

# UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, CHALLENGES, PROJECTS AND ACTIONS: 2004 TO 2006

### SECTION 1. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2004-2006

During a Strategic Planning Summit held 21-23 January 2004 the Executive Management of the University of the Free State, with due consideration of the internal and external environment of the UFS, reconsidered the four strategic priorities for the institution which were identified in 2002 and confirmed in 2003. Whereas three of the strategic priorities were confirmed, one priority (Restructuring of higher education) was reformulated to capture the UFS views on its role in the central region of South Africa. A new fifth strategic priority was added to convey an increased focus of the institution on enhancing its national and international profile and playing a more prominent leadership role in higher education nationally and internationally. Consensus was reached that the following **five strategic priorities** for the UFS will be directive for 2004-2006:

- i. **Quality and excellence**
- ii. **Equity, diversity and redress**
- iii. **Financial sustainability**
- iv. **Regional co-operation and engagement**
- v. **Outward thrust nationally and internationally**

Further brainstorming and discussions identified specific challenges that emanate from the five strategic priorities, as well as from national policy imperatives. Whereas some of the challenges can be addressed by means of actions which would mostly be implemented in the relevant line functions and managed by the line managers concerned (see Section 2) other, more complex challenges need to be tackled at a management level and require a project-based approach. Six such urgent and strategic projects were identified (see Section 3). Lastly a number of operational issues that also need attention during 2004 were identified (see Section 4). Even though these operational issues may not directly derive from the five strategic priorities, successfully addressing them would provide the crucial backbone for building capacity, improving effectiveness and efficiency and contributing towards making the UFS a more robust university in order to realise its vision, mission and strategic priorities.

## SECTION 2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, CHALLENGES, ACTIONS, RESPONSIBLE PERSONS AND TIMEFRAMES

Strategic and academic planning at the UFS is crucial for realising its vision and mission, and also for good academic and financial functioning and alignment with national policy and planning imperatives. Having taken into account the external and internal environment of the UFS, as well as the five identified strategic priorities, the following **challenges** that need to be addressed by means of specific **actions** performed by particular **responsible persons** within a short- or medium-term **timeframe** were specified.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	CHALLENGES (what)	ACTIONS (how to address challenges)	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)	ADVISORY BODIES	TIMEFRAME
1. Quality and excellence	a) Research excellence:	i. Deploy and operationalise UFS strategic research framework, inter alia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attract external research funding and optimally use unspent research funds</li> <li>- Provide research support (capacity development, guidance, finances etc.)</li> </ul>	Dir: Research Development/Deans	UFS Research Committee and Faculty Research Committees	Continuous
		ii. Attract and retain highly graded researchers	Deans/Heads of Dept.		Continuous
	b) Increase throughput rates	i. <i>Strategic project 3: Optimise student learning</i>	See Section 3		
		ii. SRC projects (to be specified)	VR: Student Affairs, SRC President		2004

	c) Improving, upgrading, modernising and optimising use of physical resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Continue implementation of UFS Structure Plan and five-year project for campus upgrading</li> <li>ii. Draw up strategic plan for residential facilities on campus</li> </ul>	Dir: Physical Planning & Special Projects  VR: Student Affairs	2004-2006  2004
	d) Improve service delivery in support services and academic spheres	<i>i. Strategic project 6: Optimise capacity to ensure robustness of UFS</i>	See Section 3	
	e) Give effect to national quality assurance requirements	<i>i. Strategic project 1: Quality Assurance</i>	See Section 3	
2. Equity, diversity and redress	a) Employment equity	i. Finalisation and approval of the EE policy and plan	Dir: Diversity and Equity	2004
		ii. Implement approved policy and plan	Executive Management	Continuous
		iii. Headhunt promising postgraduate students	Deans, Dept Heads	Continuous
		iv. Continuation of Grow our own timber project	Programme Director	2004-2006
			Grow our own timber Board	

	b) Develop a new common institutional culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Process roll-out to develop 'social contract'</li> <li>ii. Do regular 'diversity dipstick'/diversity audit</li> <li>iii. Address diversity and institutional culture in residences</li> <li>iv. Implement Botho project (specify)</li> </ul>	<p>Peter Rosseel, Rector, Dir.: Diversity and Equity</p> <p>Dir: Diversity and Equity</p> <p>VR: Student Affairs, SRC president, Dean of Students</p> <p>Dir: Diversity and Equity</p>	Institutional Forum	<p>2004</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>2004-2006</p>
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3. Financial sustainability	a) Generation of third stream (entrepreneurial) income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Promote contract research</li> <li>ii. Revisit proposals for third stream income in the financial turn around strategy</li> <li>iii. Engage in fundraising drive (particularly internationally)</li> <li>iv. Finalise entrepreneurial office and introduce 'entrepreneurial-friendly' policies and procedures to promote entrepreneurial culture</li> <li>v. Establish policy and procedures to regulate short courses as potential source of income</li> <li>vi. Selectively commercialize physical assets</li> </ul>	<p>Dir: Research Dev. Chief Director: Operations</p> <p>Chief Director: Operations</p> <p>Dir: Entrepreneurial and Academic Projects</p> <p>See <i>Strategic project 1</i></p> <p>Dir: Physical Planning &amp; Special Projects</p> <p>Deans of Facilities with support from Finance dept</p> <p>See <i>Strategic project 3</i></p> <p>Deans, Dept. Heads</p> <p>See <i>also Strategic project 3</i></p> <p>Dir: Research Dev, Deans</p> <p>Chief Dir: Operations, Dir: Financial Admin Planning Unit, Deans</p>	Entrepreneurial Committee	<p>Continuous 2004-2006</p> <p>2004-2005</p> <p>2004-2006</p> <p>2004</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2004-2006</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2004-2006</p>
	b) Maximise income from subsidy formula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Informing staff members of the implications of the new funding framework</li> <li>ii. Increase student throughput</li> <li>iii. Increase research masters and doctorate input and output</li> <li>iv. Increase research output</li> </ul>			
	c) Optimise income from student fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Establish differentiated, market-related student fees</li> <li>ii. Increase student numbers in strategically selected niche areas</li> </ul>			

	d) Address financing of School of Medicine			Rector, VR: Academic Operations, Chief Director: Operations, Dean: Health Sciences	2004
4. Regional co-operation and engagement	a) Align Vista and Qwaqwa satellite campuses with UFS strategic priorities by planning strategic reconfiguration of campuses b) Optimise and integrate management processes of QQ and Vista campuses into UFS c) Forge stronger links with Northern Cape	i. Develop medium-term strategic vision for both campuses by engaging in strategic planning process for reconfiguration of delivery sites in collaboration with partners ii. Operationalise developed management models iii. Ensure quality teaching of pipeline students	VR: Academic Planning Registrar: Strategic Planning Respective Campus Heads See <i>Strategic project 4</i> VR: Academic Operations, Campus Heads, Dir. Entrepreneurial and Academic Projects		2004
		i. Plan strategic engagement with National Institute for Higher Education in the Northern Cape	VR: Academic Planning		2004

5. Outward thrust nationally and internationally	a) Develop strategy for outward thrust nationally, in SADC, Africa (NEPAD) and internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Involve institutional leadership at national level to influence HE policies</li> <li>ii. Identify and launch national and international leadership focus areas</li> <li>iii. Finalise internationalisation/outward thrust policy and strategy</li> <li>iv. Use internal experts at national level on policy committees, councils etc.</li> <li>v. Position people/staff at national and international level (also at companies) to identify opportunities where UFS can play a role and give recognition for people fulfilling this role</li> <li>vi. Present and participate in international conferences</li> <li>vii. Initiate and participate in international research projects</li> <li>viii. Centenary conference</li> <li>ix. 'Social contract' process</li> </ul>	Rector  VR: Academic Operations, Deans  Dir: Entrepreneurial and Academic Projects Dir: Research Development VR: Academic Operations, Deans         VR: Academic Operations, Deans Dir: Research Development, Deans Rector Rector	2004-2006  2004  2004  Continuous  Continuous
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**SECTION 3. THE SIX MOST URGENT, IMPORTANT AND STRATEGIC INSTITUTIONAL PROJECTS TO BE CONCLUDED DURING 2004**

Some of the challenges identified by the Executive Management are of such a strategic and complex nature, requiring input from and cooperation by various sections, Faculties and departments, that the best way of approaching them seemed to be in the form of strategic projects, involving a range of role-players. The following table lists these projects by relating them to the strategic priorities and also indicating the responsible task team.

<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE BODIES</b>	<b>ADVISORY BODIES</b>
Quality and excellence	<p>1. Quality Assurance:</p> <p>1a) Preparation for institutional audit in 2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Prepare policies, plans, procedures, etc. which need to be in place before audit</li> <li>ii. Communicate audit requirements to faculties and departments</li> <li>iii. Audit quality assurance mechanisms and procedures in faculties and departments.</li> <li>iv. Undertake user surveys</li> </ul> <p>1b) Programme self-evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Implement programme self-evaluation framework for all undergraduate programmes in all Faculties in a staggered process to be completed by December 2004</li> </ul>	<p>Planning and coordination:            Planning Unit            Implementation: Dean and Directors</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Committee, Portfolio            Education and Research</p>
Quality and excellence Equity, diversity and redress Financial sustainability	<p>2. Growth Management:            Develop growth management and enrolment plan by inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Determining legal and policy parameters for growth</li> <li>ii. Analysing historical growth patterns at the UFS</li> </ul>	<p>Planning and coordination:            Planning Unit            Programme Directors</p>	<p>Programmes Committee, Portfolio            Education and Research</p>

<p>Regional co-operation and engagement</p>	<p>iii. Determining optimal size and shape of UFS taking into account: the nature of the university, equity imperatives, subsidy allocations, physical facilities</p> <p>iv. Determining admission criteria to realize managed growth (Subproject: Access and Admissions)</p> <p>v. Aligning student admissions criteria and procedures with planned growth</p> <p>vi. Aligning bursary and loan schemes in order to stimulate planned growth</p> <p>vii. Aligning marketing and recruitment with planned growth</p>	<p>Implementation: Registrar: Student Administration</p> <p>Implementation: Head: UFS Marketing</p>	<p>Committee for Access with Success</p>
<p>Quality and excellence</p> <p>Equity, diversity and redress</p> <p>Financial sustainability</p> <p>Regional co-operation and engagement</p>	<p>3. Optimise student learning:</p> <p>i. Develop and implement open learning plan (introducing new modes of learning, new teaching/learning technologies, flexible learning opportunities)</p> <p>ii. Identify courses with high failure rates, investigate and address causal factors</p> <p>iii. Establish service for language proficiency development</p> <p>iv. Establish service for post-graduate academic writing skills development</p> <p>v. Devise and implement student tracking system</p> <p>vi. Introduce tutor system for all students through academic lines (based on experience with residence tutor system)</p>	<p>Planning and coordination: Planning Unit</p> <p>Implementation: Open learning office</p> <p>Implementation: Deans</p> <p>VR: Academic operations, Deans</p>	<p>Education Committee, Portfolio Committee: Education and Research</p> <p>Task Team</p> <p>Task Team</p> <p>Education Committee</p>

<p>Quality and excellence</p> <p>Equity, diversity and redress</p> <p>Financial sustainability</p> <p>Regional co-operation and engagement</p>	<p>4. Develop medium-term strategic vision for Qwaqwa and Vista campuses by engaging in strategic planning processes for reconfiguration in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.</p>	<p>VR: Academic Planning / Reg. Strategic Planning and relevant Campus Heads</p>	<p>Campus Coordinating Committees</p>
<p>Quality and excellence</p> <p>Equity, diversity and redress</p>	<p>5. Further roll-out of PMP ke Nako Project: Total Cost to Company Job evaluation Performance review system Staff development</p>	<p>Project Team, pilot groups</p>	
<p>Quality and excellence</p> <p>Equity, diversity and redress</p> <p>Financial sustainability</p>	<p>6. Optimising capacity: Identify all issues relevant to optimising the resource capacity of the UFS in order to ensure robustness by inter alia determining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ what is needed to manage a large (multi-campus) university</li> <li>▪ the most vulnerable operational areas (e.g. registration process)</li> <li>▪ where and why lack of effectiveness and efficiency exists</li> <li>▪ how improvements in effectiveness and efficiency can be measured and monitored.</li> </ul>	<p>Exco of Executive Management</p>	<p>Task teams to be appointed</p>

#### SECTION 4. OPERATIONAL ISSUES WHICH NEED TO BE ADDRESSED DURING 2004

For the effective functioning of the UFS which will provide a robust and stable environment for the realisation of its strategic priorities, critical operational issues need to be addressed during 2004. These issues, proposed solutions and responsible persons are listed below.

Issue	Solution	Responsible person
1. Centenary project	i. Continuous effective management of project	Centenary Coordinator
2. Marketing and recruitment strategy	i. Differential marketing aligned with enrolment planning ii. More user friendly marketing iii. Better coordination and synergy between faculties, UFS Marketing, Registrar: Student Services, Accommodation Services, Bursaries and Loans iv. Improved information levels of staff	Chief Dir: Operations, Head: UFS Marketing
3. Web management	i. Approve and implement Web policy (including clear procedural guidelines and widespread communication)	Head: Strategic Communication
4. Management of information flow	i. Parnassus and Ariadne projects ii. Streamlining processes, capacity building, empowering staff, effective planning and time management for meeting of deadlines	Registrar: General Line managers
5. Implications of implementation of language policy	i. Practical implementation of policy and alignment with other policies and financial resources ii. Establishment and refining of procedures for language, translation and interpretation services iii. Provision of sufficient financial resources for translation and interpretation services iv. Provide opportunities to staff for improvement of language proficiency (structured processes)	Line Managers Registrar: General Chief Director: Operations Director: Budget Planning Language Depts., CHESD

	v. Establish system for language proficiency testing and development of all first year students (also addressed under <i>Strategic project 3c</i> )	Task Team
6. Development of management processes to monitor planning, decision-making and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Strategic management: Further refinement and operationalisation of strategic planning process</li> <li>ii. Operational management: Monitoring of implementation of decisions</li> </ul>	Vice-Rector: Academic Planning, Registrar: Strategic Planning Line managers
7. Finalisation and implementation of Aids policy	i. Wellness program	VR: Student Affairs, VR: Academic Operations
8. People Soft	ii. Instalment and implementation of system	Dir: Budget Planning and designated support staff