



POLICY BRIEF

July 2014

Support for building
the next generation of academics
in South Africa



Cape Higher Education Consortium





CONTENTS



1. Introduction	2
2. Policy propositions	3
2.1 Comprehensive funding packages	3
2.2 Supervision	4
2.3 Mentorship	5
2.4 Internal learning communities	5
2.5 Exposure to external networks	5
2.6 Creative institutional leadership	6
2.7 Further development of successful programmes	6
2.8 Focused funding of fewer initiatives	7
2.9 Management, coordination and communication	7
2.10 Building the institutional and research cultures	7
Appendix 1: Investment approaches of four US Foundations	10
Appendix 2: Approaches to equity and transformation in three universities	15
Appendix 3: National targets	19

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy brief flows out of lessons gleaned in a review of the initiatives in equity and transformation in three South African universities funded over a six year period by Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY).¹ It also draws on findings of a review conducted for the Ford Foundation in 2011² as well as engagements with representatives of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies. As this work has focused on initiatives that enhance research capacity development and postgraduate training in the humanities and social sciences, the findings may be particularly pertinent to these areas. Many of the lessons drawn from these reviews, however, are relevant to other fields. The importance of transforming the broader institutional culture – with particular emphasis on research transformation – has also been highlighted.

The main audiences of this document are government departments, research foundations, higher education institutions, and local and international donors. It is aimed at assisting these key role players to respond to the shared goal of building the next generation of South African scholars and researchers. As national and institutional targets are being set to increase postgraduate student enrolments, questions such as the following are being asked:

- What forms of support enhance the quality and levels of success of post-graduate students?
- How can the use of available funding be optimised so as to enhance opportunities for these students?
- How best can student support programmes be conceptualised, lead and managed?
- How can greater numbers of black students be attracted into postgraduate studies?
- How can graduate retention within the academy be enhanced?
- What makes for a supportive institutional culture?
- What should be distinctive about building a sustainable research culture in a South African university?

These and other questions point to the need for strategies that respond to the key challenge of increasing quality graduate output in ways that are equitable and responsive to the building of sustainable research capacities in South African universities.

1 CHEC (2014) *Review of Initiatives in Equity and Transformation in Three South African Universities*, commissioned by Carnegie Corporation of New York.

2 CHEC (2011) *Review Report of Ford Foundation's Programme – The Next Generation of Academics*.

The document provides a number of policy propositions drawn from the reviews and engagements mentioned above, while the appendices provide additional background information as follows:

1. Brief descriptions of the investment approaches of four United States (US) Foundations: CCNY, the Ford Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies.
2. Brief descriptions of the approaches used by the three universities included in the review for CCNY – the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand.
3. Selected data which indicates the scale of the challenge facing South African higher education institutions in terms of the goals set in the National Development Plan (NDP).

2. POLICY PROPOSITIONS

In considering how the findings from the reviews may be developed into policy propositions, two key questions were addressed:

- 'What features or elements of postgraduate training and research capacity development programmes enhance individual students' success and encourage them to consider future careers in academia?'; and
- 'How can the individual benefits of funding and other support provided be optimised in order to reach additional emerging researchers, to increase diversity and representivity in South African universities and to transform both the institutional and research cultures?'

While there are no quick fixes for meeting current challenges in higher education (i.e. producing the next generation of academics, ensuring equity and encouraging transformation), the importance of the following propositions should be noted:

2.1 Comprehensive funding packages

It is recommended that comprehensive funding packages that support the full costs of study (including the necessary time off for data collection, analysis and writing up theses) are provided in order to optimise training and development opportunities for individual students/emerging scholars. Given that highly successful postgraduate programmes include additional activities (see points made below), comprehensive funding packages allow students to attend these forums and to focus on their research projects.

The review conducted for the Ford Foundation found considerable variations in funding packages with some students receiving R60 000 while others received over

R200 000. It was recommended that the Ford Foundation consider including an agreement on minimum levels of financial support for masters and PhD students in their future contracts with institutions.

The review conducted for the Ford Foundation found that, often, multiple funding sources were used in supporting postgraduate students. The review report records an interviewee as saying that the shift from a 'thin' model of postgraduate support (i.e. the traditional model of supervisor and student working together) to a 'thick' one (i.e. different forms of support) requires an exponential increase in funding. He explained that new models of postgraduate training often involve the establishment of new structures with associated staff. It was not surprising, therefore, to find that many project leaders made use of funds from different sources including the National Research Foundation (NRF) and international donors.

In order to ensure comprehensive funding packages for increasing numbers of postgraduate students, it is suggested that there be:

- clearer alignment between the goals of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Department of Science and Technology (DST), where appropriate;
- sustained collaboration between individual universities and the National Research Foundation (NRF); and that
- partnerships between the universities and US Foundations (and other external donors) should ideally be based on a shared conceptualisation of equity and transformation and how various initiatives will contribute to this. In addition, opportunities for partners to share their understandings and experiences (as well as the data that they collect before, during and after the implementation of initiatives) will be important.

2.2 Supervision

While many aspects of the postgraduate training programmes reviewed for CCNY and the Ford Foundation were identified, these reviews and others³ suggest that supervision continues to be a critical central feature of the postgraduate student experience. The reviews suggest that traditional one-on-one supervision continues to dominate even in support programmes that have introduced many of those elements identified later in this document. For example, the work of Cloete and Mouton (op cit) points to the need for considerable supervisory support in the first year of study during which period the clear articulation of expected outcomes is critical.

3 Cloete, N and Mouton, J (2014) *The Doctorate in South Africa – Data, Discourse and Policy*.

Good support from supervisors provides for the identification of clear and viable research questions together with relevant literature and research methodologies. Thoughtful input at all stages of the project, particularly the initial and then the final stage, involving the synthesis of data collected and writing of the theses, was highlighted again and again in the reviews.

Ensuing quality supervision goes hand in hand with the retention of senior academic staff. The need to consider the incentivisation and acknowledgement of these academics has been highlighted in a number of reviews.

2.3 Mentorship

The benefits of supervision are enhanced by the use of mentors who usually deal with non-academic issues that impact on academic progress. A number of models of mentoring were identified, each with its own benefits. In some cases, more senior students such as postdocs were included as mentors while in others, past and current staff members identified by the students themselves were used.

Mentorship was reported to offer opportunities for easier social and academic integration. The acclimatisation of students in the academic milieu (e.g. university procedures) and the accumulation of cultural capital play as an important role in postgraduate programmes as in first-year undergraduate programmes albeit with different emphases. In both cases, mentorship enhances the quality of the experience for the student and, ultimately, the academic outcomes.

2.4 Internal learning communities

In addition to working with supervisors and mentors, many of the postgraduate training programmes reviewed offer a number of internal learning communities, often comprised of peers as well as other staff. These learning communities may be formal (e.g. retreats and workshops offered institutionally, seminar programmes within a department) or informal (e.g. interaction with peers in dedicated post-graduate spaces such as computer rooms).

Learning from a range of other researchers (both peers and academics) assists individual students to appreciate different approaches to research within scientific communities. They are better able to identify where their own interests and projects 'fit' within the broader landscape enabling them to develop perspective.

2.5 Exposure to external networks

The exposure of students and young academics to broader, external networks including funding for travel to national and international conferences has been

found to be extremely important. This exposure provides young researchers not only with opportunities to speak about their own research projects, but in developing an understanding of their broader field of study, of higher education institutions and the various careers available to them upon graduation.

While the five elements described featured in most of the postgraduate and research development programmes included in reviews undertaken, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' model as the elements need to be carefully tailored to specific contexts. Rather than advocating a uniform model, it is proposed that the following five points also be taken into consideration when institutions conceptualise these programmes.

2.6 Creative institutional leadership

Reviews conducted suggest that the development of initiatives to support postgraduate training and research development should rest on a clear articulation and sharing of wider institutional goals. In this way, creative leaders can provide for the identification of priorities, approaches and strategies relevant to the institutional contexts. For example, the decision to foreground 'the knowledge project' and encourage an Afropolitan approach to research in the second cycle of funding at UCT was seen by many as contextually bound and more responsive than the more traditional 'equity appointment approach'.

In other words, one of the key roles of creative leadership is to articulate a conception of how individual research development opportunities are related to changing research approaches (e.g. more interdisciplinary, focused on Africa, etc.) and begin to change the environment within which core activities take place.

2.7 Further development of successful programmes

Where possible, it is recommended that institutional leaders' initiatives consider building on existing institutional programmes that have already been 'bedded down' and/or tried and tested. All three of the universities involved in the review for CCNY had built on earlier initiatives – Equity Advancement Programme (LEAP) at UKZN, the Emerging Researcher Programme (ERP) at UCT and the research grants and 'sandwich programmes' at Wits.

Both CHEC's review for the Ford Foundation and the research conducted by Cloete and Mouton (2014) suggest that institutional leaders and external funders should focus their efforts on shared intellectual academic projects within productive departments. This aligns with the points made earlier about the value of internal learning communities. Coherent research programmes in niche areas/fields of study with research leaders follow the 'science model' encouraging the development of a

research culture within the department rather than expecting this to filter down from the top. The establishment of a strong research culture in a department will assist in building a pipeline of prospective postgraduates and enable the selection of postgraduate students.

2.8 Focused funding of fewer initiatives

The results of the reviews undertaken suggest that focused funding of a smaller number of projects or initiatives – especially if some of these are new – is likely to yield greater success than those cases where funding is spread over a range of initiatives. For example, two of the three universities included in the study for CCNY were not able to implement and sustain all the planned projects and initiatives with some being dropped before the end of the first cycle of funding. This point aligns with that made in 2.6 since the priorities identified by the institutional leaders will guide the selection of focus areas for initiatives.

2.9 Management, coordination and communication

The reviews undertaken suggest a number of propositions related to management and coordination and how elements here contribute to success.

It is suggested that there is a need for both the centralisation of some functions and the decentralisation of others. In addition to the achieving a balance here, there are other functions that need to be shared. While it is necessary that there be a central coordinating office with a stable dedicated staff team to assist in both shaping the projects/initiatives and monitoring their progress, so, too, is it necessary to have individual champions (both academics and administrators) to work within the projects/initiatives themselves. For this combined and complementary approach to work, the necessary structures and good communication channels need to be in place. Effective work relationships evolve over time as the roles of the various players become better understood.

The review conducted for CCNY illustrates that a very decentralised model requires a high degree of coordination and that this is made particularly difficult where there is a rapid turnover of staff. At one of the universities included in this review the range of role players during the first cycle of funding proved unsustainable. New developments in the second cycle of funding changed this with the entire set of programmes falling under one DVC. In addition, the restructuring of project management functions under an expanded Transformation Office with a dedicated Project Manager provided for increased centralisation and stability.

Changes in management and coordination roles between the first and second cycles of funding were also reported at another university. In line with the emphasis

on equity in the first cycle of funding, the project was managed by the Equity Manager in the HR Department. She reported to both the head of this department and one of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors. While the support provided by the DVC was reported to have been critical in ensuring buy-in from the deans and heads of department and stability, the lack of a 'uniform' policy for the funding provided meant that some beneficiaries received more support than others. In addition, where deans and/or heads of department had not been closely involved in the selection processes for the equity appointments, they were less likely to have understood the purpose of the funding provided and, therefore, have been less supportive of the appointees. These findings point to the need for good communication channels between all role players.

The role of the Research Office was expanded in the second cycle of funding beginning with the writing of the grant submission so as to address the issues of stigma and resentment. In the second cycle of funding, funds were transferred to recipients through the Research Office rather than through the faculties and deans as was done in the first cycle. During implementation, the Research Office was directly responsible for the work undertaken by the ERP, Programme for the Enhancement of Research Capacity (PERC), and the Signature Themes.

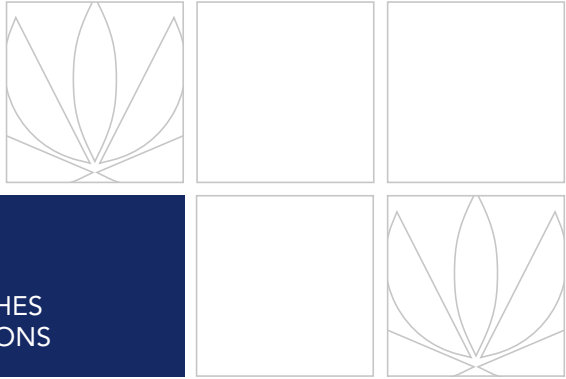
At the third university included in this review, the appointment of College Coordinators was reported to have worked well as these staff members worked closely with the LEAP appointees, their supervisors and/or mentors and reported directly to the central HR office.

2.10 Building the institutional and research cultures

Finally, while the reviews highlight that individual research development opportunities are located within the broader institutional culture, they also point to the usefulness of targeting different levels within the institution when conceptualising transformation strategies, (e.g. the level of departments). While some strategies may focus on the ways in which the broader institutional culture may be shaped and experienced (e.g. issues of class, race and gender), others may choose to focus on different approaches that might be taken in knowledge generation (e.g. interdisciplinary approaches, research for Africa, etc). These strategies should not be conceived of as mutually exclusive; however, the goals of each may need to be re-prioritised from time to time and the associated projects and activities funded from a range of sources.

As indicated in point 2.6, the approach to transformation and development chosen by individual institutional leaders and supported by funders should be conceptualised and shared both within the institution and beyond so as to make explicit the strategy to be used and its intended outcomes. While this document has given emphasis to

the point that there is no uniform or one-size-fits-all approach for all South African institutions, an explicit strategy shared institutionally and beyond will assist in the evaluation of the work undertaken and so enhance understandings of institutional change.



APPENDIX 1:

INVESTMENT APPROACHES OF FOUR US FOUNDATIONS

CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK (CCNY)

CCNY developed a strategy which aimed to support the transformation of higher education through enhancing the recruitment, academic development and retention of black and women academics, alongside a focus on promoting transformative institutional cultures. Three universities were selected to receive support to the total value of USD 12 376 972 for initiatives spanning the period 2005 and 2013.

The criteria used for the selection of these universities included the following:

- Academically strong university with effective leadership and strong financial management.
- Excellence and innovation in teaching and research.
- Commitment to the National Plan for Higher Education.
- Demonstrated commitment to racial and gender transformation with effective plans and structures in place to implement change.
- Commitment to maintaining internal quality systems to ensure excellence in teaching and research.
- Recognised as being responsive to national needs.
- Solid performance on previous Corporation grants.

In addition to the above, CCNY has supported institutional strengthening at six universities elsewhere in Africa: Makerere University (Uganda), University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), University of Education, Winneba (Ghana) and Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Jos and Amadu Bello University (Nigeria).

In the next few years, CCNY plans to continue its focus on nurturing the next generation of academics and university leadership. Support will be directed to

four universities: Makerere, University of Ghana (Legon), the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town. The Corporation also proposes to continue its support for postgraduate training and research networks in the sciences along with fellowship programs in the humanities and social sciences across five Anglophone African countries.

FORD FOUNDATION

The Ford Foundation's Office for Southern Africa has made grants totaling over USD 5 million (for the five year period 2005–2010) in support of some 17 projects under the umbrella of its Next Generation of Academics (NGA) Programme, which aimed to promote the emergence of the next generation of academics and to create greater equity in the composition of academic staff in South African universities.

The majority of the funded projects were in the humanities and social sciences and were located in a broad range of institutions, including historically disadvantaged universities.

The Ford Foundation identified critical elements of an 'ideal model'¹ for the development of the next generation of academics. This model included the following:

- A well-respected intellectual leader who is also a good and empathetic supervisor.
- A small group of masters and PhD students to work with the leader. Each student has his/her specific research topic which falls within a well-defined thematic area.
- The funds provide students with fees, comprehensive support and some research monies.
- The students are provided with space in which to work in the department/unit and they are encouraged to work there so as to be included as part of a broader intellectual and social community – in casual conversations, informal seminars, etc.
- Professional training includes hard and soft elements: the hard skills include research methods, writing for publication, presenting papers, etc; while the soft skills include working with fellow academics, teaching, supervision, etc.

While the CHEC review² identified elements of this 'ideal model', it also found a number of different approaches to postgraduate student development that 'were

1 Proposed Review of the Ford Foundation Office for Southern Africa's Grants in the Arena of the Next Generation of Academics.

2 Cape Higher Education Consortium, Review Report on Ford Foundation's Programme: Next Generation of Academics. July 2011.

likely to produce a range of graduates: those who will fulfill the scholarly research functions of the academy, those who will focus on the teaching role required of these institutions and those who will use their research skills in employment outside the academy’.

In addition to the NGA Programme, the Ford Foundation has supported other areas in higher education and also has a special interest in the vocational college sector as well as the interface between the colleges and higher education sector.

The Ford Foundation will continue to support higher education in the future. The strategy is to advance a social justice agenda through innovative policy and system changes, focusing primarily on improving disadvantaged people’s access to and success in high-quality higher education www.fordfoundation.org/issues/educational-opportunity-and-scholarship/higher-education-for-social-justice.

ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

The Mellon Foundation’s long involvement in supporting equity and transformation initiatives has focused on grants to nurture the next generation of scholars and to advance research and teaching in the humanities.

Of the 500 PhD successful graduates supported, 400 have been black graduates and more than half women (as reported in 2012). In addition, Mellon’s financial support has contributed to the production of sizeable cohorts of honours, masters and post-doctoral graduates.

Mellon’s grant-making ethos was described by Dr Stuart Saunders, previously Senior Advisor for the Foundation, as ‘supporting quality people in quality institutions’ and has included flexible support tailored to identified needs. Scholarships have provided opportunities for recipients to spend time at universities in the US.

The Foundation has provided grants to the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, Pretoria University, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of the Free State, and Rhodes University as well as two historically disadvantaged universities – Fort Hare and the University of the Western Cape. While the latter was a major beneficiary of funding from the Mellon Foundation, in the case of Fort Hare, the majority of grants have enabled the purchase of books and equipment with some spending on postgraduate student development.

Funding from the Mellon Foundation has been critically important in enabling the sustainability and growth of niche areas (e.g. opera) which would otherwise be under serious threat in the light of competing demands for limited university

resources. Mellon has also invested in providing a number of newly appointed Vice-Chancellors (for example at Rhodes and Pretoria) with grants to enable them to achieve identified institutional goals.

Other achievements listed by the Foundation include the following:

- Facilitating the more rapid career progress of faculty members;
- Development of models for the mentoring of postgraduate students and academic staff;
- Establishment of research units in the humanities;
- Making 'writer-in-residence' programmes possible; and
- Enabling the visits to South Africa of distinguished fellows.

An important legacy of the Mellon Foundation has been its contribution to the provision of internet connectivity and information technology services for South African universities and research councils through support for the Tertiary Education and Research Network of South Africa (TENET).

In 2012, the Foundation had a budget of USD 6 million per annum and reported an investment of USD 38 518 000 between 2000 and 2010. It intends to continue its work in South Africa.

ATLANTIC PHILANTHROPIES

Atlantic Philanthropies was active in supporting equity development in higher education in the period between 1994 and 2002. Since then it has focused on health (including the training of nurses) and the area of Reconciliation and Human Rights.

At the time of the review, the Atlantic Philanthropies office in South Africa was in the process of winding down all its activities. This was in line with a decision of the Board of Atlantic Philanthropies in 2002 to spend down all of its endowments and complete active grant making by 2016, with the view to close by 2020. The decision was informed by the founder's 'Giving While Living' philosophy, which is to make 'large investments to capitalise on significant opportunities to solve urgent problems now, so they are less likely to become larger, more entrenched and more expensive challenges later'.³

Prior to 2002, Atlantic Philanthropies provided fellowships for masters and doctoral candidates for study at international universities. The fellowships were targeted to black and women candidates from the following universities: the University of Cape

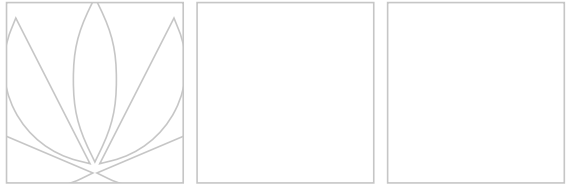
3 Atlantic Philanthropies website, www.atlanticphilanthropies.org.

Town, the University of Natal, the University of the Witwatersrand, Rhodes University and the University of the Free State. The UCT awards were focused on women in science while those at the other participating universities were spread across a range of disciplines.

Atlantic Philanthropies also funded initiatives to strengthen fund-raising and related development work at these universities.

In addition to the fellowships, there was a strong focus on funding for the humanities, with, for example, support for the Origins Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand and opera at the former University of Natal.

Considerable investment was also made in infrastructure development at a number of universities, including the University of the Western Cape (UWC), where Atlantic Philanthropies invested in two capital projects – the School of Public Health and the Life Sciences buildings. The decision to fund UWC, the only historically disadvantaged university which received support in the higher education programme, was based on a personal rapport between the founding Chair of Atlantic Philanthropies and the Vice Chancellor of UWC. UWC also subsequently received support through the health programme for strengthening its School of Nursing.



APPENDIX 2:

APPROACHES TO EQUITY AND TRANSFORMATION IN THREE UNIVERSITIES



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

While the original grant proposal to CCNY outlined plans for a range of initiatives and projects, the funding received focused on enhancing and extending one of the existing mechanisms used to address equity – the Leadership and Equity Advancement Programme (LEAP). This programme had arisen out of the earlier Equity Acceleration Programme (EAP) aimed at changing the demographic profile of those Schools in which the under-representation of Black, women and disabled academics was most severe.

The 2012 Annual Interim Report submitted by the University to CCNY recorded a very good retention record with over 50% of the nineteen Carnegie-funded LEAP lecturers having been mainstreamed.

Several LEAP appointees interviewed for the CHEC review confirmed that they would not be in their current positions in the university had it not been for the LEAP programme. While some may have registered for PhD studies, they would not have gained the valuable teaching and broader academic work experience – from that of curriculum development to setting and assessing tests and examinations, from supervision of honours and masters students to conference attendance, from engagement in community projects to fulfilling a range of administrative duties.

While one of the key benefits of the programme reported by many interviewees was ‘getting a salary while studying’, the support provided by the College Coordinators, research supervisors and mentors was extremely important.

The information and advice requested and received from mentors covered a variety of issues – from how to prepare for and deliver lectures to where to print notes.

Although very few of the interviewees had made use of the international mentorship scheme, this seemed to be of particular value when the fellows needed to gain experience on particular kinds of equipment not available in South Africa. In essence, this experience was technical research training in laboratories – either private facilities or in universities.

Retention was identified as an important issue in the ERA's Summative Evaluation Report (May 2008). This report highlights differences in remuneration between the university and the corporate sector with 'good salary packages' offered by the latter being an attractive incentive. Interviews conducted for the CHEC review confirmed that a number of LEAP lecturers are looking at other sectors for employment; however, the vast majority of these lecturers had been retained at the end of 2012.



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

The CHEC review report outlines a shift from the first to the second cycle of funding at the University. While the first cycle included the appointment of black and women staff and workshops on institutional culture, the second cycle foregrounded research development and transformation of the broader institutional culture, including the research culture. This was described by a senior staff member as a shift from 'achieving representivity' to a greater focus on 'the knowledge project'.

This shift coincided with a change in leadership at UCT. In his inaugural lecture, the new Vice-Chancellor envisioned UCT as the leading university in Africa and pointed the way to research that was 'fresh and new'. While this was not an entirely new trajectory at this University, the VC's articulation of it served to foreground the Afropolitan perspective more than had been done in the past and served as an important lever for writing the submission for the second grant which highlighted the strong relationship between transformation and research and to change universities by changing research.

The more traditional equity appointee approach taken in the first cycle of funding at UCT was described as 'a slow process' because posts for academics were not always available. It was also described as one that requires 'sensitive handling' so that appointees are not 'showcased', 'exceptionalised' or 'stigmatised'.

In the second cycle, funds continued to be channeled to women and black researchers through the Emerging Researchers' Programme (ERP). In addition, the establishment of the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Capacity (PERC) in 2009 provided greater impetus for changing approaches to research. Termed 'an epistemological project', it encourages researchers (often more established

researchers than emerging researchers) to reconsider their disciplines from ‘the vantage point in Africa’. The programme included a self-assessment exercise where researchers considered their ‘African identity’ and the contribution they could make – without ‘falling into a north-south binary’. This was seen as involving ‘an intellectual challenge’ across all disciplines.

In addition, PERC supports researchers by offering workshops which ‘probe issues, raised questions and encouraged personal narrative writing’. The seminar programme included emphases on Afropolitan research, interdisciplinary research and transformation, and new methodologies. Various forums promote academics’ mid-career growth, build new research teams and book publications. In this way, CCNY grants provided a platform for ‘a change in the way people work’. This work has recently culminated in the development of a book that challenges the dominance of Northern Theory by critiquing how key concepts are used, and by drawing attention to context and to the marginalisation of voices.

During the second cycle of funding, four grants of R150 000 were provided each year to researchers who worked across disciplines and involved post-graduate students in either new or existing projects. Activities associated with these projects have included reading and discussion groups, and the brokering of new partnerships.



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

The University of the Witwatersrand proposed and implemented the most diverse set of projects to be funded by CCNY at three institutions included in the review. While some of these projects addressed the issue of equity, others were broader in focus in generating knowledge in and for Africa and expanding the role of universities in broader society – not just in terms of the economy and the world of work – but also in terms of developing engaged citizens in a diverse context.

Two different target groups were identified for those projects that aimed to address the imbalances in staff demography and the challenge of gender equity: existing staff and new staff. The focus, however, was on the former as the ‘natural’ attrition rates would decrease with the increase in retirement age. Previous staff surveys had also alerted Wits’ management to issues around retention.

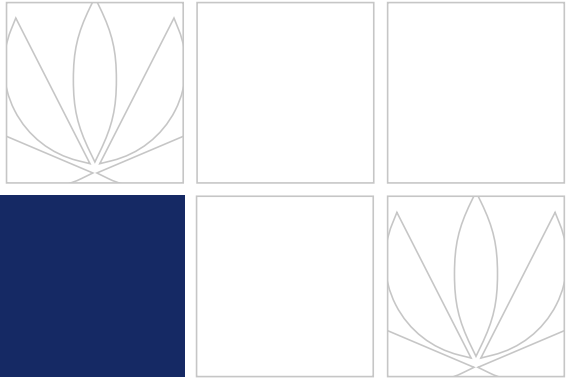
The following opportunities were offered in order to promote the research dimensions of existing staff: large research grants were offered to promising black and/or women academics, ‘sandwich programmes’ to provide staff pursuing doctoral studies with the opportunity to spend up to a full year out of the country hosted by another institution with guaranteed employment upon their return, and short time-off mini-

sabbaticals of 3–6 months for black and women staff in order to complete a specific research project, including PhD studies.

Together these projects were aimed at developing the next generation of academics at Wits. They built on Wits' prior experience with and lessons learned from similar programmes that focused on the recruitment of black and women staff (e.g. the Academic Equal Opportunity Fund, the Vice-Chancellor's Discretionary Equity Fund, and the Growing Our Own Timber Programme as well as experience with Thuthuka, a NRF initiative, and the WonderWoman Programme).

The grant proposed that the opportunities above would be focused on, but not exclusive to, the nine Strategic Research Thrusts that were core to the university policy as well as designated Centres of Excellence with which the University was associated. It was suggested that these focus areas would provide a setting that would assist in unlocking the nexus of factors that constitute barriers to the advancement and retention of young academics.

The approach at Wits also drew on the view that the establishment of a research culture needs a multi-dimensional strategy aimed at all the 'stages' of the life of a researcher – from postgraduate student to established senior researcher. Integration across research development and institutional transformation at Wits was encouraged through funding research projects that dealt with issues within and beyond the institution. For example, a recipient of a large research grant focused his work on the development of drama workshops for students in an effort to 'open up the aesthetic space' and deal with issues such as sexual harassment, and racial and ethnic prejudice. Another recipient described his work as 'an academic research and community engagement project'.



APPENDIX 3:

NATIONAL TARGETS

The National Development Plan (NDP) has proposed that by 2030:

- The percentage of PhD qualified staff within higher education be increased from 34% to over 75%.
- Over 25% of total enrolments in higher education be at postgraduate level so that more than 100 doctoral graduates per million of the population are produced. To achieve this more than 5 000 PhDs per year are required (compared to 1 420 in 2010).
- The number of graduate, postgraduate and first-rate scientists be doubled.
- The number of African and women postgraduates, especially PhDs, be increased.
- A learning and research environment that is welcoming to all and eliminating all forms of discrimination be developed.

The CHEC Review Report points to the constraints to achieving the targets (especially for doctoral enrolments) as identified and summarized by Higher Education South Africa (HESA), as follows:¹

- **Infrastructure.** The availability and quality of the research infrastructure, facilities and equipment.
- **Limited supervision expertise.** Only about a third of all permanent academic staff at South African universities currently hold PhDs and are therefore eligible to supervise at the doctoral level.
- **Funding.** In addition to limitations on the availability of direct funding for PhD students (both the numbers of doctoral scholarships available and the quantum of individual grants), universities continue to be underfunded, especially in the

¹ HESA (2011) Proposal for a National Programme to Develop the Next Generation of Academics for South African Higher Education.

light of growing student enrolments without concomitant increases in academic staff. There is also limited funding available for research programmes and the target of 1% of GDP spending on research and development has not been met.

- **Academic salaries.** These are not competitive with public and private sector salaries.²
- **Institutional culture.** Historically white institutions are challenged to attract and retain black and women academics in part due to alienating institutional cultures. Women also express concern about institutional cultures where sexism is pervasive and where there are insufficient women role models.
- **Academic mobility.** Academic expertise is lost through the 'brain drain'.
- **Age.** According to the HESA report, in less than a decade over 3 000 or approximately one fifth of permanent instruction staff will retire. Of these 32% and 17% are professors and associate professors respectively, 'which means the country is soon to lose almost half of its most experienced and highly qualified academics'. This loss threatens the country's research output as the most active researchers are ageing and not being replaced by adequate numbers of younger researchers.

2 More recent (unpublished) studies suggest that the gap between university salaries and public and private sector salaries may not be as wide as previously reported. Similarly, the disparity between salaries offered by rural universities and those located in metropolitan area may also not be as significant as earlier reports had suggested.

Published in December 2013 by the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC),
House Vincent, Wynberg Mews, 10 Ebenezer Road, Wynberg 7800, South Africa
Tel: +27 21 763 7100
Fax: +27 21 763 7117
Website: www.chec.ac.za

© 2013 Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC)

Authors: Nasima Badsha and Sharman Wickham
Design and lay-out: COMPRESS.dsl | www.compressdsl.com

