UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MANAGEMENT (CEQUAM)

Institutional

Self-Evaluation Report

March 2012

Institutional Self-Evaluation Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is the result of an Institutional Self-Evaluation process of the University of Namibia (UNAM), undertaken in August 2011 in preparation for an external evaluation by Europe-Africa Quality Connect from September 2011 to February 2012. Four key questions based on a 'fitness for and of purpose' guided the evaluation, namely:

- What is the University trying to do?
- How is the University trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the University change in order to improve?

1.1 The Self-Evaluation Process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a panel appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, comprising of 15 members from the University of Namibia community. The self-Evaluation Panel comprised of the following members: Ms. Y. Dausab – Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law; Dr. F.S. Nyathi - Quality Assurance Director; Dr. M. Mostert - Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education; Mr. A. Fledersbacher – Registrar; Mr. B. Kaurivi – Lecturer in the Language Centre; Mr. C. Mabhiza – Senior Librarian; Mr. E. Tjiramba – Director for Marketing and Communication; Dr. E. Maass - Director of Academic Affairs; Mr. K. Mbangu – Director for Strategic and Physical Planning; Mr. N. Kadhila – Quality Assurance Coordinator; Mr. R. Izaks – Human Resources Director; Mr. R. van Rooi – Assistant Bursar; Mrs. I. van Wyk – Assistant Director for Estate Services; Ms. H. Taapopi – Student Representative Council: Academic Affairs; Dr. A. Ogunmokum – Deputy Dean for the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology; and Ms. J. Aipanda – Administrative officer for the Quality Assurance Department.

Mrs. A. Kamati, a lecturer at Oshakati Campus also assisted with data collection at Ogongo Campus, Oshakati Campus, the Faculty of Engineering and IT Campus, and Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus.

Ms. Y. Dausab was the Chairperson was responsible for overseeing and leading the coordination of the Self-Evaluation process. The Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) held the administrative and logistics responsibilities. The Self-Evaluation Panel divided itself into four groups, each with a coordinator. Each group was allocated four themes in which they collected data.

1.2 The Self-Evaluation Focus

The self-evaluation was conducted on various aspects of the University's mandated activities, namely: institutional vision, mission, goals and objectives; governance and general management; institutional quality assurance management system; strategic planning; human resources management system; financial resources management system; infrastructure and learning resources; library services; institutional information; curriculum planning, design and development; teaching and learning; student support and progression; research, development and extension; community engagement; stakeholders relation; and internationalization.

1.3 Data Collection

The data was collected through interviews with various members of the University community that included the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Deans of faculties, Directors of various units, Academic Heads of Departments, other academic and administrative staff at all UNAM campuses. Students were also involved in the self evaluation process both as representatives on the Self-Evaluation Panel and as respondents. Where possible, interviews were conducted through focus-group discussions and where it was difficult to bring the people together in respective units; individuals were interviewed at a time convenient to them.

Information generated during the data collection exercise was then analysed and used to compile this report.

1.4 Positive aspects and challenges encountered

The Self-Evaluation Exercise presented both opportunities and challenges.

1.4.1 Positive aspects

The whole exercise was supported and graced by the senior management of the University. All Participants acknowledged that the process was enlightening and informative and expressed hope that it would bring about improvement and long-awaited change.

1.4.2 Challenges

One of the challenges experienced was time constraint. Self-evaluation requires an investment of time and the time that was available to the University's disposal to do a thorough Self-Evaluation was not sufficient. It was very difficult to synchronize the Self-Evaluation activities with the already-in-place University calendar. It was, therefore, very difficult to bring members of different constituencies of the University together so that they participate in the data collection process as respondents. Most of the members of the Self-Evaluation team also found it difficult to be present at all Self-Evaluation activities. Other members of the Self-Evaluation team that were available had to work under pressure to complete and submit the report on time.

The other challenge was a lack of cooperation from some of the academic and administrative staff as not everyone understood and supported the idea of evaluation. Interviewers also encountered challenges in soliciting data that portrayed weaknesses in a given component.

2. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The University of Namibia (UNAM) is an autonomous institution of higher learning that was established by an Act of Parliament on August 31, 1992 (University of Namibia Act 18 of 1992). In accordance with the National Development Plans (NDP 1&2), Vision 2030, and indeed informed by its motto: "Education, Service, Development", the University's programmes are designed to meet national human resource requirements through quality teaching, research, consultancy and community service. In the same vein the University endeavors to create knowledge and contribute to the growth of the economy through research.

The University of Namibia offers diverse academic programmes at undergraduate and post graduate levels delivered by its eight faculties namely;
- Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources;
- Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences;
- Faculty of Education;
- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences;
- Faculty of Law;
- Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences (comprising of the School of Medicine and School of Nursing and Public Health);
- Faculty of Science; and
- Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (IT).

To meet the educational needs of a diverse Namibia, UNAM has 11 campuses and eight regional centers countrywide. The latter are managed by the Centre for External Studies (CES), the distance and life-long education unit of the University.

The 11 campuses are:
- Windhoek Main Campus

- Katima Mulilo Campus
- Khomasdal Campus
- Neudamm Campus
- Ogongo Campus
- Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus
- Ongwediva Engineering and IT Campus
- Oshakati Campus
- Rundu Campus
- School of Medicine Campus
- Henties Bay Sam Nujoma Marine and Coastal Resources Research Centre (SANUMARC)

The University serves the nation in various ways and contributes significantly to nation building and development. The University of Namibia strives to ensure that it is acknowledged as a higher institution of choice for students as well as a sought after reservoir of expertise for business and industry both locally and internationally. The University has over 15 000 students, 122 PhD holders, 36 Professors, 288 lecturers (Master's degree holders). It offers 36 undergraduate degrees, 19 Master's degrees, and 12 doctoral degrees (PhDs).

Quality assurance activities of the University of Namibia are regulated by its own Quality Assurance policy as well as the National Council for Higher Education's (NCHE) National Quality Assurance System for Higher Education. Its programmes are in line with the requirements of the Namibia Qualification Authority's (NQA) National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which also plays a part in the maintenance of the university's Quality through, among others, institutional accreditation.

In terms of the current challenges facing the University, budgetary constraints are the key issues that have a great impact on the institutional operations and quality of service delivery. The institution has observed a drastic increase in student enrolments while funding from the Government has been shrinking, especially in the absence of a proper funding formula.

3. INSTITUTIONAL VISION, MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: (What is the institution trying to do?)

Quality assessment and self-analysis have to start by looking at the formulated mission and vision statements, the formulated goals and aims, as well as the formulated expected outcomes.

3.1 Mission

The mission of the University of Namibia is "to provide Quality Higher education through teaching, research and advisory services to our customers with the view to produce productive and competitive human resources capable of driving public and private institutions towards a knowledge-based economy, economic growth and improved quality of life."

3.2 Vision

The vision of the University of Namibia is "to be a beacon of excellence and innovation in teaching, research and extension services."

The University's mission and vision statements are clearly articulated, and are in line with the national strategic development goals and the latest international trends in higher education. The strategic objectives are also clearly articulated and are in line with the institution's Mission and Vision.

It was, however, observed that although the mission and vision statements were readily available on the UNAM website, strategic plan documents and other institutional materials are not known and appreciated by everybody (staff and students). On UNAM's campuses not everybody (staff and students) knows and appreciate these.

The suggested plan of action includes the displaying of Vision and Mission statements at strategic positions by the Directorate of Marketing and Communication at all campuses. This would include educating the stakeholders on the same. It is also recommended that the Directorate of Physical and Strategic Planning finalize the implementation of electronic monitoring and evaluation system.

3.3 Mandate

The mandate of UNAM as stipulated in its enabling legislation (University of Namibia Act 18 of 1992) is "to provide higher education, undertake research, advance and disseminate knowledge, provide extension services, encourage the growth and nurturing of cultural expression within Namibia, to further training and continuing education, contribute to social and economic development of Namibia, and to foster relationships with any person or institution both nationally and internationally."

Based on the findings of this review, UNAM believes that it is fulfilling this mandate. It is, however, suggested that there is a need for the Directorate of Marketing and Communication to develop and implement formal mechanisms for soliciting feedback from various stakeholders to substantiate this claim.

3.4 Strategic plan

The University of Namibia has translated its Mission and Vision into a clear Strategic Plan where the mission statement has been operationalized in achievable goals and objectives. This is evident on UNAM's current Five Years Strategic Plan (2011-2015), which was approved by Council and is now being implemented. Different units and faculties have developed their divisional-based One Year Management Plans based on this Strategic Plan. Some of the respondents, however, felt that that the mission statement is too long and needed to be shortened.

3.5 Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives as outlined in the current Five Year Strategic

Plan (2011-2015) are as follows:

- Improve relevance of programmes
- Improve quality of programmes
- Improve student and staff welfare
- Improve equitable access for students and staff
- Improve quality of teaching and learning
- Increased research output
- Enhance community engagement
- Improve registration process
- Diversify dissemination of knowledge
- Improve the delivery of quality extension services
- Strengthen international liaison and collaboration
- Optimize resource mobilization management
- Improve the corporate image
- Improve quality of library services
- Improve organizational culture
- Expand internal physical facilities
- Improve quality of academic, operational and support services
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of examination systems
- Improve effectiveness and maintenance of all physical facilities
- Strengthen records management and archives administration
- Strengthen human capacity management
- Develop and implement best practice knowledge creation
- Improve ICT infrastructure and usage
- Diversify and increase sources of revenue sources
- Improve financial management
- Promote Corporate governance

The strategic objectives are very clear and they set the goals for what the institution intends to do for the next five years. The current strategic plan is, however, very new. It is, therefore, not possible to tell at this stage whether the institution is achieving these objectives or not. The formalized quality assurance system is also relatively new and quality

assurance at this stage has not been used as a tool for strategic planning as there is a lack of feedback.

The Directorate of Physical and Strategic Planning has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework (MEF) for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and Management action Plans. The Directorate also started with business/performance review meetings this year to monitor and evaluate the implementation of Management Plans. It was reported that the institution is in its third strategic plan but it is only beginning to implement the system for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the strategic plan. The implementation of this system is, however, at the initial stage and its effectiveness might take some time before its impact can be assessed. Attainment of objectives will only be assessed by year end.

It is suggested that the Directorate of Physical and Strategic Planning finalize the implementation of the MEF, and use quality assurance mechanisms as a tool for future strategic planning.

4. GOVERNANCE AND GENERAL MANAGEMENT, AND MANDATED ACTIVITIES: (How is the institution trying to do it?)

4.1 GOVERNANCE AND GENERAL MANAGEMENT

The governance structure of the University of Namibia must be clear and adequate. The institution must have a clear management structure in which the decision-making process, competencies and responsibilities are clearly defined and reflected.

4.1.1 Governance

The **Council** of the University of Namibia is responsible for the governance of the institution and also serves as its executive authority. The organization and superintendence of instruction, examinations, lectures, classes, curricula and research are vested in the **Senate** of the University.

4.1.2 Administration

Administration at the University of Namibia is patterned on the Commonwealth model. The Chancellor serves as the titular head of the University while the Vice Chancellor as Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day-to-day management of the University.

4.1.2.1 Central Administration: Office of the Vice Chancellor

The Office of the Vice Chancellor (VC) comprises of the Vice Chancellor Prof. Lazarus Hangula who is assisted by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Research (PVC: AA&R) Prof. Osmund Mwandemele and the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance (PVC: A&F) Dr. Boniface Mutumba.

4.1.2.2 Office of the PVC: Academic Affairs and Research

This office advises and assists the VC in academic research, consultancy matters, fostering standards of excellence in teaching and publication, as well as developing academic programmes and curricula which are responsive to the socio-economic development needs of Namibia, the SADC Region and Africa at large. The PVC: AA&R provides guidance and supervision to Deans of Faculties, Directors of Academic Centres as well as the University Librarian and the Office of the Registrar.

4.1.2.3 Office of the PVC: Administration and Finance

This is the Chief Adviser to the VC in administration, management and financial matters. He is tasked to ensure that UNAM attains maximum efficiency, enhanced cost effectiveness and high quality delivery in terms of service to the University community and the public at large. In this regard the office is primarily assisted by the University Bursar, as well as the Directors of Communications and Marketing, Human Resources, Computer Centre, Estate Services, the Dean of Students and the Director of the University Foundation.

The self-evaluation exercise established that the University of Namibia's governance structure is clear and adequate. The governance structure is in line with the constitution of the University and international best practices such as the Commonwealth model. The University of Namibia's structure comprises of a Chancellor, a Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellors (Academic Affairs & research, and Administration & Finance), a Council, a Senate, the academic and administrative staff, and students. Students and other stakeholders (internal and external) are well represented on the governance structures such as Council, Senate, various committees and boards.

The management structure of the institution is also clearly defined. The decision-making process, competencies and responsibilities of the managers and other staff are also clearly defined.

It would seem from interviews with various stakeholders that communication of decisions-made at higher levels such as Council, Senate, various committees and boards seems not to easily reach staff at lower level. There is need to improve communication of decisions

made to come to lower levels of staff members and follow up activities on higher decisions are also productive. It is hoped that the appointment of the Director for Academic Affairs would make and follow-ups easier.

In terms of striking a balance between centralization and decentralisation, it was felt that the intention for decentralisation is good but the implementation and effectiveness of this endeavor are worrisome. Centralisation means that the decision-making and control function are concentrated at the top management of the institution. Decentralisation means that the directors and deans have more freedom to make their own decisions about the operations of their units. Deans of faculties feel that they are not even involved in the hiring process of the new staff in their faculties. There is also a lack of autonomy at the satellite campuses. This function is entirely left to Human Resources. It is, however, noted that the decentralisation of examinations is a remarkable achievement. The suggested action plan is that there is a need to improve decentralisation of decision-making to enhance efficiency.

4.2 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Human resources management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for recruitment, appointments, record-keeping, labour relations, employment equity, performance management, compensation and benefits, and training and development.

It emerged from the self-evaluation exercise that the management of human resources of the University of Namibia is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements for acquiring, developing and utilizing sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced academic and support staff.

The University has mechanisms in place to ensure that hiring, administration and training of their teaching and administrative/support staff is carried out with the necessary guarantees to ensure that they can fulfill their corresponding functions.

There are mechanisms in place for take care of high-quality faculty staff and support staff by clearly defining their responsibilities, and by

evaluating their performance on an annual basis and by means of an adequate staff appraisal system. There is, however, a concern on the effectiveness of the staff appraisal system. One of the respondents claimed that *"staff appraisals are done every year but no one follows up on these to give feedback on performance".* There was, therefore, a suggestion that there should be an improvement in the use of the staff appraisal system.

There is also a programme of staff development that assists academic staff to upgrade their qualifications and enhance their knowledge and skills in the fields relevant to their duties. It is felt that the staff development programme of the institution is excellent and it is one of the best practices in the region. Many of the academic and administrative staff went through and are undergoing this system to obtain their Master's degrees and PhDs. Administrative staff, however, reported that there is no formal system for staff development for administrative/support staff. There is also no appraisal system for support staff. Training for administrative staff is only recommended on case by case when gaps are observed. It is, therefore, suggested that the institution should formalise the staff development programme for administrative staff and implement an appraisal system for support staff if there is any.

It is also reported that the induction programme for new staff members is not adequate as most of the staff members did not go through such a programme on commencement of their service at the University. The suggested action plan is that the Human Resources Directorate needs to improve on the induction programme for new staff.

4.3 FINANCIAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The financial management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for budgeting, resource allocation, asset management, debt management and financial reporting.

It was reported during the self-evaluation exercise that the management of financial resources of the institution is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution meet its financial needs. The financial department carries

out internal and external audits.

It was established that the Government provides funding to UNAM in order to meet its operational needs but this funding is never sufficient or not efficiently channelled to priority areas. The University receives budgetary support from the State as a block grant and then it allocates it to different units. Different divisions report that they always get far less than requested for their activities. They also claim that the budgeting process is not transparent as there is no consultation when the budget is prepared and decided on. Divisions are requested to submit their budgetary needs but decision makers seem not to look at these proposals when the government gives money to the institution. The budget is also not realistic for the needs and expectations of the current Strategic Plan in place. These divisions claim that this state of affairs hampers achievement of their goals.

There is need to improve on institutional revenue mechanisms and financial allocation as well as decentralization of financial resources. The institution must also improve on alternative sources for funding instead of heavily relying on government funding.

There is also a serious concern with regards to the time taken and the level of professionalism in getting things through procurement. It is, therefore, suggested that the institution should introduce a computer-based system for tracking requisitions and staff members in financial department should improve on their professionalism and customer relations.

4.4 INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEARNING RESOURCES

The facilities management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for facilities planning and acquisitions, the direction for design and construction activities, maintenance of buildings, grounds and equipment, space assignment and utilization, and real estate management.

The management of facilities of the institution is not conducted within an approved framework as there is no policy on facility management system in place. The University has a transport policy, which is under

review. The recommendation for action plan is that the Estate Services Directorate develops a comprehensive policy for maintenance and capital development to improve the practice.

It was also established that the institutional facilities at some of the campuses that include the Main Campus such as the School of Medicine and the Faculty of Engineering and IT are modernized, up-to-date, and suitable for their use although they are not adequate. Other campuses reported that their facilities are neither suitable nor adequate. Fixed chairs in most of the lecture halls are not suitable for teaching and learning interaction. Some of the lecture rooms are not yet fitted with multimedia facilities, smart boards, etc. The carrying capacity of most of the facilities has been exceeded by the increasing number of students. Student numbers increase yearly but facilities remain the same. This state of affairs is reported to be worse at the recently integrated formal colleges of education. Some departments on the Main Campus also reported lack of laboratories and office space.

Lack of lecture halls, office space, space in the library and shortage of photocopy machines (a few which are available are normally out of order) were added on the list of complaints. Students reported a lack of leisure centers at all campuses. Most of the staff members and students alike were also unhappy with the removal of the swimming pool at the main campus. It became apparent that social welfare issues are given the least priority by the decision-makers. It was also reported that new campuses at UNAM such as Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus, Rundu Campus and Katima Mulilo Campus have a serious shortage of classrooms and lecture halls and auditoriums, as well as videoconference facilities. It is, therefore, suggested that there is a need to improve facilities at all of the university campuses including facilities of the Centre for External Studies (CES).

Consistent complaints by students and lecturers were that the manual registration process is cumbersome, frustrating and wastes a lot of time at the beginning of the year. It was also reported that the registration process as a whole is in disarray, very customer unfriendly by some Faculty Officers as well as outdated. It was then suggested that there is an urgent need to finalize the implementation of on-line registration.

It is strongly recommended that the university explores the viability of extending and upgrading the American designed **Millennium System** run by the library for online registration.

It was also reported that maintenance is one of the most overlooked activities as there is a lack of maintenance of facilities at all campuses. It was reported that there are broken toilets and chairs, fused bulbs, leaking roofs, malfunctioning smart boards and multimedia facilities etc. One of the respondents claimed that *"there are no sufficient toilets and staff have to queue up with students".* There is need for improvement and regular maintenance of facilities.

It was also suggested that UNAM improves the standard of facilities at all campuses to ensure that suitability and adequacy at all campuses. It is also suggested that there is a need for urgent upgrade of facilities at the formal colleges so that they are brought on par with the rest of the campuses.

There was a need to develop and implement a system for monitoring and evaluation of the management of facilities, infrastructure and learning resources.

4.5 LIBRARY SERVICES

The University of Namibia has library facilities at all its campuses country wide (except at the Faculty of Engineering & IT and former teaching colleges which recently merged with the University) to support teaching and learning with very supportive library staff. It is reported that library books in most disciplines as well as the time allocated to borrowers are sufficient. There is, however, a lack of specialized journals in some disciplines such as law and Geology. However, some students felt that some of the books in the library were outdated and it takes time to acquire new ones. Academics also reported that it was very difficult to access e-journals. The library reports that this problem lies with the server and bandwidth which are the responsibility of the Computer Centre. It is, therefore, suggested that the Computer Centre suggests a solution to this problem.

Library users reported that space in all library branches is limited, while typing facilities and allocation of hours per computer were not sufficiently. The problem of poor quality library services is reported to be worse at Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus, Rundu Campus and Katima Mulilo Campus as these campuses are new to UNAM. It is suggested that the library should improve space, computer facilities and allocation of time per computer, and update library resources such as books, journals, IT facilities, etc. at all campuses, especially the campuses that are new to UNAM.

The library reported that they have mechanisms to regularly evaluate the adequacy and accessibility of resources and services for students and staff through user surveys. There is, however, need to improve on taking appropriate remedial measures to address inadequacies and customer dissatisfaction.

4.6 INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

The Institutional Information Division normally answers all University related information requests and provides the necessary institutional insight for decision making on all levels of management. It undertakes institutional research, generates information reports on issues such as enrolment rates, dropouts, graduation rates, etc., and handles ad hoc institutional information requests from internal and external stakeholders.

Institutional information has been identified as one of the weakest links of the institution. It emanated from the self-evaluation exercise that the institution does not have a centralized system in place or a dedicated office that must collect and analyse institutional information that could be used for effective management of programmes of study and to inform decision-making. The University has taken an initiative to create a position for a statistician in the Directorate of Physical and strategic Planning but it is felt that the duties of the statistician are narrow and not well defined to cater for the need for institutional information. Additionally the level and duties accorded the current satisfaction are far below the conventional

credentials required for a University Institutional Researcher (at least a PhD).

The action plan suggested is that there is a need to re-define the duties of the statistician to include the duties of institutional researcher or to create a dedicated institutional information office, and the duties and responsibilities of this person or office must be clearly defined and benchmarked with similar offices in the region and beyond.

4.7 CURRICULUM PLANNING, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The University of Namibia has formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of its programmes and awards. Academic programmes are in line with the Mission and Vision of the institution as well as national development priorities, and the learning outcomes are clearly formulated although some need improvement. New programmes are generated from departments and go through various approval stages which are Faculty Board, Academic Planning Committee, and then Senate. Senate-approved programmes are also submitted to the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) for NQF registration. It is, however, reported there is no policy on curriculum design and development but there is a documented strategy and procedures to be followed. It is, therefore, suggested that there is need to develop a policy on curriculum development and review, and consolidate all guidelines in one document, which must be widely disseminated. There is also a need for a curriculum review manual that can provide consistency in reviewing curriculum.

Academic programmes are reviewed after every four years to ensure that they remain current, coherent, and up-to-date. Stakeholder consultations are carried out during new programme development or review to ensure that the programmes offered meet the expectations of the stakeholders. There is, however, a concern that the four years cycle of curriculum review is rigid and does not provide for fast changing disciplines such as IT. There is need to implement a flexible review cycle to accommodate the fast changing programmes due to changes in demand and technology.

There was also a concern as to whether the programmes of study met their goals and objectives in the absence of tracer studies to substantiate

the claims. It was, therefore, suggested that the institution needed to engage in regular tracer studies.

It was reported that some of the faculties incorporate experiential learning in their programmes but it was difficult to find places for attachment of students. It was suggested that there was need to improve on coordination of students' placement and relationship or network with industry. Such an example can be emulated from the Faculty of Law that has a campus-based legal clinic at which students apply theory into practice.

4.8 TEACHING AND LEARNING

4.8.1 Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning planning system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for development and approval of new programmes; programme review; development and approval of academic partnership; development and approval of short courses; effective and reliable central management of information on the institution's academic offerings.

Teaching and learning are the core activities of the University of Namibia. The workload formula provides for 60% teaching time, 30% research time, and 10% community engagement time. The practice of teaching is, however, not based on any policy, as the University currently does not have in place an approved teaching and learning policy. Progress has, however, been made in the development of the Teaching and Learning Improvement Unit (TLIU). It is, therefore, suggested that the TLIU should finalize and implement the teaching and learning policy as a matter of urgency.

The University has a system in place for soliciting feedback from students on their experiences of teaching and courses through lecture evaluation by students. Students, however, report that this system is not transparent and effective as it does not provide feedback to students about the course and teaching improvement as well as the follow-up activities. Students revealed that they raised a number of issues with regards to the quality of teaching but they saw no improvement. They recommended improvement on the student-lecturer evaluation system, feedback and transparency of

this exercise.

It was also reported that procedures for postgraduate studies are properly documented and every postgraduate programme passes through the Postgraduate studies Committee (PGSC). Supervision for postgraduate students is, however, perceived to unsatisfactory. It is suggested that the quality of supervision for postgraduate students be improved. There is also a need for a monitoring system for postgraduate studies. It is hoped that the establishment of the School of Postgraduate Studies will bring about improvement.

When it comes to teaching methods, it was reported that lecturers do not use a variety of methods and student-centred approach is the least used. Teaching is heavily based on lecture methods. One of the respondents puts it as follows: "Interaction is mainly in the practical sessions but in theory sessions it is more of lecture style". It was also reported that there is a serious lecturer's misconception of what student-centred approach entails. Most of the lecturers' interpret this as giving student work to do and disappear from classes without playing a role of facilitators. The suggested action is to improve on the use of various teaching methods including student-centred approach. Worth noting is the fact that the university has no well-defined and widely disseminated teaching philosophy or strategy.

4.8.2 Assessment of students

The system for assessment of student learning includes strategies, policies and arrangements for regulations and procedures related to student assessment, including, for example, the security of test and examination papers, composition and calculation of marks, supplementary/special assessment opportunities, disciplinary and appeal procedures, internal and external moderation and examinations, etc.

Assessment of students at the University of Namibia is done using published criteria, rules, regulations and procedures. There is, however, no overall assessment policy in place.

It was suggested that the institution clearly define its assessment philosophy. This should be explicit and available to a wide audience. It

was also suggested that the TLIU strengthen the training workshops for academic staff on teaching and assessment methodologies.

4.9 STUDENT SUPPORT AND PROGRESSION

Support services include strategies, policies and arrangements for academic development services geared towards the enhancement of academic skills, student counselling services, access to information and learning materials through efficient library services and ITC to enable students to achieve their learning objectives.

The interviews revealed that the University of Namibia provides efficient and sufficient academic support services geared towards ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes and enhancing student success. It was also reported that health facilities, and guidance and counselling services were adequate and staff were qualified and experienced to carry out their duties. There is, however, need to develop and implement a social welfare policy that aims at enhancing the quality of student life. The implementation of this policy must be monitored and evaluated with reference to international best practices.

It was observed that the University did not have adequate facilities for sports and recreation, catering services and hostels for students at all campuses. There was also a lack of campus-based social workers at satellite campuses. The main campus had 1000 hostel places available but needs at least 3000 more. It is hoped that facilities being constructed through public private partnership would ease the burden at the main campuses.

It was suggested that existing student support services be improved and strengthened.

4.10 RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION

The research management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements providing for shared understanding of the nature, role and goals of research at the institution.

The management of the institution's research is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategy. The institution also has in place a research and publications committee. There is, however, no institutional research policy in place on which the strategy and other arrangements must be based. It is suggested that development and implementation of an overall research policy for the institution be done. The Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) were identified as examples of best practices for having research agendas in place and setting research priorities for a given timeframe. It is suggested that different faculties and departments emulate these examples and develop research agendas for their faculties and departments.

The institution also does not have in place a policy on Intellectual Property Rights (PIR). Although the current research strategy and the UCCB consultancy policy both have sections on PIR and a policy on plagiarism, there is need for the university to develop a stand-alone policy on PIR.

It was also reported that the institution did not have a code of conduct for research in conjunction with the research unit including code of ethics. There is, therefore, a need for the Postgraduate Studies Committee to develop such a policy.

Although the workload policy allots 30% of academic time to research, academic staff felt that this was not effectively done as they were overloaded with teaching loads and had little time left for research activities, which negatively affects research output. One of the respondents reported that *"in theory the balance is fine but in practice staff academic members spend too much time on teaching and too little time or no time at all on research".* The suggested action plan is to find strategies to increase research output.

4.11 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTANCY

4.11.1 Community engagement

The community engagement management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements providing for a shared understanding of the

nature, role and goals of community engagement by the institution.

It is always being said that the quality and impact of community engagement activities depend heavily on the satisfaction of those served and whether their interaction with the University causes and supports change in desirable ways. It was, however, reported that the management of the institution's community engagement activities was not conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements as there was no relevant policy or strategy in place. Although the workload policy allowed 10% of academic time to community engagement, it was not clear what community engagement entails and how both staff and students should undertake it. It is, therefore, suggested that the HR Directorate and Marketing and Communication Directorate to develop a policy and strategy on community engagement to guide the practice. The current state of affairs is that community engagement activities are done on an ad hoc basis. There are currently scattered reports on community engagement in UNAM Forum, University Central Consultancy Bureau (UCCB) and the Multidisciplinary Research Centre (MRC) but these are not properly documented. There is a need for the Marketing and Communication Directorate to improve documentation of community engagement and produce half yearly community engagement reports. It is, therefore, suggested that coordination of community engagement activities needs to be centralized though the establishment of a community engagement office to support the implementation of the community engagement to centrally coordinate community engagement activities and monitor the implementation of the suggested policy and strategy.

4.11.2 Consultancy

The University of Namibia has a University Bureau for Central Consultancy (UCCB) with a business wing to generate revenue through consultancy. There is evidence of institutional contribution to the society and community through consultancies, through MRC and UCCB. It emanated that UCCB operated within a framework of an approved policy on consultancy. There is, however, a need to develop and implement mechanisms for monitoring and implementation of the consultancy policy and strategy.

4.12 STAKEHOLDERS RELATIONS

The University of Namibia keeps its relationship with internal and external stakeholders through the Marketing and Communication Directorate as well as the newly established Directorate for External and Internal Relations. Stakeholders are consulted to give their inputs during programme development and curriculum reviews. Apart from having a system for soliciting feedback from students on their experiences of teaching and learning and courses (teachers feedback), the University did not have formal mechanisms in place for obtaining feedback from other stakeholders such as employers and others about the quality of its graduates and services.

It is, therefore, suggested that the university develops and implement mechanisms to regularly undertake stakeholders' surveys (alumni, employers, etc.) and use the findings from these surveys to improve the quality of teaching and learning, research, community service, and other service provision.

4.13 INTERNATIONALISATION

Internationalisation is one aspect that has gained increasing visibility among universities' strategic priorities, with many institutions striving to attain greater internationalisation through training and research activities. Growing mobility among students and staff has become a central issue for many universities all over the world.

The University of Namibia has recently established a Directorate for External and Internal Relations. This office is responsible for liaising with stakeholders. Since the office is relatively new, there was no policy or strategy document, which guides and defines external stakeholders, and how to choose and work with them. The University is, however, doing well in terms of forging links with reputable higher education institutions internationally. It was, however, felt that the staff and student exchange programme needed improvement. As one of the respondents put it, *"student and staff exchange programme is one sided. We receive so many academic (sic) and students from other institutions in the world but we send very few probably due to funding problems".* It is, therefore,

suggested that the Directorate of external and internal Relations develop and implement a policy and strategy on stakeholder relations. The other suggestion is to strengthen/consolidate working relations/ agreements. There is also need to develop mechanisms for monitoring and implementation of this policy and strategy. The other suggested action plan was to strength and improve student and staff exchange programmes.

5. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: How does the institution know it works?

The University of Namibia implemented a formalized internal quality assurance management system with a view to maintain, continuously monitor and improve the quality of its mandated activities. This system is, however, very recent as it was only introduced in January 2010 with the establishment of the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM). The University-wide quality assurance policy was approved by Senate in June of the same year. There are also departmental self-evaluation guidelines and a quality assurance manual that was developed by CEQUAM.

Most of the students that were interviewed reported that they did not know much about the existence of the quality assurance system and CEQUAM. They suggested that CEQUAM strengthened awareness over its existence and mission as well as improve on the promotion of a quality culture. Some staff members said they were aware of the existence of the Quality Assurance Policy but called for the development and implementation of a quality assurance implementation strategy.

The UNAM quality assurance policy as well as the National Quality Assurance System by NCHE expect institutions of higher education in Namibia to implement internal quality assurance based on regular self-evaluation, and subject themselves to external audits by reputable quality assurance agencies. The national system is, however, also very new and UNAM has never undergone an external audit. Departmental self reviews have only started this year and the impact of these reviews on the quality of the institution might take some time to be felt since quality assurance is a process.

Departmental reviews have just started now, which will lead to departmental self-improvement plans. There is no database as yet in place to monitor the implementation of departmental as well as institutional self-improvement plans.

With regards to benchmarking, there are some Faculties and Departments that use benchmarks although this is done in isolation. There is a need for CEQUAM to formulate a document outlining the principles for good benchmarking activities, including an explanation of the concept itself.

It is recommended that CEQUAM fully develops and implements the quality assurance management system. CEQUAM should also develop and implement a computerized database for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the institutional quality assurance system.

6. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY TO CHANGE: How does the institution change in order to improve?

The University of Namibia is serious about strategic development and quality improvement. One of the strategic initiatives that the university has taken is the implementation of the current Five Year Strategic Plan (2011 - 2015). Another initiative is the formalization of the Quality Assurance system through the establishment of the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management to support the implementation of the quality assurance policy. The fact that the University of Namibia is undertaking departmental reviews is an indication that the institution is committed to continuous improvement through strategic management.

The other positive initiative for strategic management commitment of the institution is inviting Europe-Africa Quality Connect to review it so that it can learn from this exercise and benchmark its activities with the best practices in the world. The objective of this review is to enhance strategic development. Institutional reviews will enhance public confidence in the quality of education and training provided by UNAM and the standards of its qualifications/awards.

The University of Namibia is, however, faced with many challenges that impact on quality. One of the challenges is increased student enrolments and shrinking carrying capacity of the infrastructure and facilities at all its campuses. The other major challenge is government funding which is never enough for the institution to fully implement its strategic plan. This is largely due to a lack of government funding formula.

7. CONCLUSION

The institution, through the self-evaluation exercise, identified a number of strengths and areas needing improvement, and suggested plans of action to bring about improvement.

7.1 Strengths

The institution identified its strengths in the following areas:

- Institutional mission and vision are clearly articulated, and are in line with the national strategic development goals and the latest international trends in higher education.

- The mission and vision statements have been translated into a clear Five Year Strategic Plan (2011 - 2015) where the mission statement is operationalized in achievable strategic goals.

- Divisions have developed One Year Management Plans based on the Strategic Plan.

- A monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the implementation of the strategic Plan as well as Management Plans has been developed and now being implemented.

- The Institutional management structure is clear and adequate.

- Institutional human resources management practices are conducted within an approved framework of institutional policies and arrangements for acquiring, developing and utilizing academic and administrative staff.

- There is a system in place for academic staff appraisal.

- There is an effective staff development programme in place.

- Institutional management of financial resources is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its financial needs.

- Some campuses such as the School of Medicine, Faculty of Engineering and IT, and some divisions at the main campus have state-of-the art facilities.

- The institution has libraries and library facilities at most of its campuses with very supportive staff.

- The library has in place mechanisms to monitor and evaluate adequacy and accessibility of library resources and services through user surveys.

- The University has in place formal mechanisms for approval, periodic review and monitoring of its programmes of study and awards.

- Most of the programmes of study incorporate experiential learning to prepare students for the real world of work.

- The university has a system in place for lecturer and course evaluation by students.

- The university has taken a positive strategic initiative by establishing a School of Postgraduate Studies.

- Students' assessment is done using published criteria, rules and regulations.

- The institution has in place a system for academic support services.

- The institution has in place a research strategy as well as consultancy policy.

- The institution has taken a positive strategic initiative by establishing a Directorate for External and Internal Relations.

- The institution has a number of workable agreements with reputable institutions in the world.

- The institution has taken a positive strategic initiative by establishing

a Centre for Quality Assurance and Management to support the implementation of the quality assurance system.

7.2 Areas needing improvement

The institution identified its limitations in the following areas:

- Not everybody (staff and students) knows and appreciates the institutional mission and vision.

- Top-down communication needs improvement.

- Decentralization of activities and management need improvement.

- Staff appraisal system needs improvement.

- An induction programme for the new staff seems not to be adequate.

- Lack of funding is a major hindrance in carrying out institutional mandated activities.

- The institution does not have in place a policy on maintenance and capital development.

- Facilities are inadequate and the carrying capacity of most of the facilities cannot cope with increasing numbers of students.

- There is a lack of maintenance of existing facilities at all campuses.

- There is a lack of library resources such as books, specialized journals, photocopy machines, printers, space, etc.

- Institutional information is underdeveloped.

- The institution does not have online registration.

- The institution does not have a policy on curriculum design, development and review.

- The institution does not have a policy on teaching and learning.

- The institution does not have a policy on assessment.

- The system of lecturer and course evaluation by students needs improvement.

- The quality of supervision at postgraduate level needs improvement.

- The student-centred approach is least applied in teaching and learning, and most of the academics interviewed did not understand how it works.

- There is no overarching philosophy for teaching that reflects whether instruction is premised on e.g. constructivism, pragmatism, etc.

- The institution does not have a research policy.

- The institution does not have a policy on Intellectual Property Right.

- The institution does not have in place a code of conduct for research, including code of ethics.

- The institution does not maintain a balance between teaching and research as spelt out in the workload policy, more weight is given to teaching.

- The institution does not have a policy or strategy on community engagement.

- The institution does not have formal mechanisms for obtaining feedback from different stakeholders to help improving the quality of its offerings and services.

- The institution does not have an approved policy and strategy on stakeholder relations.

- There are no formalized mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation in most of the institutional systems and processes.

7.3 Action plan

The institution suggests the following actions for improvement:

- Improve the promotion of the mission and vision statements.

- Finalize the implementation of monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Strategic Plan.

- Use quality assurance as a tool for strategic planning in future strategic plans.

- Improve communication of decision-making and follow-ups.

- Improve decentralization of decision-making to enhance efficiency.

- Improve the staff appraisal system.

- Improve staff development programme for support staff.

- Implement an appraisal system for support staff.

- Strengthen the induction programme for new staff.

- Improve institutional revenue and financial allocation.

- Implement alternative sources of funds.

- Implement UMS.

- Develop a policy on infrastructure and facility management.

- Improve facilities at all campuses.

- Improve regular maintenance of facilities.

- Improve IT services.

- Improve library services at all campuses.

- Improve institutional information.

- Develop a policy on curriculum planning, development and review.

- Develop a teaching and learning as well as assessment philosophy.

- Strengthen the training of academic staff on the latest teaching and assessment methodologies.

- Finalise the implementation of online registration. Alternatively,

upgrade the American designed Millennium System for expedient and efficient student-registration

- Subject some selected Faculty Officers to customer relations training as they tarnish the image of the institution through unfriendly behaviour during registration.

- Improve student lecturer evaluation system.

- Improve supervision at postgraduate studies level.

- Improve on the use of student-centred approach.

- Improve and strengthen the existing student support services.

- Develop a research policy.

- Revise/update the existing research strategy.

- Develop institutional and faculty/departmental research agendas.

- Develop a policy on Intellectual Property Rights.

- Develop an institutional code of conduct for research, including code of ethics.

- Increase research output.

- Develop a policy on community engagement.

- Improve coordination of community engagement activities.

- Implement a formalized system for stakeholder feedback including surveys and tracer studies.

- Develop a policy on stakeholder relations including internationalization.

- Strengthen/consolidate the existing agreements with other higher education institutions.

- Strengthen and improve student and staff exchange programmes, including joint programmes of study.

- Strengthen quality assurance awareness.

- Improve the promotion of a culture of quality.

- Develop a quality assurance implementation strategy.

- Develop a document outlining the principles for good benchmarking, including an explanation of the concept itself.

- Implement monitoring and evaluation systems in all mandated activities of the institution.

8. APPENDICES

- Faculties prospectuses

- General information and regulations

- Map of Namibia showing all campuses and centres

- Strategic Plan

- Sample divisional Management Action Plans

- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF)

- Business/performance reviews reports

- Governance structure/organogram

- UNAM statutes/Act

- UNAM calendar

- Sample committees and boards meetings

- Latest institutional organogram

- Sample job descriptions?

- HR policies

- Staff appraisal forms and sample reports?

- Statistics on staff members studied through staff development programme

- Financial management related policies

- Financial allocation from government

- Programme development and review strategy and guidelines

- Sample minutes of stakeholder consultation meetings

- Examinations rules and regulations (general information?)

- Guidelines for postgraduate student and supervisors

- Research agendas from FHSS & FANR

- Plagiarism policy

- Sample UCCB & MRC reports

- UCCB consultancy policy

- Sample library user survey reports

- Quality assurance policy

- Self-evaluation guidelines

- Quality assurance manual

- Sample MOUs

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