

**Quality Enhancement Project**

**Institutional Report: Phase 2**

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| **Name of Institution** | **NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY** |
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**1. Introduction**

Nelson Mandela University’s *Vision 2020 Strategic Plan* and its *Strategic Review Framework* commits the university to transformative curricula and academic development and support endeavours for the social inclusion and success of students. These are enabled by measures to incorporate different knowledge paradigms including indigenous knowledge. Trans-disciplinary efforts are also infused into the Vision 2020 plan to transform the curriculum.

Nelson Mandela University’s vision is to be “…a dynamic African university, recognised for its leadership in generating cutting-edge knowledge for a sustainable future”. Its mission is “…to offer a diverse range of life-changing educational experiences for a better world”. The core values of the institution are Diversity, Excellence, Ubuntu, Social Justice and Equality, Integrity, and Environmental Stewardship. Our vision, mission and values underscore the transformative curriculum agenda as they foreground the ways of being, acting, seeing, doing and knowing at the university that must find expression in our curricula and the attributes that our graduates develop. Furthermore, we have adopted a Humanising Pedagogy as the philosophical underpinning for curriculum transformation. This is largely based on the liberatory work of Freire. What it means to be human, treating others as human and to have agency are placed at the centre of the curriculum. The relations of power in the classroom and curriculum thus become critical as we transform the curriculum to empower students to achieve their full potential.

It is against this backdrop that this institutional submission has been prepared. In the preparation phase information was gathered from our seven faculties, Higher Education Access and Development Services (especially our Centre for Teaching, Learning and Media), academic and faculty administration, and the Academic Planning and the Quality Advancement Unit. The information was synthesised and integrated into a report. The DVC: Teaching and Learning, Executive Deans and other key internal stakeholders reviewed a draft of the report and made suggestions for refinement. This culminated in the institutional report submitted to the CHE.

The report is structured according to the four focus areas that the CHE requested universities to reflect on.

**2.** **Curriculum Renewal and Transformation**

Nelson Mandela University uses a blend of institutional and faculty approaches and initiatives to enhance, invigorate and transform approaches to thinking about, designing and delivering curricula. This blend will be elaborated below.

2.1 **Institutional level approaches**

2.1.1 **Institutional policies and strategic goals**

Nelson Mandela University has a range of policies that include a focus on curriculum and programme development, revision and delivery; assessment; experiential and co-curricular learning, and quality advancement and reviews. Key policies are:

* Teaching and Learning Policy (D/1098/09 (12-05-2010\_13h18)).
* Assessment Policy (D/602/12 (16-10-2017\_10h44))
* Language Policy (D/367/09 (23-04-2009\_15h36))
* Policy for the Development and Approval of Academic Programmes (D/504/17(01-11-2017-10h13)
* Policy and Guidelines for Experiential Learning (D/795/07)
* Co-curricular Record Policy
* Quality Criteria for Internal Review of Programmes (D/239/06)
* Quality Advancement Policy (D/743/13 (11-01-2016\_14h46))

One of our Vision 2020 strategic goals is to “Reinvigorate the curriculum transformation process across all faculties with a defined set of epistemological and curriculum statements that embed diverse knowledge paradigms to prepare our students as globally competent citizens”. Two teaching and learning retreats were held in June and September 2017 to co-evolve these curriculum statements. In the first retreat an encounter-based, experiential learning approach was followed to stimulate thinking about the curriculum and the key elements that comprise it from different perspectives. Appendix A contains the collective reflections from the encounter retreat. The second retreat focused on using a range of social technologies to develop a holistic conceptualisation of “curriculum” as a precursor to begin to grapple with developing curriculum statements in key areas. A range of academics, from senior to new generation academics, and students from across our faculties participated in these retreats. The draft curriculum statements will be refined soon. Thereafter comments will be invited from key institutional stakeholders during 2018.

2.1.2 **Institution-wide initiatives**

At an institutional level, two key initiatives have been launched, namely:

1. **Curriculum renewal workshops** are facilitated as part of our enlivening our institutional culture project. These workshops bring together academics, administrative staff and teaching and learning support staff, in groups of two faculties at a time in an interdisciplinary conversation to discuss re-imagining the curriculum and how to support the need to ‘Africanise’ or ‘de-colonise’ curricula. The interdisciplinary approach allowed different faculties to discuss their curriculum interventions, their support structures, the work and functioning of their Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees (FTLCs) and the scope and skills needed to embark on the process of re-imagining curricula. The workshops situate the process of re-thinking the curricula within the need for a personal engagement with the de-centring of the Western Canon; as well as attempting to bring the ‘whole’ person into the conversation rather than engaging exclusively in a cognitive exercise.
2. **Teaching and Learning retreats** focus on community building and strengthening the institutional and Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees (FTLC’s). Attendees contribute to and are required to lead or advise on T&L and curriculum development at faculty level, and the retreats aim to convene conversations to help equip the attendees with the orientation and skills to work at faculty and institutional level. The retreats form part of the overall strategic objective of ‘re-positioning’ teaching and learning at our university both in terms of its ‘status’ and priority within the university and levels of organisation and resourcing of T and L initiatives; as well as with regards to the ongoing project of re-thinking and reimagining curricula from an ‘Africanisation’ or ‘De-colonisation’ perspective and in alignment with our strategic commitment to Humanising Pedagogies as part of our V2020 strategic framework.

Among the lessons learned from these two initiatives are:

* The issue of “de-colonisation” of the curriculum needs to be interrogated and understood from different perspectives, especially in terms of how it will benefit the new graduates.
* There is a need to centre the present knowledge and knowledge production processes in an African context or African contexts.
* They enable and strengthen a cross-pollination process of ideas where different disciplines participate in conversations around curriculum renewal
* Adopting flexibility around the methodologies used in the curriculum renewal processes to adapt to the needs of the participants.
* Gaining advice and ideas from faculties that have already embarked on a curriculum renewal journey (e.g., Faculty of Education), or implemented engaged, inter-disciplinary learning in communities (e.g., Faculty of Health Sciences) adds value to the discussions.
* Proactively engaging more students in the curriculum renewal processes is vital.
* Retreats assist to align the work of the different FTLCs and as a result greater institutional coherence and momentum is achieved in the T and L portfolio.

Other than the two institution-wide initiatives, the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Media (CTLM) provides capacity development and support for teaching and curriculum development. Collaborative curriculum design between partners from CTLM, faculties and institutional divisions and committees, contribute to the development of dynamic curriculum renewal. To assist academics with the systematic steps needed to develop curricula within a humanising pedagogy framework, CTLM adopted the **Carpe Diem learning design approach**. The Carpe Diem approach enables a collaborative and holistic approach to curriculum design and development. Through the Carpe Diem approach, programmes and modules are collaboratively developed from scratch or transformed by a faculty or academic department together with various stakeholders including the academic planning unit, academic developers, librarians, technology enhanced learning experts, and students. The process includes receiving peer feedback and student feedback before the programme or modules are finalised and presented. Furthermore, this approach enables capacity building in curriculum development skills and knowledge in academic departments and faculties, as everyone actively engages in the process. Consequently, departments and faculties are empowered to take ownership of the curriculum process and continue the process in a sustained way. This takes the pressure off academics to individually undertake curriculum design and eliminates the practice of outsourcing curriculum design to academic and curriculum developers.

2.2 **Faculty level examples of curriculum renewal and transformation initiatives**

Faculty curriculum renewal and transformation activities and initiatives to date include:

1. The Faculty of Arts’ approach to the curriculum renewal and transformation includes implementing spontaneous (e.g., promoted by #FMF criticism of curricula in the faculty) and emic (inside-out) approaches to shape curriculum structure. These have included staff and student transformation workshops in the School of Music, Art and Design; student participation in preparation of reading lists in the School of Language, Media and Culture; employment of equity SI in the School of Government and Social Sciences to advance transformational discussions in lectures; seminars (Decolonisation lecture series); the FTLC Critical Reflection Workshop (with students after FMF) and many artistic exhibitions focusing on the postcolonial condition, as well as musical performances. The faculty used these approaches to **harness the multidisciplinary potential and richness of its diverse offerings** to decolonise and deconstruct pedagogy and the curricula.
2. The Faculty of Education took a **collective approach** in designing a suite of new curricula. All staff members were part of the process. They were exposed to a series of workshops, discussions, courageous conversations, learning walks, etc. Some international speakers, students, alumni, teachers and others were invited to share their insights on curriculum design. During this process, several models were developed to guide the curriculum renewal process, the key of which was a **curriculum framework** (see Appendix B for an article that covers the curriculum transformation process followed in the Faculty of Education and the resultant curriculum framework). This curriculum framework is used at an institutional level as well during teaching and learning and curriculum transformation breakaways.
3. A **Transformation Forum (TF)**, the first in the institution, has been established in the Faculty of Law and approved by Faculty Board. The TF is made up of representatives of Faculty management, academics, administrative staff, teaching and research assistants (TRAs) and student societies. The TF serves as a platform where matters pertaining to transformation (including curriculum transformation, Africanisation and decolonisation) may be tabled, reflected on and discussed on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the Faculty identified the need to introduce a module in year 4 of the revised LLB called “African Regional Law” to specifically deal with the relevant regional laws of the African continent.
4. The **Inter-Professional Education (IPE) project** in the Faculty of Health Sciences has as its aim to promote equity in health. A Community Orientated Primary Care and Assets based model is used to ensure that health professionals understand the communities they work with and in and that they learn from, with and about each other as health professionals. All disciplines in the Faculty participate by sending lecturers and students (from the first to the final years of their studies) in multidisciplinary groups into communities. This ultimately impacts on transforming the curricula in the various disciplines and builds cohesion and collaboration across students and staff in the faculty. It also results in better coordination of training (cost effective) and service delivery (holistic approach) and providing **transformative learning experiences** for students.

Further curriculum renewal and transformation activities and initiatives envisaged in the next two to three years include:

1. The Faculty of Arts will attempt to significantly reshape curriculum content and structure by advancing a learning for life ethos in the next two years. This will involve an annual Arts T&L Colloquium; an increased number of online SLPs in the Department of Applied Language Studies (DALS) to widen public access to language learning opportunities; a bi-annual literary/poetry festival to encourage public and student opportunities to learn about poetry and creative writing and possibly a Summer School entitled ‘Being Human’. The latter will provide opportunities to learn about the humanising pedagogy and the role of humanities in expanding the African pedagogical landscape. To further reshape curricula, the faculty will also seek to advance the internationalisation of T&L by encouraging visiting scholars and the appointment/engagement of adjunct professors and professional associates.
2. Consideration of the form and mode of assessment is an integral part of the redesign of the LLB programme and aligns to the sequencing and vertical and horizontal progression of the modules. The Law Faculty, during department workshops and an overall Faculty workshop, specifically considered how to improve the research, reading and writing skills of graduates linked to assessment opportunities. Various initiatives were identified, some of which have been introduced already and some of which will be introduced when the revised LLB is approved and offered. Initiatives include:
	1. The introduction of tutorials for modules such as Legal Interpretation, Labour Law and the procedural modules. The tutorials assist students in preparing/drafting assignments, and provides extra opportunity for them to engage with the material presented during lecture periods.
	2. The change of presentation/offering of certain modules from semester modules to year modules will allow more time for students to attend to the drafting of assignments, providing further opportunities for research, reading and writing skills to be integrated into the programme.
3. Among the lessons learned during #FMF was that effective learning could take place with less face-to-face learning opportunities if increased digital learning opportunities are available. In the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, the learning delivery in the undergraduate BA Development studies programme is set to shift significantly as a result. For example:
	1. An inquiry-based strategy will be used in lectures, with the aim of reducing lecturer-dominance in the teaching process and increasing learner participation through doing, writing, discussing, talking, thinking, which replaces passive learning with active learning;
	2. A specific focus on developing critical and analytical thinking;
	3. Replacing content driven, 1-hour lectures twice a week with workshop-based 3 hour sessions once a week; and
	4. Continuing to expand the digital learning and formative assessment opportunities on the Moodle learning management system.

To achieve this, the Department of Economics, Development and Tourism is currently engaged in a process where the respective modules and the different way of delivering them are being discussed.

1. The university is working to establish a prestigious **Nelson Mandela Chair of Social Change** to promote scholarship that embraces the challenges of decolonisation, contextualisation, Africanisation and responsiveness in the context of a changing world (marked by globalisation, demographic and technological changes). It would provide analytical pathways across the disciplinary spectrum to enable academics to ground new thinking in alternative ways of knowing and thinking about the challenges of a changing world.

2.3 **Challenges identified**

Across the institutional and faculty level curriculum renewal and transformation journeys some challenges have been encountered. These include:

1. Curriculum reshaping and implementation takes time, commitment to the principle of reflective teaching practice and scholarly teaching and learning. However, time is a scarce commodity in faculties where there is increasing enrolment. Consequently, in our University Capacity Development Plan we have made provision for Creating Space for Curriculum Development (CSCD) grants to fund the replacement of lecturers while they develop, transform and revise curricula.
2. The pace of curriculum transformation is too slow. Some professional bodies have expressed their concern about this during accreditation visits and students emphasised this during #FMF.
3. The formal curriculum renewal and transformation approval processes take too long. The fast-moving dynamic technology-enhanced education and post #FMF environments require quick responses to accelerate curriculum transformation.
4. Capacity – There is limited capacity within CLTM to accommodate the requests from faculties to assist with curriculum development and renewal and blended learning, especially with posts being frozen and various staff members retiring. There is also limited curriculum development expertise in our faculties.
5. Differing paradigms - from a philosophical point of view, “hard” science disciplines adopt a more technical, objective perception of curriculum (a product approach), compared to the “soft” sciences that lean towards a non-technical, or process approach. The latter approach results in a flexible curriculum that is negotiated, inquiry-based, learner-centred and socially critical. For those who favour the more technical, objective approach, there are visible efforts by academics to start making a paradigm shift to a more process approach to curriculum transformation but more needs to be done to promote and enable this paradigm shift.
6. Transformed academics are needed to develop and deliver renewed curricula to provide a transformative learning experience for students. The fact that not all academics are transformed and share the institution’s vision and values poses a challenge.
7. Given increasing student numbers and resource constraints, for newly curriculated programmes, it is not always possible to recruit and appoint academics that can offer the curriculum as it was envisaged in the planning stage.

**3. Diversity and Inclusivity**

3.1 **Institutional level approaches**

Diversity is a core value of the Nelson Mandela University. As such, awareness of and respect for diversity needs to be manifest in how we behave towards and interact with each other, in how we approach curriculum so that it embraces inclusivity in both its design and how it is enacted and allows for a rich diversity of perspectives to be robustly engaged with to foster criticality and intellectual development.

Our strategic priorities foreground aspects that enable the tangible expression of our value of diversity. For example, strategic priority 1 is to “Embrace a distinctive educational purpose and philosophy that contributes to student access and success”. Key strategic goals to achieve this are:

* “Provide a range of access routes and learning pathways that attract and retain a diverse, talented student population reflective of a vibrant, African university.
* Cultivate a humanising ethos of teaching, learning and assessment where all students are empowered to achieve their full potential. Humanising pedagogical approaches and practices further embrace diverse knowledge traditions and promote cognitive justice by reinforcing the right of the different forms of knowledge to co-exist.
* Encourage staff to use reflective teaching practices and embrace multiple forms of technology to enhance the flexibility of learning and programme delivery.
* Enhance student success through effective, ongoing tracking of student academic performance and the provision of holistic support and development within and beyond the classroom.
* Reinvigorate the curriculum transformation process across all faculties with a defined set of epistemological and curriculum statements that embed diverse knowledge paradigms to prepare our students as globally competent citizens.”

Furthermore, strategic priority 4 is to “Foster an affirming, transformative institutional culture that promotes diversity and social cohesion”. Key strategic goals and transversal strategic enablers to achieve this are:

* “Foster a transformative, values-based institutional culture that gives expression to the legacy and values of Nelson Mandela and creates affirming, collegial spaces for all students and staff…
* Promote social cohesion, multi-culturalism and diversity through vibrant intellectual, social, cultural, sport, recreational and other campus life events for staff and students.
* Embed inclusive language practices in policies, systems and processes at all levels within and beyond the classroom….
* Institutional policies, systems and processes eliminate racism, sexism and all other forms of discrimination while promoting multi-culturalism and -lingualism.
* Curriculum transformation ensures that curriculum content and pedagogies are responsive to national, African and global contexts.”

Beyond our values and strategic priorities, two initiatives have assisted in “preparing the ground” or creating the conditions for a transformative institutional culture. These are:

1. The intensive **Institutional Culture Enlivening Process** (ICEP), which is a long-term transformation process. Using novel social technologies, groups of staff members, which increasingly include students, are engaged in facilitated “deepening the conversations” workshops on difficult issues, including: the identity of the university; the impact of the legacy of apartheid on psyches, workplaces, discriminatory practices and pedagogies; how to embrace the university’s institutional values and co-create a new generation university and institutional culture. The cumulative effect of the multiple engagements led by ICEP are creating a tangible emergence of transformational leadership with new innovations and changes increasingly taking place across the university.
2. Nelson Mandela University is the first university in the country to create a centre specifically aimed at proactively encouraging non-racial, democratic citizenship. The Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD) provides an advocacy platform for the advancement of non-racialism and democracy through academic research, education and developing and implementing strategies and targeted interventions relating to social cohesion within Nelson Mandela University and the broader society. Academically, CANRAD works across disciplines to serve the institution through its programmes, including focusing on the intersectionality between race, class and gender. It also partners with other South African universities to galvanise the common transformation goal of a better, more equal, respectful and just life for all.

3.2 **Inclusion and diversity in curriculum design and delivery**

Some examples of curriculum delivery and renewal that promote the inclusion of diverse students are:

1. **Bilingual Tutors in Studio Arts:** Bilingual tutorials offer opportunities for students to discuss class content in their mother tongue. The aim is to improve understanding of the concepts taught in the course and tutorials are scheduled around assignment dates. Students discuss terminology concepts related to assignments. Student attendance of tutorials is exceptionally good. A tutor gave feedback on his experiences of bilingual tutoring as follows: “students critically engaged with ideas presented; sensed that they were able to develop their own voice; engaged more than in the past and applied ideas discussed in tutorial to their practical work”.
2. The **Multilingualism research and teaching project** was initiated in the School of Language, Media and Culture to respond to high student failure rates. Module guides were written in both English and isiXhosa. PowerPoint slides could simultaneously be accessed in English and isiXhosa.19 Bilingual tutors were trained to assist in tutorials.
3. In the School of Economics, Development and Tourism, an innovative way of addressing the alienation of African language speaking (primarily isiXhosa first language speakers at undergraduate level) students has been the ‘**translation of terminology**’ technique. This was introduced to academic staff by the CTLM, and in practice involves the discussion in class of what a word or term in English means in isiXhosa, how it can be translated, used, etc. So, for example, the terms ‘undeveloped’ and ‘underdeveloped’ are discussed in both English and isiXhosa, compared and translated into isiXhosa, and once consensus is reached it is captured on the board. A **multilingual glossary** has been developed for some modules as a result. Another initiative has been the introduction of tutorials (at undergraduate) and seminars (at Honours) level, where students can engage with senior students in their own language, obtain clarity on readings or concepts, engage in debate with their peers and challenge the readings they are set.
4. In the Faculty of Education, students are invited in Faculty discussions on how the curriculum can be transformed. For example, during the **teaching and learning week**, in May 2017 students shared their views on how indigenous knowledge can be incorporated in the new curriculum and how the curriculum should be underpinned by the concept of multilingualism.
5. Especially where there are students with visual, auditory and physical disabilities but also in recognition of the different learning styles of students, a diverse range of teaching, learning and assessment approaches are used. This fosters student engagement with learning, and enables the achievement of programme learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

A **future initiative** linked to entrepreneurship development that will promote inclusivity and diversity can be described as follows:

In the School of Management Sciences, a new Postgraduate Diploma in Entrepreneurship is being developed. This programme is a good example of a curriculum initiative that will promote inclusivity of diverse students. It will cater for a wide spectrum of candidates drawn from mainly four groups – (1) established professionals, scientists and technologists who wish to evolve their own or family entrepreneurial ventures and need to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and skills in order to develop business ideas; (2) existing entrepreneurs whose business ideas have stagnated and who wish to be invigorated to a new level of growth; (3) intrapreneurs employed in corporate settings who need to develop critical entrepreneurial skills in support of innovative ventures within their organisations; and (4) students who have recently completed their studies and have big ideas and a passion for changing the world. A marketing strategy that allows for an equal percentage of candidates drawn from these groups will be pursued, with a further objective being to attract an equitable ratio of female to male applicants. This programme will be distinguished from other Management programmes that focus largely on the administration and management of existing businesses, as well as other entrepreneurship programmes, by an underlying theme of responsible and family entrepreneurship, catering for both developed and developing markets.

3.3 **Challenges**

1. The Language Policy is in the process of being revised as the current policy is not enabling and is outdated. This revision needs to be finalised and approved as soon as possible. Some programmes still follow a dual-language approach, where lecturing switches between English and Afrikaans. Exams are also set in these two languages. This practice creates tension as students with a home language other than these two languages feel excluded.
2. Academics are not capacitated to facilitate learning for students with serious visual and physical disabilities, which can result in these students being marginalised. The Disability Unit needs to be resourced to be able to bring in more external experts to capacitate academics and introduce them to key assistive technologies that will support and develop student learning.
3. More attention needs to be given to the universal design for learning (UDL) principles when developing and transforming curricula as this will facilitate the inclusivity of diverse learners and enhance their learning experience.
4. Our values, humanising approach and strategic priorities and goals commit us to an institutional culture and approaches to teaching, learning and curriculum design and delivery that are affirming, inclusive and cater for diversity in its many forms. Nonetheless, as our students reminded us during #FMF and following a serious rape incident on our campus this year, our curricula do not yet/sufficiently embrace different types of knowledges, for example; language is a barrier to learning; and gender-based violence is a cause for concern. We thus have much work to do.

**4.** **Curriculum Development Capacity and Quality**

4.1 **Institutional level approaches related to curriculum capacity building and quality promotion**

The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Media (CTLM) offers a range of teaching development workshops that includes a topic “**Reconceptualising Curriculum Development**”. This topic has been re-curriculated over the last 4 years to move from focusing on the more technical and legislative aspects of curriculum development to include opportunities to actively engage with the following:

• Developing a shared understanding of the curriculum and curriculum development

• The student experience as part of curriculum development

• Biggs’s theory of constructive alignment and a more student-centred approach to curriculum

• The Humanising pedagogy as part of the curriculum development process

• Decolonisation and transformation

• Interrogating knowledge in the curriculum using Bernstein’s pedagogic device

Feedback from participants has been consistently positive with a “usefulness rating” varying between 80% - 100%. The engagement with the task submitted by participants indicates that there has been “shift in thinking” about curriculum development.

The **Carpe Diem** curriculum development approach was adopted in 2016 and was piloted with our Engineering departments. During the two day Carpe Diem process the following is focused on:

* Conceptualising a teaching and learning approach and philosophy
* Identifying key features of the programme/modules
* Developing purpose statements and learning outcomes
* Broadly aligning teaching, learning and assessment strategies to the outcomes
* Developing a visual representation of the curriculum (storyboard) focussing on selection, sequencing and pacing
* Developing face-to-face and online teaching and learning activities and aligning these to associated low- and high-stakes assessments to enable a scaffolded approach to teaching and learning.

The deliberate focus on creating a blended teaching and learning environment as part of the curriculum development pro-actively creates a space for students and academics to engage with the curriculum on and off campus. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary Carpe Diem process enables regular peer and student feedback through the development process, with an opportunity to revisit and redevelop elements based on the peer and student feedback received.

The feedback from academics that have participated in Carpe Diem capacity development workshops has been positive and has enabled CTLM to maintain contact with the departments for continued engagement, especially with regard to curriculum development.

The university has a policy that guides the development of new programmes and modules to ensure that they meet curriculum requirements. Faculties often appoint a person to coordinate the curriculation process. Professional support staff such as the Director: Academic Planning and academic developers in CTLM assist faculties and departments when new programmes are being developed. The new programme documents are approved at a faculty level by the Faculty Board. At an institutional level, new programmes and modules, and revisions of these are approved by the Academic Planning Committee (APC), the Executive Committee of Senate, and Senate. New programmes are submitted to the Higher Education Quality Committee of the CHE, the DHET and SAQA for approval and accreditation. For professional programmes, professional bodies must also approve the new programme for professional registration purposes. External processes for new programme development and approval can be very long, which frustrates academics, but some time is wasted if academics are not well versed in curriculum development. Concerted effort is being made to develop transformative curricula and the Carpe Diem methodology can assist in this regard.

A core value of the university is “excellence”. It is important that we strive for excellence in the teaching and learning environment we provide our students with. The university has a Quality Policy and a Quality Committee that guides and receives reports from the quality reviews of programmes and of support services. Annually, as part of the institutional review cycle, programmes are identified for review. The review panel is comprised of an external reviewer and various internal staff such as the academic developers in CTLM and members of the Quality Advancement Unit (QAU). The student voice is also included in programme reviews either through focus groups or a compilation of student module/ programme feedback. The Director: Quality ensures that the review reports serve at the Quality Committee and he annually compiles a list of the areas for improvement across the reviews. This assists the faculty and CTLM to plan specific interventions and capacity-building activities aligned to the aspects that require improvement.

4.2 **Faculty level curriculum capacity development initiatives and approaches**

Other than learning generic approaches and principles of curriculum development, discipline-linked curriculum and teaching capacity development are important. Two examples of this are:

1. The School of Engineering used the Carpe Diem curriculum design model to develop the curriculum for the newly approved Bachelors in Engineering programme. During the process many academics from four engineering departments (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Industrial) collaborated with each other across departments, and with academic developers and students to develop the curriculum for their courses. This engagement included pre Carpe Diem workshops to build capacity to develop effective learning outcomes and the constructive alignment of outcomes, teaching and learning strategies and assessment strategies. Furthermore, selected academics from all four departments collaborated on common modules to ensure relevance across the various degrees, and to identify opportunities for collaboration and articulation. During the Carpe Diem workshop an action plan was developed to enable the process to continue, maintain momentum and continue to build capacity. It is particularly encouraging that CTLM is still engaging with the engineering school on their various curriculum endeavours a year after they embarked on the Carpe Diem process to develop new curricula.
2. The School of Accounting has adopted a model whereby “discipline leaders” (one each in Accounting, Management Accounting, Tax and Auditing) ensure vertical integration of module offerings for the discipline. Programme offerings are mapped to professional body competency frameworks for purposes of regular accreditation visits by professional bodies. Year coordinators monitor programme offerings at first/second and third year across all module offerings in that year – identifying challenges, needs and discussing the introduction of possible interventions where these arise.

A **future initiative** is built on the fact that that all 7 faculties have teaching and learning colloquia annually and are increasingly engaging discipline-based teaching experts to develop teaching and curriculum development approaches in a discipline/faculty. These efforts of faculties could benefit from more intentional structuring and should be appropriately resourced to derive maximum impact. This has been included in one of the projects that form part of Nelson Mandela University’s University Capacity Develop Grant plan. The aim will be to strengthen discipline-link curriculum and teaching development capacity building by asking faculties to submit a plan and then to award funding for the proposed activities. The funded activities will have to be monitored and their outcome researched.

4.3 **Challenges and areas for improvement**

1. Many academics are required to lead curriculum transformation with no training or experience, which may impact on the quality of the curriculum design and implementation.
2. Departments and faculties sometimes do not scrutinise new programme development documentation thoroughly enough to look for alignment with our vision, mission and values, and curriculum drift between diploma and degree programmes.
3. Programme review reports are not disseminated sufficiently widely. The Quality Committee will put procedures in place to address this.
4. Improvement plans require resourcing and monitoring if they are to be implemented effectively.
5. A rethink is needed regarding how Nelson Mandela University conceptualises and promotes quality in programme delivery. This will probably lead to a revision of the Quality Policy and various quality enhancement and review procedures.
6. While the curriculum as planned and the way students experience the curriculum that is delivered to them are covered in quality reviews, Nelson Mandela does not have a formal process in place to systematically peer review teaching for developmental purposes. During 2018, attention will be given to initiating processes to enable a culture of peer reviews of teaching to become part of the way that we do things and grow our teaching expertise.

**5. Participation in Curriculum Design and Development**

5.1 **Inclusion of the student voice**

Nelson Mandela University is committed to including the student voice in all aspects of the academic project and to a greater extent than it has in the past.

The evaluation of teaching and courses, although not compulsory, is strongly encouraged, as it provides a forum for the students to give feedback on their experience of the academic project. However, students have indicated that they often encounter evaluation fatigue when confronted with having to complete extensive questionnaires on all their modules simultaneously. CLTM recommends that student feedback is triangulated using various lenses, such as, peer and/or teaching observations, student focus groups and self-reflection.

During the induction of newly appointed academics informal student feedback methods (e.g., 1 minute papers, muddies point, etc.) are introduced as options to get feedback from students. In addition, they are also exposed to the standardised student feedback questionnaire that is interpreted by CTLM. It is hoped that this questionnaire and the resultant information gained from student input will soon be digitalised.

Currently CLTM is the process of developing a short online course that explores the evaluation of teaching using various evaluation approaches. This should assist in providing an enabling teaching and learning environment based on the feedback received, not only from students, but also from peers, the literature, self-reflection and academic developers.

5.2 **Examples of curriculum initiatives in faculties that promote inclusion of the *student voice***

The *student voice* is increasingly valued and invited into faculty and departmental discussions as it assists in getting to know our students and helps us to understand when students feel disengaged, dissatisfied and discouraged by their everyday life in the faculty and the learning experiences provided – and to then be responsive by seeking ways to provide the type of transformative learning experiences that re-engage students.

Examples of approaches of faculties towards including the student voice are:

1. Our faculties have been engaging in a deep conversation with students on student needs, well-being and curriculum reform. These conversations are both courageous and may result in some feelings of discomfort – which provides a good impetus for change. Reports of these conversations are generated and key aspects are taken forward by the faculty, which includes sharing information with students on faculty activities and ongoing engagements between students and staff.
2. Using student feedback to inform curriculum refinement, renewal and transformation.
3. Heads of Departments and Directors of Schools in most faculties are encouraging academics to look deeply at their knowledge bases to identify bias and alienation related to the curriculum. In the process, they consider questions of who produces the (disciplinary) knowledge, whose knowledge is valued, and how the knowledge is re-contextualised in the classroom. They also question if the current knowledge base and how it is taught assists students with critical thinking tools or perpetuates the retelling of western knowledges.
4. The Faculty of Law have instituted a series of workshops to address the broad themes of Decolonising and Africanising Education and Deepening our Understanding of Humanising Pedagogies as well as strategies for renewing and re-positioning Teaching and Learning. Six to eight modules are identified by academic staff annually. Each module is discussed in groups whereby the content is analysed and suggestions made to decolonise and Africanise the content. “TRAs”, who are master’s students assisting with teaching- and learning-related tasks) are invited to participate in these workshops to ensure student input in the process. The TRAs also hold additional workshops with undergraduate student representatives and interested students to obtain their input.
5. In the School of Management Sciences, student representatives have been offered a seat on the subject Advisory Boards. These representatives ensure that the student voice is heard. Another innovation is regular student indabas to further improve student participation in curriculum development.

5.3 **The inclusion of the voices of external stakeholders**

Advisory bodies and professional bodies play a strong role in shaping the curriculum. Some departments have advisory boards linked to industry and/or professionals working in the field. Examples of curriculum initiatives that incorporated diverse external voices are:

1. The BA in Media Communication and Culture was re-curriculated in the last few years as per HEQSF requirements. Stakeholders including industry and national and international institutions were consulted. Niche areas related to employability of graduates were identified. Specialist modules, for example, Production Management, were curriculated.
2. **Art meet Science meets Place project:** The School of Music, Art and Design (SoMAD) and colleagues from Department of Botany participate in this ongoing transdisciplinary project. Students and academics, artists, scientists, and members of disciplinary communities engage with one another in a series of place-focused off-campus encounters in which various configurations of the ‘un-like-minded’ set out to see the world through one another’s eyes and apply their minds to vexing ‘wicked’ problems – be these social or environmental. The project makes of both arts-based and scientific methodologies – whatever best allows participants to explore, think, share, and express ideas and solutions.
3. **African Voices project:** SoMAD participates in a joint project with Rhodes University and the University of the Free State. The project examines the role(s) played by the visual arts as a means of facilitating social cohesion and as a means of emancipatory expression, at a time of social and political change. The project draws on methodologies focused on Humanising Pedagogies (HP), with lecturers acting as facilitators and co-learners and diverse students working in a community of practice. The outcomes to date include a studio project, exhibition, colloquium, a book chapter, a panel presentation at the 2016 SA Visual Arts Historians (SAVAH) conference, and a co-authored article submitted for inclusion in the Journal of Student Affairs in Africa: Guest Edited Issue Vol 6 (1) 2018.
4. In the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, an extensive curriculum redesign was undertaken for the new MBA in 2015. The re-curriculated MBA has received international accreditation through AMBA. The curriculum design focused on incorporating the latest (best practice) international developments in business whilst considering delivery methods business people (our student base) would find attractive. Transformation of the MBA is perhaps best evidenced in the approach to leadership in the curriculum. Whereas previously the focus was entirely on Western-type leadership approaches and theories, the African voice on leadership has been included as part of the new curriculum The Africanisation of the core leadership module includes a section that explores how African wisdoms, customs and worldview, which have largely been ignored or suppressed, could be implemented to improve leadership in business. Stakeholders who contributed to the development of this module focus are Prof Kwandiwe Kondlo (University of Johannesburg), Dr Iraj Abedian well-known Pan-African economist, Ms Rosalie Wallace (Leadership Consultant), Dr Petrus De Kock (Brand SA) and Mr Izak Khomo (Freelancing Expert on African Affairs for SABC). This module is rated a unique strength of our MBA degree.
5. The Pay-it-Forward project in the School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resources is integrated into the curriculum and aligned with the vision and strategy of the university in terms of graduate attributes and engagement, in this case, community engagement. It is also supported by the Engagement Unit of the university. In addition, it is aligned with the South African Board for Personnel Practitioners’ (SABPP) competency model and specifically in terms of corporate social responsibility. All full-time 2nd year HR students select a vulnerable community in which they want to get involved with for a period of at least 3 months. This gives students both a choice and a voice, and they report back by means of discussions with the project leader (usually lecturer/s), providing a portfolio of evidence and they do a presentation during which they present the outreach initiative and relate their experiences, as well as the challenges they experienced. The project leader/s and associates accompany these groups on one of their excursions to get to know and engage with community leaders

**New initiative**: Our new Ocean Sciences Campus will be a creative hub for pioneering and ground-breaking transdisciplinary, postgraduate ocean sciences research, teaching, innovation and engagement. A Bachelor of Engineering Technology in Marine Engineering will be offered from 2018. This qualification was developed in collaboration with Southampton University. Furthermore, another new degree is being developed by the Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and IT. The Bachelor of Nautical Science, which will train ship captains and ship navigators, is being designed in collaboration with Captain Richard Dunham from the Australian Maritime College (AMC) in Tasmania.

5.4 **Challenges**

1. The efforts to engage students in curriculum and courageous conversations, while widespread at a faculty level, are not uniform across schools and departments in faculties.
2. Figuring out the extent to which all levels of undergraduate students can contribute to co-creating aspects of the curriculum and its delivery is complex. Some departments engage more deeply with third-year and postgraduate students around curriculum matters. As first- and second-year classes are large, meaningful inclusion of the student voice for these year levels is more likely limited to student feedback in a module to inform curriculum renewal. However, the Faculty of Law has developed an interesting approach to have their master’s students, who are appointed as teaching and research assistants, to engage with students at various levels to get their input into key curriculum matters.
3. The implementation of advisory boards in departments and faculties that include representation for industry or professionals in the field is uneven across faculties.

**6.** **Closing remarks**

In many ways Nelson Mandela University’s curriculum renewal and transformation journey is still in its infancy. Being asked to reflect on where we are in our journey and what we need to do to chart our way forward has been a valuable exercise. On the one hand, we have learned about some exciting initiatives on which we can build. On the other hand, we are struck by the long road that is still ahead of us and the many challenges that we need to overcome. But we take heart from these words of Mandela - “It always seems impossible until it's done.”