Proposed Reorganisation of Academic Management and Support within the Colleges of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

1. Introduction

At a meeting of the Executive Management Committee on 21 October 2010, the Executive resolved to accept the recommendations of the report on the External Review of the College Model in its entirety. The Executive recognised that these recommendations are not only in line with UKZN's Vision, Mission and 10-year Strategic Plan (2007-2016, Goal 7) as well as best international standards and practice, but also that their implementation will enhance the efficiency and progress already made since the merger. The Executive resolved to develop a proposal for the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Panel which would serve before Senate and Council for discussion.

In the view of the Executive, the College Model is a system to empower the academic sector in our large and complex context. In the past three years UKZN has experienced significant growth in its research endeavours and continues to consolidate itself as a premier research-led and research-intensive University of African Scholarship. Our publications research output has increased by 26% from 876 units (2007) to 1108 units (2009). The per capita research output has increased from about 80% (2007) to 112% (2009) of the national norm. In 2009 we produced 12.2% of the national research publications, which was the third highest, compared to 13% from the top institution. UKZN has the best equity profiles in terms of staff and students among the top five institutions as classified by the Department of Higher Education and Training. It is also the only top research intensive institution to have been through a merger.

The College model is a system that has best supported the institutional research endeavours by allowing the creation of substantial critical masses across cognate and allied academic disciplines that are managed at College level. However, as the review indicates, there is room for improvement in the efficiencies and effectiveness of the system, primarily through decentralisation and devolution. While considering modifications, we recognise that the College Model serves to elevate the voice of academia at the executive level while simultaneously devolving academic decisions into the academic sector and allowing them to be taken at the lowest possible level. We believe that the improvements in governance structures within the University and College should support and enhance academic endeavour, and that Colleges and Schools must be seen by academics as a home for academic activity. The role of academia should thus be foregrounded, and the College will comprise academic entities doing academic work with the appropriate support that underpins an efficient and effective system.

The leadership of Colleges and Schools should be practicing academics and their role is to provide academic leadership and to develop innovative strategies to achieve our vision. This should be at the forefront of a culture of academic endeavour which should cascade throughout the activities of the Colleges. As such, the academic structure must be clearly delineated; should be the primary driver of academic activity; and should be supported by effective administration which minimises bureaucracy.

Guiding principles which underpin the implementation plan:

- Reconfiguration should take place within existing Colleges and not across Colleges. Reorganisation into the new schools provides an opportunity to move away from historical practice and exploit synergies by grouping disciplines in exciting and innovative ways.

- Academic decisions should be made by academics and these should drive the University's operations.

- Governance structures within the University should not be duplicated, and academic decisions should be devolved to the lowest possible leadership level within the structure.

- The layers of committees and duplication of responsibilities should be reduced. Decision-making, responsibility and accountability should rest with individuals, with effective monitoring and evaluation placed at the appropriate level within the Colleges.

- Academic leadership activity should be freed and separated from administrative operations in order to promote academic endeavour.

- It is essential to clarify where, within the College and School structures, responsibility lies for providing each major service, or to determine whether this is to be provided centrally.

- Effective and regular communication is critical and essential, and provision must be made for bottom-up as well as top-down communication.

- There must be appropriate systems support (such as electronic administrative systems, web-based and/or video-conferencing facilities) to mitigate the cross-campus locations of Schools and Colleges.

2. Colleges and Schools

Recommendations 1 & 2: A two-layer structure comprising Colleges and Schools
"The number of layers be reduced from three to two … fewer, larger "mega" schools are created. The primary determinants of the new schools would be academic coherence and staff size … 40-60 academic staff should be the minimum guideline. Three-hundred and fifty is perhaps a reasonable upper limit … around 20 schools across the four colleges might emerge. Each would be led by a Head of School … perhaps retaining the title 'Deans' … report directly to the DVC." (page 29)

There will be four Colleges, each headed by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) and Head of College. The initial proposal for Schools in the four Colleges is as follows:

- Law and Management Studies comprising 4 Schools
- Health Sciences comprising 4 Schools
- Humanities comprising 6 Schools
- Agriculture, Engineering and Science comprising 5 Schools

Consequently, the total number of Schools in the University will be 19.

This provides a starting point for discussion within the Colleges regarding the size and shape of the Schools. Discussions should be undertaken in a broad context, and include considerations raised by the Report of the Senate Task Team on Academic Research Productivity "*The perennial poor performing schools should be identified and either be merged or closed - lessons from the 10 successful schools must be used by those Schools that can be rescued or are in the process of improving*" (Senate 17 February 2010, Item 7).

The Schools will be led by a Dean and Head of School who reports directly to the DVC and Head of College (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: College structure: proposed organogram
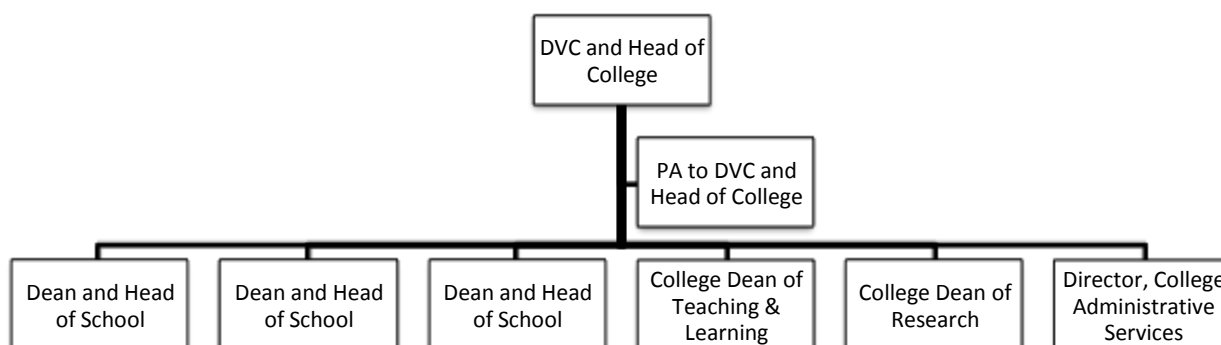
3. College Dean of Teaching and Learning, and College Dean of Research

Recommendation 7: College Deans of Research and Teaching and Learning
"Structural arrangements should be premised on the fact that teaching and learning and research are in the domain of the colleges and that central structures should play a supporting role rather than a controlling one. Academic leadership for research and teaching and learning in a college resides in the persons of Deans of Research and of Teaching and Learning ... part-time academic positions ... if this model were to be adopted, the role and place of the university-wide Teaching and Learning and Research Committees would need to be re-evaluated." (page 31-32)

There will be a College Dean of Teaching and Learning and a College Dean of Research. College Deans are academics who will be assigned a percentage of time for Dean duties. The percentage that is allocated to this will be agreed and the School will be compensated by the College for the loss of the Dean's time.

These posts will ensure that the profile of these two core academic activities is high within the Colleges. The structure will provide a liaison link with the relevant cross-cutting DVC (Teaching and Learning and Research respectively) through a dotted line. They will ensure that University policy and procedures are translated into practice by the Schools through the College monitoring and support systems. In addition, they will perform an advisory role and promote scholarship and innovation by sharing best practices. Within the College they will ensure quality and coherence in line with the College strategy for their respective portfolios. They may take on leadership responsibility for key strategic projects within the College, e.g. development of a new strategic research thrust. They may also manage issues that cut across Schools within the College, e.g. the roll-out of e-learning. They will be supported within the College by the relevant structures as devolved from the cross-cutting DVC portfolios. These part-time College Deans will report to the DVC and Head of College in terms of the percentage of their time allocated to College activities (Figure 1), and will be held accountable for academic operations by the College Academic Affairs and Quality Board (CAAB), e.g. in reporting on quality issues.

- The College Dean of Teaching and Learning is responsible for undergraduate and honours teaching and learning, and rules and curriculum, and quality assurance; and

- The College Dean of Research is responsible for promoting research and for management and development of postgraduate students, post-doctoral fellows, young academics, and the Leadership and Equity Advancement Programme (LEAP) candidates.

Additional support can be provided for these Deans if there is a particular aspect of high load in a particular College, e.g., a Dean's Assistant for monitoring student progression, or LEAP coordinator.
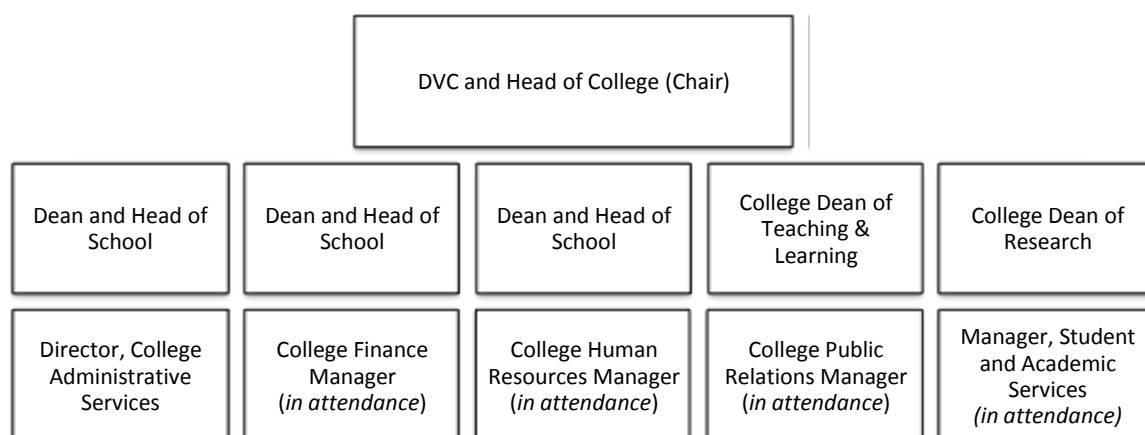
4. College Management and Academic Governance Structures

Recommendation 6: A two-tier academic committee structure: CAABs and School Boards

4.1 College Management Structure

There will be a single College Management Committee rather than a separate Executive Committee, which will consist of the DVC and Head of College, the Director of College Administrative Services, the Deans and Heads of School, and the College Deans of Teaching and Learning and of Research, (see Figure 2). This committee will be responsible for strategic and operational leadership and management of the College, including planning and resource allocation.

Figure 2: College Management Committee

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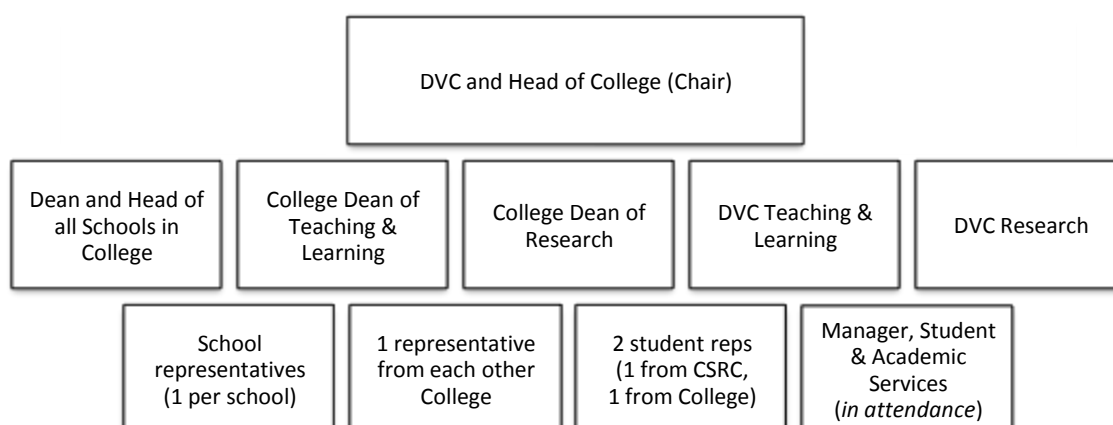| Dean and Head of School	Dean and Head of School	Dean and Head of School	College Dean of Teaching & Learning	College Dean of Research
Director, College Administrative Services	College Finance Manager (*in attendance*)	College Human Resources Manager (*in attendance*)	College Public Relations Manager (*in attendance*)	Manager, Student and Academic Services (*in attendance*)

4.2 College Academic Governance Structure

The academic authority within the College will rest with the College Academic Affairs Board (CAAB) which will function as a Senex. The CAAB will be a representative body which will allow the academic debate to be robust and represent the views of the academics within the College. The CAAB will comprise the DVC and Head of College (Chair), all the Deans and Heads of Schools, the College Deans, and an elected representative from each School. To ensure consistency of practice across the University, the DVC Teaching and Learning, and the DVC Research will be members, as well as a representative from each of the other Colleges who are also members of Senate. To provide for student representation, there will be two student representatives, one from the Central Student Representative Council (CSRC) and the other from within the College.

The CAAB will be responsible for leadership and management of the academic endeavour of the College including being responsible for quality assurance, monitoring, and evaluation of activities. Schools will be expected to have Boards which will take academic decisions and make recommendations to the CAAB which will act as the delegated authority of Senate (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: College Academic Affairs Board

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                    │   DVC and Head of College (Chair)    │
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Dean and Head of all Schools in College	College Dean of Teaching & Learning	College Dean of Research	DVC Teaching & Learning	DVC Research
	School representatives (1 per school)	1 representative from each other College	2 student reps (1 from CSRC, 1 from College)	Manager, Student & Academic Services (*in attendance*)

College-level Teaching and Learning, Quality Assurance, Higher Degrees or Research Committees will not be formally established. Creating such structures we would perpetuate the three-tier system, creating a barrier between the Schools and the CAABs. For a specific project, the CAAB may create a task-team at the College level with limited terms of reference and time of operation.

There will be a College Administrative Forum which will provide a vehicle to enhance communication among the support components of the College at both College and School levels. This Forum will coordinate administrative processes and operations across the schools, and promote best practice and efficiencies, ensuring consistency and fairness of service. The members will include the Director of College Administrative Services (Chair), College Finance Manager, College HR Manager, Manager of Student and Academic Services, College Public Relations Manager and School Administration Managers. The Forum will not have decision-making authority but may make recommendations to the College Management Committee or School Management Committees as appropriate.

5. College Support Office

Recommendation 9: Full devolution of relevant support sector activities to Colleges
"There is scope for significant devolution of support to the colleges ... in the interests of college autonomy and effective support of the academic endeavour. College support staff are physically located in the DVC's suite. The Head of support service located in the College reports directly to the DVC ... secondary reporting line to central services." (page 33)

All College support services will fall under the Director, College Administrative Services who reports to the DVC and Head of College and is responsible for managing all College administration. This supportive partnership allows the DVC and Head of College to focus on strategic and academic leadership rather than administrative matters. The Director, College Administrative Services also coordinates any special or strategic projects such as infrastructural development and, where necessary, manages any College support units (such as workshops).

Reporting to the Director, College Administrative Services are the Manager for Student and Academic Services, College Finance Manager, College Human Resources Manager and College Public Relations Manager (see Figure 4). Their direct reporting line is thus within the College but there is "dotted line" responsibility to the relevant support sector Executive for expert coordination of the services and the professional development of staff.

Figure 4: College Administrative Services
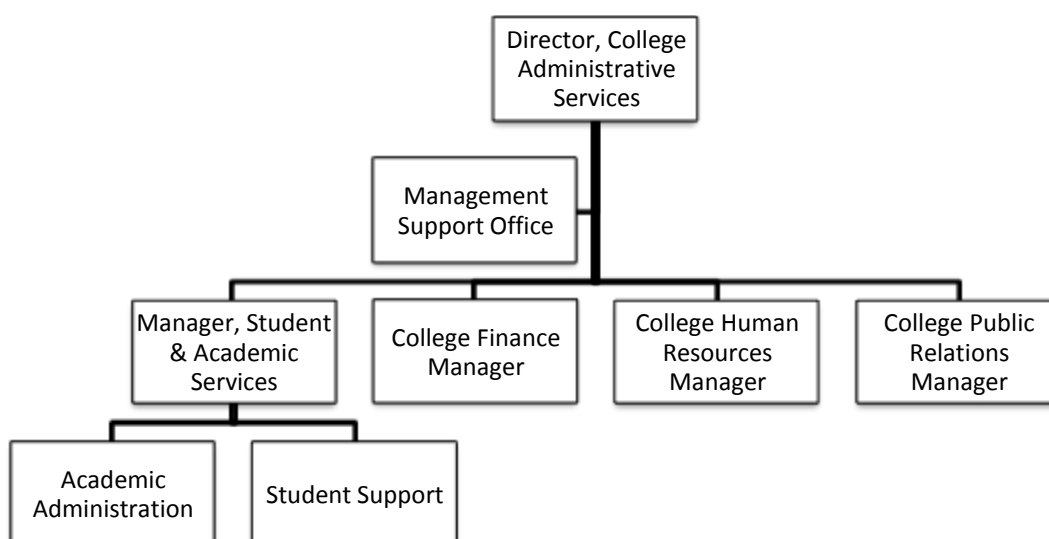
Student and Academic Services deals with aspects of student services as well as the academic management of students registered in the College. The Academic Administration responsibilities of this section include the academic management of current students, the College student admission office, examination processes for doctoral students, coordination, information, and advice on policies, procedures and rules, and the coordination and organisation of registration and of graduation at the College level. Academic misconduct and student complaints are also dealt with by this office. The

Student Support component includes academic, career and psycho-social counselling and support to students.

The College Finance Office is responsible for the maintenance of College financial records and the preparation of financial reports, both at the individual School level and consolidated to the College. The office will manage the administration of the College budget and its devolution to Schools and is responsible for monitoring expenditure against the budget. It will also provide management accounting services and information and oversee the correct application of policies and financial regulations. Staff members include a Finance Officer responsible for procurement and assets. Student Funding and the administration of Financial Aid will also be managed by this office.

The Human Resources Office will be responsible for operational human resources activities and includes the recruitment and on-boarding of College and School staff, the maintenance of staffing records, the administration of promotion and superannuation processes, employee relations and talent management.

The College Public Relations Office drives all public relations and outreach initiatives, internal and external communication and coordinates College events. The office is responsible for the development and support of the College web pages. Schools liaison and student recruitment are managed by this office.

A Management Support Office provides administrative support for the DVC and Head of College and the Director, College Administrative Services, and organises and services the College committees.

6. Organisation within Schools

Recommendation 4: Appropriate administrative support in schools
"New schools will need to be much better resourced in terms of administrative support. Each Head of School to be empowered by the provision of an administrative team." (page 30)

Recommendation 5: Discipline-based arrangements within schools
"It is important that secondary layers of authority are not created within the new mega-schools. Schools should have the flexibility to reorganise in ways that best suit their particular circumstances. It is important ... that the principle of cross-campus uniformity and the common curriculum are adhered to in operational arrangements. The principle of single schools operating across campuses will need to be supplemented by the principle of single disciplines operating across campuses. Arrangements within schools should not be such that they allow disciplines to run independently on different campuses, with their own budget and academic processes." (pages 30 – 31)

There will be no formal structures established within the School, i.e., no secondary layers of authority. Budgetary control will be retained by the Head of School and will not be further devolved. However, there may be some form of relevant line-management arrangements in order to ensure that there is appropriate span of control for staff management, and so that the Head of School is not overwhelmed with line-management. Schools and Colleges will need to engage with this matter and decide what best suits their needs within some broad guiding principles.

Besides line-management arrangements, there should be arrangements designed to facilitate the delivery of teaching programmes and the coordination of research. There may be thematic heads performing coordinating roles within schools. These need not be formally appointed through an HR selection process but may be appointed by agreement with the staff and individuals concerned in consultation with the Head of School. There may be formally appointed Academic Coordinators, for example, against qualifications requiring external accreditation. All structures created will promote cross-campus integration and the implementation of common curricula across campuses.

Administrative and professional support will be centralised within a unified support structure within the School. All of the support components of the School will fall under the School Administration Manager

who will report to the Dean and Head of School. This allows the Head to focus on strategic and academic leadership rather than administrative matters. An example of a generic structure is presented in Figure 5. In Schools with complex technical components there may be a separate Technical Services Manager reporting to the Dean and Head of School.

Figure 5: School Administration
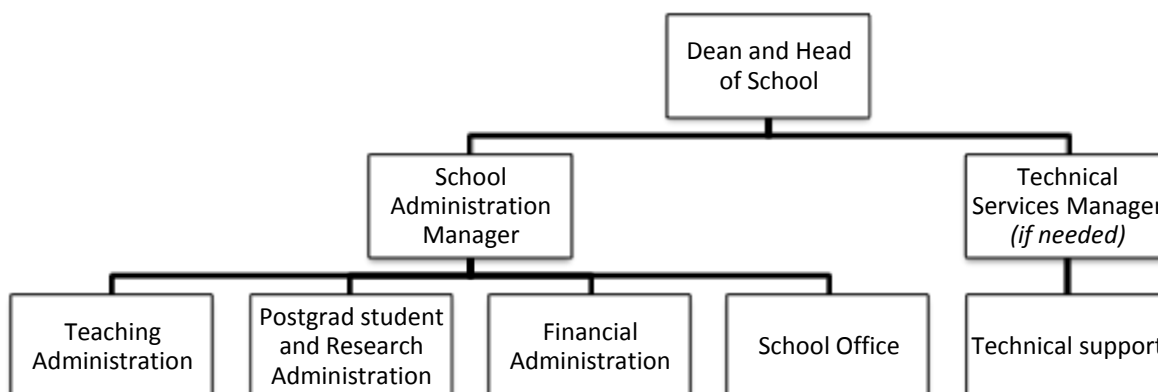
Four functional areas are identified that are common to all schools. Each of these may be undertaken by one or more staff as required by the size and functional complexity of the School, or a single staff member may be responsible for more than one functional area. The functional areas are: Teaching Administration which provides administrative support for the teaching of modules, Postgraduate Student and Research Administration, Financial Administration, and a School Office which provides secretarial support for the Head of School and senior staff members amongst other general School-wide administrative functions.

The Teaching Administration will be responsible for the management and support of the teaching endeavour for all taught modules and serves as the first point of contact for any teaching/module related queries. These staff members work in support of academics to handle the coordination and administration of individual modules (large classes) or levels (senior years/honours) and deal with matters such as the administration of assignments, the appointment and management of student demonstrators, calculation of year marks and DP processing. They are responsible for the organisation of examination papers, liaison with external examiners, capturing marks, administering script viewing and re-marks. Management of module/year web pages, bulletin boards, discussion forums and on-line teaching support also forms part of their duties. In addition, they would compile statistics on pass rates, throughput and other quality-related information.

Postgraduate Student and Research Administration will be responsible for administering the selection and admission of Masters and Doctoral students and their support and management including the administration of examination processes for Masters dissertations. They will manage the employment of post-doctoral scholars, provide administrative support for research projects and assistance with grant applications, prepare school research reports as well as support and monitor the submission of publications and other research information.

Financial Administration will be responsible for the management of the School budget, financial reporting, checking of cost reports, the administration of research cost centres and providing assistance with the preparation of business plans.

The School Office will provide secretarial support to the Dean and Head of School and the School Administration Manager as required. These staff also maintain the School web pages, organise and service School committees and provide the organisation and support for selection committees.

If required, the Technical Services Manager manages the teaching and research laboratories and technicians, is responsible for stores, equipment and vehicles, and manages any school IT staff.

7. Conclusion

In considering the Report of the Review Panel and formulating these proposals for the implementation of the recommendations contained therein, the Executive has concentrated initially on those recommendations that impact on academic organisation and the structure and governance of the Colleges and Schools. The recommendations are meant to improve academic governance, and allow academics to address synergies and academic coherence, and to create opportunities for new forms or modes of knowledge production. The proposals made to implement these recommendations firmly establish the academic sector as the focus of the University and all other structures and processes must be measured by the extent to which they can support and advance the academic endeavour.

Although not explicitly dealt with in this report, the implementation of the following process-related recommendations is also supported. This will be considered and included in the proposals as plans evolve to the appropriate level of detail:

Recommendation 3: Appointment and remuneration of Heads of Schools
Recommendation 8: Budget control and planning
Recommendation 10: Leadership development
Recommendation 11: Service level agreements

In the six years since the merger the University has made great strides and is firmly established as a leading research-led University. This reconfiguration will allow the University to exploit new and existing synergies and further build on these successes to strengthen and consolidate our position as one of Africa's top universities.

UKZN Executive Management Committee
November 2010