

**PROGRESS REPORT 2018:  
TRANSFORMATION AND ALIGNMENT GOALS**

Office of the DVC TL

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## 1 Introduction

One of the five long term goals of the NWU Strategy is to promote excellent learning and teaching and to reposition the NWU to attain the size and shape required by market direction decisions. These goals lie at the heart of the core business of the Office of the DVC TL and the newly implemented eight Faculty structure. As an institution we are committed to continuously monitor and improve on the scope of our academic offering and on the quality and excellence in our teaching and learning activities to further improve student access and success in pursuit of our commitment to transformation, social justice and an excellent student experience for all who call the NWU their home.

Transformation and alignment of standards within the NWU context is inextricably linked to the following issues:

- social justice and cultural inclusivity,
- quality of the student experience,
- excellence in teaching, learning, research and community engagement,
- relevance and alignment of our academic offerings,
- responsiveness to environmental, economic and political changes, and
- being relevant to the current and future needs of the communities we serve.

Over the past five years the NWU has worked with diligence to start addressing the above issues. We are by no means yet where we want to be. We are still very much in the process of transforming – grappling with issues, amongst others, such as the decolonisation of our curricula while ensuring that our curricula remain internationally relevant, creating the appropriate space for the student voice to be heard to enhance a culture of caring and support, finding the perfect blend between face-to-face and technology-mediated learning, ensuring a language policy that benefits our cultural diverse student and staff body, listening to industry, alumni and other external stakeholders to enhance the work-readiness of our graduates – ultimately all to the benefit of our internal and our external stakeholders.

Of note, and a motivating factor as we progress with this process of transformation and alignment, is the fact that the international QS Intelligence Unit who provides universities world-wide with expert analysis on quality performance metrics in the higher education context, has recently rated the NWU with 5 stars for excellence in the following categories: Teaching, Employability of graduates, Facilities and Innovation.

The following are a few more specific indicators as to the NWU's commitment to the two specific issues that were raised by the SRC: transformation and alignment of a) NWU curricula, and b) the student experience.

## 2 Alignment and transformation of the academic offering and the student experience across campuses: a University perspective

### 2.1 Faculty integrated teaching and learning plans

The NWU is committed to the transformation of teaching, learning and the curriculum as part of its commitment to social justice and ensuring an equivalent quality student experience irrespective of the campus where our students choose to complete their studies. To direct and drive the transformation and quality student experience agenda, a number of initiatives have been instituted. Faculties have drafted Faculty Integrated Teaching and Learning Plans that must not only indicate the direction and focus of a faculty regarding its transformation and development agenda, but also offer valuable insights from an integrated planning perspective as to the direction the Faculty intends to take with the further enhancement of the quality and responsiveness of teaching, learning and its academic offering, the professionalization of university teaching, and the gradateness and employability of its students over the next five years. Faculties speak more to these matters later in this report.

### 2.2 Cross-campus alignment and quality enhancement

HEQSF-qualification alignment, a national project for aligning all university qualifications with the requirements of the policy principles of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), commenced in 2014 and was concluded in July 2018.

One of the key objectives of the HEQSF is to enable and ensure closer alignment of qualification standards across qualification types (e.g. bachelor's degrees, masters degrees etc.) nationally, and within each institution. It further facilitates more seamless articulation of a) one academic programme to another, and b) the transfer of students between academic programmes and between higher education institutions. In summary this elaborate and very intensive project required that the NWU align the nature and quality of its academic offerings with national standards, and across campuses to ensure the excellence and graduateness of all our students, irrespective of their choice of campus.

The alignment project also necessitated that we re-look the nature of the student experience across our three campuses. After all, the alignment of academic standards means little if the students who are the clients to benefit from the alignment, do not experience a similar enhancement in the quality of the support they need to be successful.

Over the past four years, all our academics on all our campuses engaged with this project. The incredible depth and scope of the transformation had a significant impact on the manner in which our academics across campuses work together towards ensuring even better quality and alignment from modular level up to qualification level. Not only have we re-evaluated our capacity for offering more academic programmes on more of our three campuses, but we have instituted a practice where academics across campuses can strengthen module offerings by way of team teaching. We are also driving towards the integration of more Information Communications Technology (ICT) within our academic offering to allow for more flexible learning to the benefit of our students.

From January 2019 the NWU will go forward with a completely HEQSF-aligned PQM, and will continue to work towards a completely aligned student experience in terms of quality of support and outputs as we move forward with our new organisational structure. Student success is at the heart of all that we do and we are very much aware that the student experience lays the foundation for the reputation and growth of our great institution. Therefore the alignment of our academic offering and of student support initiatives across campuses remains a critical strategic priority as we aim to provide comparable quality across all our campuses, aligning the desired NWU graduate attributes and student experiences across campuses, and promoting engagement and the sharing of resources to strengthen the quality of our teaching.

### **2.3 Educating students for the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century society**

The NWU Teaching and Learning Strategy makes clear the University's commitment to prepare its students to take full advantage of a rapidly changing world in which technology expands the borders of individuals and organisations, shapes human, social, cultural and organisational interaction on a national and global scale, and influences both the nature of work and the definition of employment. Of particular importance is preparing the youth, and especially those from marginalised communities, for sustainable engagement in meaningful and productive work. As a University we are committed to educating knowledgeable, skilled and values-driven graduates who are prepared for a rapidly changing world, and able to engage with its challenges in an authentic, innovative and critical manner, and thereby to contribute constructively to the development and preservation of South African and global society.

In the light of changing worldwide trends in education, and in order to contribute to the need for increased access and greater opportunities for lifelong learning, NWU intends to become a leading South African provider of multimodal education. By multimodal education, the NWU understands the use of the most appropriate combination of modes of delivery to offer its academic programmes, ranging from campus-based contact learning to open distance learning, or a blend of face-to-face and technology-mediated delivery. The NWU will use multiple approaches to provide its students with flexible opportunities for learning within a context of growing resource constraints nationwide, as well as changing patterns in student demand. The pedagogical approaches and forms of student support will take the profile and specific needs of students who are studying through each mode of delivery into account, and will be guided by the realities of spatial and, to a lesser extent, temporal separation in each mode of delivery.

Recent and ongoing developments in information and communication technology present NWU with significant opportunities to engage in a process of pedagogical innovation. Drawing on developments relating to educational technologies, smart computing, learning analytics and open educational resources, the University will systematically develop the capacity to engage in blended learning and other innovative teaching and learning designs.

## 2.4 Decolonisation of the curriculum

This Declaration (currently in its second draft) articulates the NWU's stance on decolonisation and its relationship to the transformation of the curriculum (teaching and learning as well as student and staff experiences). The Declaration links key policy documents (the NWU Strategy and the Teaching and Learning Strategy of the NWU), in which transformation of the curriculum is featured, to the debates concerning decolonisation of the curriculum in and beyond the University. Furthermore, the Declaration should be regarded in terms of the North-West University's commitment to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, academic excellence, social responsiveness and an ethic of care that is imbedded in an organisational culture evidenced by behaviours congruent with a transformational focus, which includes the valuing of diversity and inclusiveness, a values-based collective identity that promotes integration, participation, collaboration, innovation, joint and individual accountability, open and transparent communication, robust engagement, and academic integrity.

As soon as the Declaration has been finalised and approved by Senate and Council, the implementation of the decolonisation principles within each Faculty and academic programme will become a key focus and will necessitate continuous integrated reporting.

## 2.5 Annual gender awareness week (GAW)



Women's Month is an opportunity for the three campuses of the North-West University to focus on women and related aspirations of the NWU in terms of equity, inclusion and social justice. In 2017 Marketing and Corporate Communications profiled August by marketing a series of events organised by Faculties and the University at large to celebrate National Women's Day which commemorates the important role that women played in the struggle for freedom in South Africa. Approximately 20 000 women marched on that day to petition specifically against the country's pass laws in which race-identification, as per the Population Registration Act, was required. Since 1994 the Day as well as the Month at NWU and nationally has been marked and celebrated to focus on women in terms of achievements, continuing struggles and issues stemming from a society still characterised by patriarchy. In 2018 Corporate Relations and Marketing ran a campaign similar to the one in 2017 featuring female students and employees. This chimes into the broader USAF 2018 Common Campaign theme - social Inclusion and wellbeing.

The above plans have given rise to the institution of an annual NWU gender awareness week, of which the first took place from 2 to 8 August 2018. The purpose of this week is to promote awareness of gender in society, in the workplace, or communities and to look at how gender is represented, constructed and the

intersectionalities between, for example, gender and religion, gender and race, gender and other identity-markers (such as class), or research on gender. The GAW is one of the ways in which the NWU is making tangible its commitment to social justice through a series of events and opportunities that aspire to raise awareness and enrich our consciousness of the role that gender plays in the construction and impact of difference. Gender is also an indispensable part of who we are as people, and given that as persons we are as different as we are similar, it made sense to offer as wide a range of opportunities as possible for all our students on all three our campuses to engage in. These opportunities ranged from panel discussions on love, gender and family, art workshops, workshops on poetry, and workshops on queer theory and its implications for the creation of inclusive classrooms, to book exhibitions and a special concert celebrating LGBT and women composers.

One of the highlights was the art workshops presented by Umcebo Design that involved people creatively across the three NWU campuses, designing a single public art piece in a collaborative effort. Umcebo Design developed a 'Block Project', which saw students, community leaders and artists come together at three workshops (Vaal Campus- 3 Aug, Potchefstroom Campus- 4 Aug and Mafikeng 5 Aug 2018). During the three hour workshops, each participants was provided with a pre-cut piece of primed wood. They were requested to reflect on their own gender and broader gender issues and to then paint the blocks depicting their reflections. All the blocks were ultimately combined into a single public art piece, launched on 6 Aug at the University Gallery. The single piece is truly a work of art:



Inasmuch as the NWU recognises Women's Month or Gender Awareness Week, we also affirm our commitment to support many such initiatives, within or beyond our Faculties, involving members of the University and members of our communities. There are a plethora of actions hosted by residences on and off our campuses, student societies, research groups and community groups. All of these are recognised and supported in different ways and if gender or race, autism, poverty, land or leadership are elevated in special ways this is only to signal the University's responsiveness to the need for social change.

## 2.6 The NWU Language Policy and Plan

In 2018 the NWU undertook a language audit whereby staff and students were asked to identify languages of use, languages of preference, to describe ideas about how to develop multilingualism, and to reflect on the implications for revising the current Language Policy and Plan at the NWU. The data gathered from the survey resulted in six policy-related sets of principles to inform planning going forward:

- Principles related to designating a language of instruction according to certain requirements.
- Principles for the provision of interpreting and translation services
- Principles for the provision of parallel medium of instruction
- Principles for the provision of translanguaging in teaching and learning environments
- Principles for the provision of flagship African language programme development
- Principles for the provision of multilingualism in formal communication, meetings and events.

Details of these sets of principles are available on request. The approved language principles will take the NWU forward into a new era with regards to its recognition of the necessity for and practice of multilingualism in our particular context.

## 3 Alignment of the academic offering and the student experience across campuses: Faculty perspectives

### 3.1 Faculty of Economic and Management Science



Alignment, to ensure equivalence of offerings across sites of delivery is generally well established in those academic programmes where professional bodies play a strong role. In academic programmes where this is not the case, the concept of 'academic freedom' and individuals 'doing their own thing' sometimes result in levels of disparity in the student experience not only across campuses, but even within different modules of an academic programme on one campus. The Faculty is well aware of this, and in an effort to ensure similar quality student experiences, there is a drive to develop academic communities of practice to improve collaboration and meaningful interaction between lecturers across sites of delivery to align the offering and the student experience.

The Faculty therefore drives quality through alignment and then specifically to attain:

- an aligned excellent student experience irrespective of campus;
- quality of the academic offering in terms of;
  - Content
  - Teaching and learning practices that speak to the needs of a diverse student body
  - Assessment practices and standards

- Calculation of participation marks
- Internal and external moderators for examinations
- alignment of operational matters that may impact on teaching and learning and especially on the support and success of our students.

The Faculty is working hard on the equity of the student experience. In addition to the campuses infrastructure audit that was completed in August and that will impact planning going forward, Schools in the Faculty drive their own initiatives to enhance student experiences across campuses. One example in the School of IPS & HRM is the annual three day Human Capital Summit which is hosted by a different campus every year. All 3<sup>rd</sup> year and Honours students attend this summit on the host campus annually and are not only exposed to exhibitions from market leaders in their field of study, but also have the opportunity to engage with experts from industry and possible future employers.

## 3.2 Faculty of Education



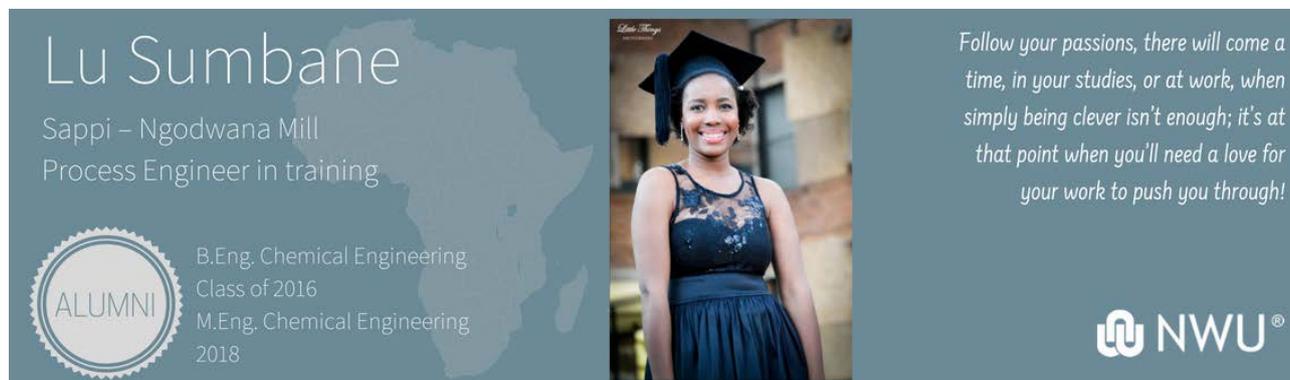
The offering of aligned or shared modules according to the needs and relevance on each campus is characterised by team teaching and aligned (shared) study guides, assessment, eFundi sites, and equal time allocation for modules and equity in terms of resources, for example human resources, equipment, venues and library budget. Staff are obliged to collaborate in terms of the quality of the programme and module offering to ensure an equivalent student learning experience. The first phase of the implementation of team teaching includes regular contact and close collaboration between lecturers on the different campuses responsible for the same module to ensure alignment of module outcomes, assignments and assessment. The second phase of the implementation of team teaching will look into the possibility to utilise white board broadcasting where time table alignment occurs. The nature and unique teaching strategies of each module will also be taken into account when decisions on team teaching in phase 2 are made. During the second phase of team teaching, selected lecturers will, where possible, rotate the presentation of the class while lecturers on the other campuses act as facilitators. Ongoing research on team teaching will be done to ensure an equal experience for students across campuses.

The appointment of fixed-term subject-group leaders and subject-group coordinators to ensure a subject-group footprint on all campuses is required to ensure the quality of the delivery of all programmes. Programme leaders and programme coordinators are tasked with the development, monitoring, evaluation and quality

enhancement of specific faculty programmes. These academic leaders are key role players to steer teaching and learning activities in the faculty

The creation and maintenance of a well-resourced teaching and learning environment, in terms of facilities and infrastructure, on a sustainable basis. Special attention should be given to the alignment of campuses in terms of infrastructure and equipment. A pressing need for laboratories for Science, Geography, Life Science, Technology, Movement Sciences and Computer Application Technology was identified and should be addressed during the next five years.

### 3.3 Faculty of Engineering



**Lu Sumbane**  
Sappi – Ngodwana Mill  
Process Engineer in training

**ALUMNI** B.Eng. Chemical Engineering  
Class of 2016  
M.Eng. Chemical Engineering  
2018



*Follow your passions, there will come a time, in your studies, or at work, when simply being clever isn't enough; it's at that point when you'll need a love for your work to push you through!*



**Adelle Coetzee**  
Impala Platinum Limited  
Group Production Manager

**ALUMNI** B.Eng.  
Extractive Metallurgy  
Class of 1996



*Engineering is the field which has the most impact on the world as we know it. As engineers, we are constantly changing the world with inventions and solutions that affect everyone's lives.*



The Faculty of Engineering currently offers all of its academic programmes at the Potchefstroom campus. The Faculty is moving towards development of opportunities for study within certain fields of Engineering at the other campuses, and has been aligning its academic offering and the student experience in all its academic programmes in the following ways:

#### Recruitment

As from 2018 the Faculty of Engineering participates in the Open Days of all three campuses. Secondly, for the annual *Femmegineering* event in March, school girls was selected (in co-operation with the Ikamva Youth programme) and transported from Mafikeng to Potchefstroom to participate in this event. Thirdly, ten first year BSc students from the Mafikeng campus were selected, based on their first year marks in Mathematics and Science, and offered a complementary invitation to the Engineering Schools week in October 2018, transport included.

#### Programme alignment

The alignment of BSc programmes, particularly between the Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses, opens up articulation possibilities from these programmes to the BEng programmes. A task team has been set up in view of the long term development of a Bachelor of Engineering Sciences programme to be offered on the Mafikeng campus. BEngSci is not the same as BEng programmes, but lends itself towards articulation between BSc and BEng programmes. This is done while taking cognisance of similar initiatives by other Engineering Faculties in South Africa.

Post graduate diplomas in Engineering is in the process of being developed (first roll-out expected in 2020), to be presented at the Vaal-campus. Specialisations positioned on Mafikeng may be possible in future but are still in the planning phases, e.g. PGDip in Industrial Engineering with Logistics or PGDip in Industrial Engineering with Agricultural processing.

Research and Innovation

The Leopards Lair competition (NWU's version of the Shark Tank) is expanded this year to the other campuses. Semi-final rounds and workshops will be held on all three campuses. The finalists will compete during the bi-annual Research and Innovation conference scheduled for November 2018.

### 3.4 Faculty of Health Sciences



#### Equity of provision: Recourses

Faculty management addressed and prioritised the equivalent provision of resources already during the 2018 budget period (planned for in 2017), although limited time was available at Faculty level for this particular budget process. Financial Planning representatives had discussions with all relevant role players in 2017 and correction & provision occurred in all 3 budget categories, namely:

- Salaries (temporary, ad hoc and permanent),
- Operational expenses
- Capital expenses

During the 2018 budget process (for implementation in 2019), further alignment of provisions were recommended by newly appointed NWU School Directors and the representative Financial Planners. All recommendations at this level were captured on the budget system and presented to management. The Faculty is awaiting the outcome of the budget requests to address the issue of equity of provision of resources.

#### Teaching and learning:

In many of the Schools in the Faculty of Health Sciences, lecturers responsible for under- and post graduate offerings were divided into module teams, with one of them in the role of module coordinator and the other 2 secondi equally responsible for quality of provision. The majority of study guides, semester tests and examination papers have been aligned from the first semester, while a small number of contextual content-related and logistical challenges remain that will be addressed as the process develops further.

Module teams are progressing towards creating one eFundi site per module, with access to students from all three campuses. Lecture capturing, podcasts and online seminars are some of the examples used in modules from the first to the third year in an attempt to improve alignment of the student experience across campuses. In the School of Psychosocial Health, the Dean and Directors met with Student representatives from Academic Student Associations on all three campuses to establish good communication channels between management and the student body. Student reps are included in subject group, school and intercampus meetings. In the others schools (e.g. Human Movement Sciences, CHPE), the programme leaders from the different sites of delivery are working closely together to ensure aligned student experiences.

### Research:

Research and innovation (including post graduate programmes) are run within research entities. Research entities function across campuses and faculties and all post graduate programmes in the Faculty are aligned. In the Faculty of Health Sciences, especially in Nursing Sciences and also in Psychology and Social Work, incorporation of staff members from all three campuses into research entities have been achieved, following the NWU restructuring. The niche area Lifestyle Diseases is mainly functioning on the Mafeking site of delivery and we are currently in the process of revisiting and rethinking the aim and scope thereof. All other research entities are functioning well and have aligned programmes and are focusing on high quantity as well as quality research outputs in collaboration with our postgraduate students.

### 3.5 Faculty of Humanities

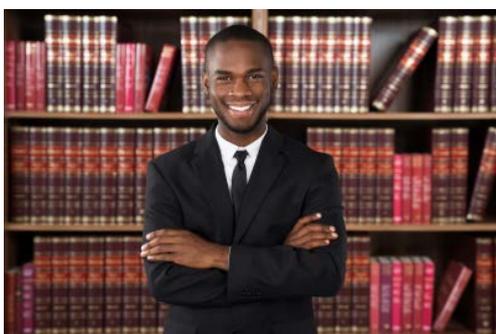


As a Faculty, through our six schools, we have made enormous progress toward curriculum alignment across our three campuses. Our focal point being to prioritise undergraduate programmes, specifically first and second year programmes. The Faculty has ensured that academic staff across campuses collaborate and work as a team to ensure the alignment of programmes and progress towards the alignment of teaching and learning practices in modules across campuses. This includes the review of programmes and ensuring that the course/programme materials are the same across campuses. Programmes provided by the Faculty of Humanities have been restructured and aligned and this has served to improve both efficiency and quality in the six schools in the faculty.

The faculty accentuates the development of generic and aligned academic programmes as opposed to competing programmes with diverse curricula across campuses. Through the consolidation of academic programmes it is self-evident that a major step in the alignment process was completed. In the next phase we will continue to work on team teaching to improve even more on the equity in student experience. The faculty has thus accepted a clear stance to terminate potential competition of programmes across campuses. The Faculty continues to emphasise the importance of communication between members of the academic staff to ensure that programmes and most importantly time slots on the timetables are seamless on all campuses to cater for students who move from one campus to the other. Additionally, subject chairs and or coordinators in various schools are required to ensure that module outcome, assessments (including dates) are the same and correspond on all campuses to fortify student equity and promote the quality of teaching and learning. Study guides have also been rolled out into the university online system (eFundi), and this has cemented academic engagement with alignment as well as student equity of experience on all campuses. The Faculty is ensuring

that Schools offer common exam papers, specifically for introductory modules in the first and second year levels. Although there are still challenges to alignment, there are schools that have shown major progression, such as the School of Philosophy, Communication and the School of Social Sciences.

### 3.6 Faculty of Law



Prior to 2017 law had been taught on the three campuses of the NWU in two separate Faculties of Law (Mafikeng and Potchefstroom), and also in the Faculties of Humanities and Economic Sciences and Information Technology (Vaal campus), where the law programmes were administered by the Subject Group: Law. Each of the separate Faculties had its own management structures and each reported to its own campus management. The new unitary structure for the NWU (since 2017) with only one Faculty of Law, allows for better planning and implementation that will result in achieving the same standard with regard to the quality of teaching and learning delivered at the different delivery sites.

#### Student experiences

The Faculty endeavours to ensure that students have similar teaching and learning experiences across campuses. As far as the following aspects are concerned, we can report that it is in fact the case:

- A single application and placement process is applied on all 3 sites of delivery.
- The revised curricula of all the programmes which are offered by the Faculty are aligned across campuses.
- The same learning materials (with a few exceptions) are prescribed in all modules across campuses.
- Equal contact time is allocated on the time table across all campuses for all aligned modules.
- Team Teaching ensures that students share more or less the same experience as far as the delivery of modules are concerned.
- The use of technology facilitates interaction between lecturers and students across campuses.
- From 2017 all summative assessments are identical across campuses while at least one test per semester is aligned in the case of semester modules, while all tests are aligned in the case of year modules. Students are given access to their marked examination scripts. Rules on academic honesty are enforced and care is taken to ensure and protect the integrity of the assessment process.
- Examination papers of under- and postgraduate modules are moderated by one internal moderator for each module (moderators are appointed from all campuses).
- Student transfers between campuses are allowed provided the request meets the Faculty guidelines in this regard.
- The faculty undertook particular interventions in order to stimulate interactions between students across campuses. Across campus student seminars are scheduled throughout the semester with the aim to

inculcate values associated with transformative constitutionalism.

- Students participate in moot court and mock trial competitions across campuses. In cases where teams enrol for national competitions, only one team, whose members are chosen from students across campuses, represents the faculty. The competition succeeds not only in developing lawyering skills, but also to create camaraderie and forge bonds between students from different year groups across all NWU campuses. Participants describe the experience as 'life-changing'.
- The success of the mock trial competition serves as point of departure for the envisaged annual student seminars. It is a concerted effort by the Faculty to ensure broader interaction between students of the three NWU campuses. These curriculum-embedded workshops, focus on topics covered in a particular module, taking into account the constitutional values and those of the NWU, including human dignity, equality and freedom, ethics in all endeavours, academic integrity, academic freedom and freedom of scientific research, responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency, and embracing diversity. Modules identified, provide scope to address social justice issues in view of the preceding values.

Through team teaching and mentorship across campuses we aim to:

- promote cooperation, build capacity and strengthen (cross-campus) collegial relationships;
- ensure alignment, facilitate staff development and ensure increased interaction and collaboration between staff and more specifically subject groups;
- develop principles and practices associated with team teaching, which will ultimately ensure parity in curriculum delivery and will ensure that the student experiences on the different campuses are comparable.
- establish a culture of team teaching that will promote cooperation at the most basic level, ensure that all lecturers are involved in the development of a renewed pedagogy, that will benefit students. Team teaching will also lead to capacity building across campuses, as junior academics will directly benefit from the experience and input of more senior and experienced academics in the same module.
- to provide high quality teaching and learning, improved access and success, curriculum renewal, delivering graduates who are uniquely prepared for responsible citizenship and innovative and creative professional careers by an enabling learning environment. This approach will also address the recommendations of the CHE in the 2017 Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) NWU Report, with respect to the enhancement of linkages between staff on different campuses and the promotion of a scholarly approach to teaching.
- bring together lecturers responsible for delivering a particular module during workshops to decide upon a team teaching strategy for the particular module. This should include reflection on their pedagogy, consideration of their method of curriculum delivery (for example the use of blended learning), lecturing across campuses, classroom activities, approach to, and methods of assessment.

Student support

- (a) Tutor and mentor system: The Faculty ensures an integrated, flexible and accessible student support network that includes, but is not limited to, mentoring, tutoring and SI facilitation. Since the beginning of 2018, and as result of the recommendations by die CHE in their LLB report, a tutor system for first years has been developed and implemented on all three campuses as an additional mechanism to provide context specific academic support to law students. Currently the tutor programme is only implemented at first year level, but the possibility to expand it to other year levels as well, will be investigated. Furthermore, the Faculty also implemented a peer mentoring programme for all first year students. Mentors are senior students who assist with the transition from secondary school to university and are normally assigned to first-year students in similar programmes than themselves. The programme offers mentees the opportunity to also voice non-academic problems (like financial difficulties).
- (b) Identification of students at risk: Project one of the UCDP focuses on activities linked to enhance student support and development underpinned by the graduate attributes of ensuring responsible citizenship and achieving success in the workplace. Activities aimed at the retention of students are well-established at the University, but obvious shortcomings have been identified, such as a well-structured First-years' Experience and an Early Warning Identification and Referral System. The timely identification and intervention of at-risk students and the use of learner and learning analytics will receive attention.
- (c) Faculty student support officer and focused research on indicators for law students' success and dropout: an application for NWU strategic funding has been granted in terms of which the faculty will appoint a dedicated member of staff, called a student support officer, attached to the Faculty of Law, functioning across all three campuses at the NWU, to be involved with and responsible for:

- conducting personal interviews with all first-year students in 2018 to determine support needs, refer them to appropriate professional support departments and to conduct follow-up interviews;
- monitoring law students' progress in order to identify obstacles and recommend possible interventions; identifying obstacles pertinent to specific year groups and/or law modules;
- proposing and implementing interventions to address obstacles in a specific programme, year group, law module and/or site of delivery in consultation with relevant role players and management of the Faculty of Law;

*(d) Extended Programme:* The admission requirements for the LLB for 2018 have been increased to an APS count of 28 and from 2019 it will be 30. An extended LLB programme will be introduced in 2019 to ensure equitable access. An important aspect regarding this programme is that it will contain certain foundational modules which are intended to enable students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds to acquire the academic foundations necessary for succeeding in higher education.

### **Communication platforms that are student friendly**

Besides the *ex officio* Faculty Board membership of the chairpersons of the Law Student Councils at each NWU campus, the level, nature and intensity of interaction between Faculty management and student representatives differed according to campuses and personal styles and preferences of those involved. A lack of structured interaction with Faculty management was identified as a key need during focus group discussions with students. It was decided that the chairpersons of the Law Students' Councils at each NWU site will, as from September 2017, be invited to interact with the FMC at the beginning of its monthly meetings and to table matters for discussion. A comment facility will be created on the Faculty website, where anybody may raise any suggestion, compliment or concern.

### Physical resources

The physical learning environment can constrain or enable the nature and quality of teaching and learning. The provision of physical spaces, equipment and technology for teaching and learning is planned and resourced at University level. Decisions about what is provided, when, where and why need to be guided by an institution's teaching and learning strategy. The current position regarding the said resources required for effective teaching and learning in the Faculty's programmes can be set out as follow:

- Lecture venues:* although resource allocation in the form of teaching venues and media equipment is generally achieved at a satisfactory level on all campuses, there is a specific need for smaller venues that can be used for tutorials and group discussions. There are also specific concerns about assessment venues, because very often the teaching venues are actually too small for the class and are not suitable for assessment. There are insufficient large venues to properly accommodate large groups during assessments. Furthermore, there is a shortage of offices for staff at all three campuses as well as at the Community Law Centre at MC and the Law Clinic at PC.
- Internet access* is in principle available on all NWU sites of delivery in most lecture halls, libraries, computer laboratories, and in some select areas also through Wi- Fi. However, internet access is not always reliable, and not all venues have access thereto.
- Audio-visual equipment:* Lecture venues on all campuses are furnished with a range of equipment, including computers, DVD players, data projectors, document cameras, and microphones. Additional accessible electrical plugs should be provided in venues to enable students to recharge their electronic devices such as laptops.
- eFundi:* The eFundi system is used in all modules in all of the Faculty's programmes. Lecturers and students share the same eFundi sites where modules are being presented across campuses. The majority of the functions on eFundi used are similar across the campuses. The differences in the options used may be attributed to lecturer autonomy and preference.
- Study material:* Modules forming part of our programmes are presented primarily by way of contact sessions on all campuses. The content used to present the modules are aligned across campuses and is available to the students in the following forms (which is aligned across campuses): study guide, prescribed textbooks, academic articles published in law journals, as well as law reports, legislation and reserved reading material. Certain modules require of the lecturer to facilitate the development of course content specifically for the purposes of the module with the specific aim of aiding students in the learning process and guide them through the learning cycle to effectively retain and apply the learning in a

relevant context. This includes text, video, audio, or any other material necessary. The production of study material is done with the support of CTL as well as colleagues who are experts in the specific subject fields and/or subject heads and it is shared amongst students across delivery sites.

### Staffing

At the Vaal and Mafikeng sites of delivery understaffing was identified as a major problem, but the Faculty has taken steps to remedy this situation. New positions have been applied for and granted by the NWU management. Some of the positions have already been advertised and new appointments will be made in the immediate future. It remains a problem to attract suitably qualified senior academics to MC, while the issue of high staff turnover remains a risk, especially at the Mafikeng campus. The main hurdle seems to be the remuneration level at which applicants are placed in their current positions of employment.

As far as staff development is concerned, the Faculty aspires to develop staff to be open-minded, critical thinkers who respect diversity, act ethically and are high performing individuals. In realising these aspirations:

- Capacity building workshops are frequently presented which deal with a wide range of topics, e.g. research supervision, facilitation techniques, the use of technology in the classroom relevant to the enhancement of the blended learning and ODL environment, programme design and review processes, assessment tools and methods, curriculum development, designing interactive study guides including e- guides, writing articles, and the use of anti-plagiarism or plagiarism detection software;
- A staff development plan (including agreement on targets, capacity building, mentorship and provision for study leave) spanning a seven-year cycle, is being developed.
- A workload module that allows for the identification of needs and staff development opportunities within a strategic framework to fulfil these needs is in place for 2018 (reduction of workload and provision of study leave to those pursuing LLD/PHDs as per the approved study leave policy);
- a system of mentoring is in place by which senior staff members can assist in the academic and personal development of staff. This initiative should address some of the issues experienced by staff.

### Enrolment planning

The Faculty of Law determines the number of students admitted to its academic programmes, taking into consideration (1) the targets set by the NWU Annual Performance Plan and Strategic Plan 2016 - 2025 for access of first-time entering undergraduates for each faculty, which include targets aimed at attaining an equitable staff and student profile to offer students the best possible support, (2) the availability of staff and facilities needed to manage such programmes and offer opportunities for student success for all, and (3) financial targets, infrastructure development and campus specific capacities. It should also be mentioned here that the NWU intends to reposition itself to attain the size and shape (field of study) required by the market direction decisions with a priority on growing Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) and Commerce at each site. However, the NWU's goal will not influence the intake of law students and only slight amendments to the enrolment plan is currently foreseen (each organisational unit in the Faculty already has specific approved enrolment planning regarding first-time entrants for the period up to 2019).

The student body of the Faculty of Law is increasingly becoming more diverse across all sites of delivery. The respective equity targets are progressively being met. As far as gender equity is concerned, equity targets have been reached and no interventions are required. Although racial equity targets have not been reached yet, the Faculty aspires to reach its equity targets in the near future. The racial equity targets at PC increase progressively and recruitment and placement practices are designed to ensure that these targets will soon be met. The Faculty has demonstrated its commitment to increase the number of equity entrants to the law programmes. PC has traditionally served the Afrikaans market and although this market segment should be retained, language should not be a barrier to access or success. As a result, PC Law has implemented functional dual medium instruction from 2017.

### 3.7 Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



The Faculty Integrated Teaching and Learning Plan provides details of the direction and focus of the Faculty. The first imperative of the new unitary faculty was to align academic programmes. This was a very large task that was undertaken from 2016 to 2018. Members of departments across the campuses planned together the new aligned programmes, which were incorporated into the 2018 Faculty Yearbook, and are being phased in from first year in 2018. There are still programmes which are only offered on one campus, but when programmes are offered on more than one campus, they are aligned. Future plans will need to address the introduction of existing programmes on additional campuses. In the first instance there is a need to get equity in existing aligned programmes. Modules in the new programmes are aligned in terms of content and outcomes. However, there are many challenges to full alignment. Some of these, which are currently receiving attention, are staff, infrastructure and equipment, and student experience.

Extended programmes are offered only on MC and VTC. Thus there are plans to introduce these programmes on PC in order to broaden access on that campus. Extending mathematics and statistics to honours and masters levels on the Vaal campus is an ongoing challenge, but we see this as a future growth-point for the faculty.

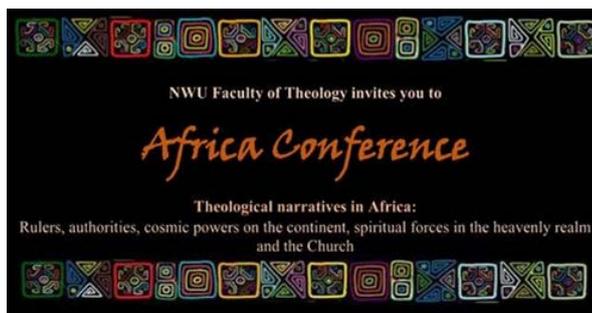
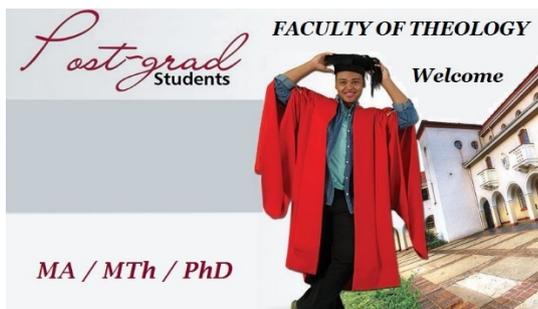
Of particular importance to the TL Strategy is preparing students, and especially those from marginalised communities, for sustainable engagement in meaningful and productive work. The Faculty is committed to educating knowledgeable, skilled and values-driven graduates who are prepared for a rapidly changing world, and able to engage with its challenges in an authentic, innovative and critical manner, and thereby to contribute constructively to the development and preservation of South African and global society.

The focus of innovative teaching and learning designs is always on the enhancement of the student learning experience and transforming pedagogical practices, improving effectiveness and ensuring efficient support. The Faculty will further explore the different modalities of learning and the range of methodologies and technologies that are available to increase students' understanding and skills, taking into account different disciplinary contexts, qualification levels, student profiles and modes of delivery. It is recognised that incorporating technology into a blended learning or other learning design may not be appropriate in all contexts, due to the nature of knowledge and the curriculum in specific disciplines, and/ or due to the personal circumstances of students, including access to technology and socio-economic factors.

Teaching and learning is a core function of the university, and other core functions, like research, play an important role in renewing and transforming curricula as this informs focus in workplaces and practice, and thus ensures curriculum relevance.

Students who are studying aligned programmes across campuses need opportunities to interact with one another in order to broaden their experience of the curriculum. This is more feasible at Honours level than at undergraduate level, due to class size. At Honours level students may travel from one campus to another to interact with each other. Joint workshops and research days could be held, where students present their research projects. Video conferencing and lectures are also feasible at Honours level. Undergraduate students may interact with each other through eFundi discussion forums and chat rooms.

### 3.8 Faculty of Theology



During 2017 and 2018 the Faculty has worked diligently to align all academic programmes that are offered across our three campuses. One of the strategies that the Faculty is employing to make certain that the student learning experience within the core modules of the different programmes are aligned, is team teaching – a strategy where the module owner, irrespective of his/her campus locality - presents the module on all the campuses via the whiteboard and the eFundi learning platform for that module.

The Faculty has done away with all hardcopy study guides and has aligned all module information and study guidance via the eFundi online learning platform to ensure that every student receives similar communications and equal study guidance. Students can thus also not be confused as regards to the learning outcomes that they are expected to master. Although the Faculty is very excited about this development, it is clear from student feedback (and a number of staff comments) that there are still some teething problems for all to get used to this novel way in which the NWU learning management system is utilised to promote alignment of the learning experience, and indeed to use Faculty capacity in the most advantageous manner.

## 4 Curriculum transformation: Faculty perspectives

### 4.1 Faculty of Economic and Management Science

Continuous curriculum development is facilitated by following a lifecycle of reviewing existing academic programmes to make sure that they are still relevant, responsive to student and industry needs, and sustainable, and retiring or phasing out those that are not. A new initiative that is in its planning phases is the utilisation of advisory committees with representatives from industry and other key stakeholders to benchmark and ensure that regulatory requirements, industry needs and transformational necessities are addressed on an ongoing basis. All sites of delivery where academic programmes are offered must collaborate to review and re-develop modules of academic programmes that are aligned.

Innovative teaching and learning with technology is a strong developmental focus for the Faculty going forward. The development of new and the re-engineering of current academic programmes are part of the planning that is spelt out in the Faculty Integrated TL Plan.

As part of the Integrated Teaching and Learning Strategy, the Faculty is planning different workshops on *inter alia* the decolonisation of the curriculum for the 2019 academic year. The following workshops are planned:

- Staff workshop on decolonisation to ensure a common understanding amongst staff
- Student workshop on decolonisation to incorporate student views and to offer students the opportunity to engage with the curriculum
- A workshop with an external expert on decolonisation and Africanisation of curricula with a view to assist the Faculty with an operational plan on incorporating these important constructs into appropriate modules of our academic offering.

### 4.2 Faculty of Education

In support of the NWU's commitment to the transformation of the curriculum as part of its commitment to social justice, the Faculty has compiled an integrated faculty teaching and learning plan (FITLP) to map our way towards achieving excellence in teaching and learning. This was done to take up the challenges of the 21st century in preparation of our graduates in becoming engaged professionals and leaders in society. This plan

is undergirded by the tenets of transformation, self-directed learning (SDL) and multimodal learning in the quest to satisfy the expectations of 21st-century learners and the fourth industrial revolution in South Africa.

The Faculty conceptualises a vision for innovative teaching-learning renewal in terms of curriculum transformation (which includes decolonisation of the curriculum) by embedding and promoting diversity and our strategic priorities with respect to SDL and multimodal learning. This vision originated from a report compiled by a task team and an expert from another university who proposed guidelines for the inclusion of diversity in the curriculum (Du Preez et al., 2012), and the work done by the Edu-Jet task team under the leadership of Prof Robert Balfour (NWU, 2016a). Recommendations were detailed at a systemic or a university level, a curriculum level and an extracurricular level and divided into short-, medium- and long-term actions. These recommendations are attempts to guide curriculum development in the faculty so that diversity, transformation and multimodal learning can be included across the curriculum. The faculty is in the process of exploring and planning how to address the national call for decolonisation of higher education.

Curriculum transformation is also envisioned in terms of SDL. SDL will have implications for module design, the role of the student will change from a traditional role to that of a self-directed learner, taking responsibility for their own learning, and the lecturer's role as a facilitator, and guidance and emphasised. The idea of SDL is that the curriculum leads to the development of increasingly sophisticated levels of SDL as students' progress from the first-year-level to exit-level modules.

Furthermore, blended learning as a strategic focus will transform the curriculum in terms of integrating complementary teaching and learning approaches and technologies. The redesigning of the structure of and approach to teaching and learning will lead to a richer and more accessible teaching-learning experience and graduates who can perform in a technology-driven world. It will also assist in creating the same learning experience for students enrolling in a contact and in a distance mode.

Thirdly, a new initiative that faculty will be presenting is that of an integrated approach of collective cooperation (team teaching) among academics. Team teaching will ensure that students have the same learning experience regardless of the campus where they enrol. Fifthly, another new initiative is student academic advising, to mentor and support students and to guide students towards success.

From a research perspective, staff academic mentoring to strengthen the research culture in the faculty and to support research in career development will receive priority and will be reflected in academics' 8-year career plans and a faculty research mentorship plan. Also from a research perspective, significant transformation of teaching and learning requires an emphasis on the SoTL. Faculty management encourages research on effective teaching and learning through SoTL projects, and academic staff will be supported in terms of SoTL projects in their striving for the improvement of teaching and learning. Various examples of SoTL projects in the faculty are available. In addition, the faculty encourages academic contributions to the annual SoTL conference of the NWU in terms of papers delivered and discussions led.

Finally, the faculty has a critical view of service-learning that "must emphasise the skills, knowledge and experiences required of students to not only participate in communities, but to transform them as engaged and active citizens" (Mitchell, 2008:52). This implies that service-learning should contribute towards learning and development, not only of students, but of the community members involved. This is difficult to do within WIL in the Faculty of Education, where the focus is on assessing the student's ability to teach. For this reason it is recommended that each programme incorporate a service-learning opportunity within a model that all students take. In other words, each student who graduates with a BEd should have completed one service-learning opportunity within the four years of study. Critical service-learning encourages deep critical reflection on the part of the student on attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviour so that they form personal and professional identities that enable them to engage critically with reality beyond their own narrow life experiences, questioning the inequalities in the world that surrounds them. It prepares them to live and work effectively and humanely in diverse contexts. As such it also contributes to transformation of the curriculum and integration of diversity.

### **4.3 Faculty of Engineering**

The Faculty of Engineering fully supports the notion of curriculum transformation to accommodate decolonisation and Africanisation of the engineering program. In an effort to be a forerunner in this field, the faculty already started in 2017 with the planning of a total curriculum transformation programme in conjunction with the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), with a strong focus also on student-centeredness. The

Faculty is committed to the continuous and necessary training and development of university teaching skills under the auspices of the CTL, which will enable academics to better understand and cater for the learning needs of their students, to understand and implement curriculum transformation to further improve the student learning experience, the application of decolonisation and Africanisation in an Engineering context, and the development of multimodal module presentations to the benefit of students.

The Faculty of Engineering's curriculum transformation plan focuses on equipping the academic staff members to redevelop each module owned by the Faculty within the boundaries of the overarching requirements of the ECSA. The plan has kicked off in June 2018, with the last training session in December 2020. All module transformation is expected to be complete by 2021, where after the process will be repeated cyclically to ensure that the curricula of the academic offering stay relevant and responsive to the needs and requirements of internal and external stakeholders.

The Faculty does not envisage difficulty with implementing a decolonised approach in to the curriculum. Engineering is based on laws of nature that are unchangeable regardless of background, social upbringing, economic class and/or religion. Therefore decolonisation and Africanisation will mostly be focused on the application of these laws in a known environment applicable to student background and paradigms. Reducing exposure to Western world paradigms currently used in the engineering application and broadening world views with a goal to addressing Africa's specific problems will aid in addressing shortcomings.

Scholarship of teaching and learning contributes to a great extent to informed, replicable, efficient and sustainable curriculum transformation as well as the transformation of teaching and learning in the broader sense. The facilitation and enhancement of and professional development awards scholarship of teaching and learning are some of the objectives of the envisaged Centre for Engineering Education. The Centre for Engineering Education will be a support and development centre to the benefit of staff and students alike, with the goal to ultimately enhance the quality of teaching to ensure even greater student success.

#### **4.4 Faculty of Health Sciences**

The Faculty of Health Sciences is committed to curriculum transformation and will engage in a systematic process of curriculum transformation and renewal in order to equip graduates to address the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century society. This will be done by ensuring that the academic programmes are coherently designed, intellectually credible and relevant, by pursuing the following strategies:

- Appropriate balance between professional and general-formative programmes to meet national needs.
- Students should receive an in-depth orientation to the field of study, and a broad understanding of contemporary societal challenges.
- Curricula should provide an orientation to various paradigms of thought and explanatory systems including indigenous systems so that students and graduates are introduced to different intellectual traditions, and are also able to substantiate their worldview and the principles that inform their conduct.
- Design of academic programmes should support the learning styles and needs of a diverse student body, by involving students in a range of individual and collaborative learning and assessment activities, so that they can engage as learners who progressively assume responsibility for their own learning.
- In keeping with the NWU graduate attributes, curricula are designed to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them to lead purposeful lives in the service science they professions and civil society.
- Academic programmes are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are relevant and up to date with the most recent scientific developments, underpinned by appropriate disciplinary benchmarks, and feedback from students, employers, I loom my, and professions and statutory bodies, as appropriate.

As a starting point, all schools/entities in the Faculty will be encouraged and supported to initiate critical discourse about topics such as curriculum transformation, decolonisation, Africanisation, inclusivity and social justice. A common understanding about these topics is crucial for the planned curriculum transformation process. This will be done through workshops, colloquiums, meetings and rigorous staff development. The Faculty of Health Sciences perceives curriculum transformation to be much more than meeting general transformation targets, but that changed mind-set and the ability to be critical of traditional, westernised worldviews to be the knowledge base of choice. It is about being flexible and sensitive to context and being

creative in adopting well established knowledge in the current South African context, or to replace it with something new, if needed. Decolonised teaching and learning will require a critical evaluation of the applicability of overpowering Eurocentric approaches of defining and valuing knowledge mostly from the global North, and be inclusive of other knowledge systems like the global South and African perspectives. In order to adhere to the call to decolonised curricula and teaching practices, it will be needed to de-construct existing curricula and then to reconstruct it with a more responsive and relevant focus in which Western ideas and theories are balanced with African ideas, paradigms and theories to make it relevant for the South African context. Staff training and development will have to go further than a common understanding since a transformative way of thinking will have to be instilled in staff. The underlying mind-set of staff will have to be that of: curriculum transformation and decolonisation start with me and in my classroom.

Although existing teaching and learning practices in the faculty of health sciences already address elements of curriculum transformation, the systematic process of curriculum transformation will specifically focus on the following practices to actively incorporate transformation in existing and new curricula:

- Active attempts to listen to the voice of students and include their needs and perspectives in curricula and classroom practices.
- Increased use of local textbooks as prescribed study materials.
- Inclusion of local examples in classroom discussions when only Eurocentric material is available for study.
- Critical discussions of theories and approaches from a multicultural perspective.
- Increased reflective practices to personalise learning of the critical debates and discussions on the applicability of theories and learning content for the multicultural context of South Africa.
- Inclusion of problem-based learning activities that speak to the South African population and context without isolation from global context and challenges.
- Autonomy's learning experiences towards the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits.
- Responsiveness towards community needs.
- An orientation towards lifelong learning.
- It eagerly sound and culturally sensitive practices when entering communities for teaching, learning or research purposes.
- Continuous curriculum provision.
- Teaching and learning strategies which make provision for diverse learning styles through diverse classroom practices as well as diverse formats for assignments and assessments.
- Sensitivity towards language barriers and support for the NWU's multilingual approach and policy.

#### **4.5 Faculty of Humanities**

Examples of some implementation gains in terms of transformation and decolonization of the curriculum are presented below.

The subject group Art History has recently revised their undergraduate curriculum to be more inclusive of relevant South African and African Art History and visual culture perspectives. These revised modules still need to be officially updated, but new perspectives are being implemented. A blended learning environment is encouraged for students to have more active participation opportunities in lectures as well as the opportunity to learn from each other. The T&L plan of each school is aligned with the T&L strategy of the faculty and of the university.

At the programme level, the school of Social Sciences held a workshop with all three campuses on 4 May to redesign a unitary BSocSc programme that will offer the same degree options, credit value and curriculum structure on all campuses. This exercise was highly effective and enabled us to reduce the total number of programmes in the BSocSc qualification from 27 before alignment to 9 after the alignment. This is particularly significant as it will for the first time make it possible for students to transfer between campuses within this qualification without having to take additional modules or extend their study period. At the module level, full alignment of modules is phasing in, in the wake of the HEQSF alignment process completed in 2017. Second and third year alignment will phase in annually so that by 2020 Sociology will offer 100% aligned modules. History and Sociology will again meet during the second semester to ensure that movement towards 100% content alignment is proceeding. In the School of Languages (SoL), the most comprehensive curriculum review

over the last five years has taken place in the Subject Group: Academic Literacy. Consequently, an inter-campus curriculum development project was launched.

## 4.6 Faculty of Law

Although the programmes which were offered by the Faculties of Law and the School of Law at Vaal were already aligned in 2007, these programmes were only partially aligned in terms of the NWU's policies at that stage, and there were also huge differences regarding the implementation of the programmes at the different campuses. Already since 2013 the Faculty actively pursued the full alignment of the respective law programmes presented on the three delivery sites. This alignment requires the academic staff of all the delivery sites to use the same module plans, study guides, textbooks and formative assessment. Formal tests and examination papers are drafted with the input of all lecturers concerned, while lecturers coordinate to lecture the same module content in the same week. This development necessitated, and was preceded by a critical consideration of the law programmes and curricula concerned.

### Curriculum design

Over the years the curriculum did undergo a number of changes, the last after the CHE review of the LLB programme. Besides the introduction of additional skills and language modules, the contemporary relevance of modules was considered. The Law of Negotiable Instruments was changed to Banking Law and Electronic Commerce Jurisprudence (IURI 412) requiring critical thinking skills was moved from year 3 to 4 and a module that serves as basis for other modules, Fundamental Rights (IURI 223), was moved from year 3 to 2. Another example is the change from semester to year modules in certain fields where more time is required for the student to acquaint him/herself with the theoretical and practical components of a topic (e.g. Introduction to Law (IURI 171), Principles of Contract (IURI 373), Criminal Procedure (IURI 271) and Law of Evidence (IURI 371)). The curriculum designs maintain an appropriate balance of theoretical, practical and experiential knowledge and skills. It has sufficient disciplinary content and theoretical depth, at the appropriate level, to serve its educational purposes. The approach to our curriculum design strives to ensure appropriate progression through ascending levels of competency.

The Faculty's approach to Transformation of the Curriculum

The CHE Quality Enhancement Project Phase 2 notes that the student protests brought to the fore some curriculum issues, inter alia, "the Eurocentric orientation in content, the constitutive rules and norms that control thinking, and what knowledge and productive processes are valued and legitimized formally at and through universities". Further reference is made in the Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education to the pervasive dominance of western canons of knowledge, leading to an urge for decolonisation and Africanisation of the curriculum. This means that African universities need to see themselves as part of Africa, in Africa. This need not be done by ignoring other knowledge traditions, but it does call for an affirmation and validation of African views of the world and systems of thought, by adding or mixing it with current knowledge.

A workshop on 'Decolonisation of the Curriculum' was attended by all lecturing staff on 3 and 4 August 2017. Guest speakers addressed a number of issues and presented differing views on what decolonisation of the curriculum entails. This ensured that all academics have been included in the current debate on reconsidering the LLB curriculum, brought about by the well-documented #fall movements. The main features of the August 2017 workshop included a lecture on "decolonisation and the law" by Mr Joel Modiri from UP. The next day the faculty watched the presentation by Chimamanda Adichie on "The danger of a single story" that dealt with the need to include more voices and experiences into one's life (in general). The faculty's own Mr Gideon Rossouw gave a presentation on how decolonisation can work in the criminal justice sphere, and this was followed by Dr Emile Zitzke who spoke on decolonisation in private law.

A diversity forum, a committee that reports to the Dean has been established to achieve the following objectives within the Faculty:

- To define transformative constitutionalism and how it can be embedded in the NWU Law curriculum?
- What does diversity, inclusion and decolonisation entail, in respect of sources of knowledge, views on legitimacy and diversity in the LLB?
- What can the Faculty do to ensure that social justice awareness and involvement are ensured throughout the curriculum?

A first round workshop was held on the 24th-25th of April 2018. The next workshop was held on the 28th-29th May 2018.

When the new LLB curriculum was redesigned in 2018, it was decided to remove the module Indigenous Law (IURI 121) from the curriculum, and to incorporate topics dealt with there the substantive modules, such as Family Law, Law of Succession, Law of Property, Law of Delict, Land Law, Fundamental Rights, and Socio-Economic Rights. However, it is realised that this is merely the beginning and that all modules have a role to play towards the renewal and transformational perspective. A breakdown on how each module contributes towards *transformative constitutionalism* is available. It is also the responsibility of each lecturer to continuously review the module content to bring it in line with the Faculty's vision for a transformed curriculum.

### **Curriculum renewal project (Carpe Diem)**

The Faculty has to infuse transformative constitutionalism, diversity, inclusion, decolonisation and social justice awareness and involvement across the entire curriculum. In order to enable Faculty to engage with these concepts in the context of the transformation of the curriculum, the Faculty partakes in *Carpe Diem* curriculum transformation project. The purpose of Carpe Diem is to facilitate a collaborative curriculum design, development and renewal process that is aligned with the NWU T&L strategy to enable student success.

All academic staff members are expected to attend workshops which provides lecturers with the opportunity to redesign or review their programmes or modules, while they are guided through structured activities and work collaboratively within multidisciplinary teams. As a process, it focuses on effective learning design where learning outcomes are scaffolded and aligned to content, activities, assessment, and feedback, along with the embedding of innovative teaching practices and digital technologies. The theory that underpins the use of technology is connectivism. This view focuses on connecting information sets and forming connections between people with use of technology.

Curriculum renewal, in the sense of a revision of the pedagogy followed, is also envisaged. Activities should be staggered and linked to ensure student development from LLB I to LLB IV. Activities and content should be coordinated across year levels and subject groups to ensure positive reinforcement. In this regard, the team teaching project is also relevant as lecturers will need to agree on their strategies, activities and assessments.

It is envisaged that the curriculum transformation project will be rolled out over a four- year cycle. All first year lecturers attended various workshops in the first semester of 2018, while workshops involving 2<sup>nd</sup> year modules will be held in the second semester.

## **4.7 Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences**

The Faculty is fully committed to the University principle of transformation and will engage in a systematic process of curriculum transformation and renewal in order to equip its graduates to address the challenges of twenty-first century society. Quality of teaching and learning must be the overriding imperative in all discussions on renewal and transformation of the curriculum.

Teaching and Learning in FNAS is aligned with the information shared in the NWU Teaching and Learning strategy. This strategy will be used to inform planning, decision making and curriculum transformation in the faculty in order to offer excellent and innovative teaching-learning experiences to our students. We therefore encourage lecturers to design meaningful learning experiences in order to cater for students with different learning styles and educate students for the challenges of the twenty-first century. This is done by advocating decolonisation of the curriculum, providing multimodal education, engaging in pedagogical innovation through blended learning initiatives, student-centred and outcomes orientated educational approach, active and participative learning activities, learning analytics, and open educational resources. These meaningful learning experiences also include work-integrated learning and community engaged service learning where appropriate.

The majority of disciplines within the Faculty are practical based. This means that they need resources in terms of laboratories and equipment which are not necessarily required by all other faculties. The students' experience in the Faculty is very largely determined by the availability of resources and the quality of the practical component within nearly all the programmes offered. It is thus an ongoing focus to align resources to thereby align the quality of the student experience. Financial planning in this regard, although challenging, is something that the Faculty takes seriously.

Within the faculty it is an accepted assumption that programme curricula content must provide students with an orientation to various paradigms of thought and knowledge systems, e.g. undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes with a focus on indigenous knowledge systems.

One of the major themes of transformation is to make the content of programme curricula relevant to prepare students for the workplace, but also to prepare them for life in the communities where they will live. Another theme is transformation of teaching strategies and methods to be inclusive to students from diverse cultures, and to structure the learning experience in ways that are not alien to the various cultures of the student body. Examples given in study materials and during classroom presentations are looking to include the African context and to take into consideration the life experiences of the students. The majority of lecturers believe that an open transformation agenda will enable students to learn more effectively as their learning environment should be more familiar and comfortable. It should give students a sense of ownership and assist in the development of local and African values and learning products.

Ultimately the core values of decolonisation are important to also ensure the employability of our graduates and to give students from all walks of life an equal opportunity to attain the degrees necessary to compete in the job market. What we teach the students must prepare them for the workplace, thus we need to use both local and international examples, to fulfil the needs of industry and equip students for job opportunities in the national and in the global market.

#### **4.8 Faculty of Theology**

The Faculty approved an integrated teaching and learning plan for new qualification developments and transformation initiatives that includes the development of Higher Certificates and Diplomas to broaden access and to offer prospective students a wider range of study options. One of the main foci of these new qualifications is to address the education and training needs within the African Independent Churches (AICs) of South Africa. The Faculty is convinced that collaboration with and critical engagement in the training needs for the AICs will influence and contribute to the contextualisation of the curricula of the other academic programmes already presented within the Faculty.

As from 2019, every academic programme offered by the Faculty of Theology will have at least one module with a stronger African contextual focus to facilitate critical thinking around inclusion and the importance of taking different perspectives into account to ensure an environment of collaboration and better understanding. The Faculty has also started to engage with other Faculties to conceptualise and develop interdisciplinary academic programmes that will offer prospective students the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skill to different fields of study, e.g. psychology and philosophy.

The Faculty is also in the process of developing short courses in specific niche areas to address more immediate needs of working individuals within the field of Theology. Theology is truly working towards a more inclusive approach to ensure a quality service to its students and the communities where graduates will work and live. Together we can make a difference!

### **5 Conclusion**

In the NWU TL Strategy (2016-2020) the University envisions working towards becoming a leading SA provider of multimodal education, known for its excellence in innovative teaching and learning and an outstanding student learning experience on all its campuses and in all modes of delivery. To make such a vision a reality requires an openness to continuously transform and collaborate with all its stakeholders with a view to ensure that NWU graduates will stand out as responsible and engaged members of society, knowledgeable, highly-educated professionals, innovative and critical thinkers, principled leaders, effective communicators and skilled collaborators.

**Our students and our graduates are and always will be the mirrors of our success in making our vision a reality.**

The Office of the DVC Teaching and Learning will therefore continue to establish platforms and to create initiatives for staff and students to engage with the opportunities and indeed the challenges of our modern-day society.

One way in which human rights come to be lived is through social interaction: in other words, those occasions and events initiated, supported and sustained by civil society and the State to create the conditions for rights to be lived. Universities as part of educational apparatus of the State are called upon, through their ethos and their curricula, to create the conditions in which rights can be both explored and lived. Gender Awareness Week is one of the initiatives at the NWU that is aligned carefully to the University's stated commitment to

social justice in recognition of the fact that a socially just society is a genuinely inclusive one in which damaging binaries particularly as these affect gender identity are explored, described, challenged, and changed.

We plan to take such initiatives further. Exploration of and engagement with the very human concepts of identity, ethnicity, religion, race, culture and social class are but a few of the foci that we plan to learn more about.

Who is called upon to engage, reflect, challenge and change?

Everyone.

These are not projects for the minority or the marginal groups to find expression through seminars, lecturers, concerts, panel discussions, workshops and the like: it is for everyone an opportunity to contribute to the change we want to see in our University, our society and in our country.

Be assured, the NWU as an academic community is committed to the values of:



We invite you to engage with us so that we can continuously transform and move forward as a unitary institution of academic excellence with a visible commitment to social justice and an ethic of care.