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UNIVEN Integrated Transformation Plan

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1. Introduction and Background

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states as a core value that the country is founded on human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms as well as emphasising non-racialism and non-sexism.

The history of South Africa includes that ethnic institutions of higher education were set up to serve what some have referred to as agencies of academic apartheid. The University of Venda started life as one such institution with its original mandate being to solely serve the Vhavenda people. This typifies UNIVEN as having been born in 1982 with the distinct disadvantage of inequality in a context where the curtailment of human rights and freedoms was clearly an implicit, albeit not an overtly stated, goal.

With the profound political and concomitant social changes that started in early 1990 in South Africa, institutions of higher education of necessity also started to undergo processes of transformation. In 2008 the *Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions* report (colloquially known as the Soudien Report after the Chairperson of the Committee that originated the report) noted that “...transformation is clearly an issue facing all South African higher education institutions, irrespective of their historical origins.” The Soudien Report stated that against this background historically black institutions therefore also had to focus on transformation.

The Soudien Committee placed their work within the context of *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. In developing this Integrated Transformation Plan, UNIVEN also took this 1997 White Paper into account as the wellspring of all its transformation efforts.

One of the most telling statements in the aforementioned White Paper is the following:

“Higher education has an unmatched obligation, which has not been adequately fulfilled, to help lay the foundations of a critical civil society, with a culture of public debate and tolerance which accommodates differences and competing interests. It has much more to do, both within its own institutions and in its influence on the broader community, to strengthen the democratic ethos, the sense of common citizenship and commitment to a common good.”

It is held that the institutional culture of UNIVEN does not as yet fully reflect all of these laudable ideals and values, which serves to confirm that the need for transformation is still very much prevalent at the University and is indeed much wider than the scope implied in the above quotation from the White Paper.

The same White Paper further powerfully contextualises the transformation of higher education as follows:

“The transformation of higher education is part of the broader process of South Africa’s political, social and economic transition, which includes political democratisation, economic reconstruction and development, and redistributive social policies aimed at

equity. This national agenda is being pursued within a distinctive set of pressures and demands characteristic of the late twentieth century, often typified as globalisation. This term refers to multiple, inter-related changes in social, cultural and economic relations, linked to the widespread impact of the information and communications revolution, the growth of trans-national scholarly and scientific networks, the accelerating integration of the world economy and intense competition among nations for markets.”

This context very much still applies to UNIVEN and was therefore heeded as one of the fundamental points of departure in the development of this Integrated Transformation Plan.

It is of note that some of the leading higher educational institutions in South Africa have already (as of October 2012) adopted Transformation Charters, Transformation Plans or both. This is in no small measure the result of encouragement to do so from the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande.

UNIVEN has to date viewed transformation as a multifaceted and integrated process by which the University continuously renews itself in an ongoing effort to represent, in all aspects of its life and functions, the vision and ideals of its mission and values. Through its pre-existing transformation agenda, the University has therefore been striving to accomplish the following objectives:

- to redress past injustices;
- to become relevant;
- to promote equal opportunity for all;
- to safeguard human rights;
- to ensure that UNIVEN’s system of governance, its teaching and learning, and its research and service uphold the inherent dignity of all, and meet the development needs of South Africa’s democracy; and
- to ensure that UNIVEN develops a quality driven higher education facility that becomes a preferred and first choice institution of higher learning for staff and students.

UNIVEN has already made significant Transformation progress such as the following:

- fundamental research transformation;
- constant increase in pass rates of students;
- clean-up in accreditation of programmes;
- extensive infrastructure expansion;
- extensive information technology advances and broadband access;
- achieved financial sustainability;
- more than 100 new policies approved;
- student leadership transformation regarding election criteria;
- major increase in student financial support;
- online registration of students;

This Integrated Transformation Plan is intended to take UNIVEN beyond the existing transformation agenda as set out above to an entirely new level.

The emphasis in this Integrated Transformation Plan is thus on clearly visible and arguably fundamental institutional change.

Within the South African context the word transformation has developed a close connection to the redress of past inequalities and injustices. It is thus often used with reference to for example economic, race and gender equality, creating opportunities for people with disabilities and a similar arguably narrow and formal area of focus.

Work done previously within the higher education sector in South Africa has distinguished between “formal” transformational areas of focus such as curricula, governance structures and their representivity, race and gender issues etc., as opposed to the “informal” and less tangible area of broadly defined institutional culture.

For purposes of the process of development of the UNIVEN Integrated Transformation Plan, the point of departure was explicitly a comprehensive and all-inclusive understanding of transformation with no artificial narrowing of focus or exclusion of topics or areas.

It was deemed appropriate to develop an operational or working definition of transformation in order to create a shared understanding of the concept for the purposes of the Integrated Transformation Plan.

Practically, transformation at UNIVEN has to date been about the teaching, learning and research environment and activities, requiring the University to broaden student access and to continually review its curriculum. This is done not only for its national relevance, but also in terms of the interface between its goal to be research-led and the challenges of an enriched teaching and learning environment.

As a noun, the Oxford English Dictionary defines transformation as “*a marked change in form, nature, or appearance*”.

The working definition adopted for the purposes of the Integrated Transformation Plan is as follows:

Transformation at UNIVEN means all those initiatives and actions that are focused upon taking the University, as a recognised comprehensive university, to a next level where institutional culture, institutional visibility, institutional relevance and the active embracing of widely defined diversity which positively contribute towards the achievement of the University’s Vision, Mission and strategic goals whilst scrupulously upholding all of the values of the South African Constitution.

The Integrated Transformation Plan is furthermore seen as constituting an enabler of the overarching UNIVEN Strategic Plan for the period 2012 to 2016 and therefore does not seek to supplant or amend the Strategic Plan.

For purposes of the Integrated Transformation Plan, the following six transformation themes were extracted from an inclusive consultative process with all direct UNIVEN stakeholders (listed in no particular order):

- Diversity ¹
- Institutional Culture
- People Management
- Student Centricity
- Core Business
- Governance

In this Integrated Transformation Plan, a total of 33 objectives have been set across the six transformation themes. Timelines have also been set to achieve the objectives and the ultimately accountable persons have been identified (See Annexure D - Detailed Implementation Action Planning). It is the explicit intention that the identified accountable persons will where appropriate delegate/coordinate the detailed operationalisation of the stated objectives whilst remaining fully accountable for the achievement of the objective.

Given the integrated nature of the plan, linkages were also made where deemed appropriate to the UNIVEN Strategic Plan for the period 2012 to 2016 as well as to subsidiary strategies and plans and to the 2011 HEQC audit recommendations.

Finally, an extract from a keynote address by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, as made to the *Stakeholder Summit on Higher Education Transformation* at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology on 22 April 2010 is deemed to be a fitting close to this introduction and background:

“...I believe that transformation should be understood to be about more than eradicating the purely racial aspects of apartheid, as important as this is. It is essentially about radically changing our society, including our education and training system and all other areas of life to ensure that they can serve the interests of all South Africans in a democratic, equitable and prosperous society. Put differently it is about confronting the deeply interrelated challenges of class, race and gender inequalities, including confronting the HIV/AIDS pandemic and being an inclusive society for the disabled. This means ensuring that the working class and the poor, women, youth and the disabled, become significant beneficiaries not only economically and politically, but also in terms of cultural and educational development.”

2. Transformation Charter

Preamble

The University of Venda actively recognises the historical inequities of the past and its obligation to contribute towards the redress of these inequities. This obligation exists at both an institutional and at a societal level, with a particular albeit a non-exclusive focus on Limpopo Province. The Transformation Charter of the University of Venda takes the South African Constitution and the following principles as extracted from the 1997 White Paper on Higher Education as its fundamental points of departure:

¹ Race, Gender, Disability, Age, HIV Status, Ethnicity, Language, Religion, Nationality and Class

- Equity and redress
- Democratisation
- Development
- Quality
- Effectiveness and efficiency
- Academic freedom
- Institutional autonomy
- Public accountability

In so doing, the University's Vision, Mission and Institutional Values continue to remain at the core of all of its transformation efforts:

- **Vision:**

Change from "To be at the centre of tertiary education for rural and regional development in Southern Africa."

To

"To be the centre of tertiary education for rural and regional development in Southern Africa".

- **Mission:**

Change from "As a comprehensive institution, the University of Venda offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in fields of study that are responsive to the development needs of the Southern African region, using appropriate learning methodologies and research."

To

Change from "As a comprehensive institution, the University of Venda offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in fields of study that are responsive to the development needs of the Southern African region, striving for excellence in teaching and learning, research and community engagement".

- **Institutional Values:**

- **Quality and excellence:** *Strive to the highest standards as benchmarked and evaluated by peers. Entrenching best international and national practises and striving to achieve excellence and to act in an exemplary way with pride not only in the core business, but in all that we do (including support services) is paramount to our success.*
- **Accountability:** *Commitment to good and responsible use of human, fiscal and physical resources entrusted to us and deliver on and be answerable to our mandate.*
- **Transparency:** *Openness to public scrutiny on our actions, processes and use of our resources.*
- **Integrity:** *Consistently espousing and practicing honesty, truth and freedom in all we do.*
- **Respect:** *Treating all stakeholders with civility and dignity.*

- **Diversity:** *Recognition that diversity and excellence are mutually inclusive, enhancing our teaching, scholarship and community engagement, as well as our ability to interact with all people; and*
- **Social responsibility, community engagement and Ubuntu:** *Contributing to the best extent possible, to the intellectual, social and economic well-being of the communities we serve.*
- **Collective responsibility.** *When any member of the university community notes a challenge, even if that is not in the own sphere of responsibility, the person should feel duty-bound to report the matter to the person/unit responsible for the matter. This also requires the receptiveness of the responsible person/unit for the input. Our commitment could for example be signified by adding an additional institutional value.*

All direct stakeholders of UNIVEN furthermore recognise the challenges that arise from:

- Its deeply embedded institutional history as an originally ethnically based higher educational institution;
- Serving students that more often than not come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Developing and sustaining a progressive and inclusive institutional culture that is embraced by all direct stakeholders and that exhibits a range of positive attributes, all of which make students and staff feel at home in each and every sense and make the University an excellent place to study and work;
- Producing graduates that are equipped to be economically relevant and thus readily employable whilst being conscious of their larger role as citizens that ought to positively contribute towards South Africa's social transformation;
- Attracting and retaining competent academic and support/service staff given the remote geographical location of the University;
- Becoming a fully comprehensive University as mandated by government;
- Instituting and maintaining levels of governance that are compliant with best practice guidelines; and
- Providing and sustaining the requisite physical infrastructure and facilities against a background of student numbers that vastly exceed the original design capacity of the campus.

Our Charter

The University of Venda shall be an institution of higher education where:

- a. It is recognised that our transformation has already started but that it is of necessity a perpetual journey to an always higher level;
- b. Our Core Business of Teaching and Learning, Research and Community engagement shall take place within a constantly evolving and positively transforming environment whilst being socially and economically relevant;
- c. Our ultimate transformation to a fully comprehensive institution shall be accompanied by increased overall relevance; a positively raised profile and the materially increased desirability of our graduates by employers;

- d. Equitable treatment based on Race, Gender, Creed, Disability status, Sexual orientation , Age, HIV Status, Ethnicity, Language, Nationality, Religion and Class shall always be actively taken into account in the student makeup, staffing structures, policies and practises of the University and the positive benefits of our infinite diversity shall be valued;
- e. Our Institutional Culture shall demand active participation of all stakeholders in working towards our vision and will be socially cohesive and all inclusive as well as being typified by amongst others mutual respect, tolerance, compassion and accountability;
- f. Freedom of expression is actively encouraged and is at all times to be practised without ever infringing on the fundamental human rights of others;
- g. Governance is always of the highest order and the University’s limited resources are at all times deployed carefully and thoughtfully;
- h. Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are both recognised and actively defended in a dignified fashion that takes account of the objective reality within which the University exists and operates;
- i. The specific goals of our Integrated Transformation Plan are pursued by all stakeholders at all times as being of fundamental significance;
- j. All direct stakeholders take individual as well as collective responsibility and accountability for the transformation of the University; and
- k. The effective and efficient execution of the University’s formally approved strategy shall always remain a top priority.

3. Transformation Themes

3.1. Theme 1: Diversity²

The Constitution of South Africa places a direct prohibition on any direct or indirect unfair discrimination on the bases of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. UNIVEN ~~in addition specifically~~ commits itself to no unfair discrimination against students, ~~or staff~~ and/or stakeholders on the bases as listed in the Constitution. ~~of Race, Gender, Disability, Age, HIV Status, Ethnicity, Language, Nationality and Class.~~

It has also been noted that as referred to in the January 2012 *Green Paper For Post-School Education And Training*, the DHET plans a focused examination of how disability is currently dealt with and provided for in tertiary educational institutions and UNIVEN will therefore at some future point have to show that it is actively dealing with this important matter. In pursuance of the commitment to root out any and all sources of unfair discrimination, the University therefore sets the following objectives:

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
1	Create a culture amongst Univen staff and students that embraces and promotes diversity in its broadest	Vice Chancellor and Principal

² Race, Gender, Disability, Age, HIV Status, Ethnicity, Language, Nationality and Class

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
	sense through the creation and monitoring of an enabling environment for behavioural change, development of new and the review of existing policies, create disability access and disability-friendly infrastructure.	
2	Consider recommendations from Anti-Xenophobia Task Team and implement approved actions. Notably the actions like Transformation Charter; Social Dialogue Platform; Aggressive Marketing and Publicity; Module on Diversity; Language Policy; Language Skills; Sharing Local Language and Culture; Mixing of Cultures in Residences; Diversity Celebrations; Reaching out to “silent” members of the Community; Student involvement; Partnerships with other Universities and enhance positive Institutional Culture Elements.	Vice Chancellor and Principal

It is of note that some of the objectives as set under this theme are also in direct support of the 2011HEQC recommendation number 4, being:

“The HEQC recommends that the University of Venda investigates the extent and impact of xenophobia, sexism and all manifestations of intolerance among staff and students in order to establish an institutional culture based on democratic values and respect for human rights as it impacts on educational quality.”

3.2. Theme 2: Institutional Culture

Institutional culture, which can simply be defined as “the way we do things at UNIVEN” is arguably the key transformation theme in that it is ultimately the “glue” that holds all facets of UNIVEN together. A positive institutional culture is therefore a powerful enabler of all transformation initiatives.

The key sub-theme here is that of *institutional social cohesion*. Social cohesion is the capacity of a society or of a community such as UNIVEN to ensure the welfare of all of its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society or community is thus a mutually supportive entity of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means.

All societies and communities have to live with the strains and stresses caused by divisions and potential divisions. A cohesive society or community is one which has developed satisfactory and broadly supported ways of coping with these and other stresses and strains in an open and democratic manner. This amongst others practically means taking action to reduce inequalities wherever possible and to restore equity so that these various divisions remain manageable and do not grow so as to ultimately threaten the stability of the society or community.

It must be recognised that there are individuals at UNIVEN that see growing multiculturalism as a threat to traditional identities. Therefore as the University positions

itself as a truly southern African University, this factor has to be managed with great sensitivity.

Within this context, the fundamental commitment of UNIVEN has to be to human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The aim of this is to achieve greater unity between its staff and students for the purpose of safeguarding their ideals and principles and facilitating their educational, economic and social progress. At a practical level, this also implies all direct stakeholders demonstrating behaviour such as mutual respect, tolerance and compassion within the context of the concept of Ubuntu/humanism.

UNIVEN should thus seek to develop a rights-based approach to social cohesion. Rights provide the firmest foundation for social policy and rights put all members of a society or community on an equal footing.

Equality between women and men is also a fundamental Constitutional commitment that is highly relevant to the social cohesion strategy. Continuing efforts must be made to keep alert to the gender implications of all policy interventions and to integrate a practical gender mainstreaming perspective into all decision making. Specific objectives in respect of social cohesion follow below.

It is of note that a morphological analysis performed as an input into the development of the Integrated Transformation plan explicitly identified the development of a social cohesion plan as a transformational objective.

The next subtheme under institutional culture is the creation of ***continuous engagement opportunities*** between all direct stakeholders. Psychological safety to voice views and opinions are deemed to be important pre-conditions for effective engagement.

The need for psychological safety and for all voices to be heard (and to be responded to via structured multidirectional communication feedback loops) is a fundamental determinant of the quality and nature of institutional culture and is thus addressed in the objectives below.

A further subtheme under institutional culture is the ***fear to raise issues or to act as a whistleblower*** for fear of being victimised. This was also raised in the aforementioned morphological analysis as a disabler to transformation and is once again addressed in the objectives below.

Another very important determinant of institutional culture is ***zero tolerance for fraud and corruption***. This also ties in with the whistleblowing issue as referred to immediately above.

A final determinant of institutional culture that was identified during the process of developing the Integrated Transformation Plan was that of ***Inclusive Policy Creation and Review***. This stems from the fundamental insight that UNIVEN staff and students can only be expected to buy into policies that they have been involved in creating or reviewing. Practically this for example means that management can draft position papers which are

then used as a basis to consult with and elicit the views of the relevant/affected direct stakeholders.

Against this background, the objectives that are set for the Institutional Culture theme are as follows:

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
3	Appoint an internal Social Cohesion Task Team that represents the interests of all direct stakeholders with an emphasis on inclusivity, gender equity and the representation of people with disabilities to draft a Social Cohesion Charter that includes exhaustive inputs from all direct stakeholders and design appropriate Social Cohesion interventions and for approval by the Human Resources Committee of Council.	Vice Chancellor and Principal
4	Enhance communication by creating formal engagement platforms between Senior Management (VC, Two DVC's and Registrar plus limited other senior staff as invited by the VC - thus not the entire Executive) and specific direct stakeholder groups (Students; Academic Staff; Support Staff; Service Staff).	Vice Chancellor and Principal
5	Ensure a corrupt and fraud-free environment by developing and implementing a Fraud Prevention Strategy, Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and implementing an off-campus independent whistleblowing hotline for use by staff and students.	DVC: Operations Vice Chancellor and Principal
6	Commencing with an Inclusive Policy making and Policy Review approach that allows directly affected stakeholder groups to be consulted on and to comment in writing on proposed policy and planning.	Vice Chancellor and Principal

3.3. Theme 3: People Management

Universities are by their very nature people-centric environments. This is already recognised by UNIVEN's strategic objective number 6 *Integrated Human Resource Management and Development*.

The people management transformation initiatives that have already been undertaken by UNIVEN include among others, the engagement of staff and internal stakeholders to critically look at the culture that the University should adopt in order to ensure sustainability as underpinned by the values and objectives agreed during the change management (Rotakuwa) workshops. Additional inputs have also been derived from the 2011 HEQC report as referred to below. This document must be read in conjunction with the UNIVEN Integrated People Management Strategy.

Becoming a University of choice for staff has also already been recognised as a strategic imperative. It must however be stressed that this is an outcome driven by multiple other

variables and that it thus cannot realistically be “planned and implemented” in and of itself.

From a transformation perspective, the relevant sub-themes that specifically rose to the surface during the development of the Integrated Transformation Plan included:

- *Employment Equity* (As already provided for in the 2012 to 2016 Strategic Plan only insofar as the setting of new EE targets are concerned as well as being covered under Objective #1 of this Integrated Transformation Plan)
- *Staff Retention* (Already provided for in the 2012 to 2016 Strategic Plan under the benchmarking and development of a recruitment and retention strategy)
- *Staff Recognition* (Already provided for in the Performance Management and Incentives Policies)
- *Recruitment and Selection processes* (Already partially provided for in the 2012 to 2016 Strategic Plan under the benchmarking and development of employee selection models including psychometric tests)
- *Workload and staffing levels* including but not limited to the staff/student ratio
- *Raising levels of staff commitment and dedication* including but not limited to physical on-campus presence
- *Reviewing of the Staff Code of Conduct*
- *Striking a balance between staff rights and responsibilities*
- *Raising levels of staff competence* (Already covered in the Strategic Plan for the period 2012 to 2016 under Human Resources Development)
- *Staff Feedback* (Already covered under the rollout of performance management to all levels of staff by 2013 as provided for in the 2012 to 2016 Strategic Plan)

Against this background, the following objectives have therefore been identified in addition to the HR transformation objectives as already set out in the 2012 to 2016 strategic plan and that are thus not repeated here:

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
7	Creating a Staff Recognition framework in conjunction with all stakeholder groups directly affected thereby. This framework is by definition to be de-linked from recurring remuneration and should emphasise non-cash recognition by means of celebrating specific extraordinary work-related achievements by both academic and support/service staff.	DVC: Operations
8	Ensure that Univen becomes Employer of Choice by Benchmarking and reviewing the practical aspects of Recruitment and Selection processes against best practice at comparable universities nationally and internationally. Implement “Grow our own Timber” strategy as well as “Succession Planning” for key posts.	Director Human Resources
9	Ensure that Univen staff has an equitable workload by reviewing workload versus staffing levels including but not limited to the staff/student ratio to comply to 2011 HEQC recommendation number 3.	DVC Academic/ DVC Operations/Registrar

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
10	Devising People Development Strategy comprising programmes and initiatives aimed at raising levels of staff commitment/an improved work ethic and implement a modern and effective Staff Code of Conduct in order to ensure that it is in line with best practice at comparable universities.	DVC: Operations
11	Developing of a “Staff Rights and Responsibilities Charter” by means of extensive consultation with the directly affected stakeholders.	Director Human Resources
12	Implement Equity Plan with emphasis on gender progress and achieving targets of staff with disabilities	Director Human Resources

3.4. Theme 4: Student Centricity

Given that the core rationale for the existence of UNIVEN is teaching and learning, conducting research and community engagement, students feature very strongly and visibly in the very existence of the University. A teaching University that is not strongly focused on the interests of students as whole human beings face the risk of becoming largely irrelevant if not dysfunctional.

No higher education institution transformation plan can thus be complete without dealing with student’s specific transformational needs. This is also directly supported by the fact that UNIVEN’s Strategic Objective number 8 for the period 2012 to 2016 is Enhancing the Quality of Student Life.

Becoming a University of choice for students has also already been recognised as a strategic imperative. It must however be stressed that this is an outcome driven by multiple other variables and that it thus cannot realistically be “planned and implemented” in and of itself.

What it means to become a truly student-centric University whilst maintaining a sound balance with the interests of other direct stakeholders and all the while upholding standards of good governance, requires a great deal of reflection, original thought and input. This aspect is therefore provided for in the first of the objectives below.

Additional sub-themes under student centricity that were identified during the consultation with direct stakeholders for the purposes of developing this Integrated Transformation Plan are as follows:

- Student Financial Aid, which is a particularly burning issue given that a large percentage of UNIVEN students come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds
- Streamlining student academic administration with specific reference to fully electronic registration
- Student governance
- Student Rights versus Responsibilities

Against this background, the following objectives have therefore been identified in addition to the various student life objectives as already set out in the 2012 to 2016 strategic plan and that are thus not repeated here:

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
13	Improve UNIVEN's student centricity whilst maintaining a sound balance with the interests of other direct stakeholders and all the while upholding standards of good governance.	Vice Chancellor and Principal
14	Consider the region and geographic location of UNIVEN's student population and consider novel ways and all existing forms of Student Financial Aid to improve support to needy students.	Director: Finance
15	Mobilise all relevant role-players in UNIVEN to move to fully electronic registration on and off-campus and ensure UNIVEN is becoming an automated "Smart" campus.	DVC: Operations
16	Ensure "fit for purpose" student governance structures as already recommended in the 2011 HEQC recommendation # 6 along with such broader mandate as may be framed by the Vice Chancellor and Principal and develop a "Student Rights and Responsibilities Charter" by means of extensive consultation with the directly affected stakeholders.	Vice Chancellor and Principal

3.5. Theme 5: Core Business

The University of Venda has been mandated by government to become a comprehensive University offering a combination of academic, professional and career-focused programmes at both degree and diploma levels. This requires a fundamental rethinking and restructuring of curricula given the need to ensure articulation between diploma and degree programmes, changing the traditional academic orientation of the staff and providing the necessary infrastructure and resources.

Furthermore, expanded opportunities for research and the strengthening and development of applied research are required. In short, this demands a fundamental transformation of the academic architecture of the University, in particular, its qualifications structure and programme profile. The academic re-engineering exercise has to be undertaken within the context of the University's approved size and shape, which required that by 2010 the head count enrolment should not exceed 10 500 distributed as follows: at least 28% headcount enrolment in Science & Technology (including Health); at least 22% in Business/Management; Humanities enrolment must not be more than 34% and Education should have at least a 16% share of enrolment. Furthermore, at least 15% of the headcount should be in undergraduate diplomas, 77% in undergraduate degrees, and no more than 8% in postgraduate studies.

The University is committed to ensuring that the changes in its qualification structure and programme profile in line with its new vision and mission is done in a manner that builds on existing strengths and does not result in instability. In this regard, the University initiated three processes in 2008, which served as the point of departure for giving effect to its new mandate.

Firstly, a detailed review of the University's existing programme and qualification mix was undertaken in 2008. The main focus and purpose of the review was to assess all the current programmes offered in terms of their relevance to the new vision and mission, including responsiveness to regional labour market needs and their financial viability.

The programme portfolio review process was concluded early in 2010 and the recommendations, which impact on programmes offered by all the schools, have been extensively discussed and were ratified by Council. The review process also included a preliminary analysis of the programmes that would have to be realigned to meet the requirements of the new Higher Education Qualifications Framework of 2007.

Secondly, and in parallel with the programme review process, preliminary work was done to identify the possible broad areas in which to introduce the new diploma-level career-focused programmes. The University has identified twelve clusters of fields all of which are linked to the Limpopo Provincial Development Nodes and in which UNIVEN has the broad capacity to offer certificate and diploma programmes.

Thirdly, a student enrolment plan and process for 2008 to 2010 was developed to enable UNIVEN to meet the size and shape targets approved by the Minister. It is important to highlight that after extensive discussions, the University, while accepting the total head count enrolment target of 10 500, has adjusted the shape targets set by the Minister.

This means that UNIVEN has had to manage student enrolments very carefully over this five-year transition period to ensure that by 2013 it will be within the parameters as approved by the Minister.

Against the background as set out above, most of the changes that are busy unfolding in respect of the conversion to a truly comprehensive University are fundamentally transformational in nature and do not have to be set as new objectives in this Integrated Transformation Plan. The high-level details of the various underlying objectives/targets are also already captured in Strategic Objective number 1 for the period 2012 to 2016, *Conversion to a Comprehensive University* as well as being captured in recommendation #2 and indirectly related to recommendations #11 and #17 of the 2011 HEQC audit.

A recurring theme raised by virtually all staff and students during the transformation engagement sessions constituted for the purpose of developing the Integrated Transformation Plan was that of improving facilities/infrastructure.

Whilst this is not strictly a transformational issue as such, the particular history of the institution and the resultant backlog in the provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure is an institutional reality.

Given that adequate facilities and infrastructure is a key enabler of the University's core business, it was deemed appropriate for the benefit of especially staff and students to take cognisance here of that which has already been achieved in this regard and of that which is still planned.

It is thus noted that the Infrastructure Master Plan already provides for the following:

- **Urgent Projects**

- New Residences
- 24 Hour Study Centre
- IT Centre
- Mining Engineering Building
- Science Park
- Lecture Halls
- School of Health Sciences
- Campus Health Clinic
- UIGC Training Centre
- Indoor Sports Centre
- Sports Field and Improved Sporting Facilities

- **Medium to Long Term Projects**

- Lecture Halls
- Additional offices
- Exploratorium & Natural History Museum
- Retail Centre
- Staff Recreation Area
- Staff Housing
- Moot Court & Legal Clinic
- Housing for visiting professors and researchers
- House of Prayer

A further facilities-related issue that was raised by multiple participants during the transformation engagement sessions constituted for the purpose of developing the Integrated Transformation Plan was that of the slow internet access speed on campus.

In the same vein, it is therefore noted for the benefit of staff and students that:

“The existing bandwidth will be upgraded to 300 Megabits per second (Mbps) to cater for the increased need for quicker Internet access by both staff and students. The 10 Gigabits per second SANREN backbone will be extended to the University before the end of 2012 and this will provide increased capacity for our Internet connectivity.”

In addition to the conversion to a comprehensive University, the following transformation sub-themes that fall within the ambit of the University's core business emerged during the crafting of the Integrated Transformation Plan:

- Accreditation of Qualifications with the HEQC and/or externally

- Raising UNIVEN's Relevance (*It is deemed that this will in all likelihood be an automatic outcome of the conversion to a comprehensive University and no specific objective has thus been set in this regard*).
- Internal Shape & Size debate
- Raising UNIVEN's profile (*This is already within the ambit of the accountabilities of the Director of Communication and Marketing but an objective for this has nevertheless been set below*)
- Improving the desirability of graduates for placement (*It is deemed that this will in all likelihood be an automatic outcome of the accreditation of all programmes and no specific objective has thus been set in this regard*).
- “GOOT”(Growing Our Own Timber) and the employment of our own graduates
- Standardised operating parameters that impact on delivery within the University’s core business
- Distance Education

Against this background the objectives as set under the Core Business theme are as follows:

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
17	Ensure all UNIVEN programmes are accredited by the HEQC and/or external organisations such as for example SAICA and that UNIVEN become fully comprehensive taking into consideration the internal Shape & Size modalities.	DVC: Academic (Deans within their respective domains)
18	Build the UNIVEN Brand through specific campaigns and initiatives in respect of raising UNIVEN's profile that goes materially beyond generic marketing and communication.	Director of Communications and Marketing
19	Developing/refining a quantified “GOOT” (Growing Our Own Timber) programme and the targeted employment of our own graduates linked to clearly set out targets driven by internally identified strategic needs taking into consideration growth and targets for Disabled Staff and Students.	DVC: Academic for Academic staff and Director Human Resources for the balance
20	Developing standardised operating parameters that impact on delivery within the University’s core business.	DVC: Academic and DVC: Operations
21	Position and prepare UNIVEN for future provision of distance education by UNIVEN features during the course of the debates regarding the conversion of the University to becoming fully comprehensive.	DVC: Academic

3.6. Theme 6: Governance

Being a largely publicly funded institution imposes very clear governance requirements on the University. This is in addition to governance having a core link to transformational issues at multiple levels.

Albeit that the King III report on corporate governance excludes Universities from its intended ambit, there are certain voluntary principles and recommended practices in King III that can only serve UNIVEN well.

This is at the very least true in respect of the basic points of departure that informed King III, being (as slightly adapted for the context by for example replacing the word “company” with “organisation” where applicable):

- 1. Good governance is essentially about effective leadership. Leaders should rise to the challenges of modern governance. Such leadership is characterised by the ethical values of responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency and based on moral duties that find expression in the concept of Ubuntu. Responsible leaders direct organisational strategies and operations with a view to achieving sustainable economic, social and environmental performance.*
- 2. Sustainability is the primary moral and economic imperative of the 21st century. It is one of the most important sources of both opportunities and risks for organisations. Nature, society, and organisations are interconnected in complex ways that should be understood by decision-makers. Most importantly, current incremental changes towards sustainability are not sufficient - we need a fundamental shift in the way organisations ... act and organise themselves.*
- 3. The concept of corporate citizenship which flows from the fact that the organisation is a person and should operate in a sustainable manner. Sustainability considerations are rooted in the South African Constitution which is the basic social contract that South Africans have entered into. The Constitution imposes responsibilities upon individuals and juristic persons for the realisation of the most fundamental rights.*

As is clear from the above, transformational imperatives are thus clearly intertwined with the King III principles and should be taken into account in all governance activities and decisions that impact on UNIVEN. Kohler (2005) proposed an approximate definition of (good) higher education governance as:

“That institutional set-up and those processes at strategic level of both higher education and research institutions and of national and international systems which are concerned with the identification, validation, and realisation of those prerequisites and consequences and of that culture and those steering devices which pertain to institutional autonomy and individual freedom in their contexts with public responsibility of the institution to be governed, and which must be described and developed for the sake of maintaining and enhancing benefits with regard to the well-being of individuals and society, traditional academic values and objectives, quality and quality assurance, institutional positioning, effectiveness and efficiency of mass higher education and advanced research in democratic societies based on expert competence, on inclusion and participation, on the rule of law, on the freedom of ethically responsible individuals, and on mutual respect and – to add the notion of “good” governance to the definition of governance of higher education as such – serves these objectives best and at least to an optimum of compromise between conflicting aims and devices.”

Albeit that this definition may at first glance appear longwinded, it is certainly comprehensive and helpful within the ambit of transformation.

The primary governance body of UNIVEN is obviously Council, with Senate and the Institutional Forum being the next tier governance bodies, the first with a focused academic mandate and the second having a different focus that is largely transformational.

The intended transformational focus of the Institutional Forum (IF) is set out clearly in the Higher Education Act (and echoed in the UNIVEN statute), in that the IF must inter alia advise Council on:

- race and gender equity policies;
- the selection of candidates for senior management positions;
- codes of conduct, mediation and dispute resolution procedures; and
- the fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning; ...
- as well as “...perform such functions as determined by the council.”

The specific sub-themes that presented themselves under the Governance theme during the development of the Integrated Transformation Plan were specifically:

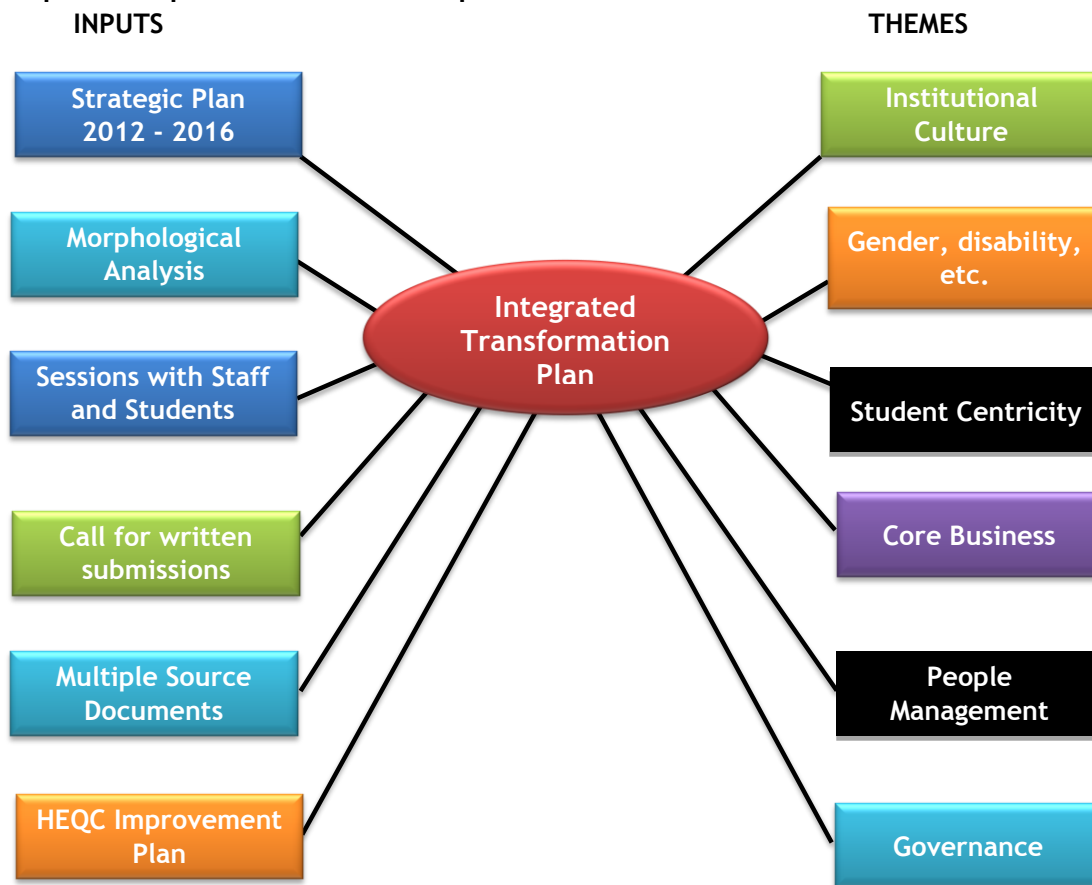
- The functionality of the IF
- Clarifying and strengthening of the Role of Council
- Consistency of Policy Implementation/Monitoring of Policy Compliance and the Enforcement thereof
- The possibility of creating a transformation oversight & compliance forum
- The efficiency and effectiveness of Senate (as already touched upon in recommendation #5 of the 2011 HEQC audit and thus not further addressed here)

Against this background, the specific objectives as set under the Governance theme are as follows:

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
22	Create an effective IF by undertaking an independent external assessment of the current state of functionality of the IF be performed and that a report on the outcomes, along with recommendations, be presented to Council.	Vice Chancellor and Principal
23	Ensure Council members understand the role and responsibilities of the Council through an “indaba” or team building event. Establish a clear understanding of the oversight monitoring role of Council regarding Consistency of Policy Implementation / Monitoring of Policy Compliance and the Enforcement. Establish a clear understanding of the monitoring role of Council regarding transformation oversight & monitoring of compliance with the Integrated Transformation Plan.	Chairperson of Council

#	OBJECTIVE	ACCOUNTABLE
24	Amalgamate objectives 20 and 21 to become the envisaged oversight role of a reconstituted and/or re-invigorated Institutional Forum. This may also be tied into the thoughts captured under section 4 of the plan relating to the capacity to implement.	Chairperson of Council

3.7. Graphical Depiction of the Development of the Six Transformation Themes



Please note that the six themes as depicted above are in a random order.

4. Change Navigation Capability for Implementing Transformation Theme Objectives

The capability of organisations to implement any of their planning can often be the differentiator between success and failure. This certainly applies to the Integrated Transformation Plan, hence this section.

Change capability is the ability of an organisation to plan, design, and implement all types of change efficiently with committed stakeholders, causing minimal negative impacts on people and operations, so that desired business and cultural results from change are consistently achieved and integrated seamlessly into operations to deliver maximum return on investment (ROI). Successful transformation thus requires organisational capability to navigate the following dimensions in a systemic and integrated manner:

- **Content of change:** The original focus of the change (in this case the various transformation themes as highlighted in section 3).
- **Process of change:** The way in which the transformation journey is planned, designed and implemented; how it unfolds.

- **People's reactions to change:** The way that people's mindsets, emotional reactions, degree of involvement, acceptance, commitment, and cultural dynamics impacting the change either enhance or undermine what the content element seeks to achieve.

The following are the most common strategies in developing change management capability as a strategic discipline:

- **Strategic Change Agenda:** Identifying and managing an organisational change agenda.
- **Common Change Methodology:** Having one common change process methodology - a practical, integrated model of change incorporating transformational, transitional and developmental methodologies and tools that become a discipline.
- **Change Infrastructure:** Establishing a change infrastructure, including change leaders able to initiate change, understand the dynamics of profound change and able to respond appropriately - managing the inevitable conflict, engaging the knowledge, spirit and heart of people to support and drive change. This also includes a cadre of change agents able to inform, enable and support change initiatives at all levels.
- **Change Centre of Excellence:** Building a strategic change centre of excellence for all change practitioners and developing a cadre of competent change specialists able to facilitate and inform transformational and transitional change
- **Strategic Change Office:** Creating a strategic change office.
- **Building Change Resilience:** An on-going process of initiatives to develop change resilience and capability.

Change capability is one of the key conditions of success that UNIVEN needs to be built in order to lay a sound platform for sustainable implementation. There is however also other key conditions for successful transformation, namely:

- The whole UNIVEN shares a common vision of the desired state and how it will produce the required results.
- Leadership presents a unified front in support of the transformation objectives.
- Leaders consistently and visibly support efforts to achieve the successful implementation of the Integrated Transformation Plan.
- The reward system directly reinforces support for the change process and the desired state.
- Timelines and commitments are honoured or publicly altered to ensure leadership credibility.
- Appropriate time and resources is allocated for designing, planning, and implementing the change.
- The ongoing engaging and alignment of direct stakeholders. Communication is frequent, accurate and multi-directional.
- Surfacing issues or concerns that may block success are welcomed and expected. A learning-oriented, problem-solving climate is encouraged.
- Leaders are models of the mindset and behavioural changes required by a transformed UNIVEN in order to ensure the successful implementation, not only of the letter of the Integrated Transformation Plan, but also of the spirit of the plan.

From a leadership perspective, the following five tracks of development may be developed:

- **Track 1: Change leadership breakthrough:** This first track addresses the being arena - mindset, behaviour, and style, and what is required at a personal level to lead the transformational journey at UNIVEN successfully. It delves into the values espoused by leadership and the behaviours and work practices that reflect those values and create the desired change.
- **Track 2: Change leadership commitment and alignment:** This track ensures that the leaders, individually and collectively, understand the full implications of what UNIVEN's transformation entails, how to lead it, and what is required of them to ensure success of the change.
- **Track 3: Change leadership education and methodology:** This track provides the majority of the knowing and doing requirements of conscious transformation. It is aimed at educating the leaders about the models, skills, tools and templates for planning, overseeing and course correcting the transformation effort. Where the Personal Change track focuses on the internal dynamics of the leadership need to "be" to succeed, this track teaches them what they need to "do," and how to do it successfully.
- **Track 4: Change Team development:** This track develops the team building process required to ensure that each of the leadership members are aligned behind the transformation and are performing well.
- **Track 5: Individual development plans:** The purpose of this track is to optimise the development of each of the leadership members. It may include further education, coaching, or mentoring for any or all of the leaders in support of the objectives of each of the other four tracks. Each leadership team member identifies and acquires the support needed to sustain their personal change, change skill development, and team performance so they can walk the talk of the transformation, behaviourally model the desired culture, and lead the critical transformation activities.

Against this background, the specific objectives as set under Change Capability are to be found in Annexure D (Objectives 34 through 37).

5. Conclusion

All direct stakeholders in the University are invited and actively encouraged to join in the exciting transformation journey that is lying ahead.

Organisational change requires a critical mass of stakeholders to be in support, and it is only by enrolling as many individual and collective stakeholders as possible in the various transformational efforts and initiatives that the University can hope to ultimately achieve the various objectives as set out in this Integrated Transformation Plan.

6. Recommendation

The Human Resources Committee is requested to approve the Integrated Transformation Plan of UNIVEN in principle as a base and guideline document to guide the Management of UNIVEN in attaining its transformation objectives in an effective and efficient way.

The Audit Committee is requested to note the Integrated Transformation Plan of UNIVEN which serves in as a base and guideline document to guide the Management of UNIVEN in attaining its transformation objectives in an effective and efficient way.

Compiled by: Laetoli Consultants with variety of documentation inputs from Univen

Submitted by _____

Date: _____

Director: Human Resources

Recommended by: _____

Date: _____

Deputy Vice Chancellor: Operations

Approved for Submission to Human Resources Committee: _____

Vice Chancellor and Principal

Date: _____