Transformation Summit Report- Labour and the Institution - July 2017

Introduction

The Rhodes University Council and the Institutional Forum made a decision to hold a Transformation Summit and in preparation for the Summit prioritized the engagement of all university stakeholders. The process involved calling for volunteers to facilitate the convening of discussion groups and collecting of data about the stakeholders' perspectives on transformation at Rhodes University. There are twelve working groups. Each of the working groups adopted various data collection methods relevant to their area and environment. This report contains findings collected by the **Labour and the Institution Working Group.**

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The Labour and the Institution Working group consisted of six visible members and four active members who contributed to the collection of data, facilitation of discussion groups, going live on radio interviews, note taking and summarizing relevant documents, producing reports from their respective constituencies and compiling and collating the information. The initial meetings of members of the group saw four interested members brainstorming strategies to gather information from the relevant stakeholders of the University.

The working group consisted of the following members:-
Lindelwa Nxele, Gilton Klerck, Ziyanda Ntlokwana, Mark de Vos, Alfred Vena and Susan Robertson.

Each member was tasked with a responsibility to approach and engage one or two of the stakeholder groups identified. Stakeholder groups that were identified included Senior Management, Middle Management, Heads of Department (HoDs), Academics, Support Staff, International Staff and the two unions, NEHAWU and NTEU.

The working group came up with four basic questions to pose to each stakeholder group in order to start the conversation. The questions were: -

1) How do they view labour in a transformed institution?

2) What is their vision of the role of labour in a transformed institution?

3) What do they think is preventing transformation at the institution?

4) What can be done to ensure progressive realization of a transformed institution?

It was initially hoped that conversations with all stakeholder groups could be held but this was not always possible. The approach and way in which stakeholder groups were engaged had to be flexible. Written submissions were requested and it was agreed that previous engagements with stakeholders in respect of transformation would be reviewed and input included.

The workgroup was able to engage the Middle Managers in a facilitated discussion which was conducted on 03 April 2017. Sessions planned for academic and support staff did not yield any participants. This may have been a result of timing in that the sessions were scheduled in the week of Graduation and also

when staff were picketing. Wage negotiations impacted negatively on further engagements. The working group also received feedback that labour issues are the concern of only the unions and the HR Division and that discussions in this regard should only be held with these stakeholders. Notwithstanding this feedback, the working group felt it necessary to continue to try and engage all stakeholders on that basis that each one of them have a role to play in either the promotion or limitation of transformation.

The meetings resumed soon after the wage negotiation process was concluded and picketing had ceased. The mailroom staff who wanted to be involved in the process initiated an insightful and constructive engagement process which encouraged and paved the way for further engagement with support staff. Following this meeting a succession of meetings were held with different sections of support staff, namely Food Services, Housekeeping, Grounds and Gardens, the Campus Protection Unit (CPU) and Central Cleaning Services (CCS). Attendance was lower than expected, partly due to insufficient communication but also because staff indicated that they have participated in a number of engagements about transformation in the past and despite raising issues of concerns not much had changed. Notwithstanding this, further discussions took place and they were fruitful, insightful and many of the issues raised in previous engagements were raised again. Consequently, the workgroup worked with and included input from the reports emanating from previous transformation discussions and surveys. The following reports were reviewed and the data triangulated with the data collected in the various discussions and have been included in this report: -

a)   The Institutional Survey report and findings conducted in 2014[1]

b)   The discussion draft from NTEU on the role of organized labour in a University

c)   The Infrastructure and Operations Division Transformation report[2]

d)   A Case Study of Centralized Cleaning Services at Rhodes University[3]

e)   The facilitated Middle Management discussion meeting notes

f)   Notes from the various facilitated constituency meetings mentioned above

The complete Institutional Survey report and findings, the Infrastructure and Operations Division transformation report and the Case Study of Centralized Cleaning Services can be found on the website - http://www.ru.ac.za/equityandinstitutionalculture/tsg/labourandtheinstitution/

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[1], [2] and [3] Reports available on the website -
http://www.ru.ac.za/equityandinstitutionalculture/tsg/labourandtheinstitution/

DISCUSSIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

The Institutional Survey report and findings conducted in 2014[1] showed that staff members were fairly satisfied with the institution's physical environment and infrastructure; however, staff indicated levels of dissatisfaction regarding the pace of the transformation process, equity, working conditions, rewards and recognition and management practices. The findings from other reports and the discussion forums indicated that the majority of staff members are still not satisfied with personal and career development thus far. The 2014 survey further revealed that issues of race, culture, language were prominent in the responses and that the NEHAWU members showed greater dissatisfaction in how these issues were dealt with by the institution in comparison to NTEU members. It should be noted that most of the NEHAWU staff hold lower grade level positions whilst NTEU members hold higher grade level positions. The study also showed that staff in higher grade level positions were generally more satisfied with the culture of the institution than those in lower grade level positions. In the Rhodes context there are more black staff in lower grade level positions than there are in higher grade level positions which means that in general black staff expressed higher levels of dissatisfaction. The findings from the 2014 survey have been echoed in other reports and dialogues within the Institution. In general staff within the Institution feel that transformation is both inevitable and necessary.

Responding to questions posed, the various groups engaged with were not positive about the culture of the University and staff focused on what needed to be transformed rather than on what a transformed institution should encompass and/or look like.

ENGAGEMENTS WITH STAFF REPRESENTED BY NEHAWU, THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS DIVISION TRANSFORMATION REPORT[2] AND THE CASE STUDY OF CENTRALIZED CLEANING SERVICES AT RHODES UNIVERSITY[3]

The following recommendations have been summarized from the various engagements with staff and the documentation that has been reviewed: -

1) **Staff development**

- A coherent and transparent staff development system that is linked to performance and career progression should be developed.

- Managers should be trained to be professional and to have supportive rather than demotivating attitudes towards staff in their units.

- There should be transparency in recruitment and selection processes. Individuals in managerial positions should be in those positions because of their qualifications and experience.

2) Supervisor/supervisee relationships. Manager/Report relationships

- A more caring, supportive consultative and participatory style of management should be adopted.

- Staff should take responsibility and learn to work without close supervision so that an improvement in their levels of performance results in the phasing out of walkabouts.

- A method of work allocation that is seen to be fair should be developed and agreed on by managers and staff.

3) Centralisation

- There should be reduction in the moving around that CCS entails and staff should be enabled to work in one section.

- Starting time should be changed back to 8.00am for those who have family obligations. The institution should provide a bus to transport workers to and from the townships in winter.

4) Job Profiling and Reward Practices

- The policy on acting allowance should be clarified and fairly implemented.

- People who have been acting in a position for a long time should be considered for selection into that position.

5) Inconsistency in the implementation of HR policies and in HR support

- Unfair discrimination in the application of HR policies should be eliminated. Recruitment and selection and other processes should be seen to be transparent and fair in line with the institution's policies.

- Improve the working conditions of the lower level staff, e.g., do away with clocking, restricted leave allowance, long-term casual work, etc.

- HR policies should be accessible language and should be translated into Xhosa and a comprehensive orientation programme for new employees, which includes the explanation of the institution's policies, should be introduced.

- HR should commit to a period within which complaints will be dealt with.

A recurring theme from stakeholders was that they have participated in a number of transformation conversations but they don't see any tangible progress in respect of transformation. In addition there is a high degree of frustration, anger and pain that underpins engagements with staff.   It is imperative that the outcomes from the Transformation Summit ensure that tangible plans are developed and executed and that the senior management of the Institution are held accountable for ensuring that transformation plans are appropriately executed.

NTEU SUBMISSION

The role of organized labour in a transformed university - Draft Discussion Document

NTEU Rhodes University Branch

Note that this is a working document of the local branch for internal purposes and does not reflect NTEU National and is not a position statement of NTEU National. It is not a press release and should not be released to the press as such.

The brief provided was to consider the role of organized labour in a transformed university including the following questions: -
1) How does NTEU and its members see labour in a transformed institution?
2) What is NTEU and its members vision of the role of labour in a transformed institution?
3) What does NTEU and its members think is preventing a transformed institution?
4) What does NTEU and its members think that be done to ensure progressive realization of a transformed institution?

This document is a working draft; given its scope, it is impossible to provide an exhaustive account.

Transformation is inherently political and as such it is normal that its meaning is contested. For practical purposes we suggest an inclusive and dynamic notion of Transformation outlined by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Governance and Operations at Vaal University of Technology, Prof Gordon Zide: -

"Transformation is an on-going process and not an event. It is a journey of a lifetime and a journey that requires us to speak the same language of respect, self-respect, tolerance, diversity, equity and fairness. Transformation is the bed-rock of social engagement, social cohesion, and public discourse, agreeing to disagree but not to lose focus of who we are as a Nation and as a people of the African Continent, imbued with the spirit of Ubuntu/Botho/Humanness. Transformation is about laying to rest the ghosts of the past which had plagued South Africa for too long and such ghosts are Racism, Discrimination, Ethnicity, Tribalism, Intolerance, Sexism, Superiority Complex, Being Judgemental, Corporate Bullying and regarding one's own views as being superior than those of the other people. Transformation is about bringing radical changes to current structural systems for the betterment of an Institution and thereby building and promoting a culture of mutual respect, trust, co-operation, tolerance and humanness. Transformation is also about the promotion of moral, ethical value and enhancement of moral regeneration".

CONTEXT

Any discussion of transformation must necessarily take into account the context. The context in which we are operating in is multifaceted and complex and the scope of this document precludes a deep analysis of all of them.

Grahamstown is located in the Eastern Cape, South Africa's poorest, rural province. It has an official unemployment rate of 32.5% and real unemployment has been estimated to be as high at 70%. According to Statistics SA, Grahamstown has a dependency ratio of 44.1: each economically active person directly or indirectly supports 44 people who are not working.

Grahamstown is a microcosm of South African society more generally which is characterized by low growth, high unemployment, high underemployment, searing levels of income inequality, high dependency ratios, a broken education system and a skills crisis where despite high unemployment, it is increasingly difficult for enterprises to find workers with necessary skills. Despite talk in the political sphere about reindustrialization, the reality is that South Africa is losing traditional large-scale employers in primary and secondary industries is simultaneously failing to empower its population to take part in the so-called information economy.

Despite widespread popular participation in politics, unions and civic organizations, South Africa's civil society has become factionalized, personality oriented and self-evidently corrupt. Despite the significant gains made by the government in rolling out services (e.g. social grants, electricity, potable water, housing, free education, etc.) the challenges remain as stark as ever and there is widespread disillusionment about the capacity and willingness of government to improve the lives of ordinary people.

With respect to Labour, South Africa has a long history of effective workers' unions and there are significant political gains for workers encoded in labour law e.g. restrictions on summary terminations, right of appeal, the CCMA, the right to form unions, agency shop agreements, collective bargaining, etc. However, given the economic and political context, the importance of organized labour remains as strong as ever.

Within the higher education sector, issues of transformation cannot be separated from the politics of the sector more broadly. HE has been underfunded for decades and has been top-cut recently to accommodate two new institutions. The result has been student contributions rising from about 20% to 30% with resultant media coverage of student protests over the last three years (note that it is important to see student protest in a historical continuum: there have been continuous student protests since the '90s, largely at HDIs, and it is only relatively recently that protest politics have played a significant role at the HWIs and has been reported by the media.) Moreover, we see an increasing income disparity between (a) men and women academics; (b) between junior and senior academics and (c) between academics generally and a rapidly expanding managerial class resulting in a steady increase in the bureaucratization of the academy.

Internationally, HE is under enormous strain from neoliberal pressures to commoditize and monetize education. This is especially prevalent in the United States and Great Britain, although the same pressures apply to other countries too. Consequently, we see a rise in for- profit universities and colleges with dubious educational standards; the spread of MOOCs which generate profit but remove real human interaction in teaching and which have very low throughput rates; the gutting of US State budgets for public education, the amateurization and casualization or academic labour to the extent that in the UK 45% of academic staff are on the lowest salary scale, 1.4 million zero-hour contracts in UK HE (about one third of the academic workforce). We have also witnessed a disturbing rise in infringements of academic freedom, summary dismissals of academics for their views, closures of universities, etc. in the United States, Hungary, and Turkey among others. In South Africa, we have been somewhat luckier insofar as these trends are yet to reach their climax. Nevertheless, there are warning signs that the financial assault on South African HE is in full swing and that we are not immune to these international pressures.

Questions of transformation play out among these currents and are not immune to them. In particular, organized labour must be sensitive to these issues.

Question 1 & 2: What is the role of labour in a transformed institution?
We see Questions 1 and 2 as being substantively the same and will be answered together.

The role of NTEU in particular and organized labour more generally, is focused primarily on worker issues at the university and secondarily on worker issues in broader society. It is important to recognize our mandate and not to confuse it with the many other areas for intervention in our society.

NTEU is a bottom-up driven organization and we draw our mandate from our members, specifically at Rhodes University.   The goals and views of the union are ultimately driven by our constituency.

Our constituency includes a variety of people with diverse views and it is not the role of the union to police their views or to attempt to impose a single ideology or a common policy on our constituency. However, it is most definitely our role to ensure that workers have the rights to free expression of those views along with their other constitutional rights.

Accordingly, we do not necessarily make pronouncements on curriculum, student affairs, politics and various initiatives unless these issues become important to worker rights. This is not to negate the importance of these issues; merely to acknowledge that they fall outside of our mandate and that our members are free to pursue them – and that we will protect their right to do so.   This is consistent the principles of bottom-up organization and our stance is determined by our constituency.   We therefore reject top-down, vanguardist approaches that seek to impose normative views upon what organized labour should or should not do.   We therefore take our mandate to include: a focus on labour issues, providing a voice for workers to give input – both locally and nationally through FEDUSA; Sharing resources among our constituency e.g. using the expertise of one member to assist another; Collective bargaining to promote workers' rights; ensuring the effective and sustainable running of the institution, and good governance within the realms of the law; promotion of promote transformation and equity in the interests of a just society, a sustainable institution and the promotion of a safe and equitable workplace for labour.   We are involved in a cross-section of activities throughout the year; the benefits of our work accrue to all workers.

- We sit on 18 committees in the university;
- We sit on selection committees;
- We meet with HR once a month to deal with issues as they arise such as: recognition of prior experience; safety and security; disciplinary matters; selection of pay days; annual leave; medical aid; pensions, etc.;
- We deal with disciplinary issues (we counsel members about their options; we assist in mediation and in disciplinary hearings);
- We review policy documents;
- We keep members informed about local and national labour issues, as well as keeping members informed around important events at the university;
- Annual wage negotiations;

- We have input on a number of ad-hoc groups such as: The national Higher Education Summit; the Health and Safety review workshop; Harmonization of working conditions; the Transformation Forum; the Extended Leadership Workshop; negotiations around #Feesmustfall, etc.

Finally, we need to take cognizance of the fact that organized labour at Rhodes University does not operate in the silo of the academic institution: labour is a national and transnational fact and unions are responsive to the broader context: organized labour exists in the context of and is a response to unequal power relations which are located both institutionally, nationally and internationally and which include ideologies of neocapitalism, managerialism, objectification and exploitation for profit. Transformation at a purely local level (at Rhodes University) will have no effect on the national or international dynamics; no matter how transformed Rhodes University is, we envisage that (a) the power relations within the university with respect to labour will remain largely intact and (b) the power relations operating within broader society will remain unchanged. We therefore envisage that the role of labour will remain largely unchanged. Wherever there exists an unequal power relationship between employers and employees, there will be a role for organized labour. We therefore see our role as remaining fairly similar to what it is now.

Question 3: What is preventing transformation?
It is worth outlining how a transformed institution might approach worker rights and responsibilities and organized labour. The picture we paint here is partial; some aspects are controversial and it is likely that some aspects cannot be achieved without radical transformation of society and the economy.

With respect to labour it is worth considering Transformation of the institution as an ongoing process working toward a fairer, saner, healthier society. This includes having a diverse workforce where there are opportunities for every member of society at every level/grade for which they are qualified. Such transformation includes but is not limited to dimensions of race, gender, language, ethnic origin, social class, disability, age, etc.

Accordingly, we expect a transformed university to: -
- Espouse as a core value that workers are essential long-term stakeholders, that workers need to be actively involved in the sustainable running of the institution and that workers are partners in the institution – as opposed to viewing workers as a "cost", as ignorant and needing to be excluded from decision making processes, as a necessary nuisance rather than partners. Consequently, a transformed university would ensure adequate worker representation on decision-making bodies and develop collective worker-management decision forums (as is the case in Germany, for example).

- Be committed to ongoing equity (e.g. with regard to employment practices, representivity, etc.).

- Be committed to transparency in the interests of equity (e.g. using the committee system, semi-democratic decision making processes, freedom of information, etc.).

- Be committed to sustainable management practices. These include abiding by statutory requirements to ensure the financial wellbeing of the institution, but also to work toward environmental sustainability contextualized in the ecosystem of the Eastern Cape (e.g. a car free campus, solar water heating, rainwater recycling, grey water recycling, natural air conditioning, green spaces, carbon-neutralization, etc.).

- Aggressively develop and maintain worker friendly policies e.g. generous leave; generous and progressive parental leave; support workers in gaining educational qualifications; disability policy; fair disciplinary procedures, etc.

- Aggressively develop and maintain an equitable remuneration policy informing remuneration decisions. Workers should be paid a fair wage reflecting the risks inherent in their job, the investment in education and experience that underpins the job. Wages should be fair in the sense of allowing a decent standard of living, competing favourably with the real inflation rate, allowing workers to improve their material circumstances, gain access to the economy e.g. having a salary that allows workers to take out home loans, put their children through university and retire with dignity.

- Use a worker friendly business model that allows workers to develop long careers within the institution as opposed to an exploitative model that relies on adjunct labour and outsourcing.

There are a number of issues that inhibit these including (in no particular order):

- Organized labour has been working to transform workplaces in South Africa for more than a century. As such, it is not apt to talk about transformation as an unproblematic binary. Viewing transformation in simplistic binary terms may prevent progress.

- The international and national structural relations and economic models within which HE operates. These are significant constraining forces.

- Transformation in the South African context seems to be often approached in an ahistorical and exceptionalist manner often ignoring the fact that labour transformation has a long history in South Africa and also often ignoring the postcolonial transformation experience generally and the transformation experience of the African continent specifically. This leads to under theorization and relatively simplistic understandings of structural power and tends to denigrate the responses of other countries in the South. Transformation has for many years been a theme of discussion at Rhodes. One of our members writes "Since I have been here this is the third round of institutional level discussion around the subject starting in 1993 – not forgetting that the University, prior to that time, was in trouble several times with the government of the day for placing black students in residence, appointing black staff in the teaching departments and even electing a Chinese student as Rag Queen. Even the res rules campaign of 1972 was a transformative event and process. Vice-Chancellor Henderson, for instance, came under great threat from the government of the day for transformative decisions. It is, though, easy to forget (or not even know) the history of the actions and implementations that have been made and become part of our fabric. There is, in fact, a lot of

history around this, but that does not exonerate the community from continuing the debates, and hopefully arriving at conclusions and changes."

- Systematic negative stereotypes associated with organized labour promoted through the media, by managers and through popular middle-class folklore. These include the notions that unions waste time; are inept; destroy infrastructure; undermine the sustainability of enterprises; contribute toward unemployment; are coercive, etc. In some instances these prejudices derive from thoroughly bourgeois ideologies of individualism and autonomy combined with a naïve approach to the way power is mediated in institutional structures, namely, the naïve notion that an individual is better able to represent themselves to the institution than a collective would be able to. In many cases, this attitude is backed up by the willingness of individuals to rather leave the institution than to work to improve conditions; again this option of labour mobility is a privilege only enjoyed by a minority of the middle class. In other instances, especially among managers, similar views may be motivated by other factors. This may be partly because unions represent a bona fide counter weight to managerial power and partly because business schools and managerial training emphasizes a neo-liberal view of economic power where organized labour plays little positive role.

- Some staff in the higher grades are resistant to organized labour and, to the extent that labour is an inherent part of a transformed institution, this resistance must be seen as potentially inhibiting transformation of labour relations. For instance, the apparent preference of some academics to express themselves on labour issues through parallel structures such as Faculty or "separate academic meetings" rather than expressing themselves in a democratic and legitimate way through the unions which are mandated to carry those issues forward, is worrying. Academics are, of course, free to do use their voice in these forums, but if this is combined with a concomitant reluctance to participate in labour structures, it raises some difficult questions about the role of academic staff in promoting or inhibiting transformation of labour relations.

- Divisive notions within the institution that serve to create artificial divisions between workers. Notable among these is the prevalent discourse of "workers" vs "academics" which is a crude proxy for blue-collar vs white-collar (and in South Africa this is also a proxy for race). Notwithstanding the challenges faced by workers in the lowest grades, this division is at least a century out of date, presupposes an industrial model and is simply not true in a modern, service-oriented economy. Accordingly, we need to consider social class in terms of community and patterns of dependency. There needs to be a broader realization that workers are exploited and are in economic distress regardless of the type of work that they do.

- The lack of recognition that transformation requires financial investment. There appears to be a naïve tendency for people to talk about transformation on a zero budget. This does not take into account the fact that injustice is a deep-seated economic fact underpinned by generations of exploitation and a system where one's economic leverage is essential in accessing the economy. It is an inescapable consequence that real transformation requires real money. For instance, last year unions and HR renegotiated to "harmonize" conditions of service for all staff. Negotiations dealt with practical issues such as ensuring equal leave and maternity benefits, equal choices with regard to medical aid, pension and provident funds, etc. These were about very real issues that concern

staff and make a tangible difference to their lives and those of their families.   Although most issues were successfully signed off by unions and HR, the University Top Management placed a moratorium on the implementation citing concerns about "costing".   Another example is about how, following the successful regrading of grades 1 to 5, University Top Management placed regrading of grades 6+ on hold indefinitely.   Effectively, real transformation was held ransom by financial constraints.   Notwithstanding the constraints are real enough, it remains a fact that transformation requires financial investment.   It's not enough to talk about it; policies must be backed up with budgets.

- Implementation of systems vs individualization.   Rhodes University has many good policies (negotiated with unions) but implementation is sometimes uneven and too dependent on individuals.   This points to the need for smooth running systems that run regardless of the personalities involved.

- The committee system.   It needs to be considered whether the extended committee system in its current form is effective in implementing change or whether it serves to delay decisions, stifle change and lower productivity while protecting people from being accountable.

- Practices that serve to exclude unions and labour representatives from decision making bodies.   For example (a) there is no NTEU representative on Council (although there are two for "support staff") (b) invitations to meetings are sometimes extended within 72 hours of the meeting and often less (c) the sheer volume of meetings means it is difficult to ensure union representatives are available (d) ratio of representativity on committees, senate etc. e.g. Senate and Council are packed with senior academics and managers – having a single representative for Support Staff does nothing to ensure representativity of workers in the system.

- The apparently parochial attitude of some senior and line employees in selection panels who see only a route to "the hit the ground running" candidate as opposed to a good equity candidate who is fairly easily extended by training and development support.   Associated with this is the relative lack of true subscription to training and development for real career paths of staff.   Currently, only academics have a clear career path through promotion which is supported by real opportunities to expand their proficiencies (e.g. through committee work, funding for further qualifications, etc.).   On the other hand, non-academic employees do not have promotion opportunities but must reapply for internal positions.

- Apparent resistance to change.   Many members have pointed to the perception that management at Rhodes is resistant to change.   There seems to be a prevailing attitude of prematurely dismissing innovative ideas rather than engaging seriously with how to overcome perceived challenges.   This may partly be a result of personalities which seek to criticise rather than provide constructive criticism and partly a result of the fact that any new idea has to negotiate several committees (each one essentially being able to veto or stall a new idea).   The result of this is that Rhodes University has not changed its business model despite the fact that other universities have invested in future change e.g. short courses, online teaching, partnerships with other

universities, etc.   The result is that Rhodes University remains a victim of its geography and municipal context.

- Apparent inability for top management to make decisions in accordance with their job descriptions. As has been highlighted recently by our Manifesto to Top Management, there is an unwillingness or inability of Top Management to plan and/or to communicate that plan to staff.   Examples abound: (a) The HR director warned in 2014 that staff complement was at a critical level – nothing was done by Top Management to rectify the situation with the result that in 2017 the Executive Director presented a "sustainability budget" that called for cutting R69 million!   (b) Already in 2014 it was clear that student debt would no longer be a sustainable approach to funding the university and each year after that student protests made this conclusion inescapable.   Despite being able to foresee stress on university finances, and frequent presentations to the university community about the financial "crisis" University management did not match its actions to its rhetoric: they continued to hire new staff; did not develop a new funding plan.   To date, although there is a "sustainability" budget as well as a "deficit" budget, there are no concrete plans on how to implement either e.g. the VC's circulars outline trivial cost-cutting attempts to save R10 million by cutting end of year functions and partial moratoriums on support staff hiring.   Relatedly, a plan to scrutinize the ability of students to pay fees through use of an outsourced service was referred back by Council in 2017 saying inadequate work had been done.   The fact that it took 3 years to develop an *inadequate* plan for this facet of the problem is worrying.   (c) At an "Extended Leadership Workshop" in 2017 the VC called for Senior Directors, Managers and Deans to think creatively and "reimagine" the university to resolve the financial issue.   It is our opinion that very few of the senior management present were able to rise to the challenge; very few presented anything resembling "reimagining" and very few presented any solutions (with notable exceptions being Registrar's division, DVC: Research, the Deanery and NTEU).   Consequently, it is hard to avoid the conclusion of a Top Management that is paralyzed in its decision-making.

- The lack of an agency shop agreement.   Earlier we pointed out that the benefits negotiated by unions accrue to all workers regardless of their union membership.   For example, the higher wages negotiated by unions are applied to all workers – not only union members; retirement, medical aid, annual leave provisions negotiated by unions benefit all workers, etc.   There are two important principles at play here;
  a) **Collective benefit:** all workers should benefit from the activities of organized labour.
  b) **Collective responsibility:** all workers should contribute toward the activities of organized labour.

- The entire raison d'etre of organized labour is to benefit *all* workers.   This is the principle of collective benefit.   Allied to this is the principle of collective responsibility: since all workers benefit from organized labour, it follows that all workers should contribute in some way. Unfortunately, this latter principle is not recognized by Rhodes Management although it is allowed for in legislation in the form of an "Agency Shop Agreement" (LRA section 25).   Simply put, an ASA allows for every employee to either (i) become a member of a union of their choice, or (ii) to remain a non-member but to contribute the equivalent membership fee, or (iii) to remain a non-member and to contribute the equivalent membership to the Department of Labour.   The funds

thus collected are specifically earmarked for worker development. This means that all workers contribute toward organized labour in one form or another; however, the right to freedom of association is respected and the individual has the right to determine whether to become a union member or not. It is our view that in a transformed university, the principle of collective responsibility will be recognized by the institution as a principle of ethical labour practice. Correspondingly, a transformed university will institute an agency shop agreement with the unions.

Question 4: What does NTEU and its members think that be done to ensure progressive realization of a transformed institution?

1) Ensure strong and active unions that allow staff scope to actively participate in governance structures.

2) Put into effect the positive points raised under above and put a stop to the negative practices mentioned above.

3) It is important to see the points raised above as particular examples of institutional practices from which one needs to abstract basic principles of transformation. Even if one resolves individual issues if one does not resolve fundamental guiding principles, then the effort is wasted. It is not the scope of this document to outline what these principles may be but they would presumably include the guiding principles of the Constitution, the need for strong union membership, the need for active participation, transparency, accountability, effective leadership, and a vision for a new future where workers matter, etc.

A number of members urged that transformation can only be done through active engagement by all employees. One respondent wrote: "As a long time trade union leader I also understand and know just how difficult it is to get communities to enter into these interactive spaces. There is no real reason other than the question of where to start that stops many from becoming involved. Well just start somewhere – remember in most cases an idea has not failed; it just didn't work out but it will have had a small effect; approach it from a different angle. If you don't invite people to the table: nobody gets lunch."

"Structures like the Institutional Forum should lead debate around these issues and should become more visible in this space. All of you can contribute to this and should have your own debate spaces, your own "lunch-events" to discuss race, gender, access, academic character, the meaning of academically free space; and so forth. Last night I saw a report on such a process initiated by Republican members of Congress in America where representatives are invited to lunch events to discuss, for instance, race issues – a space where white and black representatives engage with each other and realisations are created and myths are broken down."

Another member put it succinctly, "support and actually actively work to have our employees live the Constitution of the country. Dispense with intellectualised questions like this."

ENGAGEMENT WITH MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

As mentioned previously a facilitated discussion was held with Middle Management. Participation was voluntary and everyone from the Middle Management Group was invited to participate. The following questions were posed to the group: -

How does Middle Management see labour in a transformed University?

- Staff at the grade 1 to 5 levels would not all be black. Representation should apply at all levels.

- The equity formula and way in which we apply equity should be reviewed.   Transformation should be looked at both at the department/unit level as well as institutionally.

- The culture of the university needs to be more inclusive, this would assist in retaining staff.

- The skin colour of staff would no longer matter because the University would be transformed and staff would be hired based on their skills and their ability to perform in the job that they are hired to do.   A strong performance culture would be one of the key components of a transformed University.

- Middle Managers said that the values associated with a transformed University should be: -
  o Equality
  o Kindness
  o Diversity
  o Inclusivity
  o Dignity
  o Trust

- There would be development plans for every staff member which would take into account that everyone has different needs and ambitions.   Development plans would take into account individual needs and circumstances.

- There would be transparent succession planning that would give everyone in the University the opportunity to progress.

- There are currently 2 'classes' of staff, academic staff and non-academic staff. The latter term is offensive and staff that are not academics are often made to feel like second-class citizens. Comments like 'without the academics there would be no Institution' are not inclusive or helpful in building a transformed Institution.   A transformed Institution would ensure that everyone is treated with respect and that one group of staff are not given more opportunities and better conditions of service than the other.

- A strong Mentorship program using retired academics to mentor young academics who are at the start of their careers will be in place.

- A knowledge and resource Centre will be in place where institutional knowledge is captured and housed and is accessible to everyone.

- When there is a vacancy HR should be able to approach staff within the University with a view to giving staff the opportunity to apply rather than going externally.

What is preventing labour from being how you think it should be in a transformed university?

- The way in which we recruit. We bring people in from the outside as opposed to developing our own staff and/or people from Grahamstown.   If a proper succession plan is in place we would be able to plan appropriately and ensure that we are able to provide opportunities for our staff and/or people locally.

- Senior people do not share information and knowledge.   As a result when people leave they leave with everything they know and the next person has start again from scratch.   It should be mandatory to have Standard Operating Procedure manuals and repositories.

- We need to create more spaces where we unpack people's understanding of equality and transformation.

- The lack of Individual Development plans that focus on staff development and career growth. Some staff are employed at Rhodes at a particular grade level and years later they retire at the same level doing the same job. This needs to change.

- In some instances, transformation is inhibited by people who are 'gatekeepers' and once they retire there will be opportunities to transform.

- Rhodes is seen as a transition space for many, so transformation needs to be viewed within this context.   It is important to understand why people see Rhodes as a place to get experience and then leave.

- The lack of a flexible work program.

What can be done to ensure progress in a transformed university?

- Performance management should be introduced and the guaranteed 13th cheque should be done away with and we should introduce performance bonuses.

- The University needs to have a stronger equity policy.

- Re-visit the way we promote staff.

- Turnover amongst academics is the highest and vacancies should be filled with staff from designated groups.

- A transformed university is about remaining viable and relevant.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It must be noted that whilst the working group was able to hold some meaningful engagements with staff, not all stakeholders were engaged and/or submitted their input. Notwithstanding this there is rich data within the Institution regarding transformation.   The challenge lies in formulating plans to implement transformation in a way that is inclusive, open and transparent.