



# **Audit Report on the University of Johannesburg**

**Report of the HEQC to the University of Johannesburg**

## **Executive Summary**

**July 2010**

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## Acronyms

ADS	Division for Academic Development and Support
AP	Audit Portfolio
APB	Auckland Park Bunting Road Campus
APK	Auckland Park Kingsway Campus
CenTAL	Centre for Technology Assisted Learning
CPASD	Centre for Professional Academic Staff Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DFC	Doornfontein Campus
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IF	Institutional Forum
NRF	National Research Foundation
PsyCaD	Centre for Psychological Services and Career Development
RAU	Rand Afrikaans University
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SANREN	South African National Research and Education Network
SLP	Short Learning Programme
SRC	Student Representative Council
SWC	Soweto Campus
TWR	Technikon Witwatersrand
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UJLIC	University of Johannesburg Library Information Centre
UJSRC	University of Johannesburg Student Representative Council

WIL	Work Integrated Learning
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## **Overview of the Audit**

### **Introduction**

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) which was constituted as the Quality Council for Higher Education in terms of the Higher Education Amendment Act of 2008 and the National Qualifications Act of 2008 has a statutory responsibility to conduct institutional audits of higher education institutions.

The Audit of the University of Johannesburg was conducted by the HEQC in terms of its mandate. This document reports on the audit process and findings based on the Audit Portfolio and documentary appendices provided by the University of Johannesburg, supplementary documentation requested from the institution, and interviews and observations made during the audit visit that took place between 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> August 2009. The Panel also consulted the Institutional Profile of University of Johannesburg prepared by the Monitoring and Advice Directorate of the CHE.

This report<sup>1</sup> contains an overview of the audit visit, the findings of the Panel in relation to the audit criteria set by the HEQC, and a list of the commendations and recommendations that are based on the findings.

### **The Audit Process**

In June 2008 the Executive Director of the HEQC secured the consent of the Vice-Chancellor and the senior academic management team at the University of Johannesburg that the University would participate in an institutional audit during August 2009.

The University of Johannesburg conducted its institutional self-evaluation in the agreed time and produced an Audit Portfolio for review by the Audit Panel. An Audit Steering Committee headed by the Pro-Vice Chancellor was established by the Management Executive Committee to steer the preparations for the quality audit. The Audit Steering Committee reported regularly to Senate through the Senate Quality Committee. Five audit task teams were established with responsibility for different areas of the audit. Other structures established to support the audit included Audit Working Groups and a dedicated Audit Office, with support from the Unit for Quality Promotion in the Division for Institutional Planning and Quality Promotion (AP: 3-4).

A variety of consultation and communication strategies were employed to ensure stakeholders were informed of the audit process. The University conducted a mock audit in February 2009 as part of its preparations for the HEQC audit, and the insights provided were included in the revision of the Audit Portfolio (AP: 5). The Audit Portfolio which included a self-evaluation report, supporting documentation, and a CD was submitted to the HEQC in June 2009.

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<sup>1</sup> The report includes four appendices: Appendix A lists the objectives of HEQC audits; Appendix B provides the names of the members of the Audit Panel; Appendix C lists the documents submitted by the University of Johannesburg; and Appendix D contains the audit visit schedule.

The HEQC constituted an Audit Panel consisting of senior academics and academic administrators from the higher education community, all of whom had taken part in auditor preparation workshops run by the HEQC. An Audit Portfolio meeting was convened on 18 and 19 June 2009 at which the Audit Panel considered the Audit Portfolio and identified additional documents to be requested from the University prior to the audit visit. A senior member of the HEQC staff then undertook a preparatory visit to the University in July 2009. During that visit, the format and other details of the audit were discussed and generally agreed to by the senior management of the University.

A sub-panel supported by HEQC staff members carried out visits from 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> July to the following four campuses: Auckland Park Kingsway, Auckland Park Bunting Road, Doornfontein Campus, and Soweto Campus.

Open sessions were also available for any staff or student member of the institution and community to meet the Audit Panel and make a submission. No one took advantage of this opportunity.

In all, the Audit Panel interviewed more than 398 people in 70 interview sessions during the audit visit, including

- Council members,
- The Vice-Chancellor and members of his executive team,
- Academic and academic support staff,
- Administrative staff,
- Full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students,
- Civic and community representatives,
- Alumni.

This report reflects the audit process and findings based on the Audit Portfolio provided by the University of Johannesburg, supplementary documentation requested from the institution, and interviews and observations made during the audit visit. Every effort has been made to understand the quality arrangements at the institution at the time of the audit visit and to base the Panel's conclusions on the documentation submitted, the interviews held and the observations made.

It is expected that the University of Johannesburg will use these findings to strengthen its internal quality management systems and thereby facilitate the improvement of the quality of its core academic activities. Decisions about the manner in which this is done, and the priority accorded to the various recommendations, is the prerogative of the University of Johannesburg. It is expected that within five months after the publication of the Audit Report, the University will submit to the HEQC an improvement plan based on the HEQC Audit Report.

The HEQC would like to thank the University of Johannesburg for the co-operative manner in which it has participated in the audit process. The HEQC also wishes to express appreciation for the openness and confidence shown by the Vice-Chancellor and management in allowing the

Audit Panel to conduct its work freely. Efficient preparation by the University of Johannesburg resulted in a trouble-free audit that allowed the auditors to focus their attention on the main purposes of the audit. The hospitality and assistance of the University of Johannesburg's personnel is appreciated. Professor H. Geysler and her team, especially Ms Ina Pretorius who acted as the project manager, are thanked in particular for the preparation of the documentation, and for their co-operation and helpfulness throughout the process.

## **Executive Summary**

### **Brief Overview of the University of Johannesburg**

1. The University of Johannesburg is a large contact residential university situated in the Johannesburg Metropolitan area. The University operates across five campuses, namely: Auckland Park Kingsway (APK), which is its administrative seat; Auckland Park Bunting Road (APB); Doornfontein Campus (DFC); Soweto Campus (SWC); and East Rand Campus, which is located in Ekurhuleni. At the time of the HEQC audit, the East Rand Campus was temporarily closed.
2. UJ was formally established on 1 January 2005 as a result of a merger between the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) and the Technikon Witwatersrand (TWR). This was one year after the incorporation into RAU of two campuses of Vista University - Soweto and East Rand - which was being unbundled in terms of the National Plan for Higher Education. The University of Johannesburg was designated as one of six comprehensive universities with a mission to provide vocational, formative and professional education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
3. UJ is organised into nine Faculties. Its programme qualification mix ranges horizontally through a spectrum of vocational, professional and general formative programmes, and vertically from undergraduate certificate programmes to doctoral programmes. In 2009, UJ had a student headcount enrolment of 47233; 87% for qualifications at the undergraduate level, and 13% at the master's and doctoral levels. Although it is a dual medium comprehensive university, most of its programmes are offered in English only. In 2008 the institution employed a total of 9415 staff, 3274 of whom were academic and professional staff.

### **Institutional Mission**

4. Despite the fact that the majority of UJ's enrolments are concentrated at the undergraduate level, the institution has clear research ambitions, partially based on the research strengths inherited from RAU. The University as a comprehensive university is proud of its 69 NRF rated researchers, its research centres, and its ability to offer a wide range of programmes that span vocational, professional and general academic fields. The institution graduates the largest number of black chartered accountants trained at a contact university in South Africa. Its contribution to the country's needs for professionals and diplomats in different areas of expertise is acknowledged by external stakeholders.

#### **Commendation 1**

**The HEQC commends the University of Johannesburg for its contribution to the social and economic development of the country through the work of its research**

**centres and contributions in graduating significant number of students in scarce skills areas.**

5. During the merger the University of Johannesburg undertook a radical organizational re-design and renewal process. This was marked by considerable financial and human resources investment directed at amplifying its teaching and learning capacity and movement towards equalising infrastructure across campuses. The merger required UJ to examine its academic offerings and critically reconceptualise its teaching and learning, research and community engagement functions in response to its new challenges as a merged university located in the Johannesburg Metropolitan area. In 2009 the institution appears considerably settled in relation to the operational aspects of the merger and is now in a position to embark on the task of giving expression to its mission and vision.
6. Regarding the vision and mission, the Panel wishes to make four comments. First, teaching and learning as well as research are prominently positioned within the vision statement. The third core function - community engagement is reflected in the vision as putting 'intellectual capital to work'. Secondly, the Panel heard of different interpretations among the stakeholders of what it means to be an 'embracing African city university', other than the obvious fact that the University is situated in a major city in Africa. The Panel found varying levels of awareness and understanding of the vision and mission through the range of interviews it conducted with different levels of staff across the institution. While more reflection is needed to unpack the many implications of being an African city university, the Panel is of the view that this idea has been embraced by many staff and students and given expression in a range of creative and interesting ways. Thirdly, although the vision and mission speak to a qualification mix that contains both vocational and academic programmes the statements are generic in nature and do not provide a clear idea of a distinct comprehensive identity of the institution.
7. In general, academic staff members still think in terms of the old technikon and university divide, especially with regard to programme offerings. The Panel is aware that the discussion about the kind of comprehensive institution that UJ wants to be is still a work in progress. This notwithstanding, the Panel heard during interviews with management that the comprehensive character of the institution is seen by many as an opportunity to make a unique contribution to the economy of Gauteng and the country. Most staff members interviewed during the site visit indicated that the merger has been successful in that it has managed to produce a new institutional identity out of three distinct institutions eliciting considerable loyalty among its staff and students. This was most marked by staff and students at the APK campus. The Panel suggests that the institution develop and implement measures to consolidate these gains, paying particular attention to its other campuses.
8. Lastly, the Panel noted that discussions on the current vision and mission were limited to 'a workshop for the executive leadership of the faculties and support divisions and

Council' (AP: 12). The Panel also noted that in an attempt to secure stakeholder buy-in after approval by Council of the statements, the executive management developed and implemented survey instruments in which staff members were asked to provide their own understanding of the various terms used in the vision and mission statements. Given the limited response to this survey, with only 52 of the 9415 staff responding (AP: 13), the Panel suggests that the institution consider conducting an intensive institution-wide debate on the meaning and appropriateness of the vision and mission statements, and to engage actively with staff on the practical application of the statements.

9. While the Panel appreciated the need in the early days of the merger for a strategy driven model and a highly managerial approach, during interviews with staff across the institution it heard some skepticism about the ability of this approach to deliver equivalent quality in the student learning experience across all UJ's campuses. In relation to the implementation of the Dashboard tool the Panel heard in interviews that there is some concern about the effectiveness of the Unit for Institutional and Strategic Planning given its lack of sufficient staff. The Panel suggests that the institution reconsider the manner in which it is trying to give effect to its strategic objectives and develop systems that encourage participation of all stakeholders.
10. The University develops annual strategic thrusts which are informed by its Strategic Plan. The Panel found during interviews with various categories of staff across the institution that there is very little awareness among staff of these strategic thrusts. This might be a consequence of the fact that new thrusts are selected each year without a clear sense among staff of how these yearly strategic thrusts are integrated and built on each other. The Panel is of the view, that the difficulties of this approach might be compounded by the multi-campus nature of UJ, and the different inherited identities of the institution. The Panel is of the impression, that this perception is reinforced by the establishment of an annual focus theme (AP: 25). While the Panel understands that the annual change of theme does not imply that the previous year one is discarded, the overall effect of this approach seems to be that staff do not have a sense of continuity or sufficient time and resources dedicated to the achievement of the goals of one focus theme to be embedded in the institution's practices.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg conduct an institution-wide debate on the meaning and appropriateness of the vision and mission statements, and engage actively with staff on the practical implications of the statements, how they are translated into strategies, and meaningful performance indicators.**

## **Transformation at University of Johannesburg: Equity, Redress and Institutional Culture**

11. The institution, like its predecessors, continues to offer affordable education to the population of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Area. In terms of access, the student profile has remained fairly constant since the inception of UJ with the only variation being a drop in white student enrolments in the last three years and a marginal increase in African student enrolments. The Panel heard during interviews with management of concerns about the fewer enrolments of white students with some expressing the view that this is to do with prospective students and parents' anxiety about the stability and maintenance of academic standards at the merged institution. Other interviewees suggested that the limiting of programme offerings in Afrikaans as the medium of instruction is the problem. However, this does not seem to be the case as the Panel learned that Afrikaans as the preferred language of tuition dropped from 8.9% in 2006 to 7.8% in 2007. The Panel was of the view that given the demographics of the Metropole the student profile is not unusual.
12. In terms of gender, like all other South African institutions, UJ has a slightly higher percentage of female students than males. Despite this, consistent with system level trends, women students are particularly underrepresented (24%) in areas such as engineering. Conversely, women students are over-represented in the Faculties of Health Sciences with 73% of enrolments; 72% in Humanities; and 68% in Education, which is in line with traditional stereotypical patterns. The Panel would like to encourage the institution to monitor enrolment patterns in those faculties with relatively low participation of female students.
13. With regard to success rates at the undergraduate level, African, Coloured and Indian students' success rates have been consistently lower than those of their white counterparts in the past four years. The Panel is aware of the initiatives, such as the extended curriculum programmes, that the institution has implemented. Further, the Panel noted the support given to first year students through various other initiatives, which aim to encourage improved retention and throughput rates, by fostering closer collaboration between the Centre for Academic Development and Support and Faculties. It is too early to comment on the impact of these initiatives on the quality of the first year experience and, equally important, on the quality of graduates. The introduction of admission and tracking mechanisms is acknowledged by the Panel. However, as important as such initiatives may be the nature of the teaching and learning challenges faced by the institution will require systematic interventions beyond the first year. This will be even more urgent if there is an expectation that more undergraduate students will move into postgraduate studies as part of the institution's drive to be a research-focused university.
14. With regard to the transformation of the demographic profile of its staff, the University has developed a suite of policies and procedures for the recruitment, selection and appointment of various categories of staff. Furthermore, the University has an established

practice of setting equity targets which are reviewed annually (AP: 149). Despite its targets and enabling policy, there is a very small percentage of black academic staff holding posts at the institution. In interviews with staff, the Panel heard some disquiet about the lack of consistency in the application of these policies. Given that the institution seems to have all the necessary policies and processes in place to deal with equity in staff appointments, and in the face of high staff turnover, the institution is strongly encouraged to investigate whether there are internal obstacles that hinder the attraction and retention of black staff, particularly in terms of institutional culture. The small number of black academics at UJ undermines the institution's chances to create a diverse environment which appropriately mirrors South African society. The institution knows that lack of sufficient number of black academics jeopardizes the institution's ability to provide black students with appropriate role models.

15. In terms of gender, between 2005 and 2008 there has been a substantial improvement in the number of women at the professorial level. In 2008 women constituted 29.2% of professors compared to 18.8% in 2005. This, notwithstanding, the Panel encourages the institution to develop and implement mechanisms that will support the recruitment and promotion of women academics that are still generally underrepresented in most categories.
16. In interviews with staff, the Panel heard the view that posts are often filled with people who lack sufficient seniority for their functions. While some of these views might reflect conservative attitudes, others are reflecting a genuine concern with professional and academic standards. In addition, the Panel heard from external moderators and external stakeholders that the University is suffering from appointing too many junior staff, a practice which undermines the quality of teaching and learning and in turn, has an unfavourable impact on the quality of graduates. The Panel would like to encourage the institution to investigate this problem and find creative ways of balancing the tension between equity and quality imperatives within a framework of transformation.
17. The Panel was informed by management that there are challenges facing UJ in this regard. These include the inability of the University to attract and retain 'top class' academic staff (AP: 148). A direct consequence of this is the relatively large proportion of academic staff with academic qualifications below master's degree. Both management and staff attributed the main cause to poor remuneration packages prevailing at the University. The Panel heard from management that the institution is currently engaged in a process to establish market-related salary packages. Besides trying to attract staff through competitive salaries, the University has also launched the New Generation Scholars Programme in an effort to enhance funding and support for master's and doctorate students and in particular to address the general lack in black academics with doctoral degree across the entire higher education system (2008 Annual Report: 25).

### **Recommendation 2**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg, within the existent systemic constraints, investigate the issue of recruitment and retention of black and**

**women academics as a multilayered problem which requires complex interventions encompassing not only salary packages and overall conditions of service but also the development of an institutional culture which is attractive and supportive of black and women academics.**

18. Institutional identity and institutional culture are an important area that needs particular attention given the multi-campus character of the new institution. The Panel observed during its visits to the campuses and heard during interviews with a range of staff and students that the historical under-investment in the Soweto, Bunting and Doornfontein campuses constitutes a risk for the successful integration of the new university and the creation of a unitary institutional identity and institutional culture. The Panel had the opportunity to hear from students on these campuses about their frustration about the differences between the experiences of students at Kingsway campus and their own. The Panel would like to urge the institution to take these feelings seriously as these could undermine the real infrastructural improvements and planned future developments that the institution is undertaking and the efforts and commitment of academic staff. The Panel would like to encourage the University to engage critically with different constituencies to understand how the quality of the student experience could be enhanced especially on the Soweto campus, which needs urgent attention.
19. While the Panel is aware of the vast resources invested, or intended to be invested, on these campuses and of the projects still to be implemented, it would like to impress on the institution's senior leadership that equivalence of provision across campuses requires not only the development of campus infrastructure but also the establishment of a substantive academic presence on each campus. Furthermore, the Panel is of the view that if the campuses are upgraded so that there is equivalence in infrastructure and in the learning environment this might encourage diverse staff and students to move to these campuses and therefore support the institution in its goal of establishing non-racial environments on all its campuses and across various disciplinary fields. This requires a deliberate attempt at deepening cultural and demographic transformation on all UJ's campuses and ensuring that the programmes and learning environment offered across campuses are of comparable quality.
20. The University has a small but significant component of international students from the rest of the African continent. The Panel heard international students' general appreciation for the quality of the programmes for which they are enrolled. However, the Panel also heard of instances of behaviour among students that suggest that there is a lack of genuine integration of foreign African students into UJ's student life. This is reinforced by the apparent xenophobic attitudes on the part of South African black students. In a society not free from racism, these attitudes help to make students from the rest of the African continent feel unwelcome both as foreigners and black people. The Panel heard of at least one instance of foreign black students confronted with a class being taught in Afrikaans instead of English. Whether this was an administrative mistake or something

more serious, it created an impression on the students who experienced it. The institution is encouraged to ensure that incidents such as this are due to administrative error which can be corrected and not to prejudice which cannot be tolerated at a higher education institution. The Panel also heard and saw itself racist, sexist and conservative attitudes among staff which cannot but undermine the realisation of the institution's vision and its academic effectiveness. In this regard, the Panel would like to encourage the University to develop appropriate interventions to ensure that individual attitudes do not compromise the goal of developing an embracing and inclusive culture. More generally, the Panel would like to urge the institution to investigate the extent of xenophobia among students and between staff and students and to develop the appropriate mechanisms to make tolerance and democratic values important aspects of the curricula and non-curricular experience at the University. The University's cosmopolitan aspirations as well as its commitment to advance democracy, equality and human dignity, need to be enabled by an institutional culture which appreciates and supports diversity across all campuses, and the range of possibilities this opens up. In so doing the institution might want to think about the role of the International Office beyond its most obvious administrative function.

### **Recommendation 3**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg investigate the teaching and learning experience as well as the learning environment of its foreign and black students to understand the nature of racism and xenophobia and then develop and implement programmes that will ensure that such students are integrated and fully supported. In the case of the foreign students this should include the review of the role of the International Office.**

### **Institutional Planning, Resource Allocation and Quality Management**

21. The University of Johannesburg Institutional Statute had still not received approval at the time of the site visit hence the University is still operating under the Standard Institutional Statute. The Panel noted the absence of a sub-committee on Student Support and Services and suggests that Council might like to consider the creation of such a committee to advise it in this regard. In interviews with members of Council and from documentation perused, the Panel was pleased to note that systems have been introduced and implemented for Council to assess its own performance.
22. While the Panel heard of the involvement of the Institutional Forums in the legacy institutions during the merger discussions and negotiations, it learned that the current Institutional Forum (IF) is now largely dysfunctional. The Panel heard of steps taken by management to try to revive the IF and ensure that the institution meets its legal requirements in this regard. Nevertheless despite these efforts the meetings are not well-attended and are often not quorate. The Panel would like to encourage the institution to initiate a process to investigate in a systematic manner the reasons for the IF's dysfunctionality as the basis to address the problem.

**Recommendation 4**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg develop and implement an innovative strategy to ensure that the Institutional Forum functions are in line with legislative requirements.**

23. Since the establishment of the University of Johannesburg, two Student Representative Council (UJSRC) Constitutions have been developed with the second being approved by Council in August 2008. The Panel was pleased to learn from SRC members that induction, training and mentoring programmes have been instituted by the University under the auspices of the Student Life and Governance and the Student Accommodation and Residence Life divisions. The Panel congratulates the institution in particular on the mentoring programme for the UJSRC and for the feedback session at the end of the UJSRC's term of Office (AP: 25).
24. The Panel heard in a range of interviews with different levels of staff of concern that decisions are essentially made by the Management Executive Committee and that this strong managerialist approach has led to a disconnect between the decisions made by the 'centre' and the decisions that are considered to be needed by faculties and campuses. The Panel is aware of the enormous demands posed by the initial phase of the merger, which required a strong driving force and a top-down approach to bring the merger to completion. However, the Panel heard staff bemoan the absence of consultative processes now that the University is in the post-merger phase when the pace of change could slow down so that different layers of the university community could be consulted in detail about different aspects of the task of giving effect to the institution's mission and vision. The Panel is of the impression that the strategy-led approach of the senior leadership might not be as useful in this new stage in the evolution of the University and suggests that the institution consider a more collegial approach.
25. UJ has adopted a management model with reporting taking place along line functions irrespective of the location of the staff member or the line manager. Besides this, in order to ensure the smooth running of each of its campuses in 2007, Campus Directors were appointed. The Panel heard during interviews with Campus Directors that their responsibilities and authority are limited which in turn limits the impact in which they can have on service delivery including the quality of the learning environment on each campus. The Panel suggests that the institution investigate ways in which the role of the campus director can be made more effective.
26. In November 2008 Council adopted a Campus Master Plan, which outlines the way in which the campuses will be utilised in the long-term and the facilities that will be needed on each. A Campus Programme Profile has also been developed, which is in the early stages of implementation. The aim is that as far as possible, faculties will be consolidated on a particular campus and offer all its programmes there. The SWC will be an exception in that it will provide a range of programmes from different faculties. The Panel heard during interviews with management and staff of a number of issues that still need to be

- resolved, particularly with regard to resource allocation and equivalence of provision both in terms of facilities and staffing. The Panel appreciates this initiative but it would like to stress that the development of a communication strategy which ensures that there is continuous staff and student consultation is one of the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of the project.
27. With regard to planning, the Panel found evidence of a separation between the strategy set by executive management and the active engagement with academic and intellectual choices for the institution being particularly evident. The Panel would like to encourage the executive team to review the conceptual and practical relationship between planning as a technical and administrative function and the core functions of the University so as to ensure that planning serves and supports academic choices and the possibility of imagining new alternatives for the institution. Furthermore, the Panel has the impression that the demands of academic planning and implementation of strategy require much more sophisticated and forward-looking organisation of the Planning Office. The Panel would like to emphasise to senior leadership that a deep understanding of the academic enterprise; translation of this understanding into planning; and coherence among leadership; are crucial elements for the successful implementation of the mission of the institution.
28. In terms of resource allocation, the Panel heard during interviews with executive management that mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that all budgeting decisions are aligned with the Strategic Plan. The Panel found the budgeting process to be efficient in meeting the requirements for the effective allocation of resources and functions to the three core functions. Nevertheless, the Panel heard during interviews with the Deans that their input to the budget and allocation of resources is limited and as a result cuts have had to be made in the faculties, which negatively affect the delivery of the learning programmes. The Panel suggests that the University consider giving more authority to the Executive Leadership Group, and in particular to the Deans in this process. The above notwithstanding, the Panel notes with appreciation the manner in which UJ has managed its resources and welcomes the institution's conscious shifting of resources from operations to the core functions as a way of contributing to the creation of a new university.
29. The quality management system has evolved through several phases. The Panel heard during interviews with management that an outcome of the first Quality Plan was the review of the programmes of the two merged institutions. The Panel noted that these institution-wide programme reviews included an extensive review of learning materials and teaching and learning strategies. The result of this process was the development of an integrated programme qualification mix, which was subsequently approved by the Department of Education in December 2008. The Panel congratulates the institution on its systematic engagement with programme review as a tool to harmonise quality processes and quality of offerings in the merged institution. At the same time the Panel would like to encourage the institution to allocate appropriate resources to the analysis

and utilization of the outcomes of these reviews for both planning and quality enhancement.

#### **Commendation 2**

**The HEQC commends the University of Johannesburg for its use of programme review as a mechanism to develop a programme qualification mix for the new institution.**

30. The Panel appreciates the manner in which UJ has organised its quality assurance function and the efforts made to develop a culture of quality across the institution. While the Panel supports the creation of a joint academic planning and quality committee, it stresses the need for this committee to engage systematically with the newly created Teaching and Learning Committee, in order to situate quality assurance and planning in a larger conceptual framework. It is also concerned about the degree of overlap and lack of clarity in the responsibilities of most of these structures and encourages the institution to undertake a review to ensure that roles and responsibilities are not duplicated and that these are clearly defined.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg review the structures responsible for quality assurance and promotion and their relationship to each other in order to ensure there is coherence between them and also clarify the roles of the structures responsible for managing the quality of the learning programmes.**

### **Benchmarking and Surveys**

31. The University benchmarks itself in a number of ways. It also conducts a number of user surveys as a means to measure its performance in the core functions. The Panel heard during interviews with staff that improvements in the identified areas have not been implemented, and consequently, these surveys have not yet led to improvements. The Panel encourages the institution to ensure (i) that the findings of surveys are systematically implemented, and (ii) that a monitoring process is put in place with clear allocation of responsibility so that the quality of both the core functions and the support services is enhanced.

#### **Recommendation 6**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg develop mechanisms to ensure that the findings of surveys are systematically implemented and evaluated.**

### **Teaching and Learning**

32. UJ has a *Teaching and Learning Strategy* which was developed and approved by Senate in December 2008 for implementation in 2009. This strategy, together with the document entitled *Teaching and Learning Philosophy*, outlines UJ's conceptualisation of teaching and learning; namely 'learning to be'. During interviews with management and academics the Panel heard a number of interpretations of this concept. Some held the view that it had to do with student learning in such a way that they become well-rounded

persons, whilst others said it had to do with the way in which the curriculum is offered; yet others were unaware of the notion. Given that it did not find evidence of a consistent understanding of the concept and consequently of its implementation, the Panel is of the view that the University should explore more clearly the meaning of 'learning to be' and its relationship to pedagogy as well as to the institution's intended graduate attributes and ensure that these are shared across the institution. The Panel hopes that the implementation of the plan for the 'learning to be' philosophy, underway during the audit site visit, will address the lack of consistency in the understanding of the philosophy, will flesh out its practical implications for teaching and learning, and will open reflection and critical debate about the 'learning to be' philosophy itself. These tasks in the Panel's view are urgent.

33. The Panel was pleased to learn during interviews that there has been a recent development to advance the status of teaching through the establishment of the Vice Chancellor's *Distinguished Award for Teaching Excellence* in 2008. The Panel also confirmed during interviews with staff that 'teaching competence' has been included recently as one of the criteria to be used in promoting academic staff. Despite the fact that there is a clear policy, some staff were of the view that research is the single most important criteria for promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer. Given this discrepancy, the Panel would like to encourage the institution to ensure that sufficient communication and information about promotion criteria is available at faculty and department level.
34. During a range of interviews with staff the Panel heard of concerns about the role and autonomy of Senate. Although many of those interviewed acknowledged the place and need for approving numerous policies and procedures, the concern that Senate is in danger of becoming a 'rubber stamping body' was strong. The Panel was pleased to learn from members of senior management and the professoriate of the desire to inculcate a culture of robust academic debate at Senate meetings and encourages that this be given effect.
35. The Panel heard in a range of interviews with management and staff about the unexpected large number of students who turned up to register at the institution at the beginning of the 2009 academic year and the manner in which they were registered. During interviews with staff the Panel heard of a number of breaches of policy that occurred in dealing with this particular situation. This resulted in a large over-enrolment of students; placing students in programmes that were not of their choice; insufficient infrastructure to accommodate all students; and a reduction in teaching contact hours. The Panel also heard during interviews that students who did not meet the minimum admission requirements were admitted to programmes. As a result, the Registrar had to take a special recommendation to Senate for the admission of the affected students to be condoned and allowed to continue with their programmes through a Senate Discretionary access route. All Faculties were put under severe strain to ensure that the academic

programmes operated. The Panel heard during interviews with management that systems have been put in place to ensure that this situation is not repeated in subsequent years.

36. The issue of the rapid expansion of enrolment at UJ goes beyond the issue of the difficulties experienced during the 2009 registration. First, there is a pressure on physical infrastructure which together with parallel medium instruction at the APK campus forced the institution to reduce contact time. Although this seems to have improved recently, the Panel heard from lecturers and students that this constitutes a source of concern. Secondly, enrolment expansion puts pressure of human resources. The Panel learned through interviews that many staff had become seriously overloaded and that many students failed the mid-year examinations and had to be referred to the extended curriculum programme. Thirdly, most of the students enrolling in higher education required more attention and support and not less. Finally, overloaded staff and large classes with fewer contact periods can lead to reduction in curriculum content, and lack of academic renewal. The Panel heard and found evidence that in some areas, the curriculum taught at UJ might have lost depth. Given the structural problems faced by the institution, the Panel would like to suggest that the University gives serious consideration to initiating an investigation in order to ensure that the quality of the teaching and learning experience as well as the depth of the curriculum are not being jeopardized by the institution's commitment to expand access.

#### **Recommendation 7**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg investigate the most appropriate strategies particularly in large classes to deal with the pedagogic challenge of teaching of, mostly, “underprepared” students with insufficient staff and infrastructure. This could include, but not be limited to, increasing the number of contact hours.**

37. The Panel found during interviews with student tutors, and lecturers, and through examination of documentation of the Faculty of Education of a systematic approach towards embedding student learning and student support. The Panel suggests that this example of good practice towards enhancing student learning be disseminated across all faculties.

#### **Commendation 3**

**The HEQC commends the University of Johannesburg for the good practice shown by the Faculty of Education in having a systematic approach towards student learning and support.**

38. Extended degree programmes are available in six faculties and these cover general formative, vocational and professional qualifications. While the extended degree programmes are fully owned by faculties and quality assurance is included in regular module and programme reviews, the Panel learned that several faculties have mandated the Academic Development Centre to manage the initial year of these curricula. The Panel is concerned that this means that these courses may not be as fully integrated into

the curriculum as the Department of Education policy expects. Further, there has been a substantial increase in the number of students enrolled in the extended degree programmes from 1142 in 2007, to 2199 in 2008. The Panel heard in interviews with staff that one faculty is considering stopping this programme in order to reduce student numbers. However, in interviews with students on various extended degree programmes the Panel heard that they were very grateful to be on such programmes as they received better support than their peers in the mainstream. The Panel encourages the institution to monitor and evaluate the success rates of students in these programmes before any decision is taken about the extended degree programmes.

#### **Recommendation 8**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg monitor the effectiveness of extended programmes across faculties and that decisions about the future of these programmes are based on teaching and learning criteria as well as on enrolments considerations.**

39. As a comprehensive university that has a wide range of vocational programmes and with a mission to provide quality education and contribute to national objectives regarding skills development and economic growth, one way in which this is given expression in the institution is in the conceptualisation and organisation of work integrated learning (WIL). However, the Panel also heard with concern during interviews with academics that there is doubt about the future role of WIL. This needs to be investigated and clarified. The University is well aware that not only its status as a comprehensive university requires WIL as part of the curriculum in the vocational stream, but also that more workplace experience is becoming a necessity for graduates in professional degrees.
40. Senate approved a document for ensuring the quality management of the core functions of teaching and learning; *Guidelines for Teaching and Module Evaluation*. The Panel found a number of disparities in the application of the policy on course and lecturer evaluations across faculties, with a tendency within some departments to rely solely on informal faculty-level discussions. Given the concerns expressed about the impact of growing enrolments on the quality of the learning experience, this might be a useful way of gauging the extent and nature of such impact and decide on corrective measures when necessary.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg ensure that the evaluation of courses and lecturers by students is consistently applied and that its results are used appropriately as one tool for the improvement of teaching and learning.**

41. With regard to the management of teaching and learning the Panel noted with concern the lack of synchronization between the data used to plan and inform teaching and learning initiatives. From interviews with staff, data gathering approaches appeared at best mechanical, and at worst, unresponsive. This in part has led to a lack of shared understanding amongst middle and senior management and lecturers about the emerging

student profile of the institution. The Panel encourages the University to make effective use of its available information systems as tools for the improvement of teaching and learning at the institution.

### **Recommendation 10**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg use its well-developed information management systems as tools to plan, monitor and assess teaching and learning at programme level. This will require that the institution ensure that academic staff is sufficiently familiar and technically competent to use the available interfaces.**

42. **Academic Development.** The Division for Academic Development and Support (ADS) is headed by an Executive Director and consists of four centres headed by Directors. The Panel found that there is uncertainty about their roles and responsibilities. The Panel agrees that this needs to be clarified for the effective functioning of ADS. The Division also has a number of staffing problems, with an unusually large proportion of temporary and part-time staff. The Panel notes that the University has sought to increase the ADS budget and posts and encourages the institution to clarify the conditions of service of the staff of ADS so that it can attract and retain suitably qualified staff, as well as to boost staff morale. During interviews with members of ADS the Panel heard that the centres work in a holistic manner and have an integrated approach to the services that they provide. The Panel was pleased to learn during interviews with members of ADS that institutional research will be undertaken to measure the impact of their support services. In this regard a statistician has recently been appointed to gather data that will feed into this research.
43. The primary goals of ADS are to promote excellence in teaching and learning through the innovative application of appropriate technology to identify and assist at-risk students, and to ensure the efficient delivery of alternative access programmes (AP: 179). The Panel heard, for example, that CenTAL has been effective in assisting a number of lecturers in the use of *EduLink* as a teaching tool, and has made valuable contributions to the design and development of web-based material in many modules. The Panel learned from the AP and through interviews with academics from campuses other than APK that *EduLink* is available, and equally accessible at all campuses. However, the Panel urges the institution to address the under-utilization of this resource at some campuses.
44. The Panel heard during interviews with staff of PsyCaD's services and the provision of professional development workshops and that the need of an increasing and diverse student population stimulates greater demand for their services. During interviews with students the Panel heard of appreciation for the work of PsyCaD. The Panel was pleased to note that PsyCaD is an HPSCA-accredited site for the training of counselling and educational psychologists and psychometrists. It was also pleased to learn that ADS is represented on core institutional committees, thus ensuring its expertise and concerns can be heard where important deliberations occur and decisions are taken. The Panel congratulates ADS for its systematic and coherent approach towards teaching and learning at the institution and for the range of services it provides.

#### **Commendation 4**

**The HEQC commends the University of Johannesburg for the multi-pronged support that the Division of Academic Support and Development provides for teaching and learning.**

45. **Library.** The University of Johannesburg Library Information Centre (UJLIC) is led by an Executive Director. The University acknowledges that the library is inadequately staffed, more especially at the SWC and DFC campuses. The poor staff/student ratio in comparison with other South African university libraries has resulted in the extensive use of student assistants (AP: 173). While the UJLIC has comprehensive resources, the University acknowledges that the ratio of book titles per student is inadequate in comparison to other South African academic libraries (AP: 168). The undergraduate collection is particularly poor. In addition, the libraries have varying opening hours, ranging from 52 hours at the SWC campus to 82 hours at the APK campus. The Panel suggests that the institution give immediate attention to this inequitable situation. Failure to do so would negatively impact on the quality of the teaching and learning experience of its students.

#### **Recommendation 11**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg take steps to ensure that there is equivalence of provision of library services across all campuses and strengthen the underdeveloped sections of the library such as the undergraduate collection.**

46. The Panel heard during interviews with staff members that the library has developed and implemented a training programme to assist users to develop information literacy skills, as well as provide research support for staff and students by means of focused subject information services. The Panel also confirmed that the library is effective in providing access to both print-based and electronic resources. In particular, both students and staff at all campuses have access to the same electronic sources *via* the library catalogue, *UJLink*. The Panel heard during interviews with the library staff of high levels of usage of its electronic databases and other electronic information that is made available through *UJLink*, and was pleased to learn during interviews with staff and students that the quantity and quality of these databases is good. Staff and students also commended the effectiveness of the Inter-Library Loan system which is provided through a courier service across the various campuses.
47. **Information and Communication Technology (ICT).** The ICT infrastructure includes 100 MB/s data links between the APK, APB and DFC campuses and an electronic document system that was implemented by Information and Communication Services with Department of education funding. The Panel noted with appreciation that the connection to the South African National Research and Education Network (SANREN) has opened up a gigabyte per second communication capability between University of Johannesburg, the participating institutions and the High Performance Computing System

at Meraka Institute in Cape Town. Nevertheless, the Panel found during interviews and campus visits that there are considerable infrastructural inequalities regarding the availability of computer laboratories and computer equipment across the various campuses. This negatively impacts on the quality and equivalence of provision across the campuses. The Panel would like the University to take steps to ensure that there is equitable provision of ICT across the campuses.

**Recommendation 12**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg ensure equivalence of provision across all campuses of its information, and communication technology services.**

48. **Certification.** The Panel found that UJ's certificates have a sound set of security indicators that militate against fraudulent replication of the certificate. However, it is concerned that a single member of staff at the Central Academic Administration Office appears to have the sole responsibility to manage the processes of issuing and printing of the certificates (as well as duplicate certificates). Based on the experience of the site visit and the interviews, the Panel did not find evidence of any controls being in place to ameliorate any possible institutional risk arising from exclusive responsibility residing with a single person. Furthermore, there was no evidence that there are regular or ongoing reviews of the processes by the institution that will assure the maintenance of a quality regime. However, the information on the system regarding the certification process is audited on an annual basis to ensure data integrity. The Panel suggests that the institution review its certification processes including staff responsibilities in order to assure itself of the integrity of the certificates that it awards.

**Recommendation 13**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg review its allocation of responsibilities pertaining to management, issuing and printing of certificates to minimize the institutional risk arising from exclusive responsibilities residing with a single person.**

49. **Short Courses.** While the institution has adopted a decentralised approach to the quality management of short learning programmes (SLPs), the Department of Central Academic Administration maintains a comprehensive register of all SLPs offered at the institution. The Panel was pleased to note that the *Academic Programme Policy* and the *Quality Promotion Policy* require that all SLPs must be subject to the same programme design and development principles as formal academic programmes. However, the Panel heard during interviews with academics of concerns of large class sizes, heavy teaching loads, low throughput rates, and students needing additional educational support for subsidised programmes. As a consequence the workload and availability for the delivery of these programmes is under severe stress. With this in mind, the Panel is concerned that the wide range of short learning programmes offered (i) are competing with the subsidised programmes; (ii) detract from the institution's core academic activities; and (iii) are not strategically linked to articulate with the institution's postgraduate initiatives. The Panel

is of the view that the large number of short learning programmes might be negatively impacting on the core teaching programmes of the institution.

**Recommendation 14**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg review its policy in offering the range of Short Learning Programmes to ensure that these do not negatively impact on the quality of the mainstream teaching and learning programmes.**

50. **Programme Development.** Programme development is the responsibility of the Director: Academic Planning and Policy Implementation who heads a two-member Unit for Programme and Curriculum Development. Since its establishment in 2008, the Unit has focused mainly on developing support structures and guidelines for internal and external programme submissions. Due to its newness the Panel was unable to comment on its effectiveness.
51. **Staff Development.** Responsibility for academic staff development rests with ADS, principally through the Centre for Professional Academic Staff Development (CPASD). The Panel heard during interviews with senior staff that CPASD has conducted a number of academic leadership workshops for newly-appointed Heads of Department. a major weakness in academic staff development is poor attendance of workshops. The Panel heard during interviews with various categories of staff that ‘time constraints and workload’ are the main reasons for non-participation in staff development opportunities. The Panel was pleased to hear during interviews with some staff of appreciation of the support that CPASD provides for teaching as well as methodological research training for newly appointed staff.
52. In interviews with part-time and contract staff it was pointed out that the academic preparation programme for new staff does not include them although the institution states that all staff are invited to attend the Academic Preparation Programme. While the discrepancy might be a problem of communication, what is clear to the Panel is that there is no obligation for part-time and contract staff to attend these sessions. Furthermore, it is not compulsory for newly appointed academic staff to attend orientation or other staff development opportunities. The Panel suggests that the institution use the opportunity presented by the preparation of the Professional Academic Staff Development Framework to deal with these issues and those regarding staff participation in academic development opportunities.

**Recommendation 15**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg use the opportunity presented by the preparation of the Professional Academic Staff Development Framework to deal with the regulation (obligatory or voluntary), monitoring and evaluation of continuous academic staff development as well as induction opportunities.**

53. **Assessment.** UJ has an *Assessment Policy* that is applicable to both subsidised and non-subsidised programmes offered by all faculties across all campuses that lead to the award of an academic certificate by the University (AP: 85). The rules regarding assessment are contained (in part) in 'most Faculty Handbooks'; on the institutional website; and on Edulink (AP: 74). The Panel suggests that the rules regarding assessment should be incorporated into all the Faculty handbooks. The Panel was concerned to learn during interviews with academics that the University does not have a policy for blind marking assessments. This would seem particularly desirable in a society where names are characteristic of race and/or language and there are potential problems of bias. The Panel suggests that the University may like to give consideration to this issue.

54. In respect of the process of moderation, the Panel learned of the Senate decision that only exit levels of a qualification would be moderated by an external moderator. Modules at other levels are moderated by a second internal examiner. In respect of external moderators, the reports are sent directly to the Departments. The Panel is concerned that there is no centralized system to receive the reports of the external moderators; nor is there a centralized reporting process. During interviews with external examiners the Panel heard about a general drop in standards in their subject areas across the University for which they do external examination. Given the importance of standards and standards comparability for the reputation of any institution, the University is strongly encouraged to investigate this matter in a thorough fashion.

#### **Recommendation 16**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg develop an appropriate process to use external examiners and moderators reports to identify those courses in which issues of standards might constitute a problem and to develop interventions when necessary to correct this situation.**

55. With regard to the security of learner records the Panel was pleased to note that the University has successfully managed to establish a single database of student records post-merger. All data is backed-up off-site and is readily recoverable. Provision has also been made for printed records to be stored in terms of a data retention plan off-site due to the space constraints on the campus. However, during interviews with staff the Panel heard concerns about the manual nature of the information capture process. It did note, however, that there are regular internal audit and monitoring mechanisms *via* the HEDA portal to identify errors and direct those to the Faculties for attention.

56. Panel members were most concerned to find during the campus visit to the Soweto Campus an unlocked cupboard in a public passageway with what appeared to be current student files. Bundles of used examination books were also found piled on the floor in the office of the Examinations Administrator. During interviews, the Panel was told that they were actually tests for which examination books had been used. This raises two further issues of concern to the Panel: (i) why would the test scripts be with the Examinations Administrator to be stored in the vault?; (ii) the risk to the University if examination

answer books are used for tests and returned to students, as it means that students have possession of authentic examination documentation. The Panel was even more concerned when it was told during an interview with members of the Student Governance Office, that there has been an increase in academic fraud at the University, which has resulted in disciplinary action.

**Recommendation 17**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg take immediate action to ensure the security of student records and the examination documentation and implement measures that will curb all forms of academic fraud at the institution.**

57. The process for the entry of student marks is established in the Assessment Policy and is managed by the Faculty Administrators. There appears to be a sound understanding of the processes to be followed. However, the Panel heard during interviews that the policy is inconsistently adhered to across the Faculties. The Panel urges the institution to ensure that the policy is implemented consistently across the faculties in order to ensure the integrity of learner records. New processes and practices were introduced in late 2008 covering the security and integrity of assessment data and information. During the interviews with staff, the processes outlined in the procedures document were repeated with careful attention to detail: however, the practical efficacy of the new processes could not be tested as the supporting documentation was not made available to the Panel.
58. UJ has a *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy* (RPL). However, the Panel heard during interviews with staff that the implementation of the policy is unevenly executed in the different faculties. It was unclear to what extent assessment instruments designed specifically for RPL are utilised by faculties. The Panel suggests that appropriate mechanisms be put in place to ensure the consistent application of the policy across all faculties. The establishment of an institutional RPL Committee might be helpful in this regard. The Audit and Risk Committee of Council has conducted an RPL thematic audit. The report has still to be released at the time of the audit.

**Research**

59. The Panel noted with appreciation the institution's research and innovation strategy and agrees with the institution's aspiration to be a research-focused rather than research-intensive university, and notes its consequent investment in existing areas of strength and strategic areas that show potential. The Panel acknowledges the energetic leadership provided in the area of research, and the high quality of the research support function.
60. The current research thrust is based on the Department of Science and Technology's *Ten Year Innovation Plan*. One of the institution's strategic goals is a desire 'to establish University of Johannesburg among the top research universities in the country in terms of nationally and internationally accepted research criteria' (AP: 222). This strategic intent has been translated into specific goals, and key performance indicators have been developed to measure progress in relation to the research goals (AP: 223). The Audit

Portfolio sets out the details of strategic thrusts for 2007, 2008 and 2009 (AP: 22). In all cases, and particularly in the case of the research-related goals, the notion of thrusts defined on an annual basis does not make sense. The Panel is of the view that the research plans have been rolled out in a way that is largely not constrained by this approach, but is concerned by the absence of a multi-year view, with corresponding key indicators and budget plans.

61. In 2006, the University of Johannesburg Trust made an amount of R10m available for the creation of research centres which, from criteria developed, resulted in the establishment of 13 centres at the University. In addition, the institution has established research niche areas based on the NRF portfolio of eight focus areas, in the fields of water and health, aquatic ecotoxicology, nanotechnology, telecommunications, inequality and change, energy and sustainability, and geology (AP: 226). The Panel acknowledges the steps taken by the institution in identifying research focus areas, but wishes to caution against a range of foci that is too disparate and as a result may be unsustainable.

**Commendation 5**

**The HEQC commends the University of Johannesburg for its recent initiatives in supporting and strengthening the research core of the University.**

62. The Panel congratulates the institution with its success in innovative projects, such as the photo-voltaic project, which is considered of international standards.

**Commendation 6**

**The HEQC commends the University of Johannesburg for its innovative projects in the field of alternative energy.**

63. The Panel is pleased to note the continuing increase of 'B' and 'C' rated researchers. However it is concerned that there are no researchers in the 'P' category and the decline in the 'L' category which are the indicators of the development of young and previously disadvantaged researchers. However, the Panel heard during interviews and confirmed in documentation that there are Vice Chancellor awards for *Outstanding Researcher* and *Most promising Young Researcher of the Year* (AP: 245), which are aimed at encouraging researchers to gain ratings in the 'A' and 'B' categories as well as the 'P' category. The Panel concurs with the institution that these initiatives give further momentum to the growth of the research function at University of Johannesburg.
64. It is clear from documentation and interviews with management and researchers that research and postgraduate studies have been given a high priority in the budget plans for the institution. The Panel heard during interviews with staff that funding is available in various forms for both staff and students to participate in research activities. In addition, supervisor-linked bursaries have been introduced to enable experienced researchers to recruit postgraduate students to work on stipulated research projects. However, the Panel would like to caution the institution about the need to look into the ability of its undergraduate programmes to produce students with sufficient depths of disciplinary knowledge and basic research skills which will facilitate the articulation between

undergraduate and postgraduate studies. This is especially relevant given some of the concerns about the quality of the teaching and learning programmes at the undergraduate level. Furthermore, given the low numbers of staff with doctorates, the plans to grow postgraduate student numbers, laudable as they are, must be tempered by a realistic assessment of UJ's limitations in supervisory capacity.

65. In terms of research output the Panel noted there has been an increase in the University's research output which has resulted in greater income becoming available as per the subsidy formula of the Department of Education. The University has set itself a target of doubling research output by the end of 2011 (AP: 248). The priority given to research, together with the generous resource allocation in this domain of activity has had the effect of boosting morale among senior researchers. However, the Panel was concerned about the negative experiences related by some younger academics. It heard of alienation from senior management; inordinate pressure to publish; and to do so in conditions in which academics are carrying heavy teaching and administrative loads. The Panel would like the institution to consider ways in which young academics can be supported. Failure to do so is a risk to the University both in terms of staff retention and in not having a future cohort of researchers to give content to the institution's research aspirations.

**Recommendation 18**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg investigate the workload of young academics involved in furthering their qualifications and research career in order to develop adequate and realistic support systems for them and the university to fulfill their research ambitions.**

**Postgraduate Education**

66. The Panel learned that the University is committed to growing its enrolments in postgraduate education. Yet postgraduate enrolments have shown a steady, if slight, decrease between 2005 and 2009. This is at odds with the institution's stated intention to be a research-focused university. To support its aims in this regard, the University has, as from 2009, offered free tuition to all postgraduate students who successfully complete their studies in the minimum time (AP: 227). However, it noted with concern that the output of master's degrees has fluctuated widely between 2005 and 2008, and doctoral degree awards have declined sharply from 88 in 2005 to 61 in 2008.
67. While there are procedures in place to govern the relationship between supervisors and postgraduate students, the Panel heard in interviews with postgraduate students of instances of poor communication between students and supervisors, and of PhD students receiving poor levels of supervision in terms of supervisor availability, discussion and feedback of drafts submitted. Many academic staff also complained of 'high workload in terms of both undergraduate teaching and postgraduate supervision'. Lack of sufficient supervisory capacity at the right level seems to have resulted in at least one case in which an academic was tasked with the supervision of a degree below his/her own. While there

might have been particular and good reasons to allow this, which are contemplated in the university's relevant policy, this is an indication of the much more complex problem of the development of supervisory and research capacity at the institution. The Panel urges the University to find ways of decreasing the supervisor-to-student ratio, but stresses that this cannot be done at the expense of the already poorly serviced undergraduate students. The Panel urges the institution to ensure that academics appointed to be supervisors are properly qualified and to ensure that the workload is at a level in which good supervision can take place.

#### **Recommendation 19**

**The HEQC recommends that the University of Johannesburg conduct an assessment of its supervisory capacity, including the staff: student ratio for different postgraduate degrees, as a point of departure to develop a multipronged strategy to enhance the institution's supervisory capacity not only in terms of numbers but also in relation to appropriate teaching and learning ability at postgraduate level.**

#### **Community Engagement.**

68. The importance of community engagement as a core function of the University is recognised in the institution's Strategic Goal 1 and Goal 4. However, the Panel heard from a range of interviews with staff of an uneven understanding of the notion and value of 'community engagement'. The Panel concurs with management that there is a need for a new and more inclusive definition of community engagement as well as a planned strategy to infuse the activity into the core activities of teaching and learning as well as research. Careful consideration will be needed to embed and ensure that this strategy is aligned with the objectives and in the core business of the University.
69. The Panel heard during interviews with staff that at the faculty level, individuals or committees are appointed to ensure that community engagement is integrated into the core functions of teaching and learning and research. Staff participation in community engagement activities is taken into account in staff performance evaluation and for promotion purposes (AP: 257). Funding for institutional community engagement activities is provided out of the Capital Reserve Fund and the Community Engagement Sustainability Fund, which will be managed by a Community Engagement Advisory Board when it is established (AP: 257). The Panel acknowledges these initiatives.
70. The University of Johannesburg has embarked upon a path of providing greater support and coordination of community engagement activities. It has a Community Engagement Office, which is responsible for integrating institution-wide community engagement activities and maintaining a database and website. In 2008 it conducted an audit of the University's involvement in community engagement. A total number of 131 projects were recorded in the responses received, the majority of which were located in Gauteng. Two international projects were recorded in Mozambique and in Canada. The Panel found that the level of dedication of the staff members involved and the impact and value

of the projects to be exemplary. The Panel is however concerned that in certain projects there seems to be a lack of integration with the curriculum. The University may wish to consider building on the strengths, such as those found in the Faculty of Education of which the community engagement initiatives are particularly well-conceptualised and implemented.

## **Conclusion**

71. The University of Johannesburg is entering into a new phase in the consolidation of the merger, which created the institution in 2005. With its nearly 50,000 students, its four operating campuses, its designation as a comprehensive university, its increasing research and innovation profile, the University can make a valuable contribution to the goals of South African higher education and, particularly, to the socio-economic development of the Johannesburg Metropole. The institution can do this by providing affordable education to the city's population and by providing access with success to previously disadvantaged students; by giving effect to its specific identity as a comprehensive university; by forging research and training partnerships with a variety of stakeholders; and by contributing to social development through its community related initiatives.
72. While the University has taken many of the initial steps towards achieving its mission and vision, its main challenges are the following:
- The consistent provision of quality education across its programmes and campuses
  - The low teaching contact hours that characterise many of the undergraduate learning programmes
  - The lack of human and infrastructural resources to provide quality education to a growing student body
  - The development of clear forms of internal differentiation and articulation between technological and academic programmes
  - The implementation of its identity as a research-focused institution
  - The development of an appropriate and dynamic focus for its community engagement activities.

In order to make substantial progress in meeting these challenges the institution requires: sustained leadership; an uncompromising commitment to offering quality education across all programmes; and the ability to mobilise staff and students behind a common educational approach.