MERGER REPORT

2007

MW Makgoba
Vice-Chancellor & Principal
VISION
To be the Premier University of African Scholarship.

MISSION
A truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past.

PRINCIPLES AND CORE VALUES
The University commits itself to the principles and values enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa and articulated in the preamble to the Higher Education Act of 1997 (as amended).

GOALS
The goals of the University are to: Promote access to learning that will expand educational and employment opportunities for the historically disadvantaged, and support social transformation and redress. Create and develop an enabling environment for all learners and scholars to pursue their studies in accordance with the principles of academic freedom. Advance knowledge and culture through globally competitive teaching, learning, scholarship and research, innovation and scientific investigation. Foster a capacity for independent critical thinking, free engagement in fundamental discovery and a reappraisal and extension of traditional views of the world amongst students and staff. Support and contribute, across the academic enterprise, to national and regional development, and the welfare and upliftment of the wider community. Provide holistic education which promotes an awareness of social responsibility and sound ethical practice in a diverse society. Promote and foster tolerance and respect for multilingualism, diverse cultures and social values. Promote excellence in teaching and learning through creative and innovative curriculum design and development, pedagogical strategies and assessment practices in accordance with sound quality assurance principles. Strengthen the institution through local and international collaboration, exchanges and partnerships with the private sector and higher education institutions in teaching, research and development enterprises. Conserve the physical environment, and foster a culture of responsible, ethical, sustainable use of natural resources. Increase opportunities for lifelong learning in response to the educational, social, political, scientific and economic challenges of our time. Equip graduates to serve as future leaders of the nation. Ensure effective governance through democratic representation, accountability, and transparency. Promote the social and personal well-being of staff and students, and foster the realisation of their full human potential.

The University views this vision and mission statement as a reflection of its core values and commitments. In carrying out its various activities, the University seeks to contribute to the building of a just South African society.
This document responds to a request from the Department of Education to highlight our particular institutional experience in terms of meeting the Minister’s stated goals for mergers. It examines the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s experience and achievements in relation to each of the objectives identified for our particular merger.

The report is organized in three parts: part 1 is an objective analysis from the Planning Office of the merger in relation to the “Minister’s Stated Objectives”; part 2 is an independent assessment of the experience and achievements from the perspective of members of the Executive and part 3 is from the perspective of the Deans and Deputy Deans. These three exercises were conducted independently of each other ie the Planning Office was not aware of what members of the Executive or the Deans were doing and vice versa.
As we enter our fourteenth year of democracy in South Africa, we can look back with pride on our achievements in working together to build a South African higher education system for the twenty-first century.

In 1994, the democratically elected South African Government inherited a legacy of almost 50 years of apartheid higher education policies and practices. A sound policy framework was needed in order to deal with an irrationaly structured higher education system.

In December 2002, the Ministry of Education released its proposals for transformation and re-structuring of the institutional landscape of the higher education system in South Africa. These proposals resulted in the consolidation of higher education institutions through mergers and incorporations. Four mergers took place at the beginning of 2004, a further four at the beginning of 2005, and one in 2006. The merger process reduced the number of institutions of higher learning from 35 universities and technikons to 23 institutions: 11 conventional universities, six comprehensive universities, five Universities of Technology and one Technikon. The merger process was aimed at correcting the historical realities. Combined with the new institutional funding framework, the national student aid system and the development of the national and institutional quality assurance systems it will provide better opportunities for all higher education institutions to satisfy the development goals of the White Paper 3 and the National Plan for Higher Education.

The role of the Ministry of Education in the implementation process lies in the provision of financial and technical support and guidance, and in monitoring the implementation process at the institutional level. Managing the implementation of mergers and incorporations is the responsibility of the affected institutions. The Ministry provides support and guidance wherever possible and on request from the institutions. The overall responsibility for driving the merger project rests with the institutional leadership, who must ensure that the process, complex as it is, does not unduly interfere with the normal academic enterprise of the new institution.

The report which follows highlights the successes achieved in the four years or so since the founding of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The report also notes some of the outstanding challenges facing the institution.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) was formally established on 1 January 2004 following the merger of the former University of Durban-Westville and the erstwhile University of Natal.

I wish to thank the Vice-Chancellor, Professor MW Makgoba and the Chairperson of Council, Dr V Maphai, for their leadership during these challenging years, and the many men and women of goodwill for their effective and diligent execution of their responsibilities.

Naledi Pandor, MP, Minister of Education
THE MINISTER’S STATED OBJECTIVES FOR MERGERS

1. Overcoming the apartheid divide between a historically white and historically black institution
2. Promoting staff equity
3. Ensuring the effective and efficient use of resources through reducing overlap and duplication in academic programmes
4. Consolidating existing programmes to enable a wider range of academic programmes to be offered in response to regional and national needs
5. Consolidating the deployment and use of academic personnel
6. Mitigating the effect of unnecessary competition

AN EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE ON INSTITUTIONAL MERGER ACHIEVEMENTS.

African Scholarship
1. Vision and Identity
2. Stable integration into a new institution
3. Established UKZN as a research-led University
4. Established the College Model at UKZN - a first in South Africa
5. Transformation achieved at UKZN
6. Creating an environment conducive to learning
7. Diversity achieved at UKZN
8. Governance and operations
9. Funding

THE DEANS’ PERSPECTIVE

Top Ten Achievements Since The Merger
Merger Achievements – Full Lists From Deans
"Knowledge makes you great."

The President of India, Dr Abdul Kalam, speaking at UKZN, 17 September 2004.

"... what Africa and its people have contributed to humanity is evident in virtually every part of the world."

Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr Pallo Jordan at the launch of the Centre for African Literary Studies, 7 September 2004.
In giving notice in terms of the Higher Education Act of his proposal to merge the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal into a single higher education institution, the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, stated the reasons for the merger as follows:

1. Overcoming the apartheid divide between a historically white and historically black institution.

2. Promoting staff equity.

3. Ensuring the effective and efficient use of resources through reducing overlap and duplication in academic programmes.

4. Consolidating existing programmes to enable a wider range of academic programmes to be offered in response to regional and national needs.

5. Consolidating the deployment and use of academic personnel.

6. Mitigating the effect of unnecessary competition.
MINISTER’S OBJECTIVE 1: Overcoming the apartheid divide — creating a unified, stable, financially sustainable and productive institution

The historical context surrounding the merger of the Universities of Durban-Westville and Natal was complex and volatile. In terms of organisational culture and ethos, the University of Natal was perceived as white, elitist and colonial, while its merger partner lobbied from the moral stance of historically disadvantaged champion of the masses. The merger presented challenges in the area of student governance and the threat posed by student disenchantment. The Higher Education system nationally demonstrated systemic problems such as leadership and governance failures, poor productivity, and financial instability that were viewed as potential risks in any merger.

If the apartheid divide was to be overcome, the primary task was to create a unified, stable, sustainable, productive institution with enabling governance structures and a new corporate identity.

The University’s initial successes in this regard are recorded in a Vice-Chancellor’s Report entitled “One Hundred Days” that covers the period immediately following the merger, 1 January to 9 April 2004, a copy of which was submitted to the Minister in 2004.

CORPORATE IDENTITY

One of the most public early indicators of our progress in shaping and defining the new University was the official launch on 27 February 2004 of the University’s corporate logo. The logo is a powerful visual symbol, described by Minister Asmal as “a logo of transformation”, a symbol that captures the essence of a truly South African university. It projects the University’s image and provides an identity around which both staff and students have united.

The awarding of UKZN degrees and qualifications has also united parents, students and employers regionally and nationally and removed the divide created by previous perceptions of institutional inequality.

The University’s vision to be “the Premier University of African Scholarship”, which was developed prior to the merger, has also proved to be a unifying factor. Discussion around the definition and form to be given to the concept of “African Scholarship”, its translation into curriculum design and research, and the emphasis placed on African scholarship in the University’s Strategic Plan, have served to give a particular stamp and identity to the new institution.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

In our experience, the structures adopted by the University represent a major achievement towards the creation of a single, unified institution free of past history.

In 2004, following a lengthy process of discussion and consultation, Senate and Council approved the adoption of a College Model as the preferred organisational structure for UKZN. This structure, a first in South Africa, has subsequently been translated into a legal framework when the founding Statute of the University of KwaZulu-Natal was gazetted in 2006.
"The merger created a new institution with even greater academic expertise and intellectual resources at its disposal, an institution greater than the sum of its parts ... ".

Dr TV Maphai, Chair of the Council of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
The essential structural features of the UKZN College Model are as follows:

- Four Colleges (consisting of clustered Faculties), each headed by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor; with an Academic Affairs Board as its chief governance structure;
- Within Colleges reside Faculties (two in each College, headed by a Dean);
- Faculties are constituted by Schools consisting of either a single discipline or a set of cognate disciplines.

The model is a response to the challenges of designing appropriate unitary academic structures that would:

i) underpin the vision, mission and goals of the University; ii) foster unity, and ensure the efficient and integrated management and administration of a large and complex academic operation; iii) ensure better co-ordination between operations and strategy; iv) exploit synergies across Faculties; v) provide the critical mass necessary to compete in the national and international arena.

Underpinning these structures are the following operational principles:

- Single University-wide Faculties and Schools, operating across delivery sites where appropriate.

In 2003, during the pre-merger phase, it was decided that in the merged university, academic governance structures should not be duplicated. In many respects, this decision represents a founding principle that serves to integrate fully not only the two previous institutions, but also the various centres and campuses of the new institution.

Devolution

- The main feature of the College Model is that it provides an appropriate structure to facilitate the devolution of core academic administrative functions. By clustering cognate Faculties into a smaller number of Colleges that can function as operational entities, it is possible to devolve administrative functions from the centre to smaller, more manageable, and more homogeneous functional units that are closer to the sites of delivery. In particular, the model provides more scope for strategic redirection of financial resources, and more flexibility in budgets, with the College Heads as the principal budget-holders. Within Colleges, management responsibility and accountability is further devolved to Faculties, and thence to Schools.

The decisions to distribute the academic portfolio across four College Heads rather than having a single Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, and to devolve central administrative functions to Colleges, are key to addressing the objectives set out in designing a new organisational structure, and are in line with contemporary practice in a number of leading international institutions. The College Model represents a radical departure from the academic governance structures in place in either of the previous institutions and, as such, has served to break down old barriers of entrenched practice and structural divides.

The academic structure is supported by a full range of administrative and service operations that fall within the portfolios of various Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Executive Directors within the Executive Management team. The conceptual framework for the sector was developed with a view to consolidating and optimising human, physical and financial resources in supporting the academic endeavour, staff and students of the new institution. In this sector too, the courage to change and merge rather than continue business as usual has contributed significantly to the achievement of real integration.
Four Colleges consisting of clustered Faculties were approved as follows:

**Colleges**

**AGRICULTURE, ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE**
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Science and Agriculture

**HEALTH SCIENCES**
- Faculty of Health Sciences
- Faculty of Medicine

**HUMANITIES**
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences

**LAW AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES**
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Management Studies

▲ Drama and Performance Studies
students in action.
STUDENT GOVERNANCE

Student governance too is a characteristic of UKZN’s organisational structure that we regard as a notable achievement. In terms of the Statute of the University, the University as a whole has a Central Students Representative Council (CSRC) which represents students on University-wide matters and in the formulation of University-wide student policy and procedures. In addition, each of the five campuses has its own Local Students Representative Council that represents students on matters relating to their specific campus. The constitution of the Students Representative Council (SRC) with its component parts is uniquely tailored to provide opportunities for student leadership, and to ensure that students spread across five diverse and geographically separate campuses have vehicles for representation at various levels, in matters that affect them both as individuals and as a body. The appointment of a dedicated Student Governance Officer has contributed to ensuring that the transition to the new institution and the implementation of the new governance model have been free of conflict. It is important to note that the University has had exceptional student leadership that contributed significantly to the success and stability of the merger.

STABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

Even before the effective merger date, it was recognised that appropriate management structures and lines of responsibility would need to be in place to ensure that there was no leadership vacuum and that an atmosphere of stability and unity prevailed on all campuses. Taking into account the needs of a very large, culturally diverse multi-campus institution, a new Interim Management structure was designed that gave due recognition to such issues as access, equity, and an enabling organisational culture that underpin the mission and vision of the University. Interim Executive Directors were appointed in these key areas. The Interim Council was constituted and operational prior to the merger and made appointments to the Interim Executive positions, including the Interim Vice-Chancellor, so that the transition to the new institution was realised without any disruption to the normal operations of the University. Although some of the Executive portfolios have since fallen away as planned, the permanent Executive Management team that followed on from the Interim Executive demonstrated a significant degree of continuity. The continuation of Professor Makgoba as the Vice-Chancellor in particular ensured stability. The transition from the Interim Council to the permanent Council was equally seamless, and under the chairmanship of Dr. Vincent Maphai, UKZN’s new Council has managed the reins as the University’s highest governing body with assurance.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

As with almost all other tertiary education institutions, the University of KwaZulu-Natal is at present – and, during the next few years, will continue to be – faced with severe resource constraints. These constraints will impose upon the University the burden of ensuring that scarce financial resources are utilised both efficiently and effectively. As well as meeting its recurrent operating expenditure requirements, the University must be able to provide for its infrastructural development and capital expenditure needs in the medium to longer-term, if it is to be a truly sustainable institution as intended by the Minister.

The 2006 budget was effectively the first truly “merged” budget for UKZN and was premised on the Council-approved “breakeven” principle. Unfortunately, the attainment of a breakeven operating result in 2006 was frustrated by a number of adverse factors, in consequence of which a revised budget deficit was presented to and adopted by Council in December 2006. Council subsequently directed that a comprehensive long-term financial plan be prepared in advance of its approval of a budget for 2007 and subsequent years.
We note with pride the significant progress that our Institution has made since the merger.

This directive has resulted in the development of a framework for the annual budgeting process with a view to demonstrating, on a three to five-year “rolling” basis, ongoing financial sustainability. The aim is to present a balanced statement of the University’s projected income and expenditure to Council annually or, preferably, an operating budget depicting a marginal surplus. Alternatively, where this may be impracticable in the short-term (as proved to be the case in 2006), the framework allows the University to budget for a “manageable deficit”, by which it is meant that a realistic plan indicating how the operating deficit is intended to be financed, and ultimately eliminated is presented to, and approved by the Council.

Linked to the budget framework is a Resource Allocation Model, created out of the need to implement a more objective method of allocating resources to the various budget holder portfolios within the University. The University regards this model as a significant move away from historic budgeting practices in the previous institutions, and a positive step in the direction of rational allocation of funds to the academic, support, strategic and contractual sectors.

In short, the merger has established a single statutory entity which, in financial terms, is stronger than the sum of its constituent parts. Despite major financial constraints on the newly-merged University, there has been a growth in assets, a relative strengthening of key financial ratios, and a progressive improvement in operating performance from 2004 to 2006 that reflects the growth, diversity and increasing viability of externally-funded activities.

**PRODUCTIVITY – RESEARCH OUTPUT**

One of the major achievements of the merger is the fact that the University of KwaZulu-Natal has managed to consolidate its position as one of South Africa’s leading research institutions. The vision of UKZN to be the Premier University of African Scholarship has acted as a framework within which to generate high level knowledge at the local level, and thus enter the global knowledge system on the basis of this local legitimacy. New approaches to developing strategic partnerships have emerged, substantial resources for the performance of research have come into the University through grants and contracts, and a set of research initiatives has been identified that act as the interface between the activities of the University and the needs of development. Examples are HIV/AIDS, economic development, water and waste management and sustainable rural livelihoods.

Most significant, however, from the perspective of productivity, is that the research output of the University, in terms of publications recognised for subsidy purposes, has increased by 80% over the short life of the institution to the point where we are the second-highest ranking institution in the country. The new university can legitimately claim to be a research-led institution, with a firmly entrenched culture of research.

The above points serve to illustrate the fact that the merger of the Universities of Durban-Westville and Natal has indeed succeeded in breaking down the apartheid divide through the creation of a unified, stable, financially sustainable and productive institution.
"The depth of the historical legacy of apartheid damage and distortion is evident in the simple fact that the majority of black graduates are in the social sciences and not in the engineering sciences and technology."

MINISTER’S OBJECTIVE 2: Promoting Staff Equity

The total staff complement of the new institution is 4,112 as at 25 October 2006. This total is made up of 1,512 academic staff and 2,600 support staff. Among academic staff, 48% are White, 31% Indian, 19% Black African and 2% Coloured. 57% of academic staff members are male. Among support staff, 42% are Black African, 35% Indian, 19% White and 4% Coloured. 57% of support staff members are female.

As these statistics indicate, one positive outcome of the merger is that in terms of academic staff equity the Black/White ratio stands at 52% Black vs. 48% White. While there is still room for improvement with respect to Black African academic staff, Faculty Equity Plans are in place, linked to appointment policies that are in accordance with the goal of reshaping the staff complement. In order to improve upon this ratio, the University has in place a sophisticated equity acceleration programme that has attracted considerable donor funding, which will assist in widening the programme’s reach and efficacy.

Furthermore the transformation agenda and recognition of diversity as a core value have been discernible in the appointment of the new academic leadership and in the restructuring of Senate to be representative and reflective of age, gender and demographics. Identifying young and upcoming scholars, engaging them in specific projects that advance the core business and translate African Scholarship philosophy into a reality, younger African academics getting into the practice of assuming leadership and responsibility through the College and Institutional structures has also been a major aspect of the transformation process.

MINISTER’S OBJECTIVE 3: Ensuring the effective and efficient use of resources through reducing overlap and duplication in academic programmes

From the perspective of academic programmes, the merger posed a particular challenge in that curricula differed not only across the two merging universities but across the two centres of the former University of Natal.

This issue was addressed in the first instance at the level of academic structures. In 2003, during the pre-merger phase, it was decided that in the merged university academic governance structures should not be duplicated: single University-wide Faculties and Schools were established, operating across delivery sites where appropriate. In many respects, this decision represents a founding principle that has served to integrate fully not only the two previous institutions, but also the academic programmes of the new institution.

The decision to have single University-wide Faculties and Schools meant that Schools needed to develop common curricula across all delivery sites in accordance with a Senate-approved policy document defining the term “common curriculum”. Schools were required to have a common curriculum in place for first-time entering students in 2005. Qualifications of both previous institutions are gradually being phased out in favour of the new common curriculum as pipeline students pass through the system.
Academic Staff

- White: 48%
- Indian: 31%
- Black African: 19%
- Coloured: 2%

Students

Of the 38,870 students registered at UKZN in 2006 about 27% were postgraduates.

- Agriculture, Engineering and Science: 19.1%
- Health Sciences: 13.8%
- Humanities: 34.5%
- Law and Management Studies: 32.8%
A particular achievement of the merger has been the development of the School Planning Decision-making Support System (SPDSS) – a planning tool based on the workload of Schools, which can be utilised to ensure the efficient and rational distribution of resources to academic programmes.

**MINISTER’S OBJECTIVE 4: Consolidating existing programmes to enable a wider range of academic programmes to be offered in response to regional and national needs**

There can be no question that the merger has accomplished the Minister’s objective of consolidating existing programmes to enable a wider range of academic programmes to be offered in response to regional and national needs. Programmes provided by the two previous institutions in such fields as Education, Law, the Humanities and the Sciences, have been restructured based on the best of what both institutions had to offer. This has served to improve both efficiency and quality in many areas. The development of a single Engineering programme from two previously competing programmes of varying standard has resulted in a more focused and rational allocation of resources. Through the consolidation of programmes in this way, it is self-evident that the merger has also accomplished the Minister’s sixth objective - mitigating the effect of unnecessary competition.

Where the two previous institutions provided training in complementary, rather than competing fields, as in the Health Sciences where the University of Natal offered Medicine and Nursing and the University of Durban-Westville had a strong Faculty of allied Health Sciences, merging presented an opportunity to create a College of Health Sciences that now offers a full suite of disciplines except for Dentistry. This can only strengthen the base from which the University responds to regional and national health training needs.

A major challenge in the consolidation process was to organise the University’s campuses in ways that would ensure full integration of academic programmes, and to create an infrastructure that is sustainable into the future. Meeting this challenge has involved the relocation of some Faculties from one campus to another in the Durban area, in order to consolidate their programmes physically as well as academically.

Early in 2003 a set of scenarios for the location of Faculties in the Durban area was developed. The Department of Education funded a process to produce preliminary cost estimates for the implementation of the preferred scenario (“Scenario 10”). The consultants recommended a variation of the preferred scenario (“Scenario 10A”) that locates Faculties in the Durban area as follows:
New student computer laboratories.

Fine Arts studio.

An enabling environment
This scenario also locates the corporate headquarters of the University, as well as centralised support functions, on the Westville Campus.

Since those early days there has been an ongoing logistical exercise of refurbishment, alteration of space and major building projects to accommodate the consolidated programmes in appropriate space on the appropriate campus. In addition to the grant of R150 million provided by the Department of Education for this purpose, the University has secured a loan of R 250 million from the Development Bank of South Africa. A major portion of this 75% has been invested on the Westville Campus to ensure infrastructural equity across all the campuses. A further two years of work are anticipated before the merger-related building projects and the ensuing moves are complete.

In the course of renovations and building operations so far, staff have moved in and out of temporary space, some more than once, and the levels of inconvenience many have endured cannot be adequately described. However, it is a tribute to the resilience and patience of many individuals, and a remarkable achievement, that the academic programme has continued to be offered without disruption, with the needs of students always in the foreground. Schools that have completed their moves, such as the School of Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics consolidated on the Westville Campus, are now happy to boast that they have world-class facilities and visitors have confirmed their claims. This can only serve to facilitate the provision of education that serves the needs of the region and the country.

**MINISTER’S OBJECTIVE 5: Consolidation of academic staff**

The National Working Group’s Report commented on the movement of staff between the Universities of Durban-Westville and Natal at the time, and the disruptive effects of this on both institutions, noting that a merger would have the positive spin-off of putting a stop to this practice.

The merger has gone beyond acting as a mechanism for halting a disruptive practice. As envisaged by the National Working Group, consolidation of academic staff has, we believe, made possible a more rational and efficient deployment of academic expertise in the region. A reduction in the number of academic staff has occurred during the years of the merger (from 2 192 in 2004 to 1 512 in 2007). Though some attrition may be attributed to the merger itself, and there are critical staff shortages in key strategic areas, this reduction may well demonstrate a more efficient utilisation and deployment of resources than previously. This is especially so as the University has developed a sophisticated tool (the SPDSS referred to earlier) that can be used to determine the appropriate staff complement in a School based on the School’s workload.

To this extent, the merger may be said to have achieved the Minister’s objective of effectively consolidating academic staff.
“Government, together with the private sector and the universities, have put in place a comprehensive plan that should help us build the necessary skills-base in all critical areas needed by our economy.”

CONCLUSION: Challenges

Despite these successes, Human Resources remain the largest outstanding challenge of the merger. There was industrial action in 2006 over salary increases, probably also reflecting some measure of “merger fatigue” and “residual merger resistance”. The process of populating the new structures in the support sector has proved cumbersome and contested; progress in such key areas as the harmonisation of salaries has been slow; academic salaries are uncompetitive; and the conditions of service agreed to early in the merger are having to be revisited for financial and other reasons.

Declining student enrolments are also a matter of concern. Though the merger has been achieved with commendably little student unrest, there has been a marked reduction in enrolments in programmes now based on the Westville Campus, particularly in Management Studies. Historic perceptions relating to the Westville Campus may well have contributed to this decline.

The University has also been exposed to significant media coverage around scandals that have called into question the quality of its degrees. This issue may be regarded as part of the residual legacy of the former institutions, and the University has taken uncompromising steps through the newly transformed Senate to harmonise and tighten degree rules, and to educate both staff and students on the seriousness of plagiarism through the introduction of new software and the development of a far-reaching policy that has an educational as well as a punitive aspect.

High profile failures in corporate governance involving the former Chief Finance Officer and false allegations against the Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Council have also rocked the institution, and have had to be carefully managed swiftly and transparently so as to ensure that the principles and procedures for sound corporate governance are well understood and grounded in the new institution.

Despite these difficulties, however, we remain confident that our problems are merely transitional, the inevitable consequence of a young institution still in flux. There can be no question that the merger has accomplished the objectives set by the Minister; and there is every expectation that the institution will transcend the transient label of “merged institution” and continue its upward trajectory towards achieving its vision to be the Premier University of African Scholarship. The abiding drive for our success has been the single-minded commitment and passion of staff and students to create a better institution out of the legacy institutions out of this “once in a lifetime opportunity” and ensure that the new institution is better and greater.

Ms Brenda Bell, Strategic Planner

MW Makgoba, Vice-Chancellor & Principal
4 September 2007
An SRC leader addresses a graduation ceremony, April 2007.
2. AN EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE ON INSTITUTIONAL MERGER ACHIEVEMENTS

African Scholarship

a) What do you believe are the 3 most important achievements of UKZN since the merger?

1. Vision and Identity
2. Stable integration into a new institution
3. Established UKZN as a research-led University
4. Established the College Model at UKZN - a first in South Africa
5. Transformation achieved at UKZN
6. Creating an environment conducive to learning
7. Diversity achieved at UKZN
8. Governance and operations
9. Funding
African Scholarship

The meaning of the phrase “African Scholarship” that underpins the vision of the new University of KwaZulu-Natal, does not simply reside in the combining of the two dictionary definitions of the words that constitute the phrase. Like all concepts, the meaning resides as much in the words as in the context of their application. How the words are used and their communicative purpose adds depth and a sense of perspective to the meanings conveyed both with respect to what is said and what is not said.

The context surrounding the formulation of the concept of “African Scholarship” was the occasion of a merger between two universities sharing many common universal academic values but each with a past deeply embedded in the racial separateness of South Africa’s apartheid system.

The most important formative decision made by the merging partners was that the “new” University should not emerge by default as a convenience of compromise but rather by design with an explicit intention to undo the past. But the past cannot simply be obliterated. In order to overcome the past and negate its legacy, it is necessary to affirm a future that celebrates all that the past denied. The concept of African Scholarship, and in particular the idea “of Africa”, not only provides a common ground of unity for the members of the merging universities but in so doing also captures the very essence of what we were denied – our “African-ness”.

It is fundamentally misguided to attempt to provide a fixed definition for the term “African” because to do so would imply not only that there is consensus about what the word means or should mean but also that the meaning should remain fixed despite the fact that the world and all that it means is constantly changing.

To be “African” is not to be separate from or outside the “world” but to play an integral and constitutive part without which the world and especially the world of scholarship, remains incomplete and impoverished. Scholarship does not designate a thing or product and is not to be confused with knowledge. Like other “ship” words such as leadership or sportsmanship, the term “scholarship” reflects a special quality or way of being in relation to knowledge. “Scholarship” encapsulates a process of engagement with knowledge, its production, application, and dissemination, and “African” distinguishes that process of engagement.

Professor Ronald Miller, Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Planning
6 October 2006

“My interest in the merger from the pre-merger days of the Charter Group discussions has always been to contribute to the transformation of the Higher Education system and sometimes we need to understand that transformation means moving aside and allowing others space on the main stage. It has been a singular honour for me to be allowed to participate in the creation and formation of our new University. I would like to thank my colleagues for their support and the University Council for allowing me the privilege to participate in the transformation of our two former separate institutions into a splendid new unified University serving the academic needs of our region, country, and continent.”

Professor Ronald Miller to the University Council
30 June 2006
a) What do you believe are the 3 most important achievements of UKZN since the merger?

1. Vision and Identity

- The awarding of a UKZN degree or qualification has brought much needed equity to parents, students and employers regionally and nationally.
- The establishment in less than three years of a clear identity for the new institution.
- Creating a new logo, new vision for a new identity.
- Commitment to our African roots which is becoming internationally recognised and is evidenced through increasing donor funding.
- Developed a 10 year strategic plan in line with the vision and mission of UKZN.

From divisional:

- Successful re-establishment of institutional identity - through appropriate branding, events, publications, community and media liaison.
- Successful communication and liaison with external audiences through schools’ liaison, alumni relations, events, conferences, government, community and business engagements.

2. Stable integration into a new institution

- Achieving real integration between the two previous Universities.
- Achieving a unitary merger through the single School, single Faculty and the College Model organisational process.
- Having the courage to change and actually merge rather than continuing with business as usual. It has allowed for a new identity to emerge.
- Consolidation of resources (human, physical, intellectual, financial) and creating opportunities for all staff to be productive and make a contribution; move away from whining and avoid mediocrity.
- 37 HR University-wide policies were harmonised.
- Establishment of a separate statutory (merged) entity which, in financial terms, is stronger than the sum of its constituent parts (i.e. the combined balance sheets of the two legacy institutions at 1 January 2004) and reflects growth in assets and a relative strengthening of key financial ratios. Despite major financial constraints on the newly-merged University, it has shown a progressive improvement in its consolidated net operating performance from 2004 to 2006. This reflects the growth, diversity and increasing viability of externally-funded activities.
- The execution of an unprecedented programme of academic and physical restructuring over three years, while keeping the institution running continuously throughout.
- The appointment of the entire leadership of the academic sector before the date of merger meant we did not have a leadership gap from day one.
“Another statistic of the success of our policies is the growing number of women graduates.”

From divisional:
- Matching & Placing and redeployment of staff.
- Contract Conversions/Harmonisation of the Conditions of Service.

3. Established UKZN as a research-led University

- The very significant rise in the profile of the new UKZN as a research-driven institution.
- Improving research output by 80% over three years and entrenching a research culture at UKZN.
- An improved research output.
- Development of competitive and forward-looking University-wide research policies.
- Increasing research output during a merger period.
- Prominent Research Profile – improved funding opportunities and University’s national and international rating.
- UKZN is rated within the top 1% of the world’s best universities—a remarkable achievement.
- Acquiring eight South African Research Chairs.
- Commendable growth in the value and an improvement in the quality of research endeavours. Growth in the level of specifically-funded activities, the major component of which is research-based, is evidenced by the increase in income from these sources as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>R’m</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>496  *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* as per audited consolidated financial statements and restated to exclude non-recurrent income, i.e. government merger-related grant.

From divisional:
- Increased research funding particularly for HIV/AIDS & TB.
- We have four of the National Research Chairs in one College. This is outstanding given the process is in the early stages and is disproportional to the number of universities competing for these.

4. Established the College Model at UKZN - a first in South Africa

- The development of the College Model and its highly successful implementation. This has set a benchmark for mergers elsewhere and it allowed new alliances to be formed and broke the divide of the past. It built a unitary system from the start.
- Entrenchment and consolidation of the College system through visionary leadership and proper governance.
"One of the critical challenges facing our continent is to ensure that we produce sufficient numbers of experts in the area of science and technology."

Address of President Thabo Mbeki, at the launch of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Cape Town, 10 September 2007.
Conceptualisation and implementation of the College Model.

Generated better and more functional structures for the core business of the University (Colleges & Schools, Research and T&L Units).

College Model.

The College system, though still work-in-progress, as a basis for a stable multi-campus institution.

From divisional:

- The development of a new structure that accords with the College model and which is more efficient and at lower cost than that which we inherited.
- The formulation of a policy and procedure manual to ensure consistency across all campuses.
- The introduction of several student administration practices and tools to improve efficiency of our role and those dependant on the Division.
- The formation of an academic administration forum so best practice can be shared and a common understanding of policy and procedure assured across the University.
- Formation and consolidation of College governance structures.

5. Transformation achieved at UKZN

- An unprecedented level of transformation.
- Transformed profile - in terms of staff and students, curriculum and teaching methods, outreach initiatives and leadership structure.
- Appointment of a new academic leadership.
- Restructured the composition of the new Senate to be representative and reflective of age, gender and demographics.

From divisional:

- Development, approval and implementation of all Employment Equity Plans for all Faculties and Divisions.
- Identifying young and upcoming scholars, engaging them in specific projects that advance the core business and translate African Scholarship philosophy into a reality, younger African academics getting into the practice of assuming leadership and responsibility through the College and Institutional structures.

6. Creating an environment conducive to learning

- Major infrastructural funding injection of R400m for consolidation and improving research and teaching facilities across the entire University, giving equity to all campuses.
- Significant strategic infrastructural upgrade - Faculty of Science & Agriculture, Residences.

From divisional:

- The division, by example and by cross-cutting engagements, has contributed to the harmonious relations
R130 million invested in new residences.

R90 million invested in new Biological and Conservation Sciences building.
that generally exist between students, student organisations and the University, and the generally positive and constructive nature of the working relationships between students and management (which are the envy of many other institutions).

- Positioning teaching and learning as a prominent topic on Senate agendas.
- Institution of the University Teaching and Learning Committee and the development of a suite of University policies relating to teaching and learning.
- Introduction of the Student Academic Performance Monitoring Procedures, within which academic exclusion is now a last resort.
- Creating a coherent and stable framework for alternative access at UKZN.
- The consolidation in the Durban axis to develop some of the best academic facilities on the continent without any disruption to the academic programme and with growth in the research output.
- Stabilisation and streamlining of academic procedures and delivery processes.
- Strengthened quality assurance mechanisms and processes.
- The division has played a major cross-cutting role in helping to create a more sensitive and student-centred institution (e.g. the change in approach to student academic performance).

7. Diversity achieved at UKZN

- Acceptance of diversity as a core UKZN value.
- Ensuring diversity is expressed at the Executive, Senate, Deanery, Heads of Schools in the new University.
- Commitment to diversity as evidenced by the incumbents of bodies such as the Council, Executive and Senate.
- Filling the leadership with the most diverse set of leaders in the national sector covering experience and youth as well as people from designated groups. This combination has brought fresh views and significant stability to a complex organisation.

8. Governance and operations

- Gazetting of the Institutional Statute.
- The emergence of a key role for Senate within University governance.
- Introducing more objective management and financial tools, such as the SPDSS and the new Resource Allocation Model.
- Space and opportunity to review our practices, traditions and begin to address constructively the position and role of HR & FINANCE. In our reflections we are cultivating good practices and addressing risk areas.
- Matching & Placing of staff.
Student engagement on critical issues
From divisions:

- The review and revision of the budgeting framework and the development (in conjunction with other key role players) of a credible resource allocation model and institutional financial plan consistent with the University’s strategic plan.
- The role that the Finance Division has played in developing, establishing and subsequently enforcing a suitable financial regulatory framework within the University, i.e. a major role in the preparation of a single, consolidated set of financial regulations for adoption by Council. These form the framework for the University financial policies and procedures.
- Development and harmonisation of a range of HR policies.
- Consolidation of the conditions of service.
- Implementation of the principles embedded in the King 2 report in the context of the University including implementation of the duties in terms of the ‘Whistle Blowers’ Act and development of a code of ethics for Council.
- Constituting the founding Council.
- Appointment of the Chancellor.
- Approval of the Statute of UKZN.
- Constituting the new Senate of UKZN.
- An admirable system of student governance has been put in place and well-supported.

9. Funding

- Raised R195 million from DoE for merger-related costs.
- R250 million DBSA loan for merger infrastructural consolidation.
- Raised > R450 million Project-specific grants.
- Wellcome Trust 15 million British pounds for the Africa Centre.
- Howard Hughes Medical Institute is awarding 30 million USD.
- The University’s government subsidy has been increased R75 million.
- Negotiated R110 million with DoE for SET for UKZN over 3 years.
- Impressive performance of the UKZN Foundation which, in turn, reflects well on the confidence that the University’s benefactors and other key stakeholders have in UKZN’s future. The Foundation assets have grown from approximately R40 million in 2003 to R101 million at 31 December 2006.
Student diversity at UKZN
b) What do you consider to be the 4 most important achievements of the division over which you have executive control?

- The new agreement with the DOH, which totally redefines our relationship.
- Establishing more than one cross-disciplinary research interest groups, e.g. Aging, mental health, neurology.
- Dealing with quality issues in both Faculties - something which is still in process, for instance the clinical evaluation process in the Faculty of Health Sciences, and the current revision of Post-graduate teaching at NRMSOM.
- Creating a College identity through strategies such as the development of a Strategic Plan, and the College newsletter.
- Consolidation of the Finance Division / Department into a single entity, notwithstanding the many difficulties in the process.
- Despite acknowledged deficiencies and occasional service failures, a record of generally sound internal controls, administrative efficiency and service delivery, which have enabled the University to meet its statutory reporting obligations and also, for the most part, the expectations of its stakeholders.
- Creation of a divisional structure allowing for harmonisation and equalisation of services on campuses.
- Proactive media relations leading to positive publicity despite vocal internal negativity.
- Development of HR Strategic Plan.
- 26 Excellence Awards - received from Unitech, Professional Management Review and Top 500 Companies.
- The division has operated cohesively as a single university-wide entity from day one of the merger.
- Two centres have achieved SADC centre of excellence status in important areas that underpin the vision of African Scholarship.
- Many staff have achieved both national and international recognition for their work during a phase when huge demands were made of them to consolidate the curriculum and manage the merger.
- Improved cohesion and proper co-ordination resulting in improved College publicity, visibility and image.
- Have developed functional units within HDSS & EDUCATION which allow spaces to make contribution to building a coherent College, including developing management, strategic niches and College plans. Changing perceptions within HUMANITIES and ARTS. Perceive HUMANITIES as central to the academy rather than be on the margin and be viewed as an "in case of need academic unit.... ." for failure, relaxation and purposelessness.
- Decisively implementing policies and practices that talk to transformation, equity and the African aspect of our national and institutional agendas. Though the two words are not visible in the University vocabulary, they are embedded in our day to day operations in the College when it comes to staff opportunities, mobility, development and employment. Developing internal College mechanisms to keep track of these practices. Senior academics take responsibility to mentor up and coming academics of all shades and disciplines.
- Engaged in a deliberate act to engage students (excellence vs mediocrity culture) through their own initiatives and regular interaction with College executive and participating. Student projects and activities rooted in their disciplines, practice experiences and linking the University with the schooling system in a mutually benefiting way, are strongly supported and reviewed through my office and the Deans.
First-rate teaching and research facilities
3. THE DEANS’ PERSPECTIVE

Top Ten Achievements Since The Merger

Merger Achievements – Full Lists From Deans
Some of the highly-rated researchers from the four Colleges

Above: Professor Anita Naicker.
Above right: Professor Michael Chapman.

Below: Professor Albert Modi.
Below right: Professor Dorrit Posel.
Top Ten Achievements Since The Merger

- The creation of a new University, with its unique and shared Africa-centred vision, mission and goals.
- Creation of a new functioning governance and administrative system through a College, Faculty and School system.
- The development of a University Strategic Plan developed through a legitimate, transparent process incorporating consultation with all stakeholders.
- Successful relocation of Faculties and Schools while continuing with normal University operations.
- Creation of new high quality infrastructure, such as laboratories and student residences.
- Consolidation and implementation of research policies and support procedures resulting in a substantial increase in research output over the past three years and the University achieving a very high national and international research profile.
- Integration of curricula with improving standards.
- An increasing focus on Teaching and Learning as evidenced through access, retention and success initiatives.
- Substantial progress in our Equity drive, both in terms of student demographics as well as in laying a meaningful foundation for rectifying the imbalances in the staff equity profile.
- Uncompromising stance against ‘intellectual corruption.’

Merger Achievements – Full Lists From Deans

- The amalgamation of four diverse Faculties on three different campuses into the single faculty of HDSS on two campuses.
- The successful creation of 13 new Schools (9 of which are multi-campaused) containing 72 separate Disciplines and 50 Centres.
- The dramatic increase in research productivity in the faculty of HDSS.
- The creation of an environment which permits the production of 24 accredited scholarly journals in HDSS, the largest number produced in any Faculty in the country.
- The creation of an environment where Equity and Excellence are placed as a prime consideration in the appointment of staff.
- The creation of a significant community-based outreach programme, especially in the professionally orientated disciplines in HDSS.
- The successful phasing out over three years of the pipeline Westville student cohort.
- The finalisation of the space relocation plan for the Howard College section of the faculty of HDSS.
- Creating an administrative structure to serve a Faculty containing 8 000 students and 600 full-time staff.
- The decision to consolidate German and Afrikaans in Howard College and phase out in Pietermaritzburg.
- As the primary Law Faculty in UKZN - greater contact and liaison with the Law Profession in KZN.
- One of the largest contact Law Faculties in the country.
- The merger has resulted in greater demographic representation.
- The merging of two distinct academic cultures.
Marketing and Communication Excellence
The pretext for revising curriculae to more accurately reflect the needs of KZN and the country as a whole.

The creation of a platform enabling the University to take the forefront in the field of African Scholarship.

Greater racial and cultural diversity.

More efficient economies of scale.

Multicampuses resulting in greater geographical variation and increased choice for students.

Cross campus teaching and administration resulting in greater unity and cohesion.

Rank 2nd in SA in terms of research productivity - achieved only upon merger, not by founding Universities.

The recognition of and reward for teaching as evidenced in the number of teaching-related policies as well as the Distinguished Teachers Award.

Student integration and support - student governance, student services and academic student support by means of mentorships, “Focus on First Year”, etc.

Strategic Plan “owned” by the University.

Integration of Schools.

Harmonisation of degrees.

Provision of additional housing for students.

Inter and intra Faculty collegiality.

2nd highest level of refereed publications in the country.

Successful completion (or near completion) of relocation activities.

Harmonisation of syllabi.

SRC has integrated successfully.

Successful in building a new identity.

Upgrading of Westville Campus.

Creation of the new University of KwaZulu-Natal with a common vision, mission and goals with a high level of buy-in.

Integration of curriculum with a high standard across campuses with common modules etc.

Research productivity has increased consistently despite merger instability.

Student-centered policies and procedures & academic monitoring support systems.

University Strategic Plan developed through legitimate, transparent process incorporating consultation with all stakeholders.

Effective and efficient Faculty management across campuses, schools etc.

Development of quality provision for Access across the new University.

Successful relocation of Schools and Faculties and provision of high quality infrastructure.

A new University with a new, strong and different institutional identity has become established.

We have galvanised the whole University behind a new vision, mission and strategic plan that recognises our unique South African history and context under the banner (of albeit multiple interpretations) of what it means to be part of a Premier University of African Scholarship.

Created, implemented and made functional an entirely new College model and structure within which academic and administrative governance operates according to a range of new policies related to all areas of our work – teaching/learning; research; community engagement.

We have successfully relocated whole Faculties and Schools including staff and students while continuing with normal University operations.

Learning how to function in a very large university with multiple campuses.
We have radically changed the demographics of our staff and student body and begun to appreciate (and maybe enjoy) the diversity of the new University, which we increasingly see as a resource that enriches us.

Increased our research productivity substantially.

Greater resources and improved infrastructure has been made available for a much larger number of students and staff (the merger of a historically disadvantaged university with an advantaged one that is leading to better equipped libraries, lan, labs and other resources compared to both ex-universities).

We are (one of) the largest contact universities in the country – size matters.

We have a large and increasing number and range of institutional linkages with other universities, government departments, non-government organisations, cities, etc with whom agreements have been signed.

Not withstanding some negative media and publicity, we enjoy a good reputation as one of the leading universities in the country.

UDW no longer exists.

Much intellectual corruption has been uncovered and is being fought against.

We have a clear understanding that academic employees have to spend their working time as follows: 45% in teaching, 40% in research and 15% in outreach and administration.

We have increased substantially the administrative workload of academic employees without reducing their academic workloads.

We have convinced the lecturers to record all teaching activities electronically through SMS … and keep paper records as before. The introduction of SMS for all those students who are not registered for a module, but may be registered some time after official deadlines during a semester.

Conclusion
The exercise has shown a clear convergence of highlights and achievements from the three perspectives. This convergence is what the University community should take pride in. One can say with confidence that our merger is a success beyond our own expectations and has confounded the prophets of doom.

MW Makgoba, Vice-Chancellor & Principal
7 September 2007