’Connell’s] ambitions for UWC.” Another administrator stated:

The Rector, Professor O’Connell, realized an office that would put more focus on the challenges of students on the ground. [Student Affairs] needed to be more relevant. Another thing that prompted the change was the need to be more marketable and address throughput rates.

#### *Name Changes*

There were two name changes for the Student Affairs portfolio during the first year of the restructuring process. The name changes mirrored the changed perceptions that University Administrators and Staff had of the Student Affairs portfolio. A common response from Administrators and Student Affairs staff was, “The title known as ‘Student Affairs’ used to be seen as an administrative service by students and staff.” The Rector reported:

We found that the perception of Student Affairs was a political function. This entity [Student Affairs] was for the struggle. Student Affairs’ function was brokering peace...Post 1994 [after the first national democratic election] we had a declared mission...We started reconceptualizing the Vice Rector and the Student Affairs portfolio. We must protect the rule of law. There was a new discovery of respect and responsibilities...and a reconceptualizing of peoples’ talents and skill.

Another Administrator said:

In a portfolio such as Student Affairs, we mainly dealt with student politics and student leadership. This is now out of era. It was a peacekeeping mission, dealing with student protests, etcetera, especially in post-apartheid. It's a period of transition and a new government. This moved the portfolio from political and instability to student development and support.

The name changes appeared to be the first actual change made to the portfolio.

The first name change [3] occurred in the Initial Changes in Student Affairs; the name of the portfolio changed from "Student Affairs" to "Student Support and Development."

The Rector initiated this first name change.

The new Vice Rector, Professor Tshiwula, changed the name once again during her transition into her post as new Vice Rector: Student Support and Development. The second name change [10] is located in t<sup>3</sup>: Transition of Vice Rector into Portfolio in the causal network. Professor Tshiwula wanted development to be at the core of the Student Affairs portfolio. She wanted to change the name from "Student Support and Development" to "Student Development and Support." Tshiwula spearheaded the second name change: Name Change Two [10]; she indicated that she received feedback and input from university Administrators and the Student Affairs staff before making the final decision of the portfolio name.

#### *Hiring Outside Consultant*

In early 2003, the outside consultant, Ann Harper, was approached by the UWC administration to assist in the development of a strategic plan for Student Affairs at the university [4]. Harper stated that the Student Affairs portfolio was "an area prioritized in the institutional planning strategy and neglected by the previous incumbent." Harper



reported that she was asked by the Rector to come to UWC to facilitate a seminar or workshop with the Student Affairs staff, but the process was continually stalled by the then Vice Rector: Student Affairs. Harper added:

When it became apparent that [the Vice Rector for Student Affairs] would not have his contract extended it was decided to wait until his term of office had ended before I came onto campus. The brief evolved to one which took into account the appointment of [Professor Tshiwula] who was to take up office in January 2004.

Harper played a major role in the restructuring process.

#### *Restructure Reporting Lines*

In 2001 the Rector wrote, “There was a realignment of the executive portfolios to help integrate the functions, improve institutional planning, cost analysis, benchmark performance, and clarify roles and responsibilities of positions and units” (O’Connell, 2002b, p. 2). The Student Affairs portfolio was one of the executive portfolios to be realigned. However, the change occurred later. In fall 2003, UWC combined all of the Student Affairs units to create a formal division with a single reporting line. To head this division, UWC created (or rather shifted the current Vice Rector post) and filled a new position on the Executive Board: Vice Rector for Student Support and Development (Harper, 2004). It appeared that restructuring the reporting lines into one single division [5] helped create dialogue and collaboration between Student Affairs units.

#### *Decision to Hire a New Vice Rector*

The administration and executive council decided not to renew the contract of the Vice Rector for Student Affairs and to hire a new person in the same level position, but

under the new title: Vice Rector for Student Support and Development [6] (O'Connell, 2002b). The reasons interviewees listed for the decision to hire a new Vice Rector included the need for "fresh blood" and "new ideas," new leadership, and the need to hire a Black African to "balance the legacy." One Head of Department in the Student Affairs division summed up the common thread amongst staff regarding the decision to hire a new Vice Rector when she said that the reason for the changes within Student Affairs was a result of "the growing concern for a lack of leadership and vision in this area; there was a concern that the priorities for support for students were being neglected." Another staff member said, "Before Professor Tshiwula there was more lethargy and no activity."

Another staff member commented on the Rector's involvement in the restructuring of Student Affairs and the decision to hire a new Vice Rector. He stated, "The Rector forced us to change. The Rector said, 'We need a plan...then they looked at project management. The Rector wanted a more responsible, industrious person with leadership skills.'" To add, the consultant stated:

[The Rector] has big ideas for UWC, and the personality and connections to make it happen. Already the institution has increased its ratings for research output. Also a new leader in [Tshiwula] who is energetic and enthusiastic and determined to succeed...what has happened in the Student Development and Support is very tied up with [the Rector's] ambitions for UWC.

The "big ideas" for UWC that Harper mentioned, clearly included a change in leadership and management in key executive positions. The new Vice Rector officially took post in January 2004.

One staff member added to the notion of hiring a new person to balance out the university legacy in terms of gender as well as race. Professor Tshiwula was not only the first Black African in a Vice Rector position at UWC, but the first Black African woman.

This staff member stated:

I'm coming from a very feminist perspective. The whole institutional culture was based on a patriarchy and masculine position. It was like that up to four years ago. Many of the things that we [as women] were concerned about didn't get addressed.

This same staff member specified that she met with Tshiwula before Tshiwula assumed her new post as Vice Rector, to make sure her unit (which was outside of the Student Affairs portfolio but very much focused on the support and development of students) would be considered and included in the overall strategic plan to improve the student development and support on campus.

#### *Proposal to Council*

After the Rector and the other university administrators finalized their decision to hire a new Vice Rector, the Rector presented a proposal for the university Council [7]. The Rector, once again, spearheaded this element in the change process. A university administrator firmly stated, “[The Rector] convinced the Council to restructure the portfolio.”

The Council was not lenient with the hiring process of a new Vice Rector. The Rector described the process of presenting the proposal to Council as follows:

I took the idea [of hiring a new Vice Rector] to Council. We struggled with the first job description I took to the Council; the first one failed. I then took a single

name to the Council, stating Professor Tshiwula's history as a social worker and her academic work on resilience and youth. We then got approval to finalize the search and make an offer.

Once the proposal passed through Council, organizational change within the portfolio commenced.

### *Strategic Plan for Student Affairs*

Harper, the Consultant, stated that she was hired in 2003 to "assist in developing a strategic plan for Student Development at [UWC]" [8]. Harper indicated that certain factors that came into play at the institution "opened the possibility for Student Development and Support to claim and define a different space for itself on campus."

These factors included:

- The inauguration of a new Rector with a strong commitment to student development;
- The reformulation of the post of Deputy Rector: Student Affairs to foreground student development and support and the appointment of a new incumbent in the post;
- A range of national policy imperatives which have reshaped the higher education landscape and resulted in UWC retaining its status as a separate and autonomous university;
- A process of strategic institutional review which is being undertaken in response to these systemic challenges;

- Recent trends in Student Affairs which have resulted in the consolidation of student service departments into one distinct organizational and administrative unit and a move to professionalize the sector. (Harper, 2003)

The decision to hire a new Vice Rector was confirmed at the beginning of Harper's contract with UWC. Harper indicated that her strategic plan for the Student Affairs division would take into account the transition of a new person into the head position of Student Affairs. Finally, Harper described the process of creating a strategic plan and implementing changes to the division:

I suggested that [Tshiwula] be brought into the process ahead of time so that she could shape my intervention. So in the end I spent a while at UWC interviewing all the Student Development and Support staff, a range of groups and individuals who had relationships with Student Affairs, the senior executive, etcetera, to try and figure out what was happening within the division. By that time it became apparent that it would be useful for me to run a report-back workshop with [Tshiwula] and her staff prior to her taking up the post, to engage with the findings, build a relationship between her and her new staff, and enable her to start the year with some idea of the priorities and challenges facing her new division...I subsequently ran a follow-up workshop a year later [in 2004] to access progress within the division.

It is important to note that I attended and assisted in this report-back workshop at the request of Harper and the new Vice Rector. I was asked to attend as an observer, to collect data on the restructuring in the division. At the end of the session, I was asked to join the conversations and help capture the dialogue and action plans.

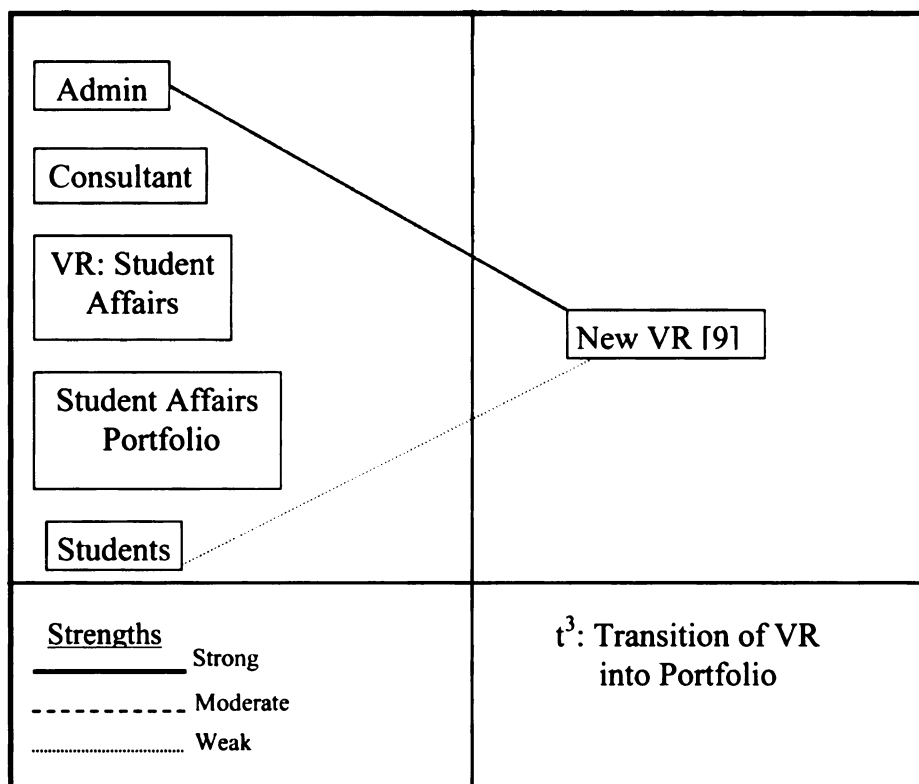
The next four sections depict the process of hiring the new Vice Rector, her transition into the portfolio and the university, her permanent placement into the position of Vice Rector for Student Affairs, and the outcomes of the restructure. Additional findings that evolved from the analysis are in the final section.

#### Hiring of New Vice Rector for Student Support and Development

In 2003 UWC hired the new Vice Rector to assume the post for Student Support and Development [9]. As I described in Chapter 5, the university Administrators played the largest role in hiring the new Vice Rector. The Student Representative Council (SRC) also stated they played a role in the hiring process (see Figure 4).

The new Vice Rector officially began in January 2004. However, the transition process of the new Vice Rector began at the end of the 2003 school year. In this next section I describe the transition of Professor Tshiwula into the Student Development and Support Portfolio.

Figure 4. Relationship between Stakeholder Group and Variables: Hiring of New Vice Rector



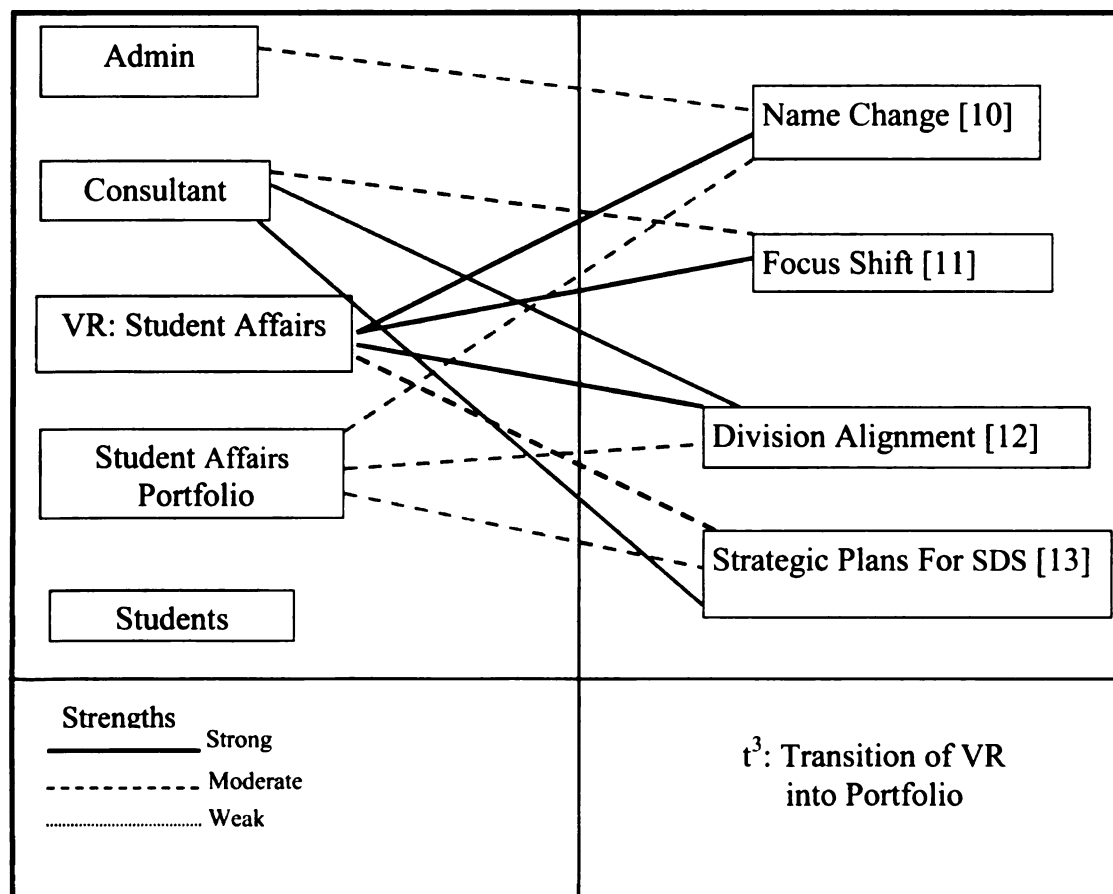
### Transition of Vice Rector into the Portfolio

The Consultant suggested that Professor Tshiwula be brought onto campus before she assumed her new post so that Tshiwula could help determine how the strategic plan should be implemented, help determine how change should take place within the division, and gain an understanding of the strengths and challenges within her new division. Tshiwula came to UWC in October 2003 to meet with members of the university. She met with the Heads of Department in the Student Affairs portfolio, as well as members of other student support units on campus, such as the Gender Equity Unit.

Tshiwula reported, “When I arrived to UWC, I realized that under the former Vice Rector for Student Affairs, there was ‘support’ for students, but no ‘development.’”

She reported that her first task was to align the Student Affairs portfolio to the university; she reviewed the *Strategic Plan 2001-2005* (University of the Western Cape, 2000) to help set her priorities for the division and stated that this document “set the stage for my transition into the university.” It was at this time that Tshiwula suggested changing the name of the portfolio from “Student Support and Development” to “Student Development and Support” [10]. Tshiwula wanted it to be clear to everyone that development was now at the center of the division of Student Affairs. Once again, the name change was the beginning of a shift of focus within the portfolio (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Relationship between Stakeholder Group and Variables: Transition of VR into Portfolio





### *Shift in Focus within Student Development and Support*

The data illustrated three shifts within Student Development and Support (SDS) at UWC. First, a shift in the focus of the SDS from simply support, to support and development [11] was a major element of the transition period of the new Vice Rector into her formal position. This shift in focus was evident throughout the first year of change within the division. Almost all Administrators and Staff Members interviewed made comments such as, “Development is now the focus, not just support.” Student Development and Support staff reported more clarity in their roles within the division as they discussed the shift in focus.

The second shift was realignment of the portfolio. The new Vice Rector and university Administrators suggested that changes within the division were meant to align the division with national policy and the university commitment to improve retention and persistence of students. It appeared that the shift in focus was effective. Staff within the SDS division and outside the SDS division made comments such as, “Now things within SDS are tied to broader policy outside the unit” and “The restructuring and conceptualization is tied to a broader policy. Rather than being seen as a side, we are now attempting to tie SDS into the overall policy related to the student experience, i.e., the experience of student throughput [persistence] and retention.”

Finally, there was a shift within SDS towards a more student-centered environment. Some students made comments such as, “Now there is a student-friendly office [the Vice Rector’s office],” and:

Before, management used to dictate to students what they need or want. Now, we can come up with a program that can help and present a proposal to the Vice

Rector or HOD. [Tshiwula ] started this year. We can't do all of the programs in one year. Most programs initiated have been successful. This year we have computer labs, tutoring, etcetera. This is new for now.

### *Alignment of Student Development and Support Division*

Alignment within the division of Student Development and Support (SDS) [12] began during Tshiwula's transition into UWC and continued during the first year of permanent placement. There was alignment, not only in content and division focus, but in how the division functioned and worked together. A common statement from SDS staff was, "Before the restructuring, the units used to work in silos; few units knew what one another was doing and there was little communication between HODs."

Alignment was facilitated through strategic planning meetings initiated by university Administrators and Harper, the Consultant, and supported and encouraged by the Tshiwula, the new Vice Rector [13]. During the strategic planning meetings, Harper stated, "I had the HODs write up the goals, strengths, and gaps in their work. There was constant evaluation and feedback between groups. They found overlap in the units." SDS staff members specified that the strategic planning meetings were the first time they were able to identify and understand what other units within their division were actually doing. It was clear that Tshiwula and Harper played major roles in facilitating the alignment of SDS units; they both helped clarify roles of units and HODs within the division, and increased communication between SDS units.

### **Permanent Placement of New Vice Rector into Student Development and Support (SDS)**

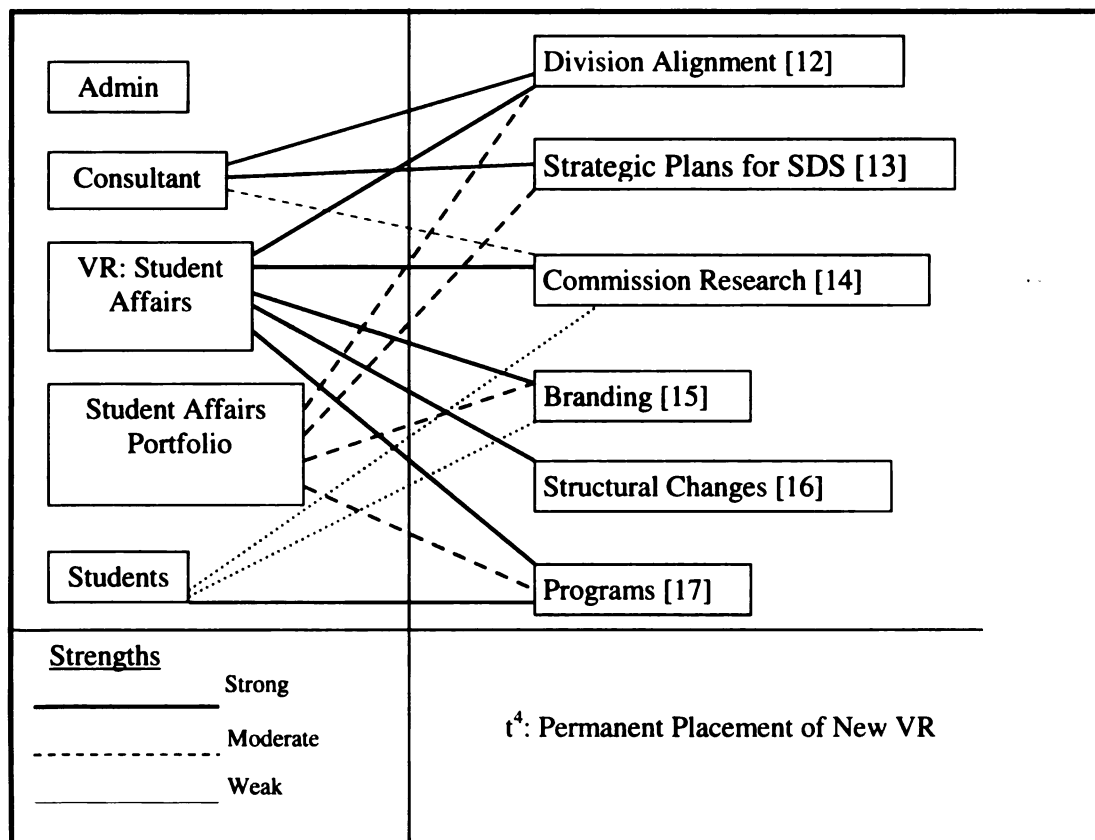
I conducted the research for this study during the Permanent Placement of the New Vice Rector stage in the change process. During this stage, SDS continued to align

the units within the division, as well as focus the division within the university.

Realignment continued through strategic planning meetings and division workshops.

During the Permanent Placement of the New Vice rector, Tshiwula also commissioned research on the student experience at UWC [14], SDS branded the division and launched it to the university at large [15], and finally, Tshiwula proposed a structural change within the division [16] (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Relationship between Stakeholder Group and Variables: Permanent Placement of New VR



*Commissioned Research*

Tshiwula believed that Student Development and Support should be grounded in research. When she arrived at UWC, she received data on student academics (i.e.,

grades, persistence, and retention) of first-year students. Tshiwula then asked two graduate students to analyze the data. Tshiwula stated, "Results revealed the need to focus on first-year students." She went on to explain:

I asked two SRC members to visit the residences which house the majority of first-year students. They found that students were struggling in certain courses academically, there was a shortage of certain books in the library, and inadequate study room in the residence.

In the following months, a computer room was under construction, the study room within one of the first-year residences was renovated, second year students in the residences started their own tutoring program for first year students, and the Vice Rector bought copies of certain academic books to keep on reserve in the library.

Tshiwula reported that when she arrived at UWC, it was clear that SDS needed more information about students. Tshiwula also specified the need for SDS to commission its own research to "assess student perceptions of the Student Development and Support units and find out the gaps in what we do." Tshiwula stated:

As a division, we need to know what students are doing and how the university views [SDS] units... I want us to do our own research. We need to understand the national and local research agendas. Our research should be meaningful for other agencies too. I had students participate with me. I took a policy issue as criteria to do individual interviews... We also need to understand how we are perceived as a non-academic unit and how we are seen as a research and academic place... I want this unit to be research-based. [Research] is an item on the agenda... I want us to present at conferences. We are beginning to do this. The fact that we don't

have resources is not enough; we need to start doing it and the resources will come.

In July 2004, Tshiwula commissioned research with the Center for the Study of Higher Education (formerly the Educational Policy Unit) located on the UWC campus [14].

### *Branding*

Each year the Division of Lifelong Learning at UWC conducted an Indaba (which means “meeting place” or “gathering” in Xhosa) in the third quarter of the academic year. In conjunction with the name and personnel changes that took place within the division of Student Affairs at UWC, the theme of the 2004 Indaba was Student Development and Support. SDS launched and branded the new face of the division during the Indaba. The brand of the SDS Division was, “You Are Your Future” [15]. In describing why she chose that specific branding, Tshiwula said:

SDS was recently branded; the motto is, “You Are Your Future.” I want to send the message to UWC students that strengths are innate. I tell people that resources are within you. I stopped using words like “need.” I don’t want to make students dependent. I want them to see that a lot of what it takes is within each of them.

The branding highly increased the visibility of SDS on campus. Students, staff, and administrators discussed the increased visibility of the division. Students reported that for the first time, the division was introduced to the student-elected House Committees in the residences and many came to know about the SDS division as a result of the new branding campaign. One student said, “It’s a privilege to be part of [the branding]. They needed to personalize the student presence at the university.” Staff members stated, “The branding put SDS on the map. We are now more central to

executive” and “You Are Your Future empowers students and lets them know we are here to help, but the motivation and will must come from inside.”

### *Structural Changes*

Structural changes occurred within the Division of Student Development and Support during the new Vice Rector’s first year [16]. Changes included (1) placing the Student Representative Council (SRC) directly under the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support rather than under the Office of Student Development and (2) creating a new manager position directly under the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support. These new changes are described below.

### *Relocation of the SRC*

The SRC was located directly under the Office of Student Development (OSD). The Head of Department for OSD explained how the SRC came to be removed from under his unit:

When [Tshiwula] arrived she wanted us to define the relationship between the SRC and the Office of Student Development. She told me that it was important for us to be on the same page. Prior to the new Vice Rector’s arrival, the SRC would continually go over my head if any of their proposals were denied. The former Vice Rector for Student Affairs would grant permission [to the SRC] after I denied some programs. The relationship was not good.

After Tshiwula assumed her post as Vice Rector, she shifted the SRC under her supervision so that “[the HOD] would have the time to do other important things.” The HOD appeared to be relieved by the shift in location of the SRC.

### *Approval of New Management Post*

Tshiwula also realized that she as the Vice Rector could not accomplish all of the division's goals and target objectives without more personnel, especially do to the fact that she wanted to integrate more research into the division. In the office of the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support, it was only the Vice Rector and one Executive Secretary. Tshiwula's proposal for creating a manager position within her office was granted by the university and the university aimed to fill the position for the 2005 academic year.

### *Increased Proposals for Programs [17]*

Many of the non-formal student leaders reported that there had been a large increase in student-lead proposals for programs. Students explained that they wrote proposals to design and implement various programs for students and presented the proposals to the HODs of the appropriate unit (mainly Residential and Catering Services). Comments from students were, "Residential Services are more willing to listen to us and work with us on proposals for new programs and events in the residences" and emphasizing this heightened phenomenon, "The residences are taking it to the next level." Students indicated that they felt more comfortable creating and presenting proposals and have learned the process of getting programs approved. This increase in programming is evidence of positive change within the SDS division.

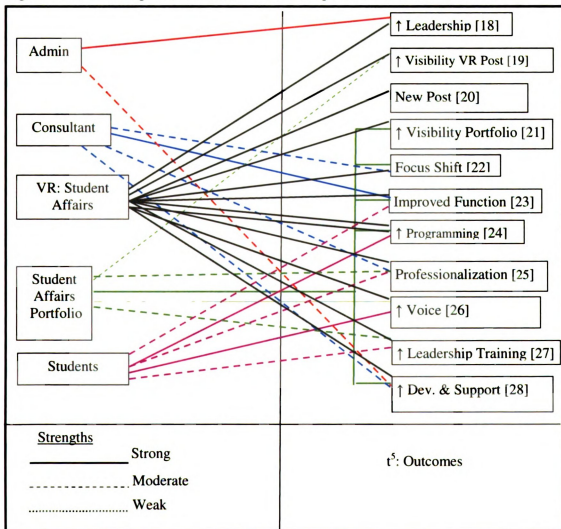
### *Outcomes*

A major component of this study was to determine if the organizational change met stakeholders' expectations and intended outcomes. In order to determine outcomes, I asked interview participants, "What were the intended and unintended outcomes of this

change? Please explain.” Almost every participant reported that it was too early to identify intended and unintended outcomes from the change in Student Affairs. Nevertheless, almost every person proceeded to discuss and present outcomes that have occurred since the change took place.

No obvious themes related to outcomes emerged from the Administrator stakeholder group. Most of the outcomes occurred within the Division of Student Affairs. Outcomes varied by stakeholder group (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Relationship between Stakeholder Group and Variables: Outcomes





### *Vice Rector for Student Development and Support*

Outcomes within the office of the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support (SDS) included an increase in leadership [18], increase in visibility [19], and a new management post [20]. Throughout this chapter I illustrated improvements in leadership and visibility in the Vice Rector position for the SDS portfolio. Staff explained how Tshiwula's powerful and effective leadership style had a positive impact on the division and its ability to make positive and meaningful change. Student comments were, "The Rector and the Vice Rector are a great team. They don't lock themselves in their offices;" "[Tshiwula] is someone who really brings change. I work in admissions. Before there was someone sitting in the office with no clear sense of direction, now [the SDS portfolio] is starting to take shape;" and

We're expecting a lot of great change. The new Vice Rector is more involved and accessible. She's all over and active. She was at the walk, the Fun Walk. We don't know her only as a Rector. We are expecting a lot of change.

It was clear that the restructuring and change created a positive momentum and effectively filtered into the student affairs portfolio.

### *Student Affairs Portfolio*

Most outcomes were visible within the student affairs portfolio. Outcomes within student affairs included once again, increased visibility [21], a shift in focus from support to development and support [22], improved function of the SDS division [23], increased programming [24], and increased professionalization of the division [25].

### *Increased Visibility*

Similar to the main office of the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support and the position of head of the division, there was an increase in visibility of the SDS units to the larger campus community. Students said the branding was the first time they heard about the office of Student Development and Support and for the first time, had an understanding of the purpose of the SDS office. One student comment that highlighted increased visibility within the SDS portfolio was:

Our HOD explained the concepts and change of Student Development and Support. The new branding is an exciting concept. The students know now that there is a department that deals with students. Before, we didn't know. Professor Tshiwula is more visible.

### *Shift in Focus*

As previously explained, there was a major shift in the focus of the student affairs portfolio from merely providing support to students, to intentionally facilitating and prioritizing the development of students at UWC [22]. This shift began with name changes within the division and was evident as individual units realigned their goals and practices during strategic planning. The shift in focus was also influenced by institutional and external trends.

### *Improved Function of the SDS Portfolio*

The strongest and most evident outcome of the changes and restructuring within student affairs at UWC was the improved function of the entire SDS portfolio [23]. Since the hiring of the new Vice Rector there was a major increase in communication, collaboration, efficiency, and programs for students within the division. A common

saying amongst SDS staff was, “There has been a break down of silos.” The Rector even commented on changes he had seen as a result of the change. O’Connell simply and powerfully stated, “There’s a discourse there that wasn’t there before.”

Other comments that represented improved function of the SDS portfolio were, “Within the sector, there used to be silos. Now, there is much more cohesion and synergy. This has a positive impact on students. This strengthened our unit and had a positive impact,” “We need to manage student affairs without dissecting the portfolio. We need to manage the whole student. We deal with diverse students, and this must be understood in a South African context,” “There is more involvement from HODs in the entire SDS division,” “SDS units are more efficient. I now know what other units are doing, where we overlap in services, and how we can collaborate,” “There is a better sense of belonging for our unit. We are included in the division more than before,” and “There has been an opening of dialogue and communication within the division and across sectors. There is clarity in what we do. Value is central to what we do. There is strength and collaboration with others in the sector.” The Consultant also recognized the change within the division throughout the change process. Harper stated, “Looking in from the outside, I saw a change in spirit in the sector; staff had a sense of shared purpose and direction and an energetic champion of the student development cause in [Tshiwula].”

One SDS staff member indicated it was too early to see concrete changes within the division; she indicated that there will be concrete changes if Tshiwula is given “financial and moral support” from administration. Her comments were as follows:

The only change that has happened is the new Vice Rector. Things haven't changed yet. Student services are still working in silos. There are no formal links of departments; everything is done informally. [Tshiwula] said the relationships need to change, structurally and functionally. The change needs to be driven by [Tshiwula]. There hasn't been any resistance.

This Head of Department was the only SDS staff member who reported that the SDS units were still working in silos.

### *Increase in Programs*

There was a large increase in programming since the organizational change and restructuring of student affairs began. Students initiated and institutionalized a tutoring and mentoring program within the residences, and implemented the First Annual Academic Awards for first-year students in order to "increase motivation for students to succeed." Also in the residences, students began to plan the first new student orientation for first-year students in the residences. Each of these programs was connected to the new Vice Rector and the visible increased support to the Heads of Department. It appeared that HODs had increased support (financial and emotional) to help students be able to design and implement programs for themselves and their peers. Although most programs were more visible in Residential and Catering Services, Sports Administration and the Institute for Counseling also showed an increase in programming. One Administrator also recognized an increase in programming. He reported, "There are now after hours' functions for students. This is indicative that something positive is happening. It's important to the success of an institution to be aware of their role and importance."

### *Increase in Professionalization*

The new Vice Rector and Consultant both played major roles in professionalizing the Student Development and Support division. The Consultant began the process by dispersing foundational documents on the student affairs profession, the practice of student services, and student development theory. The new Vice Rector emphasized the professionalization of the sector by not only her innate academic abilities and status as an academician as well as practitioner, but her emphasis on building the research capacity within the division and within individual units. Tshiwula also sought out and supported opportunities, such as leadership institutes and conferences, for herself and the HODs.

### *Students*

Outcomes for students included an increase in student voice across campus [26], an increase in leadership training [27], and an overall increase in student development and support [28].

### *Increased Voice*

Students indicated that they had more ability to design and proposed programs, and the administration listened to their ideas more. Students said, “Before management used to dictate to students what they needed or want. Now, we can come up with a program that can help” and “In the residences I do see a change. They’re trying to move to the next level. They’re willing to listen and will work on your proposal [for a program] with you.” Students feel that they have more of a voice since the restructuring of the division.

### *Increase in Leadership Training*

Increased student leadership training was listed as a key responsibility in the strategic plan for Student Development and Support. The year that I conducted this study was the first time UWC had leadership training for the newly elected House Committee members in the residences. The Director of Residential and Catering Services reported that he created the training after the strategic planning of the division. He also helped the five students who started the tutoring program within the residences get accepted to a student leadership training in the Eastern Cape. Evidence of increased leadership training was clear.

### *Increased and Improved Development and Support for Students*

There was evidence for the overall increase and improved development for students embedded in quotes throughout the text of my findings chapters. Students increasingly felt they had a place for support; student affairs was no longer strictly an administrative post, but a place for support. Shifts in the institutional focus on student development appeared to help make others more aware of the purpose of student development. The Learning Indaba and branding of the unit helped spread the importance of student development and integrate it into the function of the university. Heads of Department reported that they had reevaluated how student development was integrated into their units and made changes. Some of the outcomes were visible, but it was still very soon to fully understand the impact of the change. One comment implied there will be more change to come: "People are more aware of the student experience. A mind-shift will take a little more time."

## Conclusion

Each stakeholder group played a role in the process of organizational change at UWC. The Rector, Vice Rector, and Consultant had the strongest relationships with the variables identified in the restructuring process. Students had the weakest relationship between variables. Finally, although many participants in my study reported it was too early to identify outcomes of the change, each stakeholder group demonstrated a role in the 11 outcomes of my study. The following chapter is the discussion of my findings and implications of this study.

## CHAPTER 7: IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The main reason I chose to conduct my dissertation on student affairs in South African higher education was that few people had studied it before. I was invited three years ago to the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to co-teach a master's degree program module on student affairs administration in higher education. Students who attended our course were from four different African countries; the majority of students were from South Africa. I taught the course with two other women who had been researchers and practitioners in student affairs for over 25 years; one was from the United States and the other was from South Africa.

My colleague from the U. S. and I were responsible for teaching the foundation of student affairs in higher education, and the concept and practice of student affairs as a profession. Our South African colleague added to the curriculum on the foundation of student affairs and placed all information in a South African context. Little evidence was found in our attempts to provide written documentation and empirical data on the student experience and student affairs in South African higher education. My South African colleague was one of the first Deans of Students in South Africa; she continually stated that there was a rich history of student affairs in South Africa, but no one had written it up. I wanted to add to the written documentation and empirical evidence on student affairs in South African higher education.

I chose to focus on restructuring student affairs in higher education due to the current state of massive change within the entire system of South African higher education. I was curious about whether or not institutions involved students in the process of change and if institutions made changes that were in the best interest of students. The



purpose of higher education is to educate students and I strongly believe that those who work at institutions of higher education are there to serve students. My study gave me an opportunity to explore student affairs and organizational change in South Africa.

I used UWC as a case study because it appeared to be committed to developing student affairs administrators, as evident by the master's program; it was the home to the Center for the Study of Higher Education (formerly Educational Policy Unit), which produced the largest body of research on South African higher education; and it was in the process of restructuring its student affairs division. My study was timely in that I collected data during the strategic planning within the division of student affairs and I stayed on campus long enough to see some initial results from the change. The impetus for the change appeared to be fresh in people's minds so I felt I was able to get accurate perceptions of forces that motivated the restructuring of the student affairs division. I was also able to explore the process of change as it unfolded and once again, experience initial outcomes of the change.

In this chapter I discuss the findings of my study, as well as the implications of the findings for UWC and student affairs in South Africa. I organize the discussion around my research questions and then highlight additional findings that are relevant to UWC, student affairs, and organizational change in higher education. I divided the chapter into three main sections: Research Questions and Answers, Implications and Recommendations for Student Affairs, and Recommendations for the Future Research.

### Research Questions and Answers

I designed my research questions to explore stakeholders' perceptions of students and student affairs at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and organizational

change at UWC; more specifically, the role university stakeholders played in change, how the structure and delivery of services changed as a result of restructuring, and the intended and unintended outcomes of change. In this section I separate the discussion of students and student affairs from organizational change; it is, however, important to understand that these two elements are closely connected. I conducted this study to understand students and student affairs in order to determine whether or not the restructuring of student affairs was in the best interest of students. Conversely, the organizational change must be interpreted within the context it occurred, in this case, student affairs. Although I present student affairs and organizational change in separate sections, they must be viewed as one entity.

The questions that guided this study were: (1) How do university stakeholders view students and student affairs at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)? (2) What role(s) do university stakeholders play in organizational change within student affairs at UWC? (3) How have the structure and delivery of student affairs changed from before to after the recent restructuring of student affairs at UWC? and (4) What are the intended and unintended consequences of the restructuring of student affairs at UWC?

### *Students and Student Affairs at UWC*

I designed Research Question 1 to explore how university stakeholders viewed students and student affairs at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). In Chapter 4 I presented the emerging themes to understand the context of student affairs at UWC. Many of the emerging themes from the context of student affairs characterized both students and student affairs; there was not a clear distinction between what factors described the student experience and specific implications for student affairs. For this

discussion I identified factors that specifically related to student affairs in order to present a clear picture of the *practice* of student affairs at UWC. In other words, I want to make clear what items were ones that student affairs needed to address, not only items that characterized the student experience. I divided this section into *Students at UWC* and *Student Affairs at UWC* to make the distinction between the two areas.

### *Students at UWC*

UWC students were from diverse backgrounds and felt a sense of inclusion on campus. It was clear that many students chose to attend UWC due to the university's involvement in the liberation movement of South Africa and students' perceptions of UWC as accessible to all South Africans who had the intellectual capacity to attend a postsecondary institution. UWC students were typically bright and dedicated to their education; many lived on limited financial resources. Although UWC is open to students who may not be able to attend other institutions, the university does care about the capacity students have to learn. In search of quality students and equal access, O'Connell wrote, "We have to inculcate the truth, and that it matters. We have to match the progress being made by India, by China. Do not patronize students; challenge them. Students who don't want to study must be put out of universities otherwise we are sending the signal that it is okay to be ignorant" (O'Connell, 2005, p. 11). Students were welcome to attend UWC if they had the intellectual capacity and the desire to learn.

A major concern for students was the segregation and racial dynamics on campus. Although students seemed to be drawn to UWC for the diverse population, there was a tendency for students to socialize with members of their same racial group. Students in the residences also voiced concerns about xenophobia and how international

students, particularly from other African countries, were treated. I did not see evidence of any group on campus working to integrate students and break down divisions between student groups.

I view segregation as a characteristic of students rather than student affairs because it is directly related to students' personal identity, capability of understanding those different than them, and comfort in talking about issues on race as well as change their behavior (Tatum, 1997). Student affairs is responsible for developing the whole student (American Council on Education, 1937; American College Personnel Association, 1994; Brown, 1972; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 1987, 2004); students' ethnic identity is part of holistic development. Student affairs should provide opportunities for students to learn about the benefits of diversity on campus, challenge students to develop their own ethnic identity, and intentionally provide opportunities for integration of groups on campus.

#### *Student Affairs at UWC*

The majority of findings on individuals' perceptions of students and student affairs at UWC related specifically to student affairs. Student affairs plays a major role in the student experience on campus; student retention, persistence, and satisfaction; and student learning (American Council on Education, 1937; American College Personnel Association, 1994; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002; King & Baxter Magolda, 1999; Ludeman, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Student affairs is the overall organizational structure that is responsible for the services designed to support students' basic needs, such as housing, facilities, and health, but also the out of class learning and holistic development of students (Mueller, 2002). Student services are the actual

programs and events, within the division of student affairs, designed to foster the holistic development of students.

*The Division of Student Affairs.* The division of student affairs at UWC was firmly grounded in and dedication to the mission of UWC, committed to students, focused on student development as well as student support, worked with limited resources, and valued training and professional development of staff. In essence, the division of student affairs had the core of a strong, successful student affairs division (Hamrick, et al., 2002). Although the division of student affairs is strong at UWC and does good work, the one thing that limits its capacity is limited resources.

The main setback in the division of student affairs at UWC is limited staff, more specifically, trained staff. Student affairs frequently works well with reduced budgets if it has good, qualified people to assist with the everyday function of the division. The heads of each student affairs unit (HODs) had the knowledge and capacity to work well in their units; they were limited in what they were able to do by time and lack of adequate assistance. For example, one HOD stated:

The biggest problem is the provision of resources...the new Vice Rector has been appointed an assistant, but it also needs to work downwards; we need assistants too. People say we need to share [resources], but how do we share what we don't have?

This interview participant had one part-time student staff member to help run her entire department.

A second example was the students in the residences at UWC who organized programs to assist new students' transition into the university, as well as their academic

success. These undergraduate students took on tasks that are typically done through paid graduate student assistantships in the United States. It was clear that UWC had passionate students, dedicated to helpful other students and willing to assist with the function of student affairs on campus; the division of student affairs simply needed to create a system to train individuals and properly institutionalize the programs and services on campus.

In his reflection on student access and success in South African higher education, O'Connell (2005) wrote, "South Africa's human resources profile comprises of a very small skilled and intellectual grouping with a large base" (p. 10). Miller (in South Africa-Norway Tertiary Education Development Programme, 2005) adds her reflection on staff roles in student success in South African universities when she wrote, "...staff may not be sufficiently prepared to serve in advisory roles for students" (p. 14). It is clear that university administrators are aware of the limited number of prepared staff; the question, then, is "What actions will result from these reflections?"

*Student Services.* Student comments on dissatisfaction with residences, limited social activities, transportation, and poor administrative services related directly to student services at UWC. When staff and administrators described the student experience at UWC, it was not clear whether or not they identified many of the student challenges as the responsibility of student services. For example, all stakeholder groups talked about limited social activities and poor transportation as challenges for students on campus. However, throughout my time at UWC, including the strategic planning meeting for the division of student affairs, few people talked about using student services to address those challenges for students.

It is important that the division of student affairs understands the need to create student services to address the challenges students face on campus. Even if specific challenges may not fall directly under individual student affairs units, the division as a whole should come together to create joint strategies to meet student needs. In the end, the student experience is a concern for the entire division student affairs.

Student affairs must also collaborate with other campus units (Mandew, 2003). Although administrative services (e.g., registration and student accounts) did not fall under the division of student affairs, the poor administrative services were listed as a major challenge for students and therefore related to student affairs and services. Students did not and, probably more accurately, could not distinguish the responsibilities of different university divisions; the administrative services were all under the division of the Registrar on campus, which is not in the division of student affairs. Nonetheless, it is important for the division of student affairs to recognize the challenges students encounter with administrative services, make sure the Registrar office is aware of and responds to these challenges, and continue to monitor, to some degree, progress made on supporting student needs. No matter whether or not challenges for students fall within the direct venue of the division of student affairs, as a challenge for students, they are relevant to the division.

Another point of discussion that relates to student services is my uncertainty with whether or not staff members understood their role in student retention and graduation rates. Administrators indicated that the office of the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support played a role in the retention of students, and a few staff members stated that the changes within the division of student affairs were partially





initiated by administrators' increased concern with student retention. Few staff members talked about how the work they do and the services they provide directly affect student retention. There was a major focus on the development of students, but I was not sure to what extent the purpose and function of the division included student retention and success (however defined).

Finally, I want to highlight that personal growth of students, especially leadership development, was visible among students. Students mentioned leadership development and personal growth as part of their experience at UWC. A key objective in the *Planning Process for the Office of Student Development and Support* (Harper, 2003) at UWC was leadership development of students. Although a large number of students did not indicate that formal leadership training was part of their experience at UWC, a few students did specifically state they did not view themselves as leaders before they were given opportunities to get involved on campus at UWC. It is important that the staff and administrators at UWC realize that leadership development occurred on campus; they need to understand which students are being reached and determine the best means to foster leadership development of students.

#### *Differences by Stakeholder Group*

I interviewed students, staff, administrators, and an outside consultant as key stakeholder groups in order to determine whether or not there were differences in experiences and perceptions of the student experience between stakeholder groups. The only stakeholder group that had views different from all other groups was the formal student leaders who were in the Student Representative Council (SRC). The SRC members had different perceptions of the student experience at UWC in regards to

segregation on campus and the entertainment students prefer on campus. These differing perspectives should be a concern for UWC; the SRC is responsible for representing the general student body and has a tremendous amount of power in the form of finances, access to meetings and events, and decision making. The extent to which the SRC represented the student body was not clear.

Although almost everyone I interviewed listed the diversity on campus as a positive characteristic of UWC, many people discussed concerns about the segregation on campus. None of the SRC members I interviewed mentioned the segregation of students as a concern for UWC. To add, a student in the Formal Student Leader group in my interview sample, who was not in the SRC, stated that his organization attempted to conduct programs to integrate students and address the segregation at UWC. This same leader was concerned about the current SRC's lack of action to break down barriers and increase interaction between groups.

The most obvious difference between groups was the perception of desired social activities for students on campus. There was a major concern, particularly from students and administrators, about the lack of social activities for students at UWC. The location of UWC, problems with transportation, and limited finances for students and student services added to the importance of the social activities available on campus. The common (maybe even only) source of social activity funded by the SRC was bashes, or large parties. The executive members of the SRC threw bashes throughout the school year and the House Committees (an extension of the SRC) threw bashes at the beginning of each academic term in each residence hall. As far as entertainment and social activities for students, the SRC spent the vast majority of its budget on bashes; 45% of the 2004

SRC expenses went towards “Non-Academic Functions” (Student Representative Council, 2004).

The SRC members clearly stated that students want bashes, while many of the students I interviewed clearly stated that bashes did not cater to the student body and bashes were not the form of entertainment students wanted on campus. Only one non-SRC student I interviewed stated that he enjoyed attending the bashes; this student also stated that bashes do not meet all students’ needs.

### *Summary and Implications for UWC*

I want to make clear that I believe that the student affairs division at UWC is solid, well grounded, and as a group, very good at student affairs work. Oftentimes when the higher education community conducts research, it is easy to identify the challenges and problems at a university and offer vague recommendations for improvements. My research experience has taught me that students oftentimes look forward to talking about their experiences in college; many times I have heard comments such as, “No one has ever asked me about my experience,” and students tend to use the interviews as a forum to list what is wrong with their university. My intent in this discussion is to highlight areas that may need to be addressed at UWC, and at the very least, deserve some thought and attention.

One implication for student affairs at UWC is to explore how the entire division highlights the positive characteristics regarding the student experience and services provided to students. Student affairs units are involved in the entire course of education at the university, from recruitment to graduation and career services. UWC should explore how university divisions are using the positive characteristics to compliment their work,

whether or not the university enhances and fosters continued development of the positive characteristics, and how university divisions develop positive characteristics and programs. One question for student services is how they formally and properly institutionalize the good informal programs that are already present on campus. If student affairs invests time in fostering certain programs, the return on their investment would be high.

Another implication for student affairs at UWC is how members of the division address student challenges outside of the division. Student affairs practitioners sometimes need to serve as students' voice and advocate for students. At UWC, the SRC is viewed as the students' voice and advocate for each student (Cele et al., 2005; Luescher, 2005). I would argue that advocacy for students is also the responsibility of student affairs staff. There is a balance between what and how much staff members should do for students, but the student affairs staff should identify the extent to which they should be involved with students and be intentional in helping students develop while being supported.

Finally, there appears to be an issue of accountability. In an institution that has few resources, it is important that all university units are functioning to the optimal level and are making the best use of funds. It would be useful for UWC to look into the purpose of the SRC, as well as the SRC's spending and use of resources (mainly, transportation). The SRC is located within the division of the Vice Rector for Student Development and Support. I believe strongly that the student affairs division needs to be more involved with the development of SRC members and oversight of its daily functions.

It is important to recognize that the SRC is a training ground for student leaders and politics. Lubisi (2004) found that political corruption typically takes place in the form of

lack of financial control, where irregular and unauthorized expenditures occur. UWC needs to have more accountability of funds and should make sure students in leadership positions gain experience with being held accountable to the constituency they serve. When I was in South Africa during my study, there was a national public scandal where 30 Members of Parliament were investigated for misuse of public funds. UWC, as a training ground for future political leaders, needs to play a larger role in preparing students for public leadership positions.

### Organizational Change at UWC

My final three research questions explored organizational change in higher education. In the first section I discuss stakeholders' roles in organizational change within student affairs. I then present key points of discussion on changes within student affairs over time and then move into the intended and unintended outcomes of the change.

#### *Stakeholders' Roles in Restructuring Student Affairs*

The purpose of Research Question 2 was to explore the roles university stakeholders played in organizational change within student affairs at UWC. In my findings sections I specified the roles each stakeholder played throughout the process of change. The purpose of this section is to highlight key areas to further explore. The main points of discussion on stakeholders' roles in restructuring student affairs was the importance of involving key stakeholders, significance of the individual person within leadership positions, and the role students played in restructuring student affairs.

#### *Importance of Individual Leaders*

The importance of having the right individual in key positions was the most significant finding in my study. It was very clear that the individual person within a leadership position determined the process and impact of change within his or her unit or division. The main factors that determined how effective certain individual roles were in the restructuring were the person's knowledge and understanding of student affairs and leadership style.

The Rector played a strong role in the overall restructuring of student affairs within the context of the university. The Rector's knowledge of and dedication to the holistic development of students, as well as his effective leadership style, played a substantial role in change within the university and the student affairs division. The outside consultant also played a major role in restructuring the division of student affairs within the context of the university; she was also instrumental in facilitating the change that occurred within the student affairs division and the individual student affairs units. The consultant would not have been effective without her thorough knowledge of the foundation of student affairs as a profession and experience in higher education.

The new Vice Rector for Student Development and Support was a strong leader whose leadership style contributed to the amount of valuable change that occurred within the division; she also helped maintain the support from the university previously established by the Rector. Many of the comments on the change that took place involved the Vice Rector as the key person in creating effective change. Most of the comments about the Vice Rector described her leadership style.

Finally, the leadership style of the Heads of Department was a significant factor in the amount of change that occurred within the individual student affairs units. For

example, most of the students I interviewed were connected to a student affairs unit in some way, even if only as a residential student on campus. Some students stated that the HODs within certain units discussed the changes within the division and the realignment of each unit to focus on student development. Students within these units had a clear understanding of the changes that occurred on campus and the role they could play in helping to foster the mission of student affairs within the university.

#### *Involvement of Key Stakeholders*

The restructuring and change within the entire division of student affairs would not have been successful without the involvement of the student affairs staff. Staff played a large role in the process of change within the division. It was not clear whether the involvement of staff was mandated by the new Vice Rector or if the involvement was self initiated by individual staff members. Nonetheless, staff members (mainly Heads of Department) helped redefined and restructure the division of student affairs through strategic planning workshops and within their respective units. Each HOD participated in the conversation during the strategic planning meeting and offered recommendations on how to restructure the division. Each HOD also had to present documents that showed how his or her respective unit was designed to support the overall goals and objectives of the division. It was clear that there was actual change within the individual units, which was a main benefit of staff involvement in the restructuring.

#### *Role of Students in Change*

Exploring the role of students in restructuring student affairs was a major component of this study. It appeared that the SRC was the only student group that played a significant role in change at UWC. What was not clear is whether or not the power of

the SRC was perceived power or actual power. SRC members and documents listed SRC involvement in important meetings and selection committees. Also, the SRC members stated that they played a key role in selecting the new Vice Rector. However, I simply did not see the SRC having any actual power; not one person stated that the views and input of the SRC were taken into consideration before actual selection of the new Vice Rector or other decisions made at the university.

Cebekhulu (2004) found that student leadership in some South African universities have been uncertain of their roles and expectations, and have been “paralyzed” by the organizational shifts taking place in tertiary institutions. As higher education institutions redesign, so too may the roles of institutional governance and leadership positions. Cele et al. (2005) reported that changes in institutional governance have lead to an increased need for students to have sound administrative skills and increased professionalization in task performance. The level of administrative skills and professionalization of task performance within student leadership at UWC is not clear.

#### *Changes within Student Affairs*

Research Question 3 asked how the structure and delivery of student services changed from before to after the restructuring of student affairs at UWC. Although there were many changes in the structure and delivery of services throughout the restructuring process at UWC, the most important outcome of the change was that it improved the overall function of the division. The other three points of discussion I focus on in this section include the shift in purpose of the student affairs division, the importance of alignment within the division, and the increased value of professional development of staff.



### *Improved Overall Function*

The purpose of organizational change is to improve something that already exists (Jackson, 2005). It was evident that the division of student affairs was improved throughout the change process. Although I explored the change and presented the findings as individual sections and as individual variables within the process of change, the overall goal was to improve the function of the entire division. It appeared that the change was a success; the magnitude of the change will be explained in smaller elements.

### *Shift of Purpose*

The shift in focus within the division from student affairs as an administrative function to student affairs as a key element in student development illustrated that student affairs at UWC had shifted in line with student affairs divisions in many other countries involved in the International Association for Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) (Ludeman, 2005). The IASAS is made up of representatives from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, China, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. After the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education, members of IASAS realized the importance of creating a shared understanding of student affairs as a profession within what they described as a global community of student affairs (Ludeman, 2001). A key element of *The Role of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education: A Practical Manual for Developing, Implementing, and Assessing Student Affairs Programmes and Services* (Ludeman, 2005) was that student affairs could no longer be seen as strictly administrative or simply in existence to support students; IASAS emphasized that student affairs should focus on the

holistic development of students. The division of student affairs at UWC had shifted along with the global community of student affairs.

### *Alignment of Division*

Strategic planning played a major role in the process of restructuring and realigning the student affairs division to focus more on student development. The outside consultant played the key role in facilitating alignment within the division and the Vice Rector made sure individual units made realignment a priority. The new Vice Rector was also realigning programs she oversaw in the division office and the overall focus of the division.

Every Head of Department (HOD) was involved in realigning the division. As a division, they created a shared understating of the mission, goals, and strategic plan. A clear realignment of the division helped individual units discover what other units were doing on campus. Many HODs stated that during the strategic plan it was the first time they truly understood what each department did and where there was overlap of programs and services offered.

### *Professional Development of Staff*

The visible increase in valuing professional development of staff illustrated the professionalization of student affairs at UWC. The effort to build the research capacity within individual units and the overall division on campus was connected to professional development. When I was at UWC, I heard people talk about the division between academic and student affairs on campus. This division is typical at many institutions (Hamrick et al, 2002). One way to validate student affairs' presence on campus is through professionalizing the division and conducting research to illustrate how student affairs

adds value to the institution (Schuh, 2000). It is important that professional development does not only include the Heads of Department, but office assistants and student assistants as well. Professional development may often be time consuming; however, the return on investment should make it beneficial.

### *Intended and Unintended Outcomes*

The final research question was, “What are the intended and unintended consequences of the restructuring of student affairs at UWC?” Although most of the people I interviewed stated it was too early to identify specific outcomes from the change in student affairs, there were clearly specific consequences to the changes that occurred within the division of student affairs. For example, there was improvement in leadership within the division, increased visibility of the division of student affairs across the university, and increased research capacity and programming within the division. There was also improved clarity, communication, and efficiency within the student affairs division. Outcomes for students included increased voice in sharing student needs and concerns, as well as in the programs students needed on campus. Finally, there was an increase in student leadership training on campus.

### *Summary and Implications for UWC*

I am skeptical that UWC would have the same success in restructuring the division of student affairs without the same individuals involved in this change. An individual’s leadership style, as well as his or her knowledge about and dedication to student development and student affairs as a profession, were significant factors in the restructure at UWC. These key individuals helped to align the division, professionalize

the sector, shift the focus of the division, and improve the overall function of the division. It appeared that most of the change began with key individuals.

It is important that decision-makers at UWC understand the role the SRC plays on campus, whether or not the SRC truly represents the student-body, and how the SRC is held accountable for its use of resources. The SRC has a significant amount of power at UWC and it is important they use their power appropriately. University staff members should keep in mind that the SRC is made up of students who are not exempt from student development.

The division of student affairs at UWC should also consider a program of systematic professional development for all personnel within the division of student services. It was evident that students serve as a useful resource in student affairs and services; they should be included in this training program as well. Finally, student affairs should explore its role with academic affairs, create a shared understanding of student needs, and build a collaborative strategy to address student needs.

#### Additional Findings

There were interesting and important issues that emerged from my study that need to be further explored. Although these issues were not addressed in my research questions, these topics did emerge as critical components of the student affairs division or organizational change and deserve further attention. The additional areas included shifts in student leadership and affirmative action in higher education.

#### *Shifts in Student Leadership*

There is clearly the need to explore shifts in student leadership and the representation of students at UWC. It was evident that there had been a recent shift in

student leadership. Participants in my study talked about apathy in involvement of student government on campus as well as a shift in attitudes of the Student Representative Council (SRC). Many people I interviewed stated that the SRC used to be a major and important force on campus, but moved towards personal advancement from being a member in the SRC, rather than serving students. Many of the non-formal student leaders criticized leaders of the SRC who brought their political agendas into their leadership positions. The extent to which the SRC truly served students at UWC was not clear.

### *Affirmative Action at UWC*

Another area I would like to highlight is the notion of affirmative action at UWC and possible outcomes of policies. How the new Vice Rector is perceived on campus may impact her success and tenure in her position. Later in this section are quotes which demonstrate some people's view that the new Vice Rector for Student Development and Support was an affirmative action hire. While I was at UWC, there was a lot of conversation and fear about affirmative action policies and how these policies will impact UWC. UWC is a historically Coloured institution and while the demographics among students have completely reversed in the past 10 years, the demographics among staff have not yet significantly changed. During the time of my study, Black Africans made up the majority of the student population.

The new Vice Rector was the first Black African to serve as an executive administrator at UWC. To add, she is also the first women Vice Rector in the division of student affairs. These demographics seem to affect people's perceptions. Some comments during my interviews were, "She's seen as a mother, an African mother," "[Tshiwula] is

a mother image, but do we want a mother for a leader? How do they [the campus community] regard her?”, and:

[The new Vice Rector] is a female, which is the result of affirmative action...

[Tshiwula] is a mother figure, not just an academic; she knows and understands us. It's a student-friendly office. I think that's the major change. Now it's conducive to every student.

I highlight these findings because they may impact the Vice Rector in her position. Oftentimes, people from underrepresented groups who are in administrative positions feel an increased pressure to perform. One comment from a student affairs staff member made me question whether or not the new Vice Rector indeed had more pressure to perform. The staff comment was:

The new Vice Rector is getting a lot of pressure put on her to perform.

Management is putting pressure on her, but not giving her support. She needs help... The continual pressure to perform will result in resistance at some point.

There's frustration, but there is also optimism.

It is unclear whether or not this comment has any connection to the Vice Rector's race or gender. It is, however, important that the university realizes that she may have unique challenges due to her status as a Black African woman.

#### Implications for Higher Education

Critics of case study research may question what the higher education community can learn from a study of a single institution of higher education. My answer is that there are similarities across institutions regardless of institutional type, size, mission, and so on. Although findings from one study may not be generalizable to the higher education

community at large, there are findings in this study that add to the understanding of students and student affairs as well as organizational change in higher education.

To add, members the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) and the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development have more recently emphasized the importance of using single institutions to contribute to a global understanding of higher education. IASAS recognized the need for institutions to share professional practices and experiences and the importance of creating an international manual of student affairs that identified initiatives that 1) enhance the environment and process of student learning and 2) increase student retention and graduation rates (Ludeman, 2001). The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2002) stated that while issues in higher education need to be explored in the context of individual countries and circumstances, there is value in sharing knowledge and experiences on the same issues in order to increase our understanding and add depth to a topic. Institutions must look to one another for frame of reference for work at their respective institution and explore practices that may be effective in their unique contexts.

One implication for higher education is the importance of shifting student affairs from an administrative function to a unit that focuses on the holistic development of students, grounded in the philosophical foundation of the profession of student affairs and placing students at the center of all work. IASAS created *The Role of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education: A Practical Manual for Developing, Implementing, and Assessing Student Affairs Programmes and Services* (Ludeman, 2001) to develop a shared understanding for student affairs as a profession, but also to assist developing countries to create effective student affairs divisions in their institutions. IASAS stated

that creating student affairs divisions focused on the development of students will help institutions “meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (Ludeman, 2001, p. 9).

Second, divisions of student affairs must verify and solidify their place within institutions of higher education by grounding their work in the mission of the institution and professionalizing the student affairs staff and services. It is important that the institution understands the key role student affairs plays in the recruitment, retention, and persistence of students and that the division of student affairs is seen as indispensable to the university. Once a student affairs division has security in its position within the institution, student affairs staff have more time to create and implement effective programs and serve students.

Third, it is important that universities do not sacrifice the quality of education or expectations of students and staff due to limited resources and financial challenges. The University of the Western Cape was viewed as “world class” higher education even though it had limited resources. As an institution that supported historically underrepresented students and students from varying financial backgrounds, UWC did not lower expectations and maintained a high quality institution.

Finally, with regard to restructuring student affairs in higher education, institutions must be very selective in hiring the correct individuals to play key roles in organizational change. Hiring people with strong collaborative leadership skills, and thorough knowledge and experience in student affairs was crucial to implementing effective change. In addition, institutions should include the entire division in the process of change. Student affairs divisions often work with minimal budgets and the amount of work involved in change cannot be completed with too few people. To add, the student



affairs staff are those who implement most of the programs and services. The involvement of staff in organizational change typically leads to buy-in and a shared understanding of the goals and objectives of the division; both elements are crucial in creating effective, sustainable change.

### Recommendations for Further Research

There is a lack of empirical data on the student experience and student affairs in South African higher education. Researchers have conducted studies that have charted institutional and national demographic shifts (Bunting, 1999; Cooper & Subotzky, 2001) but the topics of student engagement, student satisfaction, and student retention are underresearched (Cairncross, 2000; Cloete et al, 2002; Koen, n.d.; Morta, 1999;). It is important to conduct solid research to gain an understating of students and explore trends over time, beyond merely tracking demographics. Without a clear understanding of the student experience, university decision-makers may be speculating on programs and services they should be providing.

Specific to South African higher education, it would be beneficial to further explore potential shifts in and role of Student Representative Councils (SRCs). The SRCs have incredible power in their institutions, especially at the University of the Western Cape, and it is important to understand how they use that power, whether or not they truly represent the general student body, how they represent and serve the general student body, how universities develop leadership within the SRCs, and to whom SRCs are held accountable to as far as money spent and services provided. The SRCs played an important and historical role in South African higher education; if there have been

negative shifts within student leadership it is important to address these shifts before new norms are created.

### Conclusion

In the division of student affairs at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), the new Vice Rector for Student Development and Support wrote that student affairs should have:

A student-centered approach, enhanced by a strong student support and development thrust to help build educated, critical and well-skilled citizens. This could be achieved by structuring the campus environment and related activities in such a way to optimize student participation in student governance, voluntary associations and organizations, to enrich the campus culture, elevate the discourse about issues of rights and responsibilities, hold students accountable for their behavior, nurture the emergence of student leadership, mentor 'at risk' students in meeting their highest challenges, and construct opportunities that enable students to develop the resilience and self-knowledge to deal with life's challenges beyond the campus boundaries. Without such participatory experiences students will graduate with a worthless qualification ill-equipped to meet the national transformation challenges associated with a well-rounded university education.

(Tshiwula, n. d., p. 2)

The restructuring of student affairs at UWC and outcomes of the change within the division truly reflected Tshiwula's argument for a student-centered approach. Change within student affairs was also conducted in line to improve the student experience at UWC. Although the amount of programs and services offered was effected by limited

resources at the university, through professional development of student affairs staff and properly institutionalizing student-initiated programs, the division of student affairs may continue to improve.

Although students did not play a major role in the actual process of change in student affairs at UWC, the important factor was that they did play a role in that the people within the university initiated change to positively impact students. The new Vice Rector sent students into the residences to collect information on what students needed before she initiated programmatic changes within her division. I was looking to see if key stakeholders involved in change on campus conducted change to intentionally improve the student experience on campus; it was clear that they did.

This case study offers new evidence and recommendations for the University of the Western Cape on positive characteristics of the university, challenges students face, reasons students and staff chose to be part of the university, and what it was like to be a student at UWC. Although the findings are relevant to this specific institution, there were emerging themes that are also relevant at other institutions of higher education. The global community of student affairs called for institutions to share their research and best practices in order to create a shared understanding of student affairs. My study contributes to this shared understanding of student affairs as a division and best practice in restructuring student affairs.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects Approval

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

July 29, 2004

TO: Kristen A. RENN  
428 Erickson

RE: **IRB# 04-522** CATEGORY: EXPEDITED 2-6, 2-7

**APPROVAL DATE: July 29, 2004**

**EXPIRATION DATE July 29, 2005**

TITLE: **RESTRUCTURING STUDENT SERVICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:  
UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF STUDENTS IN ORGANIZATIONAL  
CHANGE**

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete and I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the **UCRIHS approved this project.**

**RENEWALS:** UCRIHS approval is valid until the expiration date listed above. Projects continuing beyond this date must be renewed with the renewal form. A maximum of four such expedited renewals are possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit a 5-year application for a complete review.

**REVISIONS:** UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please include a revision form with the renewal. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request with an attached revision cover sheet to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB# and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

**PROBLEMS/CHANGES:** Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, notify UCRIHS promptly: 1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or 2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at (517) 355-2180 or via email: [UCRIHS@msu.edu](mailto:UCRIHS@msu.edu). Please note that all UCRIHS forms are located on the web: <http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu>

Sincerely,



**Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D.**  
**UCRIHS Chair**



OFFICE OF  
**RESEARCH  
ETHICS AND  
STANDARDS**

**University Committee on  
Research Involving  
Human Subjects**

Michigan State University  
202 Olds Hall  
East Lansing, MI  
48824

517/355-2180  
FAX: 517/432-4503

[www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs](http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs)  
E-Mail: [ucrihs@msu.edu](mailto:ucrihs@msu.edu)

**APPENDIX B**

**UWC Research Project Registration and Ethics Clearance Application Form**



## UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa Telegraph: UNIBELL  
Tel.: (27.21) 959-2948, 959-2949 Fax: (27.21) 959-3170

*The Dean's Office:*  
**DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**

4 August 2004

**To Whom It May Concern**

I hereby certify that the Senate Research Committee with the Human Subjects Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape has approved the methodology and the ethics of the following research project by Ms Christina Lunceford registration number 03/7/1.

*"Restructuring Student Services in Higher Education: Understanding the Role of Students in Organizational Change"*

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renfrew Christie".

Prof Renfrew Christie  
Research Administrator  
University of the Western Cape



## APPENDIX C

**UWC Research Clearance: Office of the Registrar**



**University of the Western Cape**  
**Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland**

---

**Office of the Deputy Registrar**  
**Kantoor van die Adjunk Registrateur**

**Ms C Lunceford**  
**Centre for the Study of Higher Education**  
**UWC**

13 August 2004

Dear Miss Lunceford,

**PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR DISSERTATION**

I refer to your letter dated 4 August 2004 and I have pleasure in informing you that your request for access to staff, students, records and property of the University in order to collect data for your Ph D dissertation has been approved.

Kindly note that the information gathered may only be used for the completion of your dissertation and may not be used for commercial or other purposes. The University is entitled to a copy of your Ph D dissertation.

I wish you well with your studies.

Yours truly,

**O N GELDERBLOEM**  
**DEPUTY REGISTRAR**

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Protocol: Students

## Interview Protocol: Students

1. What is your major/program of study and year at UWC?
2. Where did you attend high school/secondary school?
3. Where do you currently live (on-campus housing, off-campus housing, city)?
4. Why did you choose to attend the University of the Western Cape?  
Probes:
  - purpose for attending higher education
  - purpose for choosing UWC as institution of higher education
5. Describe the positive characteristics of UWC. What do you like about UWC?
6. Describe some of the challenges you face as a student at UWC.
7. What and who has helped to overcome the challenges you face as a student at UWC? Please explain.
8. Is there anything that UWC can provide to help you succeed as a student that is not already offered? Please explain.
9. Are you aware that UWC recently reorganized all of the units that provide student services?  
If yes:
  - a) What prompted the change? Why do you think there were changes?
  - b) Did you have a role in the change process? Please explain.
  - c) Who played key roles in this change and what role did they play?
  - d) What role did students play in this change? Please explain.
  - e) What, if anything, has changed from before to after the change took place? Please explain.
  - f) What were the intended and unintended outcomes of this change? Please explain  
If no:
  - a) Have you noticed any changes to the student supports at UWC in the past 5 years? Please explain.
  - b) What prompted the change? Why do you think there were changes?
10. Please take 5 minutes to draw your perception of the student experience at UWC. What is it like to be a student at UWC? How would you describe the student experience to an outside person? Please describe your drawing.
11. Do you have anything you would like to add?

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Protocol: Non-Students

## Interview Protocol: Non-Students

1. What is your position at the University of the Western Cape?
2. How long have you worked at UWC?
3. Have you had any other positions prior to your current position? If so, please specify.
4. Where are you from? Where did you attend high school/secondary school?
5. Why do you choose to work the University of the Western Cape?  
Probes:
  - purpose for working in higher education
  - purpose for choosing your specific position
  - purpose for choosing UWC as institution of higher education
6. What type of training and background have you had that has helped prepare you to work in your current position? Please explain.
7. Describe the positive characteristics of UWC. What do you like about UWC?  
Probe:
  - positive characteristics that help student retention, persistence, and overall satisfaction
8. What are the challenges that students face at UWC? Please explain.
9. What and who do you think help students to overcome the challenges they face as a student at UWC? Please explain.
10. Is there anything that UWC can provide to help student succeed that is not already offered? Please explain.

11. Are you aware that UWC recently reorganized all of the units that provide student services?

If yes: a) What prompted the change? Why do you think there were changes?

b) Did you have a role in the change process? Please explain.

c) Who played key roles in this change and what role did they play?

d) What role did students play in this change? Please explain.

e) Please describe the process of this change (What steps were taken? How long did it take, How were decisions made?).

f) What, if anything, has changed from before to after the change took place? Please explain.

g) What were the intended and unintended outcomes of this change? Please explain.

If no: a) Have you noticed any changes to the student supports at UWC in the past 5 years? Please explain.

b) What prompted the change? Why do you think there were changes?

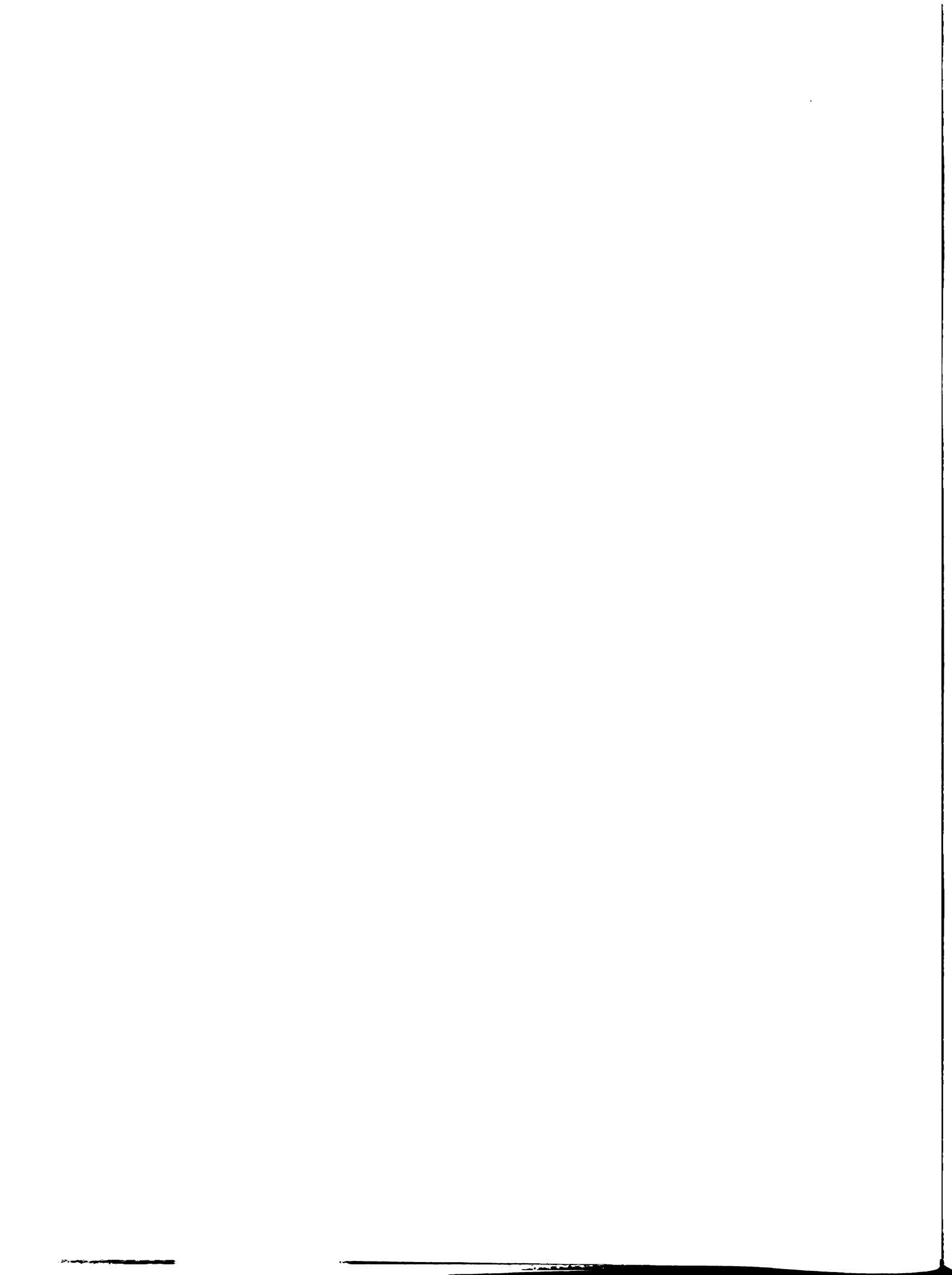
12. Please take 5 minutes to draw your perception of the student experience at UWC. What is it like to be a student at UWC? Please describe your drawing.

13. Do you have anything you would like to add?

## APPENDIX F

### Interview Protocol: Outside Consultant





## Interview Protocol: Outside Consultant

1. What was/is your role with the change and restructuring in the Student Affairs division at UWC?
2. What change has taken place?
3. What prompted the change? Why do you think there were changes?
4. Who played key roles in this change and what role did they play?
5. What role did students play in this change?  
Probes:
  - Has the role of students in institutional change shifted over the past 10 years.
  - Are students involved in the change process?
  - Which students are involved and how are they involved?
6. Please describe the process of this change (What steps were taken? How long did it take? How were decisions made?).
7. What are the intended and unintended outcomes of the change/restructuring in Student affairs at UWC? Please explain.
8. How do you think the leadership and administration at UWC view students and student affairs at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)?
9. Describe the positive characteristics of UWC (more specifically as they relate to student retention, persistence, and overall satisfaction).
10. Please describe some of the challenges that students face at UWC?
11. Do you think that other members of the university (students, faculty/lecturers, administrators, and staff) would describe the student experience differently than you? Please explain.
12. Do you have anything you would like to add?

## APPENDIX G

### Invitation to Participate in Research

## Invitation to Participate in Study

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to ask for your participation in a study that explores your perceptions of the student experience, student support services, and the recent reorganization of student services at the University of the Western Cape. The current changes and restructuring in South African higher education present the opportunity to make effective, sustainable change in single institutions as well as colleges and universities across the country. The purpose of this study is to explore the impetus, process, and outcomes of change and the role that various members of the campus play in the change. I also hope to gain understanding of what it is like to be a student here at UWC.

Your participation will consist of one 60- to 75-minute interview. The interview will take place in August or October 2004 at a time that best fits your schedule. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign an informed letter of consent.

This study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Additionally, you may choose to not answer any question. I will protect your privacy to the maximum extent allowable by law. If I have your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and I will also take notes. I will label the recorded interviews using a numerical coding system and I will report any data using a pseudonym (that you will choose). Your name and any other identifiable information will be omitted.

I am a doctoral student in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education at Michigan State University. Last year, I also had the opportunity to work with the Policy Analysis, Leadership, and Management (PALM) program at UWC in Module K: Student Affairs Administration. Your participation is truly valuable to this study.

If you are interested in participating in an interview, I can be reached at XXX XXX XXXX or [luncefor@msu.edu](mailto:luncefor@msu.edu). Please let me know some times that you are available for an interview.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you!

Christina Lunceford  
Doctoral Candidate in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48825  
USA

## APPENDIX H

### Informed Consent Form

### Informed Consent Form

**Project Title:** *Restructuring Student Services in Higher Education: Understanding the Role of Students in Organizational Change*

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore your perceptions of the student experience, student support and services, and the recent reorganization of student services at the University of the Western Cape.

**Estimate of Participant's Time:** One 60-75 minute interview

**Privacy:** This study is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Additionally, you may choose to not answer any question. I will protect your privacy to the maximum extent allowable by law. If I have your permission (as indicated on page 2 of this consent form) the interview will be audio-recorded and I will also take notes. The data collected and your identity will be kept confidential. I will label the recorded interviews using a numerical coding system. I will report any data utilizing a pseudonym (that you will choose). Your name, institution, and/or any other identifiable information will be omitted. I will keep all information in a locked cabinet. Christina Lunceford (doctoral candidate) and Dr. Kristen Renn (supervisor) will be the only persons who will have access to the interviews.

#### Contact Persons for Participants

Dr. Kristen A. Renn  
428 Erickson Hall  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
(517) 353-5979 or [renn@msu.edu](mailto:renn@msu.edu)

Christina Lunceford  
C103 E. Holden Hall  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48825  
(517) 353-4315 or [luncefor@msu.edu](mailto:luncefor@msu.edu)

From July 8, 2004 to October 7, 2004 Christina Lunceford will be at UWC and can be contacted at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag x17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa, +27 21 959 2580, [luncefor@msu.edu](mailto:luncefor@msu.edu).

For questions about the participants' rights as human subjects of research please contact Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Chair, Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at (517) 355-2180 or [ucrihs@msu.edu](mailto:ucrihs@msu.edu).

Based on the information provided above, you agree to participate in the project "Restructuring Student Services in Higher Education: Understanding the Role of Students in Organizational Change" conducted by Christina Lunceford and supervised by Dr. Kristen A. Renn. Participation in this study involves one interview. Please note that the researcher (Christina Lunceford) may contact you at a later time if there is a need to clarify any responses.

Please indicate your informed consent to participate in this study by completing Page 2 of this document.

*Please indicate:*

Audio-record agreement:    yes \_\_\_        no \_\_\_

Printed Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

I agree to participate \_\_\_\_\_  
  Signature   Date

**Please note that your signature indicates that you freely agree to be part of the study.**

## APPENDIX I

### Student Contact Sheet



Student Contact Sheet

**Title of Project:** Restructuring Student Affairs in Higher Education: Understanding the Role of Students in Organizational Change

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Year in school \_\_\_\_\_

Major/Academic Program of Study \_\_\_\_\_

High school/Secondary school \_\_\_\_\_

Racial identity \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX J**

**Staff Contact Sheet**

Non-Student Contact Sheet

**Title of Project:** Restructuring Student Affairs in Higher Education: Understanding the Role of Students in Organizational Change

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Position \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a college degree? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If "yes": Major/Academic Program of Study \_\_\_\_\_

Degree granting university \_\_\_\_\_

Which Province are you from? \_\_\_\_\_

Racial identity \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX K**

**Revised Consent Form**

## Revised Informed Consent Form for Permission to Use Real Names

**Project Title:** *Restructuring Student Affairs in Higher Education: Understanding the Role of Students in Organizational Change*

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore your perceptions of the student experience, student support and services, and the recent reorganization of student services at the University of the Western Cape.

**Update to Study:** In writing up results from the data collected in this study, there has been one unanticipated issue that needs to be addressed. I have promised to use pseudonyms for interview participants in order to help maintain confidentiality. There were, however, three participants who have written public documents that are compared and contrasted to interview comments. In each case, the written documents support comments stated in the interviews. I want to demonstrate how participants' actions are in line with what he or she says, and that ideas and theories are not simply espoused.

You are one of the three interview participants whose real name I would like to use in this study. Under no circumstance will I use your name in any demeaning manner. You have the right to refuse to sign this revised consent form and I will retain your pseudonym in the written results. You also have the right to sign the revised consent form under agreement to first read written results before they are submitted for publication. Please indicate your preference:

Do you give permission to use your real name in this study?      Yes \_\_\_      No \_\_\_

Would you like to read the written results before results are published?      Yes \_\_\_      No \_\_\_

Printed Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_  
SignatureDate

Contact Persons for Participants

Dr. Kristen A. Renn 428 Erickson Hall Michigan State University East Lansing, MI 48824 (517) 353-5979 or <a href="mailto:renn@msu.edu">renn@msu.edu</a>	Christina Lunceford 3009 Forest Road #102 Lansing, MI 48910 (517) 749-4019 or <a href="mailto:luncefor@msu.edu">luncefor@msu.edu</a>
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For questions about the participants' rights as human subjects of research please contact Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Chair, Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824, (517) 355-2180 or [ucrihs@msu.edu](mailto:ucrihs@msu.edu).

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