IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN: 10 YEARS OF WASA

A PUBLICATION BY RHODES UNIVERSITY

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Women's Academic Solidarity Association

Established in 2004, the Women's Academic Solidarity Association is geared towards strengthening and empowering women academics and postgraduate scholars to further their studies and advance their careers at Rhodes University.

The Title of this publication is inspired by Ifi Amadiume's 1997 article, "In the company of women: love, struggle, class and our feminisms", which appears in the book *Re-inventing Africa: matriarchy, religion and culture.*

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Introduction

"In academic circles, the highest achievement many would argue is the attainment of a PhD. This is even more pertinent to women, as so few women are encouraged to, or ever think they can aspire to, complete a PhD."

These words from Dr Joy Owen, who graduated with her PhD in Anthropology at Rhodes University in 2012 and currently lectures in the Department of Anthropology, reflect on the context in which the **Women's Academic Solidarity Association (WASA)** was established at Rhodes in 2004.

For the past eight years WASA has provided a much needed mentoring space for women who often find academic life alienating, isolating, white male centric, and at times irreconcilable with the many demands on them, including children and family.

Through WASA, women postgraduate students and academics have developed a strong network of support, encouragement and guidance. WASA has helped women to access funding for postgraduate studies or to facilitate research. It has identified mentors and disseminated information about training programmes and vacancies at the University. It has encouraged members to publish academic papers and to attend and present papers at local and international conference.

Rhodes University's Vice-Chancellor, Dr Saleem Badat, has been highly supportive of WASA and the University is working towards the kind of transformation that will hopefully see Rhodes' 109-year-old white male history changing to reflect a new intellectual culture and environment in South Africa where women feel this is their place.

An increasing number of women today are opting for research and academic careers within the University, where they are rising through the ranks to Professor level. These women are important mentors as senior WASArians who inspire and guide the next generation of women scholars.

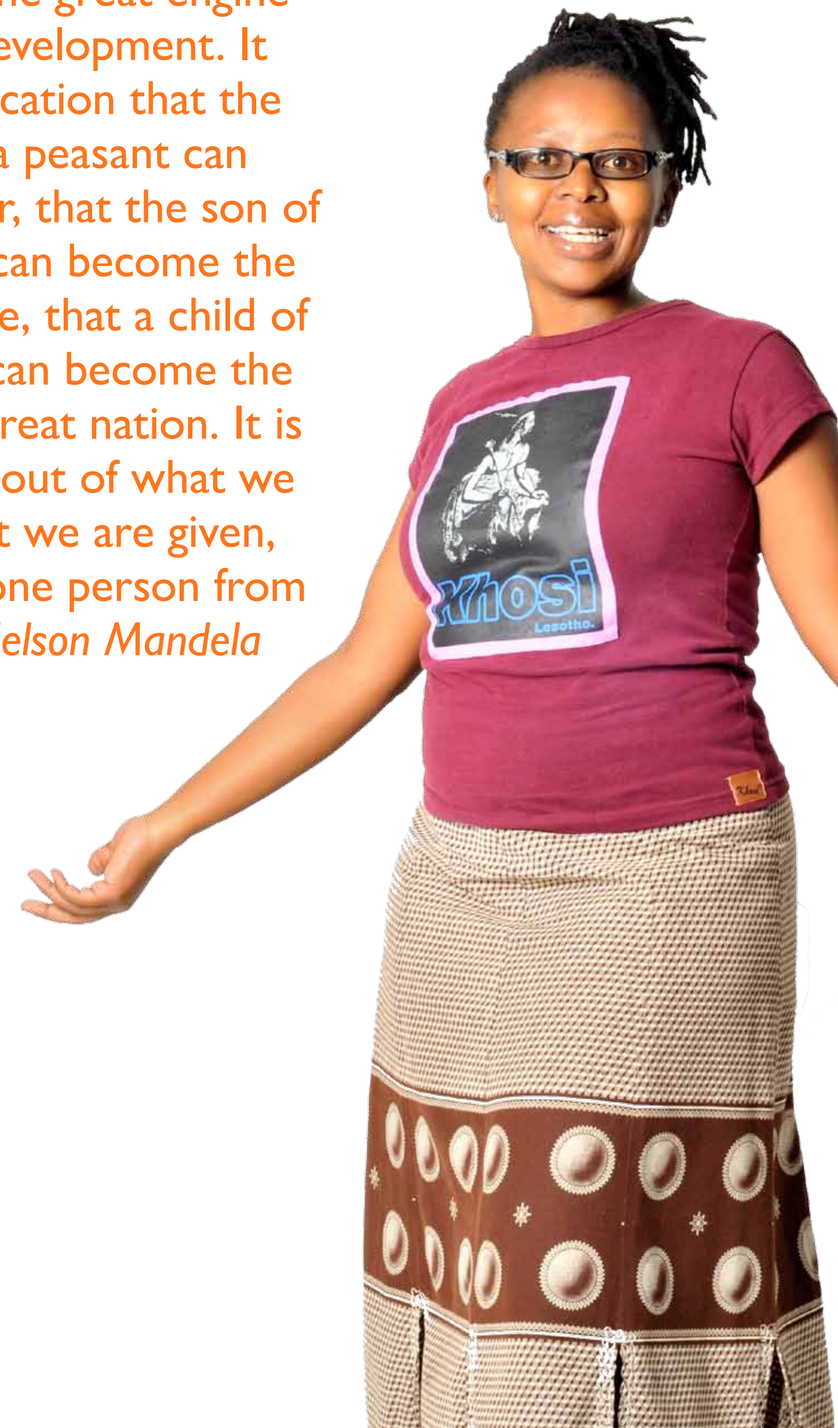
"I would like to think that the academy is available to me as a long term career, as it has been for many of my colleagues who have been academics their entire professional lives," states WASA co-chair for 2013 Ms Siphokazi Magadla who is a lecturer in the Department of Political and International Studies at Rhodes and a PhD student. Magadla is part of the new generation of South African women who tell the story of a society in transition "where black women who could once only imagine themselves as maids, teachers or nurses" rise to become scholars who lead South African universities into the future. This future is still a way off, but it is up to the new generation of WASArians to help drive tangible change in the University's culture.

WASA co-chair for 2013 Ms Mathe Maema who is doing her PhD in Computer Science at Rhodes explains tangible change as follows: "Academic doors are being opened for women postgraduates and academics but you are not sure if you can or should go through. There are many wonderfully supportive academics at Rhodes, including my supervisor Professor Alfredo Terzoli, but the general culture is still uncomfortable. We need to feel the unity and change; we need to witness that the University is not simply slotting the next generation of scholars into the conservative historic white male structure. We need to experience women moving from the periphery to the centre."

WASA aspires to a time when there is no further need for WASA as a separate organisation for women. That time has not yet come. "Until the academic environment is culturally and intellectually transformed into a de-genderised, de-racialised new scholarly space, WASA will continue," says Maema. It will not only continue to grow at Rhodes, it will also continue to expand with the formation of sister organisations at other universities, including the University of Limpopo, where ULWASA was formally launched in 2012.

"We are in the process of extending our reach as a Rhodes-based solidarity hub for all women postgraduates and academics in South Africa and beyond," says Maema. "The many issues surrounding women in academia are shared by all women at all the universities in South Africa, as well as in the rest of Africa. Our website, which will be launched in 2013, will hopefully help to achieve this, as will this publication. Welcome to WASA, welcome to our world."

"Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another." – *Nelson Mandela*



Freelance Researcher and WASA fpunder and first chairperson, Dr Darlene Miller, discusses the importance of WASA

WASA's founder and first Chairperson

WASA, like many organisations, is held together by a committed core of activists. The organisation was formed as a solidarity initiative between academics, hence its name. While collective endeavour happens at universities through committees, joint research teams and such-like, competition and individual attainment are often at the core of the way these institutions function.

For younger academics or cultural outsiders, understanding the way things are done at universities can be daunting, and the individual demands overwhelming. By cultural outsiders I mean those who have not been raised in the dominant culture of a university, whichever culture that might be.

The rules, norms and hierarchies within the University can therefore be opaque to some of us, and WASA's approach of combining women academics' experiences to collectively navigate our way has proved a productive endeavour. This is naturally time-consuming but it helps us to direct our efforts in a strategic way, and also to find some associational life on campus, which helps to keep us motivated, so it is worth the effort. Hence WASA was conceived as a form of *solidarity between academics*.

But more than just academics, the organisation was formed to help future women academics at the postgraduate level. The University, like many other institutions in South Africa, is a gendered and culturally biased space. Academic leadership in South Africa is dominated by men who speak a particular kind of English. Women often administer these academic spaces in institutions such as Rhodes and make up the bulk of support staff at the senior levels. The University's statistics reflect the gender hierarchy in the demographics of academic staff. Cultural practices and gender thus place women, both white and black, as academic minorities.

Unseating academic and cultural majorities thus aims to dislodge comfortable spaces of power and hence *have an unsettling effect* on those in the cultural majority. Solidarity, more than mere association, was therefore a requirement for the organisation to achieve some limited objectives. We could not simply be a church for women: some adversity was going to be necessary. For this reason, WASA often received an ambivalent response from the University hierarchy: an uncertainty as to whether they liked us or not.

Racial hierarchies, not only gender, also govern University life: cleaning is done by mainly black women and men from the township; teaching and research is done by those in the middle or upper classes. While WASA is keenly aware of these inequalities, it needed to focus its efforts on inequality and injustices within academic achievement at the higher echelons.

Many of our members are highly meritorious women with doctorates in Pure Mathematics, Industrial Sociology, Zoology and a range of disciplines across the Sciences, Humanities, Law and Education. The radical epistemological approach of WASA – through exchanging knowledge across diverse faculties – was prescient of global developments today, where bodies such as the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and the International Council of Science Unions (ICSU) aim to bring the natural and social sciences together. Global challenges such as climate change and planetary threats emphasise the importance of the co-design of research questions rather than the bringing together of scientific outputs *after* the research has been done.

Dr David Woods, the former Vice-Chancellor who was very supportive of WASA's collective efforts at excellence, was quite astonished at WASA's academic 'cross-over' when attending one of our public report-backs from an international conference.

'Bolshy' as always, we advised his secretary that, having travelled across the ocean to represent Rhodes University, we would like the Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research to walk across the road at Rhodes campus to come and share what we had learnt. The then Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research Prof John Duncan, in a crowded room in the Sociology Department, enthused that the intellectual energy and enthusiasm in the room was tangible and deserving of the University's support.

This support was mostly forthcoming when we banged on our pots and pans, meaning that we had to put a lot of hard work, time and verbal persuasion and petitioning into attaining our goals at the University, ending sometimes in personal frustration that saw quite a few members eventually leaving Rhodes. Of the initial core membership, only one out of the six remains. Of course, there were pull factors too for such highly talented individuals, but the push factors – both then and now – still need to be seriously examined by the University.

The principles of WASA suggested feminist alternatives to patriarchal leadership. Instead of the 'Great Leader', the outstanding individual who grows exponentially in power the longer he stays in an institution, we sought ways of collectivising leadership, hence the Chairperson of WASA, according to its constitution, was given 6 months to lead before re-election. In practise, a Chairperson might be kept on longer, but the group had a chance to decide whether or not this should be the case.

We encouraged members to form sub-committees around issues that were of burning concern to them, and to engage with the University administration around these concerns. Significant initiatives were made such as those relating to the Thuthuka Women-In-Research programme and the Rhodes Promotions Committee where blockages to academic women's advancement were identified and recommendations made. One of the difficulties we encountered, however, was that sterling committee work often ended with the paper on which the recommendations were written. This is unfortunate as each time a roadblock is encountered by the University community, the response is often to form committees whose recommendations are then ignored by the key sites of power in the institution.

But we persevered through the following principles, which indeed may be deemed WASA's founding and guiding principles:

1. Rotational leadership
2. Issue-based Sub-Committees
3. Inter-disciplinary academic collaboration.

These principles are practised while providing ongoing support to individual academic goals through the NRF's Thuthuka programme, our own internal mentoring activities, and monthly seminar presentations of doctoral chapters that formed the core activities of WASA's early days (as well as some energetic social get-togethers!).

Like all voluntary organisations, WASA has experienced energised and stagnant cycles, depending on the commitment and stamina of those who go the extra mile to attain social justice in South Africa. Like other organisations for women, it is also sometimes caricatured as a scary feminist hotbed. Despite our detractors, such singular effort should be saluted, and it is a great joy to me personally to see that WASA has endured and still tries to be *Ixbanti*, a safe and kind space for women academics across racial divides at Rhodes University.

Dr Darlene Miller (left) with Ms Babalwa Magoqwana

Ms Corinne Knowles is a lecturer in the Rhodes Extended Studies Programme, teaching Sociology and Political & International Studies. As a WASA member, she has been one of the many driving forces in the association. Knowles did her MA in Politics on the transformation in South African universities, drawing on the role of WASA at Rhodes University towards achieving this goal. Extracts from her thesis are featured on page 52. In this article she explores the history of WASA as it approaches its tenth year anniversary.

The history and future of WASA – a ten-year journey

On a windy September evening in 2004 a group of women academics and students gathered at the Grahamstown home of Dr Darlene Miller who was then in the Sociology Department at Rhodes University and is now a freelance researcher.

"She invited them to her home to discuss shared frustrations and wishes, including gender issues on campus and the insufficient support from the university for women's academic advancement. Women expressed their difficulty in accessing senior academic posts; they didn't feel they were getting ahead or being sufficiently recognised in terms of being promoted to senior positions. Women felt that the message they were getting was that their place was in junior academic levels. This is an ongoing issue that we continue to address today where, according to the University's official November 2012 statistics, only 17% of Heads of Department and 16% of Professors at Rhodes are women."

The attendance at that first meeting was overwhelming and those present decided to form a women's academic solidarity group. Initially named the Young Academic Women's Group (YAWG), the group was subsequently and more fittingly named the Women's Academic Solidarity Association or WASA.

WASA – the name was important

"The name is important as it includes the academic aspect and also the solidarity aspect of women working as a collective and wanting to address issues as a collective. WASA is all about peer group support and from the outset members would meet once a month and each woman would present a chapter or paper they were working on for discussion and advice. There were women from many different academic fields, which made for a stimulating inter-disciplinary way of working together and supporting and mentoring each other."

From 2004 to 2007 the programme was very much a collective effort and members were happy to give of their time to help each other.

Rhodes' history

In 2004 when WASA started, Rhodes University was celebrating its centenary, and as part of the ongoing centenary events there were displays throughout campus of various aspects of Rhodes' history.

"What became very apparent is how much of Rhodes' history and culture was white male focused, which provided the impetus for WASA to start, and to question and address who it was that Rhodes was configured to look after, and whether this had changed," says Knowles.

"The women in WASA when it started were mostly black women, far removed from the white male way of thinking and doing things, yet they felt the institution was not sufficiently adapting to embrace democratic diversity, and certainly not to ensure that academic equity in its academic ranks was well reflected in terms of black women."

WASA provided an important informal activism, mentoring and reading group, organising workshops to help advance women academics, including the South Eastern Workshop on Southern Africa (SEWSA).

"SEWSA was for emerging academics who wanted to publish academic papers but weren't quite sure how. It brought in editors of respected journals who discussed what was required for papers to be published in their journals. It was an extremely useful programme and we have had three SEWSAs since 2006."

African discourses and concepts

The SEWSAs also offer invaluable opportunities for informal conversation about academic work in progress. They are designed to give academics in the Eastern Cape the opportunity for close and intensive discussion of work across a wide variety of scholarly fields. They prioritise scholarship, regardless of discipline or topic, that is grounded in analysis of African discourses and concepts, and which elucidates local worldviews and experiences.

By 2007 WASA was a well-entrenched organisation at Rhodes, recognised for its work for women postgraduates and academics within the University, and increasingly meeting with the University about issues faced by women that the University needed to address. In 2007, in recognition of the work that WASA had been doing voluntarily, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, which is managed by the Vice-Chancellor, awarded WASA close to R1-million over a three-year period (approximately R30 000 per month) to expand its work.

It was a large feather in WASA's cap that a donor of this stature had approached the organisation to offer funding, and WASA members at the time were extremely proud of this achievement.

R1-million from the Mellon Foundation

"The funding afforded us an administrator and this was an interesting development because Rhodes in 2007, and this may be true for many universities, had administrative processes that seemed very difficult to access," continues Knowles. WASA members continually expressed how they were never sure who to go to regarding, for example, what sources of academic funding were available and how to access it.

"The administrator helped women who needed funding and met with the finance and research office to make it happen."

Knowles adds that many WASA members are postgraduate students from other African countries who did not have immediate access to funding.

The founders of WASA were: Dr Darlene Miller (first Chairperson), Ms Thoko Madonko, Dr Michelle Ruiters, Dr Carla Tsampiras and Ms Morgenie Pillay. Active members in the early years include Dr Phethiwe Matutu (second Chairperson), Dr Nomalanga Mkhize, Prof Janice Limson and Prof Monica Hendricks (third Chairperson).

WASA used funds to purchase equipment, including several laptops they loan out, a camera, voice recorder, photostat machine and other office necessities.

Funding was also used to organise several writing breakaways for women postgraduates and academics from 2008. And funding was made available to women postgraduates and academics needing to attend conferences that were not funded by the University.

Time relief programme

WASA also started a time relief programme for women who needed to complete a PhD or a book, but didn't have a sabbatical due or qualify for paid leave. These women received payment during their time relief period; Rhodes agreed to pay half if WASA paid the other half to women needing to complete their PhDs. A number of women have benefited from this.

Pros and cons of funding

While WASA and other Rhodes women considerably gained from this funding, Knowles believes it also interrupted something special about WASA – and that was the willingness of women, despite their highly pressured academic and home lives, to give freely of their time to help each other because they believed in what they were doing. For any organisation to take root and grow, it takes hard work and sacrifice on the part of the members, and WASA was no different.

From 2007 WASA grew from 25 to 60 to 100 members.

"Once we had funding we would have people applying for breakaways and time relief whom we had never seen. We had situations where Human Resources would tell them to come and get money from WASA. WASA became a place where you could get stuff and not where you gave stuff, and that has been an issue that has perhaps stayed with us and is important to note."

The Mellon funding, including a year's extension, ended in 2011. WASA sent a 30-page report to Mellon detailing their activities and achievements as a result of the funding and commenting on the way forward for WASA.

A time when there will no longer be a need for WASA

"We noted that we would like to see a time when there was no further need for WASA, but for this to happen, it would require the institution to take more of the responsibilities taken up by WASA," says Knowles. "Many women still do not feel they have sufficient academic support from the University administration and Human Resources, and that in many situations it is very stressful trying to approach them, including for basic issues such as employment contracts."

In other areas she feels that Human Resources has been very responsive to WASA, such as in helping to put in place childcare and parental policies that are amongst the best in South Africa's 23 universities countrywide. "At Rhodes where both the mother and father of a newborn baby are employed, they can share the maternity leave in order to look after the baby and their careers." She adds that Rhodes' Director of Research, Ms Jaine Roberts, has significantly improved access and orientation regarding the research process. "Jaine has been exceptional in establishing a women's research programme called WASARP or the Women's Academic Solidarity Association Research Programme, once again funded by Mellon. WASA also gets a budget from WASARP, to cover the administrator's salary and for breakaways and meetings."

New challenges

WASA in 2013 faces new challenges, including the transience of many of its postgraduate members who are at the University for two to five years.

"We would like to see Rhodes retaining more women postgraduates as full academic staff members and we would like to play our part in seeing this happen," says Knowles. "In partnership with Rhodes, we need to assess why, for example, it is not retaining more black South African women postgraduates. They say they still don't feel at home in the University; that the culture is not sufficiently transformed from its 100-year-old legacy. But that being said, the infusion of strong WASA women in the university, and the kind of support, network and leadership possibilities that WASA continues to offer emerging women academics, can help us to reach the tipping point where we get serious about making changes ."

WASA believes (and in many ways practices this in the organisation) that the University should be addressing practical ways of cross-pollinating academics, including making sure that all committees are strongly represented by women and ensuring that different voices are valued, and that the campus becomes more conducive to encouraging interaction in its diverse academic population. An attractive canteen or meeting place where lecturers from all faculties can meet and mingle is advised, as the senior common room is not conducive to this and the town has a dearth of meeting places for lecturers who aren't always inclined to share venues with their undergraduate students.

Changing the all-male line up of Vice-Chancellors

WASA members feel the University needs to be more proactive in its uptake of suggestions for positive institutional change. Knowles cites the example of the Council Chamber where it took two long years of protracted university processes to change the all-male lineup of paintings of Vice-Chancellors through the decades lining the walls. "These did nothing to engender a democratic, new generation, gender-friendly atmosphere. We finally motivated to have them replaced with beautiful tapestries made by women from the Keiskamma Art Project in the village of Hamburg in the Eastern Cape. It's important because it is symbolic of the drive towards tangible cultural change."

WASA is also on a drive to attract membership and maximum participation from senior women academics at Rhodes. "They have so much on their plates, both academic and domestic, but it is so important to have role models in WASA who are available to guide and nurture the next generation of women postgraduates and academics," says Knowles.

Overall, WASA members are optimistic that with the passion and support of the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Equity and Institutional Culture, Rhodes can grow into the diverse, culturally dynamic institution it should be.

We've come a long way

"We've come a long way. I've come a long way," says Knowles. "At the time WASA was formed I was working in administration at Rhodes and I had never even considered getting a postgraduate degree and becoming an academic. And here I am as a lecturer, busy with my PhD. WASA switched my head on and provided me with the awareness and mentoring I needed to take my life further. That wasn't available at Rhodes at the time and it is as needed today as it was ten years ago.

"WASA also offered me something incredibly important in Grahamstown, which can be socially alienating because people have entrenched social circles. It offered me a platform to make really good friends, and most of my friends at Rhodes, from a variety of different of faculties, I met at WASA."

Time to change, time to grow

Ms Mathe Maema believes it is time to change the perception that all black women postgraduates, particularly in South Africa, are more interested in entering industry than academia, based on preferential financial gains.

"We are in a new era of growth for women postgraduates and academics and we need to address these perceptions and bring in a new energy that encourages women to feel they have a place, a voice and a future in academia, and that the University is their home. WASA has a critical role to play in driving this change, in collaboration with Rhodes," says Maema a PhD student in the Computer Science Department at Rhodes University who is researching the preservation of indigenous knowledge through a joint ICT for Development (ICT4D) programme between the Universities of Fort Hare and Rhodes called the Siyakhula Living Lab.

Maema, who is from Lesotho, explains that an increasing number of black African women are entering research careers, "not because of financial packages, but because they want to make a difference to the society in which they live, to southern Africa, Africa and the world."

To this end she would like to see South African universities attracting and retaining far more black South African women postgraduates.

"Transformation needs to be accelerated in South Africa universities where the percentage of black South African postgraduates is still fairly low," says Maema.

She believes the University needs to recognise WASA as a serious constituent for transformation, and that it should be included as a consulting committee to the Rhodes Equity and Institutional Culture office at Rhodes with formal support from the University.

Orientation for new women academics and academic advancement

"Women need more support and guidance from the University in many different areas. One of these areas is academic advancement orientation for women as to how and when they can seek academic promotion. Women tend, by nature, to expect to be given recognition when they deserve it, rather than to actively apply for it," she explains.

Many women rely on WASA for this kind of advice, whereas WASA would like to see far more input in this regard from Human Resources and other University offices.

> "The African dream is a piece of each and every African, the African dream is Hope, the African dream is rekindling a fighting spirit of Success and not Helplessness because of our economic conditions." – *Mahlao Maema, founder of a youth NGO and sister of Mathe Maema.*

Addressing the issues facing women in academia and society

Maema believes that almost two decades into our democracy, South African universities need to be far more proactive about helping to advance women in academia and society; they need to be far more active in voicing and addressing the issues facing women, including the escalating violence and oppression.

Various initiatives to address what race and gender means, and what brotherhood and sisterhood means, have been initiated at Rhodes, such as the Forum for Institutional Transformation at Rhodes (FITAR) some five years ago, driven by academics like Prof Jimi Adesina who was in the Sociology Department at Rhodes at the time, and who is now the Head of the Sociology Department at the University of the Western Cape.

An organisation that is stronger than its individual drivers

Maema was a member of FITAR. "The problem is that when he left Rhodes, the few of us who remained members eventually abandoned ship, mainly out of disillusionment. This is why we are so grateful to WASA leaders, like Corinne Knowles who has been part of the organisation since the early days and who is still part of it, helping to inspire and motivate everyone, and to painstakingly advance the call for transformation," continues Maema.

"What we need to establish with WASA is an organisation that is stronger than its individual drivers; an organisation that intrinsically partners with Rhodes to drive the growth of women postgraduates and academics throughout the University's hierarchy. This way longevity is assured."

Maema joined WASA as a full member in 2010 and proudly describes herself as a feminist. She believes that all women postgraduates and academics should be members of WASA to empower each other and encourage the next generation.

You do not need to be a feminist to join WASA

"Some women are afraid to call themselves feminists because they fear the image of radical feminists. But there are many different types of feminists, and you do not even need to be a feminist at all to join WASA. The beauty of the organisation is that it is not about labels; it is all about helping women to pursue their postgraduate and academic goals through knowledge sharing, encouragement and mutual support.

"Being a member of WASA has made a great difference to my life, not only in terms of my academic goals but also in terms of my social circle as you become part of a wonderful network. In a town like Grahamstown this has been particularly important for me as many people have longstanding friendship circles, which can be alienating to newcomers."

Re-igniting the university as a politicised space

"I grew up very shy, but I had to break out because I realised that if you don't speak up, things don't change. Today my motto is 'Come in and just devastate!'," says Ms Siphokazi Magadla, a lecturer and PhD student in the Department of Political and International Studies. She teaches International Relations and African Security and Development.

The outspoken Magadla, who hails from the rural community of Ngqeleni near Mthatha, honed her confidence skills at Ohio University in the United States where she completed her Master's degree after winning a Fulbright Scholarship. She was elected Vice-President of the Ohio University African Students Union, the second-largest student organisation on campus. She also won a graduate student award from the United States' National Association of Black Political Scientists.

On her return to South Africa she worked as a research consultant for the Institute for Security Studies, where she focused on the role of women in conflict resolution before taking up her lecturing position at Rhodes University in 2011. She was awarded a Kresge PhD scholarship in 2012 and in 2013 became the first Rhodes academic/PhD candidate to be selected for the Social Science Research Council's Next Generation in Social Sciences in Africa Fellowship.

Her PhD thesis examines the integration into civilian life of female ex-combatants from liberation armies such as Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), The Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), and the Amabutho self defence unit that fought inside South Africa in Port Elizabeth.

"What I don't see in the literature regarding the challenges that face former guerilla fighters in the aftermath of war are the women combatants," Magadla explains. "The upheaval attendant on conflict often dramatically alters traditional gender roles, yet the impulse to women's social transformation and autonomy is circumscribed by the nationalist project, which constructs women as purveyors of the community's accepted and acceptable cultural identity; therefore the return to peace is invariably conceptualised as a return to the gender status quo, irrespective of the non-traditional roles assumed by women during conflict. Thus far there is no study that has looked at how women who participated in the armed struggle are experiencing civilian life in post-apartheid South Africa, while there are a number of detailed studies that draw a depressing picture of how the men of the struggle are socially, economically and politically marginalised."

The cultural and class implications of academia today

Academia is another traditionally male-dominated environment, particularly white male dominated, and while this is changing, says Magadla, she is concerned about the cultural and class implications of this change. "We are in an era where the demographics of undergraduate students at Rhodes, particularly in the humanities and commerce faculties, are predominantly black South Africans – and this is a first in Rhodes University's history. Physically the University is changing in terms of the bodies on chairs, but what is concerning is that the unique, highly politicised space of black students in the 1980s, when they were in the minority on campus, is diluted today."

Magadla believes that many of the black undergraduate students who are thriving at Rhodes today are from more privileged backgrounds, similar to many of their white counterparts, and both of whom are comfortable in a middle class political and cultural space, which universities all too easily become. "Privilege today is more about class than race," she states.

The need for ongoing activism and WASA

"The same applies to the growing numbers of black South African postgraduate students at university today, who recognise the advantage of postgraduate qualifications in the competitive job environment. While there is nothing wrong with this per se, there is a tendency amongst this group to neglect or not recognise the need for ongoing activism amongst women postgraduates and academics to challenge whether the University and academic environment today truly reflects the de-racialised, de-genderised, egalitarian space we desire it to be.

"I would argue that the more middle class black South African women students and postgraduates, like their white counterparts, do not recognise the need to continue championing the roles and rights of women in universities, and hence the need for WASA. It is those amongst us who need a voice – notably women from the previously 'black' universities or from unprivileged backgrounds – who most strongly feel the need," explains Magadla who feels that WASA's role in 2013 and going forward is to revive the sense of inquiry and activism required to grow all higher education institutions into the culturally, politically and economically dynamic centres of academia they ought to be.

Thoroughly investigate the cultural dynamics at Rhodes

She emphasises that unless the university sees a shift in diversity the underlying historic culture will not shift, and welcomes the initiative of the Equity and Institutional Culture division to thoroughly investigate the cultural dynamics at Rhodes. "We need to be far more rigorous about trying to understand why the culture at Rhodes is not transforming as it should because this directly affects key academic issues such as why black women postgraduates and academics don't always feel they have a home at Rhodes.

"Fortunately our Vice-Chancellor supports this investigation and has been proactive about addressing the problems of transformation head on and about addressing the need for a new generation of women academics."

She says Rhodes needs to see far more women entering senior academic positions and appeals to women academics who have achieved this status to actively support the work of WASA so that the younger members of the academic staff know who they are and can approach them for guidance if needs be. "Our goal is to creatively create a platform that connect women academics of different generations."

Towards a WASA-less future

Looking to the future she says it would be desirable to reach a stage when WASA is no longer required.

"But this can only happen when gender development, equity and transformation is far further down the line and there is a representative percentage of women, including black South African women, populating the most senior academic positions."

Towards addressing this, she says that South African universities need to actively address and counteract the stigma attached to postgraduate advancement programmes and scholarships specifically for black and women South Africans.

"There is a lingering prejudice amongst some academics that these programmes somehow compromise on excellence. A number of my most brilliant friends have been trivialised for being Affirmative Action candidates because this is equated with being given unfair advantage and puts into question their skills. Having sat on a number of selection committees I know the rigour of the process and that no candidate is chosen only on the basis of race or gender. Those of us who have walked this path need to strongly send out the message that we are in the positions that we occupy today because we have the skills and passion demanded by those positions. That we also happen to be black and female adds an interesting lens to how we articulate our views - and that is a good thing for our disciplines and the University."

Interview with Rhodes University Vice-Chancellor, Dr Saleem Badat

Developing Rhodes as a de-racialised, de-masculinised, de-gendered institution

"We encourage WASA to independently and critically analyse conditions at Rhodes and to propose how we can continue to develop the University's postgraduate and academic advancement programme for women.

"We look forward to the next chapter of our partnership with WASA, which will help to ensure that we cultivate an environment throughout campus that creates meaningful opportunities and facilitates for the development of women," says Dr Saleem Badat.

He explains that Rhodes is committed to and is proactively focusing on increasing the number and proportion of women academics, with an emphasis on black South African women postgraduates and academics, and women senior academics in general. This is regarded as a key imperative for the University.

Efforts towards achieving this include:

- Prioritising the employment of suitably qualified women academics and especially black women though an Employment Equity Action Plan and the recruitment and selection processes of the University;
- The Accelerated Development Programme funded by the University and the Kresge and Mellon foundations which seeks to produce the next generation of academics for Rhodes, and especially black and women academics;
- Prioritising postgraduate scholarships and bursaries for women and especially black women in the light of their underrepresentation at postgraduate level;
- Ensuring sensitivity in academic promotions in the case of women whose careers have been affected by child care responsibilities;
- Commissioning a formal transformation review of the University through Rhodes' Director of Equity and Institutional Culture, which, has been headed by Advocate Tshidi Hashatse since 2011; and
- Hosting round tables and Imbizo's on gender equity and transformation within the University.

Badat says that he hopes that Rhodes will continue to develop as a de-racialised, de-masculinised and de-gendered institution that is also highly conscious of issues of class, culture and language and respects and appreciates difference and diversity.

He emphasises that difference and diversity must be embraced as wellsprings of institutional, intellectual and scholarly vitality. He is adamant that "sexism and any form of sexual discrimination, harassment or violence against women will not be tolerated at Rhodes and urges that women and men counter and address and challenge such conduct and actions at every level."

Badat adds that the University is committed to ensuring that Rhodes is not the tramping ground of students from wealthy and middle class backgrounds alone, and that talented and deserving students from working class, rural poor and lower middle class backgrounds are also able to access and thrive at Rhodes. He says this "is critical for the realisation of constitutional ideals and the deepening and consolidation of democracy in South Africa".

Rhodes support to postgraduate students

In 2012 Rhodes had 2 114 postgraduate students; 664 Honours and postgraduate diploma students, 245 Masters students and 73 doctoral students graduated in 2012. In the same year Rhodes provided R35.7-million in postgraduate financial aid to 1 331 students – the funding ranged from a few thousand rand to full scholarships worth R120 000 per individual student.

Badat says he was excited that during 2013 some 50 Rhodes students who received undergraduate financial support from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) were eligible to study Honours. Although there is no guaranteed NSFAS support for postgraduate study, Rhodes registered all these students, who were in need of full support. "We could not turn these students away," he says. "We felt we *had to* register them and *had to* find the funds from somewhere."

"How could we turn them away – just because they did not have the funds even though they were eligible for Honours study?" continues Badat who told the Postgraduate Financial office that he "would stand surety for the students if the University was not able to raise the funds to support the students."

This is a major success story that exemplifies Badat's commitment, and funds were subsequently raised for all the students.

"It is imperative for South Africa's socio-economic development to dramatically increase the numbers of postgraduate students. Consider for a moment that the University of Sao Paulo alone annually produces more PhDs than the whole of South Africa, which produced just over 1400 PhDs in 2010".

He believes that South Africa's leading research universities, of which Rhodes is one, should work together to ensure the strengthening of the participation of women postgraduate students, particularly black South African women. He advocates that universities should agree to offer students similar amounts for a Masters or PhD to avert "chequebook politics" and the "triumph of the richest" in Higher Education, as this has negative implications for quality and social equity.

"When hugely differing amounts are offered for postgraduate studies it unduly influences students, who could be tempted to go for the highest funded scholarship instead of seeking the best quality institution or supervisor for their specific discipline or field," he says.

Strategy to develop the next generation of black and women scholars

As the Chair of the Funding Strategy Group of Higher Education South Africa's (HESA), Badat motivated for and convened HESA's Next Generation Development initiative, and helped to formulate its programme proposal for developing the next generation of academics, and especially black and women scholars. "We are seeking a budget of R150-million per year to support and produce 300 next generation scholars, ideally with a PhD, over a period," he explains.

"It is a superb programme and it is currently sitting with the Departments of Higher Education and Training, and Science and Technology". He hopes that funding for the programme, "which will have great benefits for universities and South Africa will be treated as a matter of urgency." (The National Planning Commission in the Office of the President has thrown its weight behind the programme and has made it part of its *National Development Plan 2030*).

This kind of national programme, like the University's Accelerated Development Programme supported by University funds and by the Kresge and Mellon foundations "provide a natural pipeline for more women academics, with an emphasis on black South African women academics, to rise through the academic ranks". He says this is also "a wonderful example of how equity and quality can be combined and do not have to be in tension, as some people like to suggest."

At present the number of Deans, Heads of Departments and Professors at Rhodes is heavily male-weighted and several WASA members have voiced their dissatisfaction with this. They say the lack of guidance from certain senior academics, as well as from the Human Resources Division where they are not given the right kind of 'paperwork support' and assistance regarding the University's advancement processes needs to be addressed.

"It goes without saying that if indeed there are problems being experienced regarding advancement we need to address these," responds Badat. "We would welcome documented accounts from women postgraduate students and academics regarding any alleged blockages or problems being experienced. We cannot act on hearsay."

He urges any postgraduate women who may be experiencing logistical or academic problems that are making them unhappy, to bring this to the attention of their Head of Departments or Deans. "If that fails, they can seek a conversation with either of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors or me."

He stresses that the "University's promotion policy and criteria were the outcome of extensive discussion by departments and faculties before they were adopted by Senate." He concedes that he has come across instances where "academics are reluctant to put themselves forward for promotion or merit awards and seek rather to be nominated by senior scholars."

He muses that this may "especially be the case with women" and urges senior scholars to be sensitive in this regard. The DVC: Research and Development, Dr Peter Clayton has since been charged with proactively identifying scholars, and especially women, who could be deserving of promotion, and encouraging them to apply or nominating them.

Emerging researcher support and mid-career academic support for women, is one of Rhodes' strategic focus areas, says Badat, as is creating academic posts for all University next generation scholars who successfully complete the programme. "The intention is to retain all the next generation scholars."

The Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning

The work of the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL), together with that of the Dean of Teaching and Learning, involves the development of academic staff as professional educators, the promotion and assurance of quality in teaching and learning and the development of student learning in conjunction with academic departments, the latter more directly through the work of the Extended Studies Unit (ESU).

CHERTL also functions as a Centre of Rhodes University that is focused on Higher Education as a field of study and the development of teaching and learning in higher education.

The Centre conducts research on teaching and learning in higher education and offers formal programmes in Higher Education Studies contributing to the development of quality teaching and learning. The Centre is also responsible for promoting Service-Learning within the institution; for the administration and development of the next generation academic programmes, supported by the Mellon and Kresge Foundations; for quality assuring short courses and supporting tutor coordinators.

The scope of CHERTL's work extends beyond the institution, playing an active role at national and international levels. CHERTL contributes significantly to the national higher education landscape, both through the offering of formal qualifications at other institutions as well as through representation on national bodies such as the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) and the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

The Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning

In December 2012 CHERTL released its book titled: 'Re-imagining academic staff development: spaces for disruption' which, in the words of one reviewer, "demonstrates a strong commitment to social transformation" and contributes significantly to the scholarship of academic development. A second reviewer suggested that the book "represents an important milestone in the emergence of a scholarly focus on staff development in South Africa" and a third reviewer said, "Anyone with an interest in critically examining what our universities are doing today will find this book fascinating and challenging".

Dean of Teaching and Learning at Rhodes, Prof Chrissie Boughey, in her preface to the book says: "In a field where development, whether of academics, curricula or institutions, is the key focus, the achievement of the contributors in this respect must be applauded, not least because it gives an indication of what can be realised elsewhere, and thus, hope for the future."

“We need to guard against seeking to clone ourselves through appointments and wishing to gather around us those who make us ‘comfortable’. This will simply reproduce an inequitable and unjust status quo that also lacks diversity and vitality, socially, intellectually and academically. Ultimately it will begin to impact on quality”

Interventions for women’s academic career paths

Badat agrees that the career path of women in academia needs attention. He appreciates “no matter how progressive our policies might be, it is highly likely that it is women that will continue to take off time to raise children. This inevitably has an impact on a woman academics productivity and research output”. Rhodes takes this into consideration when appraising women academics’ CVs for appointment and promotion, he says. “Equity or real equality is not treating everyone the same, but fairly and justly.”

He is mindful that the home lives and responsibilities of women academics and postgraduates need to be taken into consideration when University functions are organised. “Functions often take place at 5.30pm or 6.00pm – a time when women with young children usually need to be at home. Men too, are affected, but perhaps not to the same degree as women. Women then lose out on the networking opportunities functions afford.”

This matter was discussed at the University’s Gender Imbizo and the suggestion that the University should ensure childcare facilities was discussed with the crèche at the University. Badat concedes that he is “not sure that the matter of function times has been effectively addressed” and says he would welcome ideas of how it could be reasonably addressed.

Competitive academic salaries

Badat emphasises the need to pay academics competitive salaries to attract a new and next generation. “Before 1994 a professor at a university earned about the same as a director of a government department. Today a professor at retirement age earns in the region of R650 000 per year while the starting salary for a director in a government department in Bisho or Pretoria is some R750 000.

“This sends out the wrong message to academics as to how the state values them.” It is one of the reasons why generally “the recruitment and retention of academics is becoming a considerable struggle”.

According to Badat, Rhodes is very fortunate to have the quality of academics that we have. (Badat is currently chairing a HESA Task Team that is looking at the issue of academic remuneration and will formulate policy proposals with which to engage the government).

Despite the difficulties he says Rhodes is intent on hiring more women academics and the University engages actively with Deans and Department Heads around the equity profile of their departments and faculties, and the University’s need to appoint more women and black women academics. Attention is also given “to the participation of women on the Council of the University and on the Board of Governors”.

“We need to guard against seeking to clone ourselves through appointments and wishing to gather around us those who make us ‘comfortable’. This will simply reproduce an inequitable and unjust status quo that also lacks diversity and vitality, socially, intellectually and academically. Ultimately it will begin to impact on quality”, says Badat. “We need “to think about our universities in a different, more embracing and inclusive way.

“At Rhodes there is room for everyone. And while we must become more demographically representative (this is not an option but an imperative), I am very emphatic that whether you are black or white, man or women, Rhodes wants high quality postgraduates and academics now and into the future.

“Equity without quality is a sham. We can have both: equity with quality, and quality with equity. We have to create the right culture and environment for this to happen – and the rewards will flow!”

Interview with the Director of Equity and Institutional Culture at Rhodes, Advocate Tshidi Hashatse

Equity and Institutional Culture at Rhodes

"Over the past couple of years Rhodes has been engaged in a process of putting in place policies and procedures to tackle issues related to gender equality and broader equity related matters. The time has now come to put greater effort into implementation, and to show in demonstrable ways that we have the will and conviction to do what the policies say, especially in relation to black and women postgraduates and academics," says Advocate Tshidi Hashatse who studied Journalism before Law, and was Deputy Dean of Students at Rhodes University from 2009 until her appointment as the Director of Equity and Institutional Culture at Rhodes in 2011.

Hashatse works closely with the University's Vice-Chancellor Dr Saleem Badat and with the University's Equity and Institutional Culture Committee.

She lauds WASA for its efforts over the years in supporting the advancement of women postgraduates and academics at Rhodes.

"WASA has, for example, assisted women with financial support to take time off to complete their Masters or PhDs, and it has been a strong catalyst in the University's formalisation of policies on issues such as the family responsibility and parental leave benefits," she says.

She also acknowledges the importance of the Gender Imbizo held by Rhodes in 2007 to address gender issues within the University.

"All of these processes have made a positive contribution over the years but what we have to recognise is that what has been achieved so far by the University is not enough. It has not sufficiently translated into a universally positive experience for all women postgraduates and academics. The impact and effectiveness of the policy framework, and its consistent implementation, needs to be monitored and evaluated so that we can know whether we are on the right track." she says.

The full support of the entire University

"What is needed is the full support of the entire University, including the University Council. We need to assess what happens in each department, including how the input of all staff members is valued; how the workload is allocated, how opportunities are distributed, and how new staff members are received and treated. We need to know about the progression of women through the ranks, and whether there are barriers to promotion and how these can be addressed. There are systemic issues at institutional level that can get in the way, and we need to assess whether the culture of collegiality and institutional support is extended to all, so that there is equity of participation and success.

"This is necessary because policies and procedures alone do not equate to cultural and institutional change, and WASA should not be one of the few places where women postgraduates and academics feel supported. They should feel this throughout the University, including substantial support through the Human Resources philosophy. We are addressing all this and will hopefully start seeing more sustained results."

Undergraduate intake of women students is over 50%

Hashatse says the University needs to address why, when the undergraduate intake of women students at Rhodes is over 50% do more women not continue to postgraduate studies and academic careers.

She adds that the University also needs to look at its accelerated development programmes for academics, including the externally funded Kresge/Mellon programme, and establish why the University isn't retaining higher numbers of these scholars in permanent academic posts.

"It bothers me that the University has not established the conditions and environment that would encourage all of these scholars to stay, such as a guaranteed permanent position for PhD students and a positive environment for women academics where they feel there is good opportunity for their teaching, research and advancement ambitions. If you don't offer this, they will move elsewhere," she says.

Support and mentoring from within their departments

While some of the women postgraduate students and academics at Rhodes say they have received wonderful support from their supervisors and Heads of Departments, others say they have been stigmatised and not sufficiently supported by their mentors, support divisions, and host departments, especially if they are on programmes like the Mellon or Kresge.

Some senior academics take the approach that no one held their hands when they were juniors 20 or 30 years ago, and that this is not the way to build an academic career. But this is not about holding hands; it is about recognising that the inherited culture and conditions strengthened over the last century, were and still are more accommodating and supportive of some, but not all who enter the institution or the academy. It is about acknowledging that change and building a different, more inclusive culture, requires conscious, and deliberate efforts, support and empathy.

Hashatse says we have to acknowledge that old networks through which informal mentoring, support and sharing of information, undeniably supported those who now say they never had 'support' or hand holding.

"Whilst large aspects of what determines the progression and advancement of an academic career is in the hands of the individual, there are those systemic conditions and barriers that the institution has a responsibility to address. We also have to accept generational changes and acknowledge that what young scholars may be seeking now, may be different to what young scholars desired 30 years ago."

Deeply entrenched racial and gender prejudices

"When we appoint women and black people for instance, most people have doubt at the back of their minds. A few years later they are often happy to say something that suggests the risk or gamble paid off and that the colleague was indeed a good appointment. We fail to even recognise the hypocrisy and prejudice of this," she explains.

"We have to interrogate our thinking and practices and identify for instance where we are willing to grant opportunity and advancement to some on the basis of potential, whilst on the other hand we require others to first prove themselves. Deeply entrenched racial and gender prejudices are at play here and they need to be strongly and sensitively dealt with by the senior lecturers, the Heads of Department and Deans."

Other deeply entrenched prejudices that need to be dissolved are, for example, in the daily experiences when certain senior lecturers, Deans or Heads of Department ignore the contribution of women staff members in meetings.

Social Spaces

"For newcomers especially, Grahamstown can be a socially difficult and lonely experience," says Hashatse. "Many of the staff members at Rhodes have been here for a long time and have very established social circles. It is not always easy for newcomers, irrespective or colour, to break into those circles. And if you are single or if you don't have children at school it can be even more difficult as your social interaction opportunities can become even more limited."

She emphasises the need for the institution to ensure that spaces for inclusion, the appreciation of diversity and the extension of the collegial atmosphere is facilitated. Once the demographics change significantly the University and the town's environment will hopefully also be impacted.

"Many young scholars, junior managers, speak of staying in Grahamstown for a few years to get their PhD, establish their careers and then leave Rhodes and Grahamstown. Young black professionals especially, do not see themselves staying for more than a few years, which affects retention. We need to interrogate all the reasons for this, confront and deal with those push factors that the institution can impact or change."

Hashatse believes social spaces for staff members, like a well-designed staff canteen, which can be both a work and social space, would further help to promote a general sense of inclusiveness and integration, where staff can network. This would also enhance collaboration between staff members from different departments who might not otherwise meet.

"Social spaces are key for cultural change. WASA recognised this ten years ago when it was launched as a platform not only for academic support for women but equally for the friendship circles it has created," says Hashatse who is supportive of WASA's work.

Take on more of WASA's responsibilities

"Going forward, the University needs to take on more of the responsibilities that have been left to WASA, which is a voluntary organisation."

She adds that the University has a long way to go in terms of cultivating a truly gender friendly environment. "We need to significantly speed up the process, not only because it is how things should naturally be in 2013, but also because over 50% of academics at professorial level are over the age of 55 and heading for retirement. If we don't start getting things right now in terms of attracting the next generation of South African postgraduates and academics, including at least 50% women, then we are facing a major problem in this country. We will be left with no option but to bring in more academics from outside of South Africa. While this is certainly good for diversity it is not good for our country's growth and redress imperatives."

Imagining a different future

The Rhodes Gender Imbizo considered gender issues from a range of different viewpoints and perspectives to uncover and deconstruct these issues, and to understand them more carefully.

It set out to re-imagine how things can be different in future, and what everyone at the University can do to bring about the changes required to transform the institution.

Towards this the Gender Imbizo considered gender issues historically (how did we get to where we are today); critically (i.e. what structural factors are keeping particular gender relations 'in place', what power-knowledge relationships exist, and how can these be uncovered and changed); culturally (i.e. what is the cultural habitus of the University when it comes to gender relations, and how can this be changed); socially (i.e. what are the relations that exist and why); and institutionally i.e. where they occur across the entire institution.

The Gender Imbizo considered gender relations in a broad university context that involves:

- Teaching and learning;
- Research;
- Students;
- Staffing;
- Management;
- Community engagement;
- Internationalisation, and
- A range of other relations and functions that are 'less categorised' but present.

The objective was to work towards establishing a university culture and context in which women can recognise, experience and participate in an environment that respects diversity and practices equal dignity.

Q& A with Rhodes University's Director of Human Resources Ms Sarah Fischer

Counting the numbers:
women and employment equity at Rhodes

Q: What are the current statistics for Rhodes University's most senior women academics?

A: This information is from Rhodes University's November 2012 statistics and reflects the statistics amongst the permanent staff of the University:
16% of our Professors are women;
20% of our combined Professors and Associate Professors are women;
17% of our Heads of Departments are women;
Three out of eight of our Deans are women;
Four out of seven of our Deputy Deans are women.

Q: Can you offer some insight as to why the percentage of women occupying permanent senior academic positions at Rhodes isn't higher and what is the University doing about this?

A: At Rhodes, while the senior management structure is 50% female and while the junior academic positions are occupied by a good and growing percentage of women, the senior academic positions certainly need to increase. There are several reasons why the percentage isn't higher. These include the fact that academia has historically been a male profession and women's opportunities to advance their research and academic careers have often been delayed by childbearing and raising families. Research shows that women in general, have a slower career trajectory, obtaining their PhD later in their careers than men.

The PhD is a critical step in promotion within the academy. Towards addressing this we now take into account factors affecting women academics through our Parental Leave and Benefits Policy and our Personal Promotion Policy.

We grant six months of maternity leave, which may be taken up by either parent if both work at Rhodes, and women may apply for extra academic leave to complete a PhD – the latter was spearheaded by WASA and has been mainstreamed by the institution.

Our Personal Promotion Policy also addresses our equity goals and at the beginning of each academic year HR provides the Deans with a list of all staff eligible for promotion. The Deans then approach relevant staff. This is important as some academic staff are reluctant to self-promote and this is often more common amongst women. There is no resource restriction to promotion in academia. As long as the academic meets the requirements in terms of the Personal Promotion Policy, she will be promoted. The Personal Promotion Policy also recognises diversity considerations and that individuals may have different career trajectories e.g. such as women who bear the responsibility of child rearing. The University – through the Research Office - is also currently looking at programmes that would be most suited to advancing mid-career academics.

Q: How is Rhodes going about increasing the number of women academics, particularly Black South African women?

A: We don't advertise academic posts for a particular race or gender, but we always look at equity requirements and preference will be given to the designated groups under-represented within the institution. Black (African, Coloured and Indian) South Africans comprise 19% of our permanent academic staff; 5% at Professor level; 13% at Associate Professor level; 15% at senior lecturer level and 31% at lecturer level. Hence the emphasis on our mid-career programme as we recognise the importance of growing our own timber.

Q: What would you ideally like to see happen at Rhodes in terms of the growth of a new generation of South African women postgraduates and academics?

A: We are fortunate to be working with an excellent recruitment pool of academics in the form of our accelerated development programmes which seek to provide new entrants into academia with time to devote to developing their research and/or finishing a post-graduate degree while also developing their competencies as facilitators of learning. The Kresge and Mellon scholarships, for example, have been ongoing for a decade and in the last two to three years Rhodes University has been able to dedicate some of its own funds to these development programmes. In addition, we look for every opportunity with vacancies to position these as accelerated development programmes.

Future programmes are in the pipeline through HESA, notably the New Generation Development Programme led by Dr Saleem Badat as the Chair of the HESA Funding Strategy Group. This programme will prioritise the creation of opportunities for black and female South Africans in 300 posts at universities countrywide for a three-year cycle. It is awaiting government approval and it is critical that it gets approved given that each next generated or accelerated development post costs the University in excess of R1-million per person for 3 years.

As the smallest university in South Africa our budget for this type of programme is very tight as we don't have the economies of scale of the bigger universities. At the same time we pride ourselves on our outstanding graduation rates and postgraduate statistics - in 2013 Rhodes graduated 63 PhDs. To boost our budget for accelerated development academic staff programmes, we have built up a reserve in various ways, such as through the equity fund that I manage. The Vice-Chancellor has also been very supportive and has funded postgraduate students out of his discretionary fund.

It is essential for postgraduates to receive sufficient financial grants as many are first generation university students who have families putting pressure on them to graduate and head out

"We are consistently working towards the transformation of the social composition of the staff throughout the University, but as a University we need to be proactively driving institutional culture change, where all staff members feel that Rhodes is a 'home for all'."

into the working world where they can earn money and help support their families. The University, through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and Student Affairs Dr Sizwe Mabizela's office, is working on ways of assisting students who have the ability to achieve postgraduate qualifications and hopefully enter academic careers.

Paying our academics competitive salaries is another important factor to attract and retain staff. However, it is difficult for Higher Education as a sector to compete with private industry and government as employers. Academia has so much going for it as a career, providing academics with high levels of autonomy and independence in their work, the ability to make one's mark and make a difference to the world.

Q: What do you believe Rhodes' administration needs to put in place to help drive the transformation process?

The HR Division is in the process of developing and implementing its staff engagement programme. One aspect of this has been the revised induction process introduced for all new staff members in April 2013. Each department at Rhodes is also being encouraged to better manage its part of the induction process, to ensure that staff are made to feel welcome and are able to settle down into life at Rhodes quickly and easily. Another part of the engagement programme that is currently being focused on is the development conversation, focusing on the development needs of the staff member relative to their current role and/or their advancement Underpinning this engagement strategy is the building of management capacity through the management development programme currently being piloted.

A joint project between the Director: Equity and Institutional Culture's office and the HR Division is the conducting of research on our institutional culture. This research will relate to us the experiences, perceptions and understandings of staff in terms of our institutional culture. But the research will not result in the changes in behavior and attitudes needed: this change needs to happen at the level of each department and needs to be championed by the leadership. A leadership development programme is also in the process of being piloted and should be a contributor to developing such leadership.

We are consistently working towards the transformation of the social composition of the staff throughout the University, but as a University we need to be proactively driving institutional culture change, where all staff members feel that Rhodes is a "home for all". They need to feel they can grow and advance and that they have a future at Rhodes. We are working on more systemic ways to create a culture of true collegiality where all staff, including women feel comfortable and heard in this space we call Rhodes.

Interview with Ms Larissa Klazinga, Student Services Officer, Student anti-Harassment Officer and Chair of the Gender Action Forum

Growing and keeping our own timber

"The transformation process at Rhodes has been slow for women, including in the postgraduate arena. Because of this, postgraduate Mellon and Kresge students too often head off to other institutions when full-time posts at Rhodes are not made available to them. Every year we lose five or six excellent black South African postgraduates because of this. Hence we are very good at growing our own timber but we are not good at keeping it," says Ms Klazinga.

To open up more posts and opportunities for women at Rhodes, she believes the University needs to consider offering older academics the opportunity to retire earlier or to retire and serve as mentors. Retirement age at Rhodes is currently 65.

"This way the culture at Rhodes will also change because an ongoing problem that many black women students and academics have with Rhodes is that it is still largely perceived 'pale and male'."

Klazinga believes the change needs to come from the University Senate and Council.

"When 50% of Senate is female – it is currently less than 10% - we will see significant change at Rhodes, because Senate ultimately sets the tone for the priorities and culture at the University."

She emphasises that WASA and the Gender Action Forum at Rhodes (now in its 12th year) still have a lot of work to do in terms of advising the University on gender policy and its implementation. "We are members of the University's Equity Committee and we are currently strongly advocating the appointment of more women to senior academic and administrative positions," she explains. "We are also reviewing the sexual offences protocol for staff and students and we are recommending that the University holds another Gender Imbizo."

The first Gender Imbizo at Rhodes was five years ago, in 2007. It was attended by a broad cross-section of the University, including the Vice-Chancellor, members of his office, senior academics, women academics, senior management and the Academic Leadership Forum. "We need to review what has happened at Rhodes since that Gender Imbizo and take stock of where we are now and where we need to be," says Klazinga.

"When 50% of Senate is female – it is currently less than 10% – we will see significant change at Rhodes, because Senate ultimately sets the tone for the priorities and culture at the University."

Interview with Dr Joy Owen, senior lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at Rhodes University.

Loyalty in disagreement

"We need to exercise our voice and be heard and included in meaningful change in the University. We do not need superficial changes such as when committees make sure they have a woman member. That's not change; change is about the quality and impact of the voice and the actions taken because of it." – Dr Joy Owen

Dr Joy Owen is what is known as a 'non-member WASA member'. "I have one foot in WASA and one foot out of it because I feel that WASA has become too much a part of Rhodes, which I never wanted. It subdues WASA as it starts to fit under Rhodes' wing instead of being an alternative, autonomously powerful space. That is why I'm not a full member right now, but the beauty of WASA is that it respects and welcomes disagreement and debate," says Owen who feels WASA needs to have a conversation with all its members about where it is today and where it aims to be.

"The organisational structure and purpose needs to be reassessed so that we all come together again and decide on how best we can exercise our powerful, impactful voice."

Disagreement as a positive and contributing quality

Owen feels that disagreement can be a positive and contributing quality to both WASA and Rhodes. "I'm an academic staff member at Rhodes, and while I appreciate that Rhodes pays me to do what I love, it does not own me. My loyalty is shown through my disagreement with the institution – because I feel it continues to be a largely patriarchal institution based on men holding power, which is not serving the University or taking it into an exciting and transformational future."

Owen says she was fortunate when she came to Rhodes as a young academic in 2003 that her mentor and supervisor, Prof Robin Palmer, showed her the ropes and guided her in the ways of Rhodes as an institution. "I know from other women at WASA that they haven't been so fortunate and have felt lost in the system, which is extremely disempowering and alienating."

Armed with the understanding of how the institution works, Owen developed the confidence to find her voice and her path in the extended academic community. "My awareness of the patriarchal system frees me from being stuck in it. I can negotiate it and at the same time I can help to build a different system," she says.

Far more in-depth gender discourse needs to take place

"I have been particularly fortunate to be in the Department of Anthropology where there is a strong sense of collegiality, and we argue a lot but we never lose respect for each other. We also make a point of having morning tea together as a department, and we share each other's birthdays, as a way of getting to know each other not only as colleagues, but also as people and complex human beings.

These acts may seem superfluous to other members of the academic body, but I would argue that the basis of transformation is to start understanding each other and each other's complexities better, instead of confining ourselves to the outmoded academic discourse of 'I think' rules in an environment where 'I feel' i.e. emotional expression is regarded as either lacking in academic rigour or 'a woman's thing'."

A highly respected academic, Owen says she has come to realise that far more in-depth gender discourse needs to take place in the University environment. "At present, the discourse tends to be far too dualistic – with a division between men and women. I feel it is inaccurate to emphasise the differences when there are far more similarities than we acknowledge and discuss. For example, some days I feel more masculine and some days I feel more feminine. It manifests in my behaviour and it is part of my growth as a person and academic, which is surely what universities should be encouraging?"

Women need to claim their strengths and make sure their voice is heard

Within this context Owen says women need to be far more forthcoming about claiming their space in the University. She feels WASA has a powerful role to play in terms of conscientising women in this regard.

"Women need to claim their strengths, and make sure their voice is heard. We need to take responsibility for what we have to say and make sure that we are not spoken over at meetings – we need to speak up and say 'I need you to hear me out'. I don't believe it serves women to claim the disadvantaged ground; what serves women is to behave with agency and vision."

Owen says that all staff members at Rhodes need to come together to discuss what kind of vision everyone wants for Rhodes: "How do we want to treat each other? Do you know the values and morals we want to encourage amongst the staff and students for an institution 'Where Leaders Learn'? Do we feel heard? Is there an ethic of care? Do we feel that if you are a union member you will not be discriminated against? Do we feel the Human Resources division treats us as we would like to be treated? Many academics would not be able to answer 'Yes'."

Helping powerful new academic voices to pursue the path of publishing

At an academic level, she adds that the University needs to be far more supportive and aware of helping powerful new academic voices to pursue their publishing path.

WASA has been instrumental in helping women to pursue postgraduate research and she feels its ongoing support, workshops and breakaways are an essential part of its work. "Many WASA members attribute their postgraduate qualifications to the support and mentoring they received from WASA.

Universities have this 'publish or perish' ethos but the politics of research presentation is a long debate. Where, for example, does experiential representation fit in? We are all aware of the traditional canon in research and the levels of negotiation required within that canon as part of the academic trajectory, but where does new research fit it? Where, for example, does new anthropological research from African and Asian scholars, that is every bit as rigorous as its American anthropology counterpart, fit into the publication arena?" she enquires.

"I was at the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco in 2012 and there was far too much arrogance in the presentation of data as fact – simply because it follows a long tradition. In the same vein, it is widely known that if you want to be an anthropologist, you need to emulate the tradition of American anthropologists, which doesn't allow for much engagement or access to cultural capital outside of this.

I feel we need to be engaging far more critically at conferences. Further, as a South African university, Rhodes needs to be more proactive in assisting our far more diverse generation of academics to understand and master research publication, and also to find new avenues for respected, peer-reviewed publication that are not stuck in traditional modes. It's such an exciting time in the history of our University and in the history of our country and I feel we are, in many instances, missing the opportunities to engage at this level and thrive on the academic excitement this brings."

Interview with WASA member Prof Janice Limson, Head of Biotechnology at Rhodes University and the Chair of the Rhodes University School of Biotechnology (RUBiSco).

Transforming the academic space

at the most competitive level

The recipient of a Mellon Foundation academic advancement lecturing post in 2002/3, Prof Limson exemplifies the academic excellence required of Mellon and Kresge scholars.

"I am aware of the negative 'equity' perceptions linked to these programmes but they are simply unfounded. These scholarships are about transforming the academic space at the most competitive level," she says.

"The selection process for the Mellon lectureship was rigorous. I was interviewed by a full panel of Deans on campus, Heads of several divisions as well as staff representatives."

Now a senior and highly respected member of the Rhodes academic community, Limson considers herself privileged, in turn, to have been selected to serve as a mentor for a Kresge scholar Dr Earl Prinsloo whom she says is clearly on an upward trajectory in biotechnology.

An interesting intersection of pathways is that Dr Prinsloo's mother was one of Limson's Grade 6 teachers – a woman who played a role in her early development.

"The mentoring process is a rewarding one for both mentor and mentee. It continues to build on itself, evolving in quite unexpected ways, shifting the momentum continuously forward," says Limson. "We should ideally be in both the role of mentor and mentee at all stages of our development and sometimes these roles can be lifelong.

"Mentorship from my PhD supervisor, Rhodes University Distinguished Professor Tebello Nyokong (Medicinal Chemistry and Nanotechnology), who is an outstanding academic, played a major role in my academic development and she continues to provide solid and uncompromising mentorship to this day. This is one of the enduring legacies those of us, her former students, share: a rare privilege for most academics and scientists today."

Likewise, mentorship between senior and junior members of WASA plays an inestimably important role in many women postgraduates' lives.

This has been one of the single largest contributions WASA has made to the lives of women academics and postgraduates who have been a part of the organisation.

"WASA is a natural home for women academics to advance other women academics in a safe space," continues Limson who has been a member of WASA since 2005. "The shared experiences of women academics galvanises members and builds leadership, which empowers women to speak out and have a positive impact on the policies and processes of the University, as well as the many committees that are a part of university life."

WASA in its early days mostly attracted women from the Social Sciences, Education and the Arts. Many of the programmes evolved with this common background, such as the Reading Group. From 2010 onwards, WASA experienced a growth in postgraduate students from the Science and Pharmacy Faculties.

With encouragement from WASA Chair at the time, Corinne Knowles, and supported by Jaine Roberts, Director of the Research Office, Limson formed a sub-group within WASA (WASA Science) for women doing their Honours, Masters and PhDs in the Science and Pharmacy Faculties.

"The growth of the number of women in science is an interesting development in a field that is still more male-dominated by percentage than the humanities. We now have women from many different countries and different backgrounds entering our Science Faculty, which has, until more recently, been a largely homogenous academic environment gender-wise. These are the women trailblazers who will ultimately be the people to transform the academic profile of the sciences. WASA is a really important space in this regard as it assists women to navigate a way for themselves, fortified by different perspectives and ways of being."

In 2013, Limson will be mentoring the WASA Science group on how to write and communicate their research for the public. They will use *Science in Africa*, the online magazine she founded and edits, as a platform for this.

Serving as a mentor within WASA Science, says Limson, has led to some of the most rewarding and gratifying moments in her time as an academic. She recounts one of these:

"During one of our meetings, an Honours student said she didn't believe that she was 'PhD material'. 'Why don't you think so?' asked a PhD student who was just about to complete her studies. 'Well, I have not thought of myself as someone in that way – someone who would do a PhD', the Honours student replied. 'Then start thinking about yourself in that way!" the PhD student urged. Simple words with a powerful message, which is the WASA way. The Honours student did indeed start thinking of herself in that way, as did several others in that meeting. I look forward to watching these women graduate with their PhDs."

Interview with Ms Babalwa Magoqwana – Kresge Foundation PhD scholar and lecturer in the Sociology Department at Rhodes University.

The language of development

"The kind of language used around the Kresge and Mellon academic staff development programmes needs to be challenged because when you are introduced as 'the new Kresge lecturer' rather than simply as 'the new lecturer', there is a tendency for it to be interpreted as an affirmative action appointment. It makes you feel as if you are not part of mainstream academia and that the University is doing you a favour for being here," says Ms Magoqwana.

This works against both the transformational ethos of the University and the rigorous selection processes the Kresge and Mellon Foundations demand.

"Things would change if throughout the University all lecturers, including the administrative staff, were treated with the same professionalism and respect," she continues. "There would be no sense of 'mainstream' versus 'development' or 'us' versus 'them', if we are serious about instilling a truly transformational and unified culture at Rhodes."

"Human Resources, as the interface of the university, needs to take the lead in this by ensuring that all lecturers are treated as professionally as professors and heads of department are treated", she adds. "When you are appointed as a lecturer, you expect to have your letter of appointment and an orientation pack presented to you. You do not expect to be running around Human Resources – where you are often treated with disregard – in efforts to find it."

Magoqwana is one of several members of WASA who have raised this issue and WASA will be presenting a formal complaint to the Vice-Chancellor.

"Rhodes is struggling to attract and retain black women academics because of the fact that we are still being made to feel like 'the other'," she continues. "I want this to change because I love this University and I want to feel that this is my home. I want to experience the much talked about collegiality, and to stop feeling that I am some outsider. The University needs to investigate as a matter of urgency why so many women are feeling the same way. We are not blaming Human Resources or this or that department, but the University needs to address these issues and start building a unified academic community culture at the University in a far more proactive way."

"Things would change if throughout the University all lecturers, including the administrative staff, were treated with the same professionalism and respect."

Interview with Prof Anthea Garman of the School of Journalism & Media Studies, Rhodes University.

We have to be willing to be affected & changed

In the year that WASA was established (2004) Prof Garman left Rhodes for three years to do her PhD through Wits University.

"I'd been in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies since 1997 with a Masters degree from what is now the University of KwaZulu Natal," says Garman who completed her Masters while working as a journalist, which she did for 16 years before becoming an academic.

"I felt I needed to get my PhD because in the academic territory it is essential for your progress, as it is proof of your research capacity. But I found I wasn't getting to it while teaching because I didn't have the time or head space to distil my PhD question, work on it and carry a heavy teaching load".

"While many academics manage to do their PhD alongside their academic commitments, even if it takes several years, I decided the best approach for me was to take three years of unpaid leave to do my PhD (a media study on journalist-author-poet and public intellectual Antjie Krog).

My supervisor Professor Carolyn Hamilton who was then at Wits, and is now at the University of Cape Town (Department of Social Anthropology), was directing a research project that offered funding for five PhDs and one postdoc. Securing adequate funding is critical for most postgraduates, as it was for me," continues Garman who chose Wits because of Prof Hamilton. "I wanted to do my PhD with her. She is proof that postgraduate and postdoctoral students often base their choice of University on a particular supervisor."

Garman emphasises the importance of strong supervisory and mentoring skills. "Prof Hamilton is extremely successful at mentoring people through their PhDs. She guided me through regions where I felt extremely lost and needy, which often happens in postgraduate studies, and which is why so many people who start a Masters or PhD, do not complete them."

Garman lived in Johannesburg for the first two years of her PhD, to be close to Wits, and then returned to Grahamstown for the third year to complete her thesis work before returning to the department to resume her lecturing post at Rhodes in 2007.

She strongly believes in women academic advancement programmes to help transform the senior academic profile. "To achieve this, the University's research office is helping women to access research money and, with Dr Peter Clayton's leadership, the research office is increasingly open and helpful as to how to negotiate the process," says Garman. "It goes without saying that anyone aiming to become a Professor or a Dean needs a strong research career and plenty of publications."

In 2013 she is using sabbatical time to rewrite conference papers and get them published.

"I expect to be rejected and to be asked for revisions. Publication is not easy and I see a lot of young researchers struggling to be published. Part of the challenge is the bottleneck in peer-reviewed journals; but I also think that the transformation-minded, new voices approach has not filtered through to many of the local and international peer-reviewed journals. They tend to still be focusing on existing, powerful voices than making the space for new voices."

Following on this, she is encouraged to see new voices being published in well-respected South African journals in her field, such as *Ecquid Novi*, edited by Rhodes Journalism and Media Studies Prof Herman Wasserman.

To assist women researchers, WASA has been hosting writing workshops, where accredited journal editors are invited to address the members, discuss and carry out debates on what is required.

"This kind of engagement is essential to the cultural and intellectual transformation required throughout the University environment, not only in South Africa, but all over the world where the traditionally so-called 'first-world' approach to academia and society needs focused reform."

Garman is positive about Rhodes University's Vice-Chancellor Dr Saleem Badat's influence in this regard. "He has made a major difference to the transformation process in the ten years he has been Vice-Chancellor at Rhodes. He is the first Humanities VC Rhodes has ever had, and he has taken transformation and community engagement very seriously. He does not believe in the 'University on the hill' approach and has ensured that all sorts of community-focused, multi-disciplinary projects get the funding they need, such as the *Sandisa Imbewu* projects.

"Because of him, we also have a Director of Equity and Institutional Culture at Rhodes, Advocate Tshidi Hashatse, who was appointed in 2011. To understand the type of man he is, we need look no further than his wife Shireen Badat, who is not interested in playing the role of corporate wife and host. Instead, she is involved in the Upstart project for high school learners in Grahamstown's townships.

"As universities we need to be involved in making a change to the societies in which we live," says Garman. "We also need to face the realities of being academics today, where, for example, many women academics need assistance and support from the University as they carry the additional stress of bearing and raising their children. Many women either do not have equal partnerships in terms of sharing the family responsibilities or they are single mothers."

Universities need to be responsive to what women academics need. "This is imperative in a transformative environment where women are still in the minority in senior academic positions. Many of those who currently occupy these positions also need to be more responsive to what women academics have to say and contribute, and, most importantly, they need to be willing to be affected and changed. This applies to us all," says Garman. "If we truly want to contribute to transforming our society for the better, we have to be willing to be affected."

Dr Pamela Maseko from the School of Languages, African Language Studies Section, offered this insight at the 2012 WASA Round Table.

Mutual respect between men and women - a personal account

I was born in a rural village, between Mthatha and Ngcobo, and brought up by my maternal grandparents. Living with them was a world apart from the gender perceptions that general civil society seems to have about my cultural background as a black African woman.

How I came to use my maternal surname

My mother and father got married in the early sixties and they had four daughters. Early on in their marriage my father was abusive to my mother and not able to provide for us, so my grandfather had to provide for my parents and siblings. The story goes that my grandfather got tired of "supporting" my father, and my mother being made *ingqongqo*. Thus, one day he went with a wagon to my father's home, and loaded us onto it, and took us to his home, which became our home. He sent us to school, and changed our surname to his surname, and since then I have used my maternal surname.

My view of my grandmother and grandfather

My grandparents inculcated in us the following values: taking responsibility, hard-work, persistence and respect of self and others. This was not through "teachings" but through action. I remember vividly my grandfather consulting my grandmother on all issues - as small as which chicken to slaughter for Sunday lunch - and as big as whether she thought the men representing him for my aunt's marriage negotiations would do a good job.

When my grandfather died, my grandmother ploughed our fields, thatched our huts, looked after our livestock and made sure that we went to school. All of us at home lived by the values that our grandparents instilled in us – it was not so much what was expected of us, it was that we knew no other way to live. What is also important is that other members of the society in which we lived, our village community, seemed to embrace these values too.

Experiences of gender discrimination – growing up, did it exist?

The challenges I have faced as a woman, my successes in the universities in which I have worked and the manner in which I have responded to academic life, have been largely shaped by my own personal history.

I grew up having no experience of being differentiated because of being a girl or a young woman. I did not see gender discrimination - in fact in my language there is plenty oh metaphor that celebrates woman, and rebukes woman abuse.

There is so much more to say but let me wrap up this section by stating the followingt there were no gender expectations in my family background, I experienced no academic limitations in my secondary schooling because of being a girl-child, nor did I experience gender related discrimination at university as a student.

So when I entered university as an academic about 20 years ago, it really was without any sense of gender discrimination: the challenge that I experienced from the outset, was identifying that which could be identified as gender discrimination, and finding the language to articulate it.

My early experience as an academic

For example, when I, as a new staff member at a certain institutionI was given first year classes to teach with hundreds of students- was it because I was a junior staff member with an Honours degree? Or was it, as some of my colleagues argued, because I was a woman? From my side I felt that I had a responsibility towards my colleagues and my department, so I focused on this.

The years passed and I was unable to take academic leave because the administrators "could not find a replacement" for me. Was this because I am a woman? Working hard and persistently is what I grew up with, and what I continued to do, even when this delayed my MA studies for years.

When I had my second daughter, and had to run down to Mowbray (Cape Town) between lectures to breastfeed her every three hours for a year-– to me, this was something that I had to do as a woman. I had to be responsible and nurturing towards my own children as well as to my students.

So I diligently juggled my responsibilities as a mother with those of being an academic. In the meantime my research suffered, and I remained at the same institution for 10 years without a Masters even though when I was employed I "had great potential as an academic". My pleas for support and understanding from my Head of Department and Dean did not bear any meaningful outcome - and they both happened to be women!

University as a reflection of larger civil society?

In short, my first experience as an academic was atrocious. My background had not prepared me to identify and articulate issues around gender discrimination, and when I got attentive to these issues, I struggled to relate to perceptions that gender disparities in the university environment are a reflection of gender disparities in larger civil society. Why? Because that was absolutely not the society I knew, the society of which I had experience.

What have I learnt?

Many years down the line I am now an academic at Rhodes University with a PhD together witd knowledge and experience of the following:

1. I am responsible, a hard-worker and persistent.
2. There are struggles with which I grapple because I am a woman, and the university has to provide strategies for these. There are both general issues affecting us as women in academia, and there are issues that are specific to individuals, departments and faculties within the same institutios. These have to be taken into consideration when strategies for empowering women in academia are put in place.
3. Mentorship should be encouraged from both men and women academics. Most of my mentors in higher education have been men, perhaps by co-incidence. Those women academics who are successful have a responsibility to support women who are struggling to find their feet in higher education, and to help them to identify the research routes they would like to take to get their Masters and PhDs.
4. women students in higher education need nurturing and support. While there is a high output of women graduates, very few get retained as academics, hence the continued dominance of males in higher education.
5. In the final throes of my PhD, the Head of my section recused me from teaching. She gave me a month to complete my PhD, and made me coffee and meals as I sat in the office for days on end. This was done in a manner that cannot be understood by any men. Without this kind of surport I would only have finished my PhD a year or two or three later.

I believe we cannot generalise gender struggles at university - they are shaped by our personal experiences, our society, and by the dominant systems within each university. With gender equity entrenched in our constitution, we need to take responsibility for women issues, but also, as we do so, we should be mindful to take men along with us, and nurture a new generation of academics.

Dr Nomalanga Mkhize of the Rhodes History Department discusses her journey as an academic and as a member of WASA from 2004.

Aspiring to be an intellectual focused on nurturing young academics

I joined WASA shortly after it was formed in 2004. I was 23 and I had been appointed as a junior lecturer in the History Department at Rhodes on a three-year Mellon lectureship while doing my Masters. My undergraduate and Honours studies had all been at Rhodes.

It was quite a struggle securing the lectureship because the panel that interviewed me, which was predominantly male, didn't feel that I was ready to be a lecturer. They seemed to think I looked too young or too different and that somehow I wouldn't cope even though I had achieved distinctions throughout my academic studies.

Fortunately my mentor and supervisor, Distinguished Professor Paul Maylam who was also the Head of the History Department, was very supportive of me. He put forward a strong argument for me, and had he not fought for me I don't think I would have been given the lectureship.

WASA was a space where I could feel normal

WASA for me in 2004 was a space where I could feel normal because I was surrounded by women postgraduates and academics who did not see me as too young or too different; they saw me as an equal and a peer. WASA was a peer space where I never felt diminished or that I wasn't being taken seriously. It was also an intellectual development space and a networking space where academics like Dr Darlene Miller introduced us to a network of African scholars, which was stimulating and which broadened our academic exposure.

Networks that encourage women to pursue their Masters and PhD

Creating these networks for women is extremely important because it is precisely these networks that encourage women to pursue their Masters and PhD degrees. Darlene introduced me to my PhD supervisor, which took me to Cape Town where I lived from 2008 to 2010 and completed my PhD through the University of Cape Town.

Darlene and other WASA members also taught me to be confident about what I want to achieve and to pursue my ambitions. They showed me that rejection should not be discouraging; it's simply showing you that you should either revise what you are doing or seek elsewhere.

Women who get out there and get what they want, unapologetically

WASA played a major role in my ability to initiate projects for myself and present myself in such a way that people pay attention and take me seriously on my terms. This is the kind of education you cannot get from books or academic institutions; you get it from meeting women who know how to organise themselves and to get out there and get what they want, unapologetically.

My Mellon lectureship

My Mellon lectureship was from 2004 to 2006 and I enjoyed it from the outset. I didn't understand why the panel that had interviewed me for the job had made such a fuss about my ability to cope with lecturing because it came quite naturally to me even though it takes a lot of preparation.

For me it is so important to awaken in students their capacity to think for themselves, to start seeing with new eyes what history means in their lives and to encourage them to gain a strong sense of themselves as young Africans who are part of experiencing and making African history.

An alternative sense of history

At the same time I try to excite in young people an alternative sense of history, which is why I offered a third year course on Themes in the History of Crime and Criminality, including the rise of the prison system, and the rise of the global drug trade and mafia cartels. It's a way of getting students to develop a global perspective and to start interrogating society: how norms develop and how certain sectors of society come to be criminalised.

They responded positively to this and one of my students Craig Paterson went on to do his Masters on the history of dagga and the dagga trade in South Africa, and he is now doing his PhD on the history of horse racing in the Transkei.

An intellectual focused on nurturing young academics

In 2007 I completed my Masters. It took 18 months and it was hard work but I managed fine. Prof Maylam was highly supportive of me throughout my Mellon lectureship and he made sure I didn't have a full teaching load so that I could advance academically. He is the kind of academic I admire and try to emulate as his outlook as an intellectual is focused on nurturing young academics. Not only did he nurture me academically, he also offered me invaluable insight as to how the University system operates.

I believe that universities need far more academic champions like him because without him I would probably never have entered academia, and there are a lot of worthy young academics, particularly young women academics who fall by the wayside because they don't have someone to champion them.

Building strong academic networks of women

This brings me to WASA, whose role in 2013 and going forward, I believe, is to be an academic champion of women, and to build strong academic networks of women in the Humanities and Sciences at Rhodes, at all South African universities and across the African continent. This way we will start to populate academic committees and panels – such as the one that interviewed me for the Mellon lectureship – with progressive women academics.

Personally, I want to be recognised as an African scholar – this is more important to me than being recognised as an international scholar - which is why I opted for the UCT doctoral programme, which connected me to a community of African scholars.

Waiting until I completed my PhD before having my first baby

In August this year I will be having my first baby at the age of 32. My husband Xolile Madinda is from Grahamstown and we married in 2009 while I was in Cape Town. I subsequently returned to Grahamstown and took up my second lecturing post at Rhodes in the History Department in 2013. Xolile and I have wanted a child and a family for three years but I felt I had to wait until I had completed my PhD. I know that women have babies all the time but because I have waited so long while building my 'woman life' this child feels so special.

Xolile is the Director of an NGO called *Save our Schools and Community* that we founded with friends in Port Elizabeth. It focuses on advocacy and literacy that makes reading an imaginative rather than purely pedagogic exercise for black children. The NGO also has a high quality crèche for 30 children at Adolph Schauder Primary School in the coloured community in Port Elizabeth.

As with anything in life, there is no shiny prize for following the right steps in the NGO world. As I have learnt in academia and through WASA's activism, you need to pursue your own journey and adapt as you go along, always making space for change.

ULWASA member Dr Nancy Rambelani Malema of the School of Health Science at the University of Limpopo attended the WASA Round Table in 2012 where she offered an abridged overview of women in higher education and of ULWASA since its inception in 2007.

ULWASA – University of Limpopo

Women's Academic Solidarity Association

"Women, we still have a long journey ahead of us. Women, let us go forward! Phambili!"

This is the call to action by Dr Malema who states that despite progressive legislation and policies at South African universities, men still predominantly occupy the senior positions within higher education institutions.

Quoting statistics from a 2007 report from the Council of Higher Education which states that there are more women than men employed at higher education institutions in South Africa, she clarifies that most of these women are involved in support services rather than in positions of authority within the institutions.

She attributes this to "career and study interruptions and working hours that are not always flexible enough to support women who are bearing or raising children.

"Worldwide, women are late starters, with many women completing PhDs at 50 years, which means by the time they get into positions of leadership they are often older. Accordingly, the culture at most higher education institutions continues to be dominated by males."

She cites a lack of female mentorship and available time in which women can concentrate on their careers as major challenges to the quest for gender equity.

"Inspired by WASA and its approach, ULWASA, which was established in 2007, is dedicated to supporting women academics by providing the necessary support through writing workshops and retreats, research mentoring and raising the profiles of women academics at the University of Limpopo. We collaborate with women academics from Rhodes and various other higher education institutions to explore ways of dealing with the challenges facing women academics. At ULWASA we put the emphasis on collaboration and not on competition."

With 110 members and 35 mentors from more than 20 different research fields, ULWASA has grown in size and stature since 2007 when it was started up by seven women academics who saw the need for dedicated efforts at encouraging gender equity at the University of Limpopo. Over the past five years ULWASA has grown to include the Turfloop and Mdunsa campuses, which have 100 and 30 members respectively.

With ULWASA's support members have published 32 scholarly articles, and several Honours, Masters and PhD women students have graduated since 2007. Two ULWASA members have been promoted to the position of Director of their respective Schools and we are fortunate to have a Vice-Chancellor who is highly supportive of ULWASA.

Looking towards the future Malema says they are on a drive to increase ULWASA's membership and create a database on all women postgraduates and academics at the University to track their progress and assist where the can. They have also requested a Gender Studies module be included in the academic offerings at the University to help create awareness about the challenges faced by women.

"Inspired by WASA and its approach, ULWASA, which was established in 2007, is dedicated to supporting women academics by providing the necessary support through writing workshops and retreats, research mentoring and raising the profiles of women academics at the University of Limpopo."

ULWASA member Prof Esther Ramani of the University of Limpopo's School of Languages and Communication Studies attended the WASA Round Table in 2012 where she offered this insight.

Unity Love Work Affinity Strength Aspirations – ULWASA

I cannot emphasise enough what an inspiration WASA as our sister organisation has been to all of us at ULWASA. To illustrate our vision for women academics at our University, I have taken each letter in ULWASA and given it certain meaning:

U: Unity: Here we talk about a very particular form of unity rooted in the expression: 'The Unity that comes from surrender will perish while the Unity that comes from struggle lasts forever'. It's important to emphasise this because in the context of our university the male patriarchal culture is so deeply entrenched at all levels, including sexual harassment. It is not a safe space for women, and it calls for Unity amongst all women academics to reflect that the struggle is far from over. We need to remember that when we struggle a new kind of strength and unity comes into being that is not there when you surrender.

L: Love: We deal with a lot of young women in the academic environment and there are all kinds of love, romantic love, love for each other. We need to focus on the kind of love that turns men around to actively support gender equity and the growth and development of both men and women.

W: Work: Those who know the work of Kahlil Gibran will know his quote: 'Work is love made visible'. I come from India, which is a very religious country and a common phrase there is 'work is worship' and we have festivals on certain days when all the computers are covered in flowers and people spend a lot of time praying. Work is very important, because if we love each other we work with each other and for each other and that is essential for any institution to sustain itself. When this happens work is underpinned by the feeling that we are part of a community that is bigger than ourselves.

A: Affinity: A quality of mind and heart that draws people together and keeps them together. Naturally you can't influence everyone and there are a number of successful women academics at the University of Limpopo who would add such value if they came into ULWASA. We are hoping more will do so because they would be such good mentors.

S: Strength: You strike a woman you strike a rock. Our experiences make us strong.

A: Aspirations: Achieve your aspirations. This was the call of the students' cultural revolution in France: take your aspirations and your dreams for reality; don't say I have all these aspirations and dreams but the reality is so different. Start behaving as if your aspirations and dreams *are* your reality.

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Walter Sisulu University needs to establish WASA branch

In the absence of an active branch at Walter Sisulu University (WSU), gender activist Prof Theresa Chisango from WSU set out to gauge the common perceptions among her colleagues regarding issues of gender equity at the University via a questionnaire.

"There is a huge void and a clear need for a space for women academics' voices at WSU," she says, adding "the void is very real, especially within an institution with many challenges. Women are under pressure and this hinders their progress. A forum for sharing ideas and experiences is simply not available."

All the women she received feedback from, Chisango said, "bemoaned the lonely academic journeys they are on", and flagged lack of mentorship, intellectual isolation, lack of collaboration, large student numbers which demand most of their time leading to little available time for personal research, lack of funding for research interests, poor publication output and institutional instability as their main challenges.

In the light of efforts of encouraging gender equity at the institution, Chisango said feedback had indicated that there was general satisfaction with progress made by women, and that many women had "shown great resilience in the face of great challenges".

There was a resounding "yes" to the question of whether the women would like a WASA to be established at WSU. They believe it would provide a space for female academics to share ideas and empower one another through intellectual collaborations and feedback.

"We desperately need a WASA, because from there things can at least get started. This would provide a starting point for addressing the barriers and challenges faced by women, and provide a platform for support," Chisango said, adding that the establishment of a WASA branch could alleviate some of the tensions among female staff, who suffer from competitiveness for available resources and acknowledgement. "Why are we so afraid and boxed in, and why, instead of supporting each other, do we tend to turn on one another, which causes us to become even more isolated? The saddest part is I really feel for the young women; how are they supposed to get started in an environment like this?"

She said she is hoping for a meeting of interested colleagues and a good brainstorming session about the possible launch of WASA at WSU.

"A preoccupation with simply reproducing a new generation of academics without any concomitant and purposeful attention to redress social equity for black and women South Africans is likely to largely reproduce the inequalities that characterised apartheid higher education. The overall task, therefore, is to produce and retain a new generation of academics and simultaneously transform the historical and social composition of the academic work force."
– Dr Saleem Badat, 2009

Developing the next generation of academics for South African Higher Education

(Note: The information in this article is drawn from *A Generation of Growth: Proposal for a National Programme to Develop the Next Generation of Academics for South African Higher Education*, published by Higher Education South Africa (HESA) in 2011.)

It is widely recognised that South African higher education institutions - and higher education institutions in the rest of Africa and elsewhere - are increasingly challenged to recruit and retain adequate numbers of academics and researchers to constitute the next generation of academics, especially black and women academics.

The reasons for this are numerous, including funding issues, a perceived lack of prospects, academic mobility and alienating institutional cultures.

Young female scholars have expressed concern about institutional cultures and the sexism that continues to pervade male-dominated academic institutions. In addition, there are insufficient women role models and most institutions lack mentorship programmes to guide the potential next and new generations in their academic careers.

Black women academics often express the feelings of being marginalised by the white maleness and middle class ethos of institutional environments and cultures and the hegemony in the centres of administrative and academic power (committees, disciplines, departments and faculties) of white male academics and administrators.

At the same time, black women academics who have experienced the support and encouragement of white male supervisors, mentors and Heads of Departments are the first to praise them. WASA Co-Chair Siphokazi Magadla, for example, praises the exceptional support she receives from her PhD supervisor who is also the Head of the Rhodes Department of Political and International Studies, Prof Paul Bischoff.

Open-minded academics recognise that all universities today face the critical task of developing a far more equal, democratic academic culture in which the next generation of academics is culturally, intellectually and academically equipped to substantively transform and develop South Africa's universities and significantly enhance their academic capabilities related to teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The challenges in these regards are serious and must not be underestimated.

Lingering racist and sexist conduct, privileges associated with social class, the overwhelming predominance of white and male academics and administrators, the concomitant under-representation of black and women academics and role-models, and insufficient respect for and appreciation of diversity and difference, all combine to reproduce institutional cultures that are too often experienced by black, women, and working class and rural poor students as discomforting, alienating, exclusionary and disempowering.

Dr Jo-Anne Vorster

Both the National Plan for Higher Education and the White Paper on Higher Education highlight the imperative for improving the equity profiles of historically white higher education institutions, and the need to recruit and retain black and women academics in the sector as a whole. Employment equity laws also require higher education institutions to set equity targets and make progress on their achievement.

The Next Generation Development Programme should prioritise the creation of opportunities for, in the first instance, black and female South Africans, with due consideration of individuals from other African countries or from other disadvantaged or under-represented groups, where appropriate.

This has negative consequences for equity of opportunity and outcomes for these students, and the overall educational and social experience of such students may be diminished. The reproduction and limited erosion of class-based, racialised and gendered institutional cultures also obstruct the forging of greater social cohesion. Higher education institutions must be open, inclusive, affirming, intellectually and culturally vibrant places of teaching and learning, research and community engagement where everyone is respected and supported in pursuit of social justice, development and excellence.

Universities need to reflect diversity as this is integral to academic excellence, and that without the contributions of diverse people, perspectives, and ideas, we cannot achieve the highest level of excellence in research, teaching and learning and community engagement.

Towards addressing these and other equally pressing issues, it is essential to identify the context, culture and conditions that are critical at national and institutional levels for developing a next generation of academics, and making academic careers attractive to the next generation of academics.

In response, Higher Education South Africa (HESA), which is the voice of South Africa's university leadership, representing 23 Vice-Chancellors from South Africa's public universities, mandated Dr Saleem Badat (as the Chair of the HESA Funding Strategy Group) to develop a proposal outlining a national strategy and programme to address the challenges, and to propose a funding model and budget that is cost-effective and sustainable for a New Generation Development Programme.

A specific and vitally important purpose of the programme is to increase the numbers of black and women academics who are recruited to, prepared for, and retained within higher education. The main purpose of the programme is to focus on increasing, in the first instance, the numbers of South African scholars that embark on academic careers. However, given the current limited numbers of South African black scholars completing PhDs, and the relatively higher numbers of African scholars pursuing PhDs in this country, it makes sense to also target these scholars for next generation posts. Employing academics from the rest of Africa will add to the diversity of and enrich the higher education environment in this country.

To this end, HESA hosted a national workshop at Rhodes University in June 2009 where representatives from 12 universities, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) clarified the challenges of building the next generation.

A Working Group was thereafter established to lead the development of a proposal. The Working Group comprised: Prof Thoko Mayekiso (Chair) (NMMU); Mr Tembile Kulati (Wits); Dr Bernadette Johnson (VUT); Dr Jo-Anne Vorster (RU); Prof Gideon De Wet (UFH) and Dr Saleem Badat (HESA/RU), who also served as Convenor of the overall initiative.

The draft proposal was discussed at a national consultative workshop in Port Elizabeth on 24 August 2010 that was attended by almost all universities and officials from the Council on Higher Education, HESA and DHET.

The proposal was then finalised by Jo-Anne Vorster of the Centre for Higher Education, Research, Teaching and Learning at Rhodes University (CHERTL) with the support of Dr Mignonne Breier of the University of Cape Town's Research Office, and submitted to the departments of higher education and training and science and technology in July 2011.

Key challenges raised in this proposal are as follows:

Academia is not a particularly attractive career option due to relatively low salaries, institutional culture issues, expanding student numbers and consequent workloads , among others.

Despite some changes, the current academic workforce remains unrepresentative of the South African population: it is still predominantly white and male and many academics are ageing. About one fifth of academics are due to retire in less than a decade, including nearly half of the professoriate. The concern is that there are insufficient numbers in the existing academic and postgraduate pipelines to replace them.

Inequality of representation

The racism and patriarchy that were key features of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa shaped all areas of social life, including higher education. In the academic workforce, the consequence was a racialisation and gendering, which bequeathed South Africa with a predominantly white and male academic work force. Nineteen years into our democratic dispensation, South African academics are still predominantly male and white.

In 1994, academics at South African universities were overwhelmingly white (83%) and male (69%) (CHE, 2004:62). Although black South Africans (African, Coloured and Indian) constituted some 89% of the population, they comprised only 17% of academics at South African universities. The under-representation of Africans was especially severe: although comprising almost 80% of the population, they constituted only 10% of the academic work force. Similarly, while women make up just over 50% of the population, they comprised only 31% of the academic work force of South African universities.

By 2003, 10 years after democracy, the overall academic work force remained predominantly white (61.6%) though there had been advances in the representation of black (from 17% to 33.7%), and especially African (from 10% to 21.3%) academics. Proportions of black academics continued to increase and by 2009, they constituted 41.6% of the academic work force. However, this increase has to be seen in relation to declining overall numbers of academics. Between 2003 and 2009 there was a decline in the total academic workforce from 45 217 to 43 446. The decline was predominantly among whites (their numbers dropped 10% from 27 863 to 25 067 and their proportion from 61.6 to 57.6%).

On the gender front, there has been progress since 1994 when women comprised only 31% of the academic work force of South African universities (but just over 50% of the population), but they remain in the minority in academia.

Postgraduate pipeline

The second major challenge to the higher education system is the current limited output of Masters and Doctoral graduates, which constrains the transformation of the social composition of the next generation of academics. Notwithstanding some advances, white and male Masters graduates continue to predominate. In 2005, white students constituted 52% of Masters graduates and male students 55%. Women graduates continued to be concentrated in the humanities and social science fields (CHE, 2008:32).

- In relation to its economic and social development needs, South Africa produces an extremely small number of doctoral graduates.
- South Africa's PhD growth rate remains significantly lower than that of other countries.
- The national benchmark doctoral graduation rate is 20% but the national average is only 11%.
- The average age of South African PhD graduates is higher than in other countries. In 2007, only 12% of doctoral graduates were younger than 30 years – 7% of these were black. The mean age of doctoral graduates is 40 years (CHE, 2008:36), while one fifth of PhD graduates are 50 years at the time of graduation (ASSAf, 2010). Currently 12% of PhD students are already employed by South African universities (ASSAf, 2010).

The National Research Foundation's 2007 South African PhD Project set out to double the number of doctoral graduates by 2015, while the Department of Science and Technology (DST) wishes to increase doctoral graduates five-fold by 2018 (Vaughan, 2008:94). While these ambitions are welcome, there are various constraints that will have to be overcome.

Infrastructure

At many South African universities the availability and quality of research infrastructure, facilities, and equipment (including information and communication technologies, library holdings, etc.) is a constraint on the enrolment and production of doctoral graduates. This is so even at the 12 of the 23 universities that produce 95% of doctoral graduates (nine universities produce almost 83% and also the bulk of peer-reviewed scientific publications).

In various institutions there is poor and/or deteriorating infrastructure, including insufficient teaching and laboratory spaces and student accommodation. Large and growing student-lecturer ratios are an issue at higher education institutions since growing student numbers have not been accompanied by concomitant increases in academic staff. In addition, there is limited funding for research programmes, including for funding postgraduate students.

Age profile of academics

The current age profile of academics points to another key dimension of the challenge of producing a next generation of academics.

On the basis of the current retirement age of 65, in less than a decade over 3 000 or approximately one fifth of permanent instruction staff will retire and need to be replaced.

The most active researchers in the country are gradually ageing while not enough younger researchers and academics are being recruited and retained. Combined age and race data suggest that a serious crisis is looming. As the over 50 largely white and male cohort moves closer to retirement, there is little evidence of a commensurate black and female cohort waiting in the wings and ready to emerge.

Expansion of higher education

An additional issue that has to be factored is the continued expansion of the higher education system, presented graphically in Figure 4. Apart from retirees needing to be replaced, it is also necessary to take into account the additional academics that will be required if the university system expands, as envisaged by the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education, from the current gross participation rate of 16% to that of 20% by 2011 or 2016 at the latest (MoE, 2001: Scott, 2007:10). Tettey (2008) argues that mass increases in student enrolments in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa are resulting in high student staff ratios and high teaching loads, poorly qualified staff and staff vacancies. The increased student enrolments at a time of declining academic employment has led to very high teaching loads and ultimately constitutes a threat to academic standards.

Limited supervision expertise

The challenge of the enhancement of institutional capacities is, however, not confined to nor should be reduced to infrastructure, facilities, and equipment. It also relates to the capacities to sustain doctoral programmes, expand and mount new doctoral programmes, the management of doctoral education, the management of research and the mobilisation of funding for doctoral studies and students. Only about a third of all permanent academic staff at South African universities currently hold PhDs and are thus eligible to supervise at this level. Further, not all of these qualified staff have the supervisory experience or receive the appropriate training and mentorship to fulfill this task (ASSAf

Dr Lynn Quinn

2010).

In as much as it is recognised that it takes an extended period of induction, practice, mentoring and support to develop as a researcher, it is inadequately acknowledged that to become an effective teacher in an academic context similarly requires an extensive period of induction, practice, mentoring and support.

In the same way as theory, methodology and methods are explicitly taught as part of the grounding of a researcher, it is also necessary to ground future and new academics in the purposes of higher education, the challenges of transformation, engaging with a diverse student body, the nature and assessment of student learning, the induction of students into disciplines and knowledge production, and so on.

Universities are complex institutions and, similarly, future and new academics require support to navigate, mediate and where necessary transform departmental, faculty and institutional thinking, structures, processes and practices; this includes transformation at the level of the curriculum and building a culture of scholarship in contexts where this is lacking.

Funding

The National Research Foundation aims to increase the number of PhDs they support to 6 000 per annum by 2025. In the meantime, though, the 1% target contribution of gross domestic product to research and development by 2008, envisaged by the Mbeki government, has not yet been realised (Cherry, 2010).

The higher education sector experiences multiple challenges as a result of inadequate public funding.

A number of institutions have developed strategies to increase the numbers of black and women postgraduates and various historically white institutions have established programmes for the recruitment, development and retention of black and women academics. Initiatives to improve the equity profile of senior academics have also been put in place at some institutions. These programmes, which have been in operation for the better part of a decade in some institutions, have largely been made possible by donor funding. It is not possible, however, to sustain these programmes through such donor funding.

A necessary, though not sufficient condition, for a next generation programme is acknowledgement on the part of the state and higher education institutions that the problem of producing a next generation of academics is both serious and urgent, particularly at a level of addressing social equity imperatives. It must also be recognised that under current national, higher education and financial conditions, the building of a next generation of academics will not be addressed, let alone resolved, without active interventions by the state and institutions.

Remuneration of academics

The third major challenge has to do with academic salaries, which are simply not competitive with public and private sector salaries, and the differentials between public and private sector salaries and those offered by higher education institutions is sizeable and growing. Institutions in small towns or rural institutions experience additional challenges in terms of attracting and retaining academics, and there is evidence of migration from these institutions, which pay relatively lower salaries to urban and relatively higher-paying institutions. Given the financial obligations that many first-generation black graduates, and graduates from working-class backgrounds, have to their families, higher paying employment opportunities in other sectors become more attractive.

Women graduates in demand

Women graduates are also highly sought-after and can often choose amongst multiple lucrative employment opportunities that are more financially attractive than employment within the higher education sector. This is evident in a number of professions, where there have been significant increases in female enrolments and graduations, but much smaller increases in female professionals.

Academic mobility versus 'staying power' of PhD graduates

There is a continuing loss of academic expertise through the 'brain drain', which has its basis in political and social conditions. Academics further constitute a highly sought after and mobile sector of society. According to ASSAf (2010), however, only a small number (14% of a total of 1060 polled respondents) of recent South African PhDs are currently employed in other countries, and almost 50% of them are employed within higher education institutions. A third of non-South African PhD students intended to stay in South Africa. Currently more than 50% of PhD graduates are employed by the higher education sector. This points to the sector's potential to absorb its PhD graduates and the propensity of PhD graduates to seek employment within the sector; thus if more PhDs are produced by the sector, it is likely that they will be employed by the sector. More than half of recent PhD graduates indicated that they were now working within the university sector (ASSAf, 2010:86).

Doctoral enrolments and graduations

In planning for a next generation of academics, the doctoral pipeline is particularly important. Tables 1 and 2 below illustrate trends in doctoral enrolments and graduations between 1994 and 2009.

Doctoral enrolments have more than doubled since 1994, with a threefold increase in numbers of women enrolments and a nearly sixfold increase in the numbers of black doctoral enrolments. Nonetheless blacks and women remained in the minority, and the proportions need to be seen in the context of the overall demographics of the country in which blacks constitute 91% of the population and women 51 %. The enrolments are low in relation to overall university enrolments (1.3%) and total postgraduate enrolments (9.1%) and inadequate for South Africa's economic and social development needs. The female enrolments also show a worrying drop of women after undergraduate studies, given that undergraduate enrolments are almost 55% female.

The pursuit of a Masters degree is also visibly important to doctoral enrollments: 31% of students who decided to pursue PhDs did so during their Masters studies while 39% made the decision after the completion of their Masters degrees. There thus seems to be considerable opportunity to influence students' decisions to pursue the PhD route.

Research and publishing

Generally, academics over the age of 50 have increasingly come to bear responsibility of publishing. Thus, whereas in 1990, 20% of (research) articles were published by scientists over 50 years old", by "2000 nearly 50% of publications were authored by scientists over the age of 50" (COHORT, 2004:14). Thus, the next generation of academics will also need to be equipped to discharge the responsibility of conducting research and publishing, so that the knowledge needs of South Africa are effectively met.

Embarking on a research career in addition to one's teaching responsibilities is no easy task but can be facilitated by structured programmes; programmes designed on the one hand to introduce the academic to the conventions of research and publishing, and on the other to help them plan a research trajectory that starts with the Masters and PhD degrees that they might need to obtain.

Such programmes should also be mindful of the third dimension of academic work –community engagement (or social responsiveness as it is sometimes called) as well as the need to transform modes of knowledge production in South Africa.

Recruiting and retaining black and women academics

Both the National Plan for Higher Education and the White Paper on Higher Education highlight the imperative for improving the equity profiles of historically white higher education institutions, and the need to recruit and retain black and women academics in the sector as a whole. Employment equity laws also require higher education institutions to set equity targets and make progress on their achievement. In the face of both social imperatives and various challenges, it is indisputable that national and institutional interventions and structures are needed to build a next generation of academics, including their recruitment, selection, development and retention within higher education.

National and Institutional-level programme management

The Next Generation Development Programme should be viewed as a Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) national capacity building project.

The Next Generation Development Programme should prioritise the creation of opportunities for, in the first instance, black and female South Africans, with due consideration of individuals from other African countries or from other disadvantaged or under-represented groups, where appropriate.

Earmarked funding for Next Generation posts should be made available to institutions that satisfy clear and transparent criteria.

In a review of capacity development programmes for the Carnegie Foundation, Cloete and Galant (2005:5) noted that the 'governance' – the management and implementation of such programmes within institutions – was critical. Further, it is important that an institutional-level entity or person is appointed to oversee and co- ordinate all aspects of the programme; of course the underlying understanding is that each institution will have a programme tailored to its specific context.

Experiences of successful initiatives indicate that programmes should both have the strong support of vice-chancellors and senior managers and also be managed by entities and individuals who understand the nature of academic and academic development work. In order to ensure the coherent management of such programmes, managers should have a central role in the recruitment, appointment, orientation and on-going support of mentors and future academics, the monitoring of development plans, programme evaluation and progress report writing.

In addition, the responsibilities of all parties should be clearly stipulated. This includes the responsibilities of programme coordinators, Deans, HoDs, future academics, mentors and supervisors. It is also important to structure peer support activities for New Generation academics at an institution. Experience has shown that peer support structures are highly valued, especially within institutions where institutional and academic cultures are not as open as they could be.

There should be annual institutional reporting on the management and implementation of the programme.

Continued award of posts and funding should be contingent on institutions complying with specified programme requirements.

After three years, there should be a comprehensive national evaluation of all programmes to assess performance of each institution.

Proposed financing

To date initiatives at various institutions to develop a next generation of academics have been implemented largely through the support of international donor funding. Such donor funding is neither open-ended nor adequate or able to develop sustainable long-term initiatives oriented to a systemic and national effort to produce a next generation of academics.

It is clear that public funding through the DHET, the DST and the Skills Development Fund is required to mount a Next Generation Development Programme and to support higher education institutions to manage and implement such a programme.

It is proposed that in light of pressures on the current higher education budget, funding for the Next Generation Development Programme should be new funding that is mobilised by the DHET, the DST and the Skills Development Fund through the National Treasury. The investment proposed is extremely modest relative to the immense direct as well as indirect benefits that will be yielded by the Next Generation Development Programme. In the event that support from the National Treasury is not immediately forthcoming, it is proposed that the DHET examine its current categories of earmarked funds to support in the short-term the Next Generation Development Programme.

The proposal stipulates that funding should be:

- Of a dedicated and earmarked nature that is available on application by higher education institutions;
- Awarded on the basis of higher education institutions meeting criteria specified by the DHET. Institutions will develop criteria for the selection of candidates;
- Available for at least three cycles of three years duration;
- Able to provide for:
    1. Next Generation academic posts of three years duration that include salaries and benefits
    2. Costs associated with infrastructure and equipment for Next Generation academics
    3. Costs associated with development activities for Next Generation academics (such as attendance of courses, workshops and conferences), their mentors and the emerging community of practice to manage and support these academics.
    4. Contracting mentors for Next Generation academics.

The total amount recommended for 300 Next Generation academic posts for a three-year cycle, including salaries, insfrastrucuture and equipment, development activities and mentoring costs is R467 481 600.

Conclusion

The Next Generation Development Programme will not solve all the problems of the attraction, recruitment and retention of academics. It is clear that the current remuneration of academics also requires serious attention if South Africa is to build and sustain a high quality higher education system.

Nonetheless, a structured, well-supported programme can provide opportunities for newcomers to experience the many very positive aspects of an academic career – from the personal rewards associated with successful teaching to the pleasure of achieving a published journal article or attending an international conference or participating in an intellectually stimulating community.

For a modest investment of funds, the Next Generation Development programme will reap many long-term benefits for the higher education system in general and higher education institutions in particular.

It will represent a long overdue systemic and national tackling of the serious, longstanding and now very urgent problem of building a next generation of academics. It will contribute to advancing the imperatives of redress and social equity in higher education. It will also ensure that future academics are adequately prepared for the challenges of learning, teaching, research and community engagement as well as the myriad challenges of transformation in higher education. Finally, the learning that will occur through the Next Generation Development Programme and its ongoing development will be usefully applied to the cultivation of new academics generally and the more effective support of current academics.

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By Dr Lynn Quinn and Dr Jo-Anne Vorster, both are from the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL)at Rhodes University. This article was published in the Mail & Guardian on 5 October 2012.

Training new academics is a complex challenge

In "More PhDs are not the answer", Mail & Guardian, September 7 2012, Sean Muller (a lecturer in the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town) quite rightly points out that "In academia there is often a remarkably laissez-faire attitude towards human-resource planning. Consequently, there is essentially no national coordination on the development of young academics for local universities and some departments lurch from one staffing crisis to another."

Muller goes on to say: "In many faculties little effort is made to identify promising students, mentor and provide them with an idea of the career path envisioned for them, ensure that adequate funding is available and encourage them to consider an academic career."

Although we would agree with Muller that this is true of many faculties and institutions, it seems he is unaware of the proposal for a national programme to develop the next generation of academics for South African higher education that was submitted to the departments of higher education and training and science and technology in July last year. He also overlooks the various institutional programmes aimed at "growing their own timber" that, we would argue, are contributing to the sustainability of the academic project and the transformation of higher-education institutions.

Universities have to produce and retain a new generation of academics and thus transform the academic workforce. A transformed and more diverse higher-education system is necessary if the academy, through its mandate to produce and disseminate knowledge, is to address some of the most vexing issues facing South Africa and the world at large. Most senior academic positions in historically white universities are now held by ageing white males who are due to retire within the next decade or so. It is thus an imperative for the academy to attract and retain particularly young blacks and women.

The confluence of larger, more socially and academically diverse classes, unsatisfactory student success and throughput rates and the pressure to publish and contribute to the transformation of South African society means that novice academics need to be inducted into the academy in much more structured and deliberate ways than has been the case in the past. There is a growing realisation that the development of academics' knowledge and skills in relation to teaching and community engagement requires the same deliberate nurturing that the development of research capacity has always enjoyed in some institutions. The "sink or swim" orthodoxy in relation to new staff joining academia is no longer tenable.

To contribute to the transformation of the academic workforce nationally and in recognition of the complexity of academic work, the Vice-Chancellors' Forum, Higher Education South Africa, in collaboration with representatives from a range of higher-education institutions, developed a proposal for a structured, nationally funded and co-ordinated endeavour to grow the next generation of academics at South African universities.

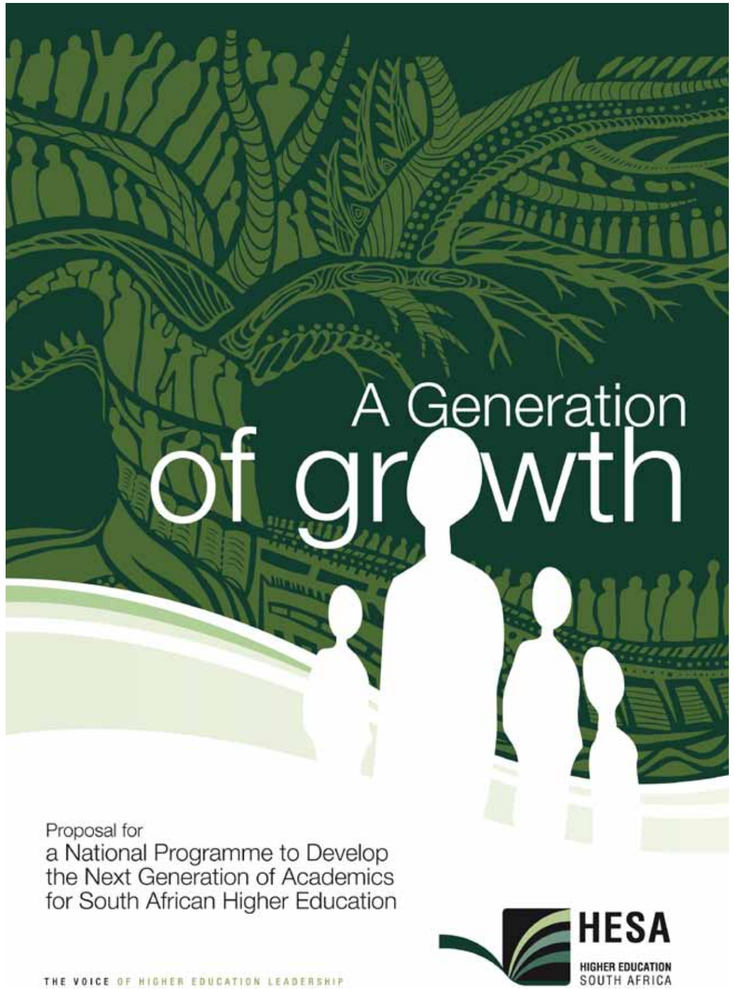
It is proposed that, in the first instance, 300 "next generation" posts are established and 300 academics are employed at institutions across the country through this project over a period of three years. The national proposal draws on the experience of existing programmes designed to grow the next generation of academics, mostly funded by foreign donors.

At the heart of such programmes is the intention to create nurturing and developmental contexts in which promising young academics, under the mentorship of outstanding senior academics in their disciplines, are provided with opportunities to become excellent all-round academics.

With the guidance of mentors and heads of departments, the lecturers plan their career trajectories to ensure that they gain experience in relation to all these key academic roles. Of course, these programmes are not without their challenges. Drawing on our experience of programmes offered at Rhodes University for more than a decade, we mention the six most difficult challenges:

1. First is the thorny and sensitive issue of ensuring that the programmes are not stigmatised and the lecturers appointed are not viewed as deficient. Unqualified and overt support from the leadership in universities may help to reduce such negative perceptions.
2. Second is the need for rigorous recruitment and selection processes that lead to the appointment of lecturers who are poised to become intellectual leaders in their fields. Given the variable quality of universities and the graduates produced in South Africa, it may prove to be difficult, particularly in some fields or disciplines, to attract suitable people.
3. Third, once these talented novice academics have been appointed, it is essential that their institutions create the conditions to nurture them and accelerate their growth as accomplished academics. We would argue that, for aspiring academics in almost any field, the learning that ensues from creating knowledge at PhD level is crucial for their ability to be the kinds of academics we would like to [have] teach the future leaders of South Africa. However, we share the concern that some of our universities are ill-equipped to produce high-quality PhD graduates.
4. Fourth, the institutions in which the novice lecturers work therefore also need to be able to offer them the opportunities to grow into confident, competent, scholarly teachers - teachers who are able to design relevant curriculums, facilitate learning and assess students who come from increasingly diverse social, cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds. Unfortunately, not all South African universities have the capacity or resources to offer lecturers such opportunities. To address this, the national proposal suggests cross-institutional partnership agreements.
5. A fifth challenge relates to identifying appropriate mentors for novice lecturers - mentors who not only possess disciplinary and institutional knowledge, but also have the appropriate disposition, the generosity to share their knowledge and experience with their mentees; mentors who are able and willing to contribute to the growth and development of a colleague without trying to mould her or him into images of themselves, thus reproducing the higher-education system. Unfortunately, because of powerful neoliberal forces, many academics are highly competitive and more concerned with the "publish or perish" imperative. Finding ideal mentors, given the multiple demands on academics' time, might not be easy.
6. Finally, having expended enormous resources, a further challenge, especially in some fields, is to retain these next-generation academics. There are many possible reasons for this. For some, the culture of the institutions they are in is alienating and they leave because they do not feel at home. For others, despite the contention that "remuneration of South African academics is generous by international standards", it is because they can earn bigger salaries in government or in the private sector and, in some cases, this is important because they are expected to support their extended family who sacrificed for their education. In some institutions, these lecturers are not offered tenured posts after their initial contract because the universities have insufficient succession planning.

We believe a structured, well-supported programme can provide opportunities for new academics to be inducted into what can be a most rewarding and satisfying career, while at the same time contributing to the transformation of South African society.



Extracts from Ms Corinne Knowles' Masters thesis, Rhodes University, 2011, on transformation in South African universities, drawing on the role of WASA at Rhodes University towards achieving this.

Knowles lectures in the Extended Studies Department at Rhodes, which offers an alternative access route to university study at the University. Students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds who show academic potential are exposed to a carefully designed supportive learning environment that enhances their ability to succeed. This purpose supports the Rhodes University mission statement with regards to transformation and equity. The department is specifically for students intending to join the Humanities, Commerce or Science faculties. Many students, who would have otherwise not gained access to university study at Rhodes University, have completed their degrees as a direct result of the support from the Extended Studies Department.

In 2009 Knowles was accepted as a laureate at the CODESRIA Gender Institute concerning Gender in Higher Education (Dakar, 2009). The month that she spent with 15 participants from across Africa sharing ideas and research, and the exposure to the work of African feminists, activists and scholars, highlighted that WASA was something quite unique. It became clear that research using WASA as a focus could contribute to a national and even continental conversation about gender in higher education.

TRANSFORMATIVITY: RECOGNISING MELANCHOLIC POWER, AND RENEGOTIATING VULNERABILITY

South African universities are embedded in an unequal society. Transformation strategies and interventions in the sector attempt to address this, but arguably, the policies and practices which aim to bring about transformation are merely platforms for potential change and do not guarantee the achievement of their aspirations. This study engages with the notion of transformation in one university, looking at how an organisation for women has contributed to transformation in individuals and in the institution. It explores the idea that vulnerability is the starting point of transformation, and must be recognised and incorporated into how an organisation, institution or individual regards vulnerable groups, in order to build a more equitable society.

The reframing of vulnerability is a process of acknowledging the way power works, and arguably, power's melancholic nature and expression in society and in universities where there are particular challenges with regard to how vulnerable groups experience their vulnerability.

This study explores ways in which an organisation for women (WASA) uses its legitimised platform for renegotiating subjectivities, norms and performances, and the potential this has for transformativity.

University policies and protocols which enshrine gender and race equality are essential but they do not necessarily effect change – change happens when individuals assert their right to be recognised and nurtured in terms of these policies and statements of intention, arguably because they have access to and understanding of them. This access and understanding is facilitated by working as a collective and sharing insight, amongst other strategies which WASA employs to address, challenge and start to change the power relationships within the university context.

Defining 'vulnerability' in a South African context

The state's focus on equity and non-discrimination as a transformation strategy provides a framework in which "vulnerable" groups and categories are identified, and live their vulnerability in institutions and societies that deal with this in ways which could, arguably, exacerbate their vulnerability.

The fact that "women" are in a category along with "children" and "disabled" means that women are identified in South Africa as part of a vulnerable group, requiring special approaches. But has this identification of their vulnerable status led to a decrease, for instance, in incidents of rape and domestic violence? Has it provided women, individually and collectively, with greater access to resources and power? Has it helped women to regard themselves as valuable, and men to do so?

Perhaps the recognition of vulnerability is only the first step in the possible transformation of individuals and structures. Perhaps if recognition is not also accompanied by the renegotiation and expansion of what is understood as "woman" and by opportunities to perform a version of being a woman where vulnerability is sheltered and accommodated, women will continue to be constructed as potential victims and survivors, entrenching their vulnerability in society.

South Africa's ongoing status globally as one of the most violent societies, especially against women, suggests that vulnerability as a status of certain identity categories has merely provided a descriptive language.

If the framing of an individual as vulnerable does not also provide that individual with the conditions that shelter the vulnerability they experience, leading to a renegotiation of whom they can become, their "vulnerable" status is entrenched.

Understanding vulnerability

How I manage my and our human vulnerability is crucial in determining whether I respond in harmful or healing ways, to myself and others. How my society articulates and manages vulnerability fashions my response, and rouses a particular version and possibility of survivor or victim.

Here, Judith Butler's theory has profound implications for understanding and transforming society. Using the lens of "vulnerability" rather than "power" to understand systemic, collective and generic violence in this country, from a perspective of gender subjectivity, we are able to conceive new ways of legitimising subject possibilities and imagine a world where many more of us have livable lives.

So what is important in South Africa in the struggle for gender, race and class equity is to understand the importance of broadening the conditions which determine who can grieve, what is lost, and what constitutes a 'livable' life – in other words, an expanded range of subjectivities, facilitated by norms which include them.

Vulnerability is a terrifying thing to those who haven't survived exposure to loss before, and its memory is traumatic to those who have experienced violence. If we see the conditions of violence as a fear of vulnerability, power can be interpreted as a melancholic notion of vulnerability and domination, in that vulnerability is not actually recognised and protected, but instead is internalised and the fear of it informs the definition of power.

Understanding melancholy

Freud explains that melancholy is a refusal to accept loss, so that the loss is incorporated into a fixed and idealised notion of who was, and who we were or could have become without losing. The level to which the lives of South Africans are defined by shades of personal and structural violence can be seen to be a refusal in South African to acknowledge vulnerability, even though it names "vulnerable groups", and instead acting out a melancholic version of power which increases the vulnerability of all. What conditions could provide both those who fear vulnerability and so react violently, and those who are dehumanised by violence to themselves or those like them, with the kind of space where the norm of mutual recognition and respect could reframe the conditions for subjectivity, for performance, for vulnerability itself?

The relationship between power and vulnerability

The struggle against imperialism, colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy have shaped the norms and experiences of women and men, black and white, in South Africa, and these legacies have a particular embodiment in the way in which power is understood and vulnerability is acknowledged.

Despite our progressive constitution, our histories and presents are infused with expressions of power which damage and dismiss people who are constructed as inferior, and who then become vulnerable. Perhaps when this happens, power is the acting out of a fear of vulnerability, rather than recognition of it. It can only then perform in terms designed with fear and vulnerability as founding but unacknowledged principles.

If I fear vulnerability, I cannot admit to being vulnerable, because that would make me vulnerable, which I fear. I could then assert power, using whichever claims of superiority are available, and behave in violent and oppressive ways to those I have constructed to be less important than myself. Across race, class and country, women have been deemed inferior in multiple sites of practice, or they have been managed and dominated without their input, thus exacerbating their status a vulnerable group in South Africa.

Destabilising, subverting and transforming so-called normative polices and frameworks

Co-existent with women's vulnerability in South Africa is the slow but steady increase of women appointed into senior positions in state, society and institutions, as will be explored in this thesis. Equity policies, quotas, and various transformation imperatives and strategies have helped to secure this increase in women appointed to powerful positions, including one of the highest representations of women in government in the world.

In a patriarchal society, women achieve power by strategies and efforts which have not necessarily grappled with the factors which excluded them in the first place. The bureaucratic and organisational frameworks which define their experiences as managers and leaders, have also traditionally defined them as women in particular ways which limit their success. These frameworks were founded without, necessarily, their inclusion, and so arguably only legitimise portions of who they are, while rendering other parts of them as deviant or invisible. The normative frameworks which govern a society will only ever perpetuate vulnerability if they are not also destabilised and subverted, and if they themselves do not transform.

Facilitating or inhibiting transformation

South African universities function within a particular context that can either facilitate or inhibit transformation. Women, particularly black women, have been identified and constructed as a vulnerable group in the sector. So in universities, this identity category entrenches both the site of oppression, and potential transformation. The recognition of a particular identity group, deserving of specific strategies to stimulate their progress, is only the start of a transformation process, and the very identity category must be open to expansion in order to bring about substantive change.

So the identity categories of "women" or "black" are problematic binaries in an environment that has traditionally regarded men and whites as superior. Arguably, transformation strategies aim ultimately at minimising the distinctions between identity categories. Perhaps the achievement of equity on an individual as well as a structural level would see different distinguishing features emerging to differentiate between one group of people and another – such as for example capacity, potential, experience or interests. Or perhaps what is currently understood as an identity polarity (between, say, white and black, rich and poor, man and woman, young and old) would be recognised instead as a continuum of common consciousness, expanding the notion of the self to include the other, and leading to a new accommodation and respect for difference.

The norms that govern human relationships in any given society define the level to which I know and am known, and the vulnerability or power that is animated by this knowing. Our individual and collective experiences demonstrate that we are deeply affected by each other, consciously, subconsciously, and unconsciously, and this has particular impact on gender relations and formations.

Transformation happens when we reconfigure vulnerability, when we recognise it, acknowledge it, and incorporate it into how we reframe who we are and can become. This can happen anywhere where identity categories are felt to be oppressive, because it is in the resistance to limiting categories, in the acknowledgement that individuals in that category have different notions of who they are and how they could be, that opportunities are found to renegotiate meanings.

WASA at Rhodes

At Rhodes, a group of women recognised their vulnerability in an institution that both identified them as a vulnerable group, and treated them in ways that perpetuated their vulnerability.

That women make up the majority of this university community's population, but only occupy such a small percentage of the senior academic and administrative hierarchy, suggests that for whatever reasons, their own or those imposed on them, women have not been sufficiently assimilated into this layer.

To address these issues they formed WASA, which, as I argue in my thesis, shelters the vulnerability which women experience in the academic environment, and uses a new normative framework in the century old institution to do so.

In the relationships between members of WASA, and in the relationship between WASA and Rhodes, there are opportunities to expand frameworks and experiences to be more inclusive - not only of women, but of all 'othered' groups considered to be vulnerable because of their reluctant assimilation into senior positions and the relatively small number of scholarly articles or post-Master's degrees accomplished by them.

Renegotiating who we are

We are, as Judith Butler claims, undone by each other. Our subjectivity is precarious, our norms and performances are translations, and we have the capacity to make each other's lives unlivable. And yet, if we can accept this precariousness as a starting point, there is the possibility of renegotiating who we are with each other, to accommodate those who have been previously excluded or discouraged, and to turn vulnerability into strength through recognising and reframing it. Our relationships with each other can be valuable opportunities to stimulate, support, inspire, challenge and understand each other.

As a fragment of South Africa's broader context of patriarchy and gender violence, Rhodes has the potential to either perpetuate or redress notions of gender that limit women's equitable progression in the institution.

As has been argued, WASA has established a legitimate platform to engage with these melancholic perceptions and performances of power and gender, and reframe vulnerability as something to be recognised and supported. This provides individuals with new ways to discover themselves as academic women. These new ways of being include their potential engagement with WASA programmes - for instance, seminar presentations, conference attendance and mentoring. But it is also through the ways in which individuals are encouraged to act in response to each other and in response to the often limiting gendered environment in universities and in South Africa, that WASA has the potential for transformativity.

The experiences of women in WASA have provided them with opportunities to reflect on their own vulnerabilities, collectively and individually, and to participate in imagining and establishing new ways to be academic women. These experiences demonstrate how the performativity of new subjectivities in WASA has led to moments of transformation.

Who academic women can become

In any institution, transformation agendas and interventions are platforms for transformativity rather than guaranteeing substantive transformation. We look at Rhodes as an example: its foundational framework arguably has the potential to continue to generate vulnerability, unless it expands its conception of what it is to be an academic and what it is to be a woman. WASA is an attempt to operate within this framework using different feminist norms to establish who academic women can become, and in so doing has contributed, and could continue to do so, to the realisation of WASA's transformation aspirations through destabilising fixed notions of how things can be done.

The emergence of WASA facilitated the development and legitimising of new platforms for women members of an alienated, and thus vulnerable, group, and this could (under certain conditions) continue to provide women with the opportunity to establish friendships, recognition and alliances with each other across disciplines, ages, nationalities and classes. The opportunity to develop their strengths in a supportive environment can have a profound effect on the quality of the renegotiations of subjectivity that must take place in order to achieve gender equity at an institutional level.

WASA's ongoing potential

WASA has the ongoing potential for transformativity for individuals and the university, in that it is an arguably safe platform for recognising that there are multiple intertwined ways in which we experience who we are and what we can become; that one person's assertion or translation of agency can render another vulnerable; and that for each vulnerability that is recognised and sheltered, another is exposed.

If WASA can continue to be a reflexive space for individuals who must and do explore new ways of being in the institution, and can continue to facilitate performances in the institution which renegotiate who women are and can be, it has the potential to be transformative individually, organisationally and institutionally. It can perhaps only do this effectively and sustainably if there is continual and ongoing recognition of vulnerability - not as an identity status, but as a human condition.

Transformation happens, as has been argued, in individuals, in organisations and in institutions, when new subjectivities and new norms provide a space for performances which contradict and expand traditional notions of what it is to be human, and an academic woman.

The daily life of a university, such as Rhodes, provides moments where non-convergence can become public – this happens in committees, in responses to events, in invitations to participate in processes. Where differences in how we experience events and processes are recognised and accommodated, we can begin to acknowledge not only the vulnerability of ourselves, but the ongoing vulnerability of all, and this will continue to establish sites for transformativity. Each act we do generates the norms which shape our individual and collective futures. Despite the care we take to build a framework to support vulnerability, it is necessarily not stable or predictable, and it is in the non-convergence of norms at many particular sites that is the potential spark for transformation.

There are many other experiences of women in other universities in the country and continent. These are all open to the possibilities provided by reconfiguring vulnerability and exposing how melancholic power exacerbates it. WASA could, arguably, continue to provide a platform for members to reflect, and to perform in ways that expand how the university frames and supports 'vulnerable' groups and individuals. The stories and dynamics at work between other women in other universities, societies and countries are unexplored inspirations for ongoing research.

Transformativity is an ongoing possibility if WASA can anticipate how powerful recognised vulnerability can be as a site for liberation, but only sustainably through an ongoing acknowledgement that we are who we are in relation to each other, with inevitable unpredictability.

Gender interventions at universities

There have been a number of interventions at different universities over the past decade to address gender inequity in South Africa.

These include:

- Mentoring programmes such as the Mellon programme which exists to support the progress of women academics through dedicated mentoring;
- Conferences such as the annual HERS-SA Leadership Academy which aims to support the promotion of senior women through a variety of ideologically engaging lectures and practical workshops;
- Funding such as the National Research Foundation's Thuthuka Grant programme which is aimed at supporting emerging women researchers by providing mentoring and reduced teaching responsibilities during their PhD's;
- The Wits Wonder Woman project (Shackleton 2006);
- Programmes in certain universities where women are fast-tracked through normal promotion hurdles, or provided with other opportunities to develop.

These have all contributed to an increase in the pool of women eligible for promotion to senior positions in the sector, while not necessarily ensuring that they achieve it (Morley 2003:12).

Despite these efforts, women form only 23% of university leadership, according to data supplied at a national conference in March 2008, entitled 'Institutional Cultures and Higher Education Leadership: Where are the women?' The patriarchal nature of higher education institutions and its effect of inhibiting the progress of women forms the basis of a number of studies, especially in the last decade, including:

- Shackleton,L. (2006) Leadership discourse on transformation and gender in a South African university. *Feminist Africa Issue 9 http://www.feministafrica.org/index.php/lost---lesley-shackleton*
- Mabokela,R. (2003) "Donkeys of the University": Organisational Culture and its impact on South African Women Administrators**.** *Higher Education, Vol.46, No.2., pp 129-145.*
- Mabokela,R.O. (2001) Hear Our Voices!: Women and the Transformation of South African Higher Education. *The Journal of Negro Education, Vol. 70, No. 3, Black Women in the Academy: Challenges and Opportunities, pp. 204-218.* Stable URL: *http://www.jstor.org/stable/3211211* Accessed May 2008.
- Perumal, J (20007) *Identity, Diversity and Teaching for Social Justice.* Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers.
- De la Rey,C. (2005) Gender, Women and Leadership. *Agenda* Vol. *65, No.1, pp 4-11.*

- There are a number of possible reasons for the low percentage of women leaders attracted to, promoted to and retained within the senior management and professorial sectors within higher education institutions. These include the fact that gender inequalities are embedded in the society in which higher education functions. In South Africa in particular, where the representation of women in government is, at 44%, amongst the highest in the world (according to IPU statistics updated regularly on their website *http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm*), the country also has amongst the highest global incidence of rape and domestic violence (for media commentary, see *http://www.mg.co.za/article/2009-07-09-in-south-africa-rape-is-linked-to-manhood*), demonstrating the distinct gap that exists between policy and practice in the lives of South Africans.

By Sandra Jackson. This article was published in the African Identities Journal in 2010

A REVIEW OF REITUMETSE MABOKELA & ZINE MAGUBANE, HEAR OUR VOICES: RACE, GENDER AND THE STATUS OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE ACADEMY

Reitumetse Mabokela and Zine Magubane (2004) Hear Our Voices: Race, Gender and the Status of Black South African Women in the Academy, University of South Africa Press, Pretoria.

With the increased numbers of black women in the academy and issues which emerge as they work to negotiate their identities as scholars and teachers and engage power, a body of literature and research has been developed which provides critical commentary about their experiences. This book furthers and extends discussions not only about race but also gender, their intersection, with particular attention to black women's experiences in a specific context, which adds nuances to understanding what it means to be raced and gendered in educational institutions by drawing upon and integrating three discourses regarding the academy: race, gender, and women of colour.

The book under review is composed of eight chapters, six of which constitute the body of the volume, drawing upon personal experiences interwoven with critical commentary about the experiences of black South African women in the academy. The authors explore issues related to racist and sexist practices, their intersections and the ways in which these problematics impinge upon the experiences of black women, affecting their responses and resistance to institutional contexts, which can be alienating, disempowering, and dismissive if left uninterrogated and unchallenged. In more than one way, this book is both an expose as well as a critical examination of the ways in which black women negotiate their identities as scholars and teachers, develop strategies of resistance, and attempt to forge spaces for themselves, their very bodies, as well as their research and creative works in institutional contexts which often present barriers to their professional development, growth and mobility.

Of particular interest is an examination of what it means for institutions of higher education to engage in transformation to change structures of inequality, and eradicate privilege and discrimination, often falling short of transcending rhetoric about commitment to change and ending racism and sexism. This book also foregrounds black women's experiences as an implicit challenge to hegemonic modes of thinking, doing and being by exploring 'how dominant ideologies reproduce themselves as sites for the interpellation of individuals into specific gendered, classed and racial subjectivities' (p.4). In the Introduction the authors explain their reasons for writing as well as the theoretical and methodological frameworks they use to analyze the politics of teaching and research in the South African academy. They then discuss major themes which emerge. The last chapter, 'Journey Ahead…' provides commentary regarding changes that need to be made in higher education in South Africa and suggest strategies which policy makers and institutional planners can use to inform their decision-making and implementation to achieve goals of transformation regarding issues of race and gender.

Grounded in black feminism, this text challenges epistemologies which deny black women their claims to subjecthood. The various contributors counter the practices of trivializing personal narratives and experiences as well as the dismissing of them as invalid sources of academic knowledge; they also question the notion of objectivity and purported neutrality in searching to understand the nature of things and in this case, social and political arrangements. The editors explain quite explicitly that 'their aim is not to deny the fact that the South African academy has been inhospitable to other groups', but rather 'it is [their] hope that exploring and illuminating the dynamics that structure black women's university experiences will generate insights that can be usefully deployed to understand various other forms of oppression, both within and outside of the academy' (p. 3). In their Introduction, the editors discuss the most salient themes: images, representation, and the reproduction of relations of inequality; the politics of pedagogy and research; and possibilities for resistance and transformation in institutional practices, policies and cultures to create more habitable spaces for black women as scholars and teachers. Different authors explore these issues in different manners, providing multiple perspectives regarding various ways in which black women academics negotiate institutions, their cultures and practices.

Briefly, I highlight the various chapters and the issues that are addressed. In 'Ambiguity is my Middle Name: a Research Diary', Yvette Abrahams discusses her experiences as a black woman teaching and researching Sarah Bartman who[se body] has been objectified and commodified, with controlling images circulating and recirculating reifying her as a 'degenerate type', a trope which degrades her as well as other black women. Abrahams critiques the work of researchers who while purporting to write about Bartman, have really been writing about something else recentering whiteness and reasserting white superiority and normalcy. As a researcher she asserts that 'I was made welcome at the dinner table with Sarah Bartman being served up for dinner' … and this made her sick.

She leaves us with her resolve to use the anger and her commitment 'to write the history of pain, hatred, and anger, without replicating and passing on the heavy burden of those unresolved emotions' (p. 22).

Pumla Dineo Gqola's chapter 'Language and Power, Languages of Power', discusses her experiences at three different South African universities: University of Fort Hare (a black university), the University of Cape Town (a predominantly white, liberal and English medium institution; and the University of the Free

State (conservative and Afrikaner). In speaking about her experiences in these three different contexts, she comments critically upon rhetoric of transformation, and disjunctures with actual practices, and how these are spaces in which she has 'woven [herself] into and out of and continues to do so' (p. 26). In addition to discussing her experiences with her peers, most of whom were white and male, she also discusses her experiences in teaching, again most of whom have been white, and raises critical questions about Freireian pedagogy and aspirations to create a non-hierarchical classroom, which for her has proven to be contradictory and counterproductive given her positionality as black and female 'one of the first Black women [that most of her students] have encountered in any role outside of (potential) servitude to them' (p. 36). So, she states, 'I prefer to hold on to some aspect of the hierarchy, especially in a situation where undermining activity stems equally from students and colleagues' (p. 36).

Reitumetse Mabokela's chapter, 'Walking the Tightrope: the Intersection of Race, Gender and Culture in Higher Education', illuminates the experiences of black female scholars and administrators at three historically black South African institutions of higher education. For her understanding the experiences of women like the twenty whom she interviewed is important for the following reasons: the persistence of chronic under representation and the need for urgent redress of racial and gender inequities; the importance of connecting these experiences with women in other countries and learning lessons; providing insight into the ways in which institutions respond to women's concerns and how these may (or may not) contribute significantly to their professional success; the potential of such research to contribute to the development of effective policies which can only be done 'when there is a clear understanding of the barriers and challenges junior female scholars [black and of colour] face' (p. 61).

'A Pigment of the Imagination? Race, Subjectivity, Knowledge and the Image of the black Intellectual', by Zine Magubane, addresses issues raised in Mabokela's chapter, while focusing on two historically white, liberal institutions which in spite of claims that they have adhered to policies of nonracialism, nevertheless 'have been notoriously inept at retaining Black academics even those that were ardently and enthusiastically recruited' (p. 42). In discussing two well-known incidents regarding Black men in highly visible positions at the institutions in question, the University of Witwatersrand and University of Cape Town, she comments on how understanding the social origins of liberal universities, funded in large part by mining magnates who shared the belief that educated Africans had no place in the white man's Africa, enables one to understand the persistence of structures of inequality. Linked to this racist ideology was the belief that Africans should be provided with industrial and technical as opposed to a liberal education. Those few Africans who were able to achieve an education, let alone one at the tertiary level, were characterized as 'School Kaffirs', male-defined,'too bookish', and reluctant to do any work. As a consequence the double- edged stereotype of African males as 'idlers' and African women as having no intellect.

Or else, 'agitators, blind nationalists, race patriots, and charlatans' (pp. 53—54). No wonder the presence of African intellectuals and scholars is suspect and their work closely scrutinized and judged by standards and requirements which often question, ignore, and challenge the legitimacy of their research and scholarship.

Yet, this new phase of South Africa's history reflects the reality that 'whether they like it or not, white academics no longer have the prerogative to set parameters such that African intellectuals are defined out of existence' (p. 56). These themes are further explored in the chapter by Cheryl-Ann Potgieter and Anne-Gloria Senkgane Moleko, 'Stand Out, Stand Up, Move Out, Experiences of Black South African Women at Historically White Universities'. Here the authors investigate through interviewing twenty-seven black women about their experiences and how disparities continue because 'transformative policy initiatives', have not been implemented, and thus affect the professional careers of black women at historically white institutions. Themes explored range from the 'racialised and gendered politics of knowledge in the academy to the ways which racism impacts relations between members of subordinated groups – in this case black and white women – to the strategies women employ to negotiate the academy while still maintaining personal and professional integrity' (p. 82).

In this regard, in relationship to white academics, black women resist the notion that they have nothing to contribute but their blackness and, in relationship to students, they challenge the idea that they are there to be caretakers. In the face of 'Eurocentric, masculinist, knowledge validation process that works to effectively keep them shut out' (p. 86), Black women respond in various ways: avoiding white colleagues, leaving the academy, or staying, determined to fight for change. Resistance to being pigeonholed and not seen as competent or having legitimate authority to write about the dominant culture, is the topic of the chapter, 'Two Dreams Unveiled: Exploring the Self from the Margins', by Jo-Anne Juliana Prins. Here she examines her 'position as a writer and a black woman attempting to write about white masculinity' (p. 97), by analyzing two dreams she had during the process of writing her thesis.

In the first dream she was in a library preparing to work on a paper where many of the people present were young white men. One of them made a joke and the others laughed. She left the room in anger. In her second dream, she found herself surrounded by 'men who were either castrated, had belly buttons instead of penises, or were suffering from AIDS' (p. 104). In interpreting these dreams she speaks of wish fulfillment and repressed desires as well questioning 'hegemonic notions of masculinity that were being produced and reproduced in mainstream texts' (p. 106) in an attempt to develop an alternative understanding.

I found the book to be highly informative and well worth reading because it furthers the discourse regarding issues of race and gender in the academy, with a particular focus on the experiences of black women academics in South Africa. The editors, Mabokela and Magubane, pick up the threads in the fabric which weaves richly coloured and textured narratives about the professional and personal experiences of black women in predominantly white institutions in works such as the following: The Careers of Women Teachers Under Apartheid (1997), by Shirley Mahlase, a study of black women teachers, a precursor. Other books that focus on the experiences of black women in the US include earlier works such as black Women in the Academy (1982) by McKay, Daniel, and Cobb and Spirit, Space and Survival: African American Women in (white) Academe (1993), edited by James and Farmer. More recent texts include Black Women in the Academy: The Secrets of Success and Achievement (1999), edited by Gregory, and Sisters of the Academy (2001) edited by Mabokela and Green. Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success, by Turner and Myers (2000) situates the experiences of black women within the experiences of faculty of colour – male and female. Women Faculty of Colour in the White Classroom (2002), edited by Vargas, locates the experiences of black women within the discourse of women of colour in the US – citizens and immigrants as does Power, Race and Gender in Academe: Strangers in the Tower (2000) by Lim and Herrera-Sobek, which examines the experiences of women of various underrepresented groups in the US. Breaking Anonymity: The Chilly Climate for Women Faculty, by the Chilly Collective (1991) which focuses on gender within Canadian and US institutions, Gender and University Teaching: A Negotiated Difference (1991), by Statham, Richardson, and Cook, and Antifeminism in the Academy (1996) edited by Clark, Gardner, Higgonet, and Katrak, examine through the lens of gendered and patriarchal practices, the overt and covert ways what women are silenced and confronted with challenges to their professional authority in higher education – particularly regarding relationships with peers, students, as well as administrators. What distinguishes the book under review is its theoretical approach which integrates discourses of race, gender,

and women of colour in its analysis.

This book, Hear Our Voices, is valuable in that it not only presents critical commentary about the nature of black women's experiences in the Academy within a South African context, but it also discuss issues of agency and resistance, as well as makes recommendations regarding how universities can develop policies, change their practices — particularly those related to recruitment, retention (with clear and fair guidelines and practices related to promotion and tenure), support for research and research, as well as mentoring, and transform their cultures so that black women academics can have viable and rewarding careers as full-fledged members of the academy and not be relegated to secondclass and marginalized locations. The issues that it examines reflect variations on themes regarding the experiences of women in the academy with particular attention to women of colour, and black women specifically in a social and political context where there are assertions of commitment to eradication of structures of inequality, racial and sexual discrimination. From this book we learn about not only the progress that has been made within institutions of higher education, but also the work that yet remains to be done to bring goals of social justice into fruition.

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By Tshidi Hashatse, Prepared for the Rhodes Imbizo
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EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND STEWARDSHIP

Depending on the writer or commentator, transformation in the higher education sector has either been proceeding at a rapid pace or not proceeding at all. Perhaps the reason for the vast differences of opinion is because there does not always seem to be agreement about what transformation of higher education should be. There is some general agreement that it should entail changes to staff composition, student composition, curriculum and the historical institutional arrangements. Some argue that the reason higher education has not progressed fast enough in the area of transformation is because the sector has not acknowledged and honestly come to terms with its role in the propping up of the apartheid system, hence the sector is unable to move on or appropriately define its role in a transforming society.

Other writers blame the slow pace of transformation on the fact that South Africa chose a negotiated political settlement and compromise, which has 'left the profound social and economic inequalities of the apartheid era in place'. (Neville Alexander, 2009)

The negotiated settlement arrangement delivered the constitutional platform for correcting the imbalances of the past. This is how the notions of equity and substantive equality became a part of our legal framework, in order to ensure that there is a legal, just and transparent system to deal with the inequalities that were left in place.

In the words of Nelson Mandela as quoted by Judith February (2009), one of choices made for dealing with the inequalities was affirmative action:

> 'Affirmative action must be rooted in principles of justice and equity. Affirmative action is a principal means of dealing in as just and realistic a manner as possible with the progressive eradication of the guilt created by the past discrimination. It must be seen as an alternative … to waiting for centuries for the market on its own to eliminate the massive inequalities left by apartheid.'

Or to put it in the words of a United States Supreme Court Justice, Justice Kennedy,

> '…the simple postulate that the way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race… is not sufficient, … fifty years of experience since Brown v. Board of Education … should teach us that the problem before us defies so easy a solution'.

For South Africa and for higher education, the Constitution lays the basis for equity and redress, the Employment Equity Act, the White Paper on Higher Education and the Higher Education Act, all followed on the basis laid by the Constitution in directing us towards equity and redress imperatives.

A good starting point for the purposes of the Rhodes Imbizo might be asking the question what is the role of a public higher education institution in a transforming society and a young democracy, and how does Rhodes want to embrace this role for itself? By answering this question even if it is by merely reminding ourselves of what the policy and legislative framework calls for, we might then fully appreciate what is required for undertaking such a role, and for playing it in the most credible way that does not smack of hypocrisy.

What is clear is that there have been a lot of changes in higher education since the 1990's, and these have in one way or another impacted on transformation, and its pace. These changes happened within and were influenced by a changing political, social and economic climate, outside of and in higher education domestically and internationally.

The higher education landscape since 1994 has been described as characterised by:

> "Relative statis in certain areas, such as decolonisation, deracialisation, and degendering of inherited intellectual spaces and the nurturing of a new generation of academics who are increasingly black and women. …
> Ruptures and discontinuities with the past resulting in
> - A recasting of higher education values, goals and policies
> - A new legal structure and policy framework
> - New institutions to govern and steer higher education
> - The emergence of a new institutional landscape and configuration of public universities." (Saleem Badat, 2008).

As regards the economic and social inequalities, which impact on equity of access, participation, and success in higher education, these are characterised as: "continuities in conditions and institutions". This is supported by the statistics of social composition of academic staff, the intersection of race, class, gender, geography and schooling and the prevailing institutional cultures which continue to hamper the achievement of equity and redress especially for the working class and rural poor. (Saleem Badat, 2008).

Discussions about Equity have to move beyond numbers, targets and goals, these are important, but tend to get us stuck in the compliance mode of doing things. The Constitution and the Employment Equity Act introduce the concept of redress and equity in order to achieve substantive equality. Substantive equality cannot be achieved by mere compliance, especially if pursued begrudgingly, and as no more than an imposition. An alternative basis by which the very same goals to achieve a more equitable representation can be pursued can be based on the appreciation and pursuit of diversity for its benefits.

The appreciation of diversity on its own is probably not enough, but it can be a useful ingredient in the pursuit of the purpose and values of higher education in a transforming society and a young democracy. This kind of framing could make it possible for the benefits of diversity to be one of the significant driving forces that moves the changes in composition of staff and students forward, thereby improving equitable representation and hopefully also helping to break down barriers between people.

Such framing could work if institutions are able to find

value and quality in people of diverse backgrounds, where they historically did not believe existed. This may be a challenge for those who still hold beliefs and notions about superiority and inferiority, capability for knowledge production, white excellence and black failure, and a myriad other stereotypes. Such restrictions do not enable the appreciation of the fact that diversity of backgrounds may also bring diversity of knowledge and worthy contributions to enrich the knowledge making enterprise.

There are other factors which contribute to the complexity of the issue such as the shortcomings of our basic education system, the continuing inequalities in our society, the limited resources for higher education, the myriad of demands and expectation on the system, and the inequalities in the higher education system itself at institutional level.

The inequalities between institutions still exist, even after institutional mergers and incorporation and are reflected in the views and perceptions about 'black institutions' and 'white institutions'. These beliefs and perceptions are revealed in the narratives of staff and students from Fort Hare University, the former Rhodes University East London satellite campus and the Rhodes Grahamstown campus, in a study entitled, 'White excellence and black failures: The reproduction of racialised higher education in everyday talk.' (Donovan Robus and Catriona Macleod, 2004)

The fact that racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination were not only perpetuated through formal means such as policy and legislation, and that they continue to be replicated and perpetuated in thinking, talk and practices points to the complexity of the issues.

Social science research has been called for in order 'to refine our appreciation of diversity's value and to enable us to balance the value of diversity against the costs of achieving diversity through race- conscious programmes'. (Sandra Day O' Connor and Stewart J Schwab, 2009) This call, made in a paper co-authored by a former US Supreme Court Justice and the Dean of Cornell Law School, shows that country's reliance on diversity imperatives as a legal basis for affirmative action programmes, especially as it relates to student admission criteria. This is different from the South African system for which redress and equity are firmly countenanced by the Constitution.

A number of American cases involving challenges to student admission policies have relied heavily (and succeeded), on the basis of arguments in favour of taking race into consideration as part of the exercise for achieving greater student body diversity. The courts took the view that prohibiting considerations on the basis of race would intensify rather than eliminate that nation's racial problems.

"Effective participation by members of all racial and ethnic groups in the civic life of our Nation is essential if the dream of one Nation, indivisible, is to be realized." From the majority decision of a court decision dealing with the affirmative action programme of the Michigan Law School. (Sandra Day O' Connor and Stewart J Schwab, 2009)

Interested parties outside of higher education in America filed 'friends of the court' briefs supporting the diversity argument as necessitating minimum race consciousness in admission criteria. Support also came from private sector companies arguing the benefits of diversity as experienced by these companies including benefits related to the rise in productivity and the fact that 'today's workforce must be prepared to work with colleagues and customers from a wide variety of backgrounds'.

In the Michigan Law school case, the court also made the point that the improvement of grades and test scores of minority applicants, and the elimination of racial disparities in high school performance, would in time eliminate the need for the affirmative action programmes, but that higher education was currently powerless to alter the basic profile of the applicant pool. Affirmative action was seen as an effective option in the absence of other effective alternatives to promote 'student body diversity and excellence'.

At least five American states have now been mandated to ignore race in their public university admission criteria, and this has led to declining numbers of enrolment of minorities, especially of African American students in public universities in those states, over a five to ten year period. The statistics indicate drops of up to 46 percent in some instances, and definite setbacks in demographic representation, which seems to indicate the important role that affirmative action measures had played in ensuring higher enrolment figures. This decline happened even though there were alternate strategies aimed at ensuring targeted recruitment of African American students and other minorities, including pipeline improvement efforts through high school interventions programmes. The efforts included targeted recruitment focusing on low-performing high schools, financial aid packages, college preparatory classes, mentoring programmes and using a mix of criteria that took into consideration socioeconomic disadvantage.

The American problem is one of including minorities; the South African problem is one of including the majority. The South African problem is exacerbated by the failure of the schooling system to increase the pool of working class and rural areas based students able to enter higher education and benefit from the equity and redress measures. The problem is compounded by growing socio-economic inequalities, a growing youth population, a growing proportion of unemployed and uneducated youth perceived increasingly as a 'ticking time bomb'.

The benefits of a diverse learning environment would hopefully accrue, not only to the previously disadvantaged, nor only to students but also to academics, and to the very goal of knowledge production and the quality and usefulness of such knowledge. The benefits are not only about the availability of role models, but could help address deeper problems in our society. The possible benefits of a diverse environment extend to the learning that could happen outside of the classroom.

The cultural diversity of students and staff would be of great benefit, but only if the institutional culture allows for the different cultures to live side by side and does not try to mould all entrants into the institutions into some homogenous group in accordance with the dominant homogenous culture. Most institutions miss this opportunity, especially in relation to students, for whom acceptance to the institution is on terms that they leave their cultural identity and all aspects of their 'otherness' at the gates and assimilate in order to be tolerated and hardly ever accepted. This kind of conditional admission of people from different backgrounds robs the institution and people of the benefits of learning about diversity, and embracing the enrichment that it could bring. Higher education is missing the opportunity of being a leader in this regard, a leader that could model for society the benefits of diversity as a possible catalyst for improving social cohesion.

Progress in respect of the representivity, especially of academic staff has been very slow in the higher education sector compared to staff changes in other sectors. Factors that have propelled rapid transformation of staff in other sectors or industries are absent and some are not applicable to higher education. There are other challenges that complicate the matter further such as the length of time it takes to train an academic, the struggle to attract new entrants to the academy, and the opening up of other career options outside of the academy, for the previously disadvantaged.

Why stewardship

Another way to look at equity and redress as more than just a compliance issue is to look at it within a framework of stewardship. Those who make decisions and hold the power in higher education institutions are exercising such power on behalf of the institution, and not for personal interest or gain. The interests of such public institution must therefore take precedence.

The concept of stewardship presupposes: notions of sustainability; handing over to the next generation at some point; development of those to whom we will handover as part of our leadership role; leadership not for narrow, selfish, expedient reasons, leadership with integrity and accountability; no abuse of power in decision making; making decisions with a long term view; self-regulation; long-term preservation and protection of a resource, balancing short-term gains against long-term care and stewardship.

Using stewardship in our conversations about equity would allow us to: Assess the risks of not quickening the pace and achievement of our transformation goals. Make equity part of the conversation about the sustainability of the institution, what do we want to preserve about Rhodes for the Future, Rhodes 2020, Rhodes 2030? (Quality, excellence, success rates, stability, maintaining an enriching and triumphing educational institution…) can we do that and still not achieve the equity goals? Assess the lost opportunity of not making diversity a part of our learning and teaching environment. Interrogate whether our strategic thrusts and priorities will aid the achievement of our transformation goals or not. (For instance: what can the Post Grad growth plan do for equity? How do we address the fact that over 40 percent of academics at associate professor level upwards is above the age of 50, how do we address this in a way that incorporates equity imperatives? What measures do we need to put in place to ensure that the efforts to recruit students from rural Eastern Cape schools leads to good participation and success rates for these recruits?) Understand and accept our individual roles and contributions towards the achievement of equity imperatives and being accountable in relation thereto. More experienced academics and administrators identifying and embracing a role for themselves, as individuals, to contribute to the equity goals, through specific mentoring, development and succession initiatives. Have the will to do what is required, and do different things in order to produce different results. Put required resources in place and accept that things will not happen on their own. (Students' academic and other support mechanisms, staff recruitment, development and retention efforts, how do we balance and prioritise?) Agree on a long term vision for the institution and its equity imperatives, and avoid decisions and actions that will compromise the attainment of that vision, consistency and loyalty to the agreed vision. Give the institution the chance to 'normalise', and to move beyond talk of racial and gender composition of staff or students Moving the conversation beyond the language of "we cannot do this because" towards the language of "we have to do this because" Is the Rhodes Employment Equity plan 2010 -2015 adequate? What else could or should we doing?

Conclusion

In conclusion I think it is time that we accept that we cannot continue in a 'business-as-usual' way of doing things and hope to get different results. We have to unlock and use opportunities to improve our staff composition and institutional culture. We have to be bold and commit resources – time and money – to the achievement of the equity goals because the alternative is likely to cost us more in the long run, and cause us to lose the very things we think we are trying to preserve.

As we reflect over the next two days here are some questions to ponder:

1. What specific strategies could we use and what resources could we commit to these strategies. (scarcity allowances, supernumerary posts, development posts, absorption of development candidates, premium payments for some skills)
2. How do we improve accountability for implementation of equity goals?
3. Do we freeze posts if we cannot find candidates from designated groups? When and which posts? How do we deal with the implications of such decisions?
4. How do we improve our recruitment efforts in order to improve results?
5. Should we use selective early retirement in order to free up some posts, and in what circumstances?

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This presentation by Sally Matthews was part of a Panel Discussion on Institutional Culture at the Rhodes University Imbizo, 27-28 July 2011

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Writing about privilege in the United States of America Michael Kimmel says:

> To run or walk into a strong headwind is to understand the power of nature. You set your jaw in a squared grimace, your eyes are slits against the wind, and you breathe with fierce determination. And still you make so little progress.
>
> To walk or run with that same wind at your back is to float, to sail effortlessly, expending virtually no energy. You do not feel the wind; it feels you. You do not feel how it pushes you along; you feel only the effortlessness of your movements. You feel like you could go on forever. Only when you turn around and face that wind do you realize its strength.[1]
>
> He then uses this image of the wind to speak about how being white or male or heterosexual in the United States is like running with the wind at your back. He stresses that when you have the wind at your back it doesn't feel like you're being aided, you just feel like you're moving effortlessly forward.

Institutional culture can be a little like the wind. If it's at your back (in other words, if you fit in with your institution's culture) you probably don't notice it and you don't realize how it helps you move effortlessly forward. But if you're running into the wind (in other words if you don't fit in with the prevailing institutional culture) it can feel as if moving even slightly forward requires incredible effort and determination.

My current research explores the idea of privilege and I've been asked today to use some of the ideas from this research to think about institutional culture at Rhodes. One of the most read articles on privilege is Peggy McIntosh's essay[2] in which she tries to unpack the 'invisible knapsack' of white privilege. What she tries to do in this essay is to reveal how white people in the United States are privileged in ways that are probably not visible to them most of the time. As she puts it 'White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks'. She draws up a list of these privileges to try to make them visible in order to help white people recognise the ways in which they are privileged in the USA. To give you some idea of what she's getting at, let me list some of the (very varied) privileges she includes in her list:

- I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of my financial reliability.
- I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
- I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
- I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

Other authors have drawn up similar lists to try to reveal the privileges which heterosexual people or men have.

I wonder if we can draw up a similar list to reveal ways in which some academic staff members might experience Rhodes as a more comfortable and easy place to be than other people. Louise Vincent has said quite a bit about students, but I'll focus on academic staff here, although of course academics are only one small constituency at Rhodes. I'll focus on academics here both because, as an academic myself, I feel more able to speak to the way that Rhodes institutional culture affects academics and also because most of those here today are academic staff and so this is of most interest, perhaps, to this audience.

According to fairly recent statistics, more than 80% of those described as 'instruction and research staff' at Rhodes are white. A disproportionate number of these staff members, especially at associate professor and professor level, are male. I would also imagine that most of these staff members come from fairly affluent backgrounds and that most are heterosexual. Rhodes' institutional culture has gradually over the years shaped itself in such a way as to make its predominant community feel welcome and at ease. It has become a 'home' for this community, but how do we manage to make it a 'home for all'?

When thinking about this question, those who are the predominant community within the community of academics at Rhodes (the straight, white men of a middle class background) might rightfully ask: 'In what ways am I privileged in this space? Where is this 'wind at my back' that you refer to?'

In order to try to make this wind visible, let me try to unpack the invisible knapsack of privilege that those who look like a 'typical' Rhodes academic carry around with them. Here are some of the 'special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks' that the straight, white, middle-class, male academic may carry in his weightless invisible knapsack. Before making the list, let me also stress that those of us who don't fit all the descriptions of this 'typical' Rhodes academic may nevertheless carry, perhaps slightly lighter, invisible knapsacks with some of these tools in them.

1. My students are not surprised to find someone like me lecturing them and tend to accept me as an authority on my subject.
2. If I forget my staff card, I can probably convince the library staff to let me into the library and issue me books.
3. The texts I prescribe for my students tend to be written by people who look pretty similar to me. It's clear to my students that people like me are experts on my subject.
4. No one complains about my 'funny accent'.
5. Even if I don't have a PhD from a prestigious university, my students tend to accept that I'm qualified to teach them.
6. When I attend a faculty meeting, there are lots of other people there who look like me and who come from a similar background to me.
7. When I'm invited to dinner by my HoD (who probably comes from a background not that different from mine) I'm familiar with the general etiquette that goes along with such events – I know whether or not to bring along a bottle of wine and which wine might be seen as decent.
8. Support staff often offer to do things for me.
9. I'm accustomed to people cleaning up after me and the people cleaning my office are accustomed to cleaning up after people like me.
10. Tutors and teaching assistants usually help me out without complaint or resentment.
11. I understand the jokes made during staff meetings and I find them funny.
12. Students are wary of complaining about me to the HoD. They assume the HoD will side with me.
13. If I forget to arrive for a particular lecture or arrive unprepared, I know my students will forgive me and just see me as a 'nutty professor', rather than run to the HoD and complain about my incompetence.
14. When I arrive to invigilate at an exam venue, the exam commissioner does not angrily tell me 'Go sit down, only staff are allowed here at the front'.
15. I understand (at least a bit) Rhodes student culture because I went to Rhodes or to a similar institution.
16. I feel comfortable at the local pub where some staff and students hang out after departmental seminars.
17. If I make a mistake, I don't worry that my mistake is going to confirm a stereotype others have about people of my gender or race.
18. I'm not worried that people think I was appointed just because of my race or gender.
19. My mother tongue is spoken all day at my workplace.
20. My children are able to go to excellent local schools in which there are plenty of role models of the same race as them.

But if we accept (and make visible) the privileges that some of us have when moving around on Rhodes campus, what then do we do about this? What do we do if we find ourselves at a disadvantage in this space? What do we do if we recognise that we are advantaged in this space? Do those who are disadvantaged just throw up their arms in despair or rage? Do those who are advantaged just say 'So what?' or quibble and try to insist that they are in fact not advantaged at all?

I want to think very briefly through some possible ways that we can move forward once we've recognised that Rhodes is not a place that makes everyone feel equally comfortable and I want to do this from the perspective of both those made uncomfortable and those made comfortable, with perhaps a little more focus on the latter.

Firstly, what can those who find themselves ill at ease do about this? As someone who for the most part (excepting my gender) is made to feel comfortable at this institution, I'm in some ways uncomfortable about answering this question, because of my own relatively privileged position, but let me try to advance a few possibilities, drawing quite a bit on my own experiences as a female academic both at Rhodes and elsewhere. Here are some possibilities I raise for further discussion. Carve out comfortable spaces, some 'breathing room' – create spaces in which those who feel uncomfortable at Rhodes feel comfortable. I think, for example, of the Women's Academic Solidarity Association. Tell some new stories to shift what Louise Vincent calls Rhodes's 'story stock'. Make visible the ways in which others are privileged – sometimes gently, sometimes more assertively. Seek out mentorship from others who have faced similar discomfort to find ways to resolve issues. Participate, actively, in attempts by the department to build a more diverse staff and student body.

But what about those who are privileged by our institutional culture? What do we do if this is a space we feel welcome and comfortable in, but we recognise that not everyone feels comfortable here and that there is something unjust about this.

To think about what those who are in an advantaged position might do with this privilege, I'd like to use the work of the white American philosopher, Alison Bailey.[3] Responding to recognition of her own privileged position as a white American, she writes the following:

> The inescapable character of white privilege initially presented itself to me in the form of a dilemma. On the one hand, to use Judith Levine's (1994) phrase, "privilege is written on my skin". As a white woman I am stuck with privilege because I can't take off the invisible, weightless knapsack that grants me privilege.' On the other hand, if I am stuck with this knapsack, then I worry about whether its contents can be used safely. If this dilemma is real, I face a kind of political paralysis: I can't divest myself fully of privilege, and its use only fortifies the system I want to demolish. I can't lose it, and I don't want to use it. Where do I go from here?

Bailey slowly works through this dilemma, coming to the conclusion that privilege can be used as a resource to bring about social changes that will result in a more just situation. The example that she uses in showing how she comes to this conclusion is very instructive when thinking about university institutional cultures. Bailey provides us with the following dilemma: She is approached by Nina, an African American student who has just been notified that she has been awarded a full scholarship. Nina goes to the administration building to pick up her cheque, but discovers that her name is not on the database of registered students (even though she did register) and is told that she can't get the money as they've had problems with 'students like her', who drop out but still collect their scholarship cheque. The administrators treat her as suspicious and so Nina asks Bailey, her white professor, to come with her to help her convince them that she is a bona fide student. So, asks Bailey, what should she do? If she marches in to the admin office and insists that they treat Nina properly, she'll probably get Nina's problem solved, but only because a white professor has come forward to vouch for her. As Bailey puts it: 'My playing the white faculty card-intervening on behalf of Nina does not give the staff in the Financial Aid Office a lesson in how to treat students of color in a way that is not rude, neglectful, or suspicious.' But if she doesn't help Nina, then she's being pretty insensitive to her student and Nina may have to spend hours of time to get the problem sorted out. Here the problem is as follows: 'If I decide not to use privilege for fear of buttressing the system that gives privilege currency, then I get to decide what aspects of oppression get addressed. My decision is based not on Nina's needs but on my comfort.'

After careful consideration, Bailey decides to sit together with Nina to try to decide how best they can get the university administrators to recognise the inappropriateness of their response to Nina and to correct their treatment of her (while hopefully also becoming a little more cautious about treating other black students in this way). Bailey hopes that in this way she can use her position of privilege in order to try to advance the interests of those who are not in the same position of privilege in the institution she works. Privilege, she argues, can be used as a resource for social change.

We could think of many similar examples. What I hope to illustrate with this example, is that those who are privileged can also play a role in changing practices and attitudes that disadvantage others. Instead of reacting defensively, those who are privileged by the current institutional culture at Rhodes can opt to recognise this privilege and find ways to use it so as to create an institutional culture that is more welcoming to others.

I end off with a quote from Audre Lorde:

> … those of us who have benefited from class privilege or white-skin privilege are often reluctant to look at [it]... lest we find ourselves morally or socially obligated to give them up or share them. We are therefore also reluctant to use those benefits and privileges in the service of what we believe needs being done, because to use privilege requires admitting to privilege, requires moving beyond guilt and accusation into creative action. And, of course, unused privilege becomes a weapon in the hand of our enemies …[4]

[1] Michael S. Kimmel, 2010, Introduction: Toward Pedagogy of the Oppressor, in Privilege: a reader, edited by Michael S. Kimmel and Abby L. Ferber (Boulder: Westview Press), pp. 1-10.

[2] Peggy McIntosh, 1988, White Privilege and Male Privilege, Working Paper 189, Wellesley College. This essay has been reprinted and circulated in various forms. One version is available electronically at *http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/HR/LO/docs/WhitePrivilege_PeggyMcIntosh.pdf?ga=t*. I list only a few of the 46 items included in McIntosh's list of privileges.

[3] Alison Bailey, 1999, 'Despising an identity they taught me to claim', Whiteness: feminist philosophical reflections, ed. by C.J. Cuomo and K.Q. Hall, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield), pp. 85–107.

[4] Quoted in "Despising an identity they taught me to claim" by Alison Bailey, in Whiteness: feminist philosophical reflections, ed. by C.J. Cuomo and K.Q. Hall, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999.

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GENDER AND INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information communications technology is used more and more in education, so much so, that it is becoming a ubiquitous resource for supporting students' learning. Several commentators have, however, raised concerns that socio-economic and cultural factors may mediate access to and use of information communication technology (ICT; e.g. Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition 1989; Jackson, Ervin, Gardner, & Schmitt 2001a; Littleton & Hoyles 2002).

Issues of equality of opportunity and access to information and communications technology may thus arise for a number of different groups, for example those of low socio-economic status and ethnic minorities, creating a number of 'digital divides' with respect to the take-up, or effective use of, ICTs.

Gender is thought to be one such digital divide (Cooper & Weaver 2003; Joiner et al. 2005). However, recently, there have been a number of commentators who have suggested that the gendered digital divide may be diminishing (Losh 2004) or even disappearing (Stanford Internet Study 2000; UCLA Internet Project 2000, 2001, 2003). The aim of this special issue was thus to examine this issue of the gendered digital divide in the use of computer technology.

The special issue opens with a review article by Joel Cooper, who unequivocally states that that 'There is a dramatic digital divide for gender such that women are not reaping the benefits of the technological revolution on a par with men' (p. 321). This, he suggests, is a 'pernicious and often overlooked wedge' (p. 320) that divides, and is a problem, for modern society. In making the case for a digital divide, Cooper points to manifestations of the divide in terms of gendered patterns of engagement with and ownership of computer technology and he also highlights the persistence of females' computer anxiety over time and across international boundaries.

Having presented evidence to suggest that there is a digital divide, Cooper asserts that this divide is 'multiply determined' (p. 322) and goes on to consider factors that may facilitate it. Among the factors discussed are the potentially deleterious effects of 'boy-toy' computer software and the consequences of girls making personal attributions for computational failures and attributions of effort and luck for computational success.

Cooper also speculates that 'gender stereotypes can have the power of the self-fulfilling prophecy, creating further evidence for the stereotype' (p. 328) and he presents work on stereotype threat, which suggests that the 'mere knowledge of a negative stereotype applying to a person's group can cause that person to perform poorly at a particular task' (p. 329). Towards the end of the paper, Cooper describes an experimental study specifically designed to explore the effect of stereo- type threat on girls' performance with computers and this work indicates that 'the mere knowledge of a stereotype that holds that girls are not good at computers causes girls to suffer stress when learning from a computer and leads to decrements in computer performance . . . at least when their identity as females is made salient' (p. 331).

The paper culminates with the development of a model for understanding some of the key factors that create the digital divide for gender. Although Cooper acknowledges that 'solving the problem of the gender digital divide will not be easy' (p. x), some specific suggestions for change emerge from the model that he proposes, and he underscores the need to alter stereotypes by attacking the phenomena that support them.

One must, however, continually guard against making simplistic overgeneralisations with respect to gender and computing and the 'digital divide' for, as in Cooper's words, 'social context matters' (p. 324). The importance of understanding students' technological engagements in context is a theme that emerges from the paper by Emma Mercier, Brigid Barron and Kathleen O'Connor. These authors used surveys, drawings and interviews to investigate 10–14-year- olds' perceptions of knowledgeable computer users and their self-perceptions as 'a computer-type person'.

Their findings indicate that students' engagement in technology is: 'a complex relationship between students' experiences, their perceptions about others who are engaged in the field and their personal identity in relation to the field, reiterating the importance of thinking about students' learning ecologies when we consider issues of engagement' (p. 345). The relationship between gender and technology is thus construed as being: 'more complex than a simple divide along gender lines' (p. 344), and their work indicates how research sometimes reveals 'more variation within each gender than between genders in level of engagement and experience' (p. 344).

The need for more nuanced analytic work on the theme of gender and technology is further highlighted in the paper by Linda Price, which examines current trends in women's performance on, access to and experience of online courses. Her analyses demonstrate that in the distance-education context, she investigated 'women studying online are confident, independent learners who may out-perform their male counterparts. They do not have reduced computer and Internet access compared to men, nor are they disinclined to enroll on online courses' (p. 357).

Interestingly, the women in Price's study attached greater value to the pastoral aspects of tutoring and had different interaction styles from men – something that may have implications for online tutoring support. Such observations lead Price to argue that the gender debate needs to 'move on from access and performance to the differences and similarities in the degree of importance that men and women place on different interaction and tutoring styles online' (p. 358). She therefore proposes a research agenda concerned with 'examining different interaction styles online and whether interactions vary depending on the perceived gender of the recipient' (p. 358).

The challenge of examining gendered interactions online is taken up in two of the contributions in the special issue. Ruth O'Neill and Ann Colley report an experimental investigation of gender and status effects in the kind of e-mails used to manage course administration in a higher educational setting. The undergraduate students participating in the study were asked to respond to an e-mail presented as being from a member of staff, informing them of failure to submit course work and asking for an explanation to be provided. The sex and status of the sender were varied. The data showed both gender and status effects, that suggest the need for further research on staff–student interactions and of the way in which electronic mail might impact upon them.

Jane Guiller and Alan Durndell discuss findings from an extensive project examining gender, language and computer-mediated communication in the context of undergraduate psychology courses. Their analyses of the students' contributions to asynchronous discussion forums indicate that: 'females were more likely to make attenuated contributions than males and express agreement, whereas males were more likely to make authoritative contributions and express disagreement than females' (p. 368). In light of these findings, the authors suggest that: 'students and staff using online discussion forums should be aware of possible differences in communication style and come to an agreed style of contribution and protocol for use of CMC in undergraduate psychology courses' (p. 379).

They also point to the need to: 'help students learn how to use language for the sharing of knowledge, argumentation and the construction of meaning on line' (p. 379).

The issue concludes with a paper by Karen Littleton, Clare Wood and Pav Chera, which investigates the potential of talking books software to support the literacy development of male beginning readers. In this context, these authors highlight the popular misconnection between boys, new technologies and re-mediation, pointing to potentially disadvantaging cultural models that expect all boys to have a natural affinity with computers. Littleton et al. argue that we cannot take as 'given' the notion that boys' perceived positive disposition towards computer technology will necessarily mean that such technologies can be readily and unproblematically harnessed to support literacy development.

Their work shows that talking books do have the potential to support boys' literacy development but that this potential is realised in different ways depending on the boys' developmental level, with phonological awareness being seen to affect boys' software use. Littleton et al. assert that in the current climate of anxiety concerning boys' literacy attainment 'it is vital that we move beyond the notion that computers are 'engaging and 'appeal to boys'' (p. 389), and they highlight the need for 'a more detailed understanding of how specific computer technologies may resource or constrain boys literacy learning interactions and how these interactions are further mediated by individual differences and social context (p. 389).'

Taken together, the papers suggest that the interaction between gender and technology is complex, being mediated by a number of factors such as status and identity. The work presented in this special issue reminds us that technologies inevitably arise in the context of existing social relations and for this reason are highly likely to result in the reproduction of these forms of relationship. Nonetheless, the work presented here also highlights how the same technologies may open up possibilities for the transformation of these social relations. In the case of ICT, it is imperative that we seek out and create the conditions for achieving such a transformation.

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By Suqin Ge, Fang Yang. Published in Economic Inquiry Volume 51, Issue 1, pages 478–499, January 2013

ACCOUNTING FOR THE GENDER GAP IN COLLEGE ATTAINMENT

One striking phenomenon in the U.S. labor market is the reversal of the gender gap in college attainment. In 1980, 57% of young men aged 25–34, compared with 46% of young women, had some college education by age 34. By 1996, however, female college attainment had reached 64%, 5 percentage points higher than that of the males in the same cohort. In fact, females overtook males in college attainment in 1987 and have led ever since.

A large body of empirical research emphasizes the role of the earnings premium as a key explanatory variable for the determination of education outcomes (see, e.g., Becker 1967; Mincer 1974; Willis and Rosen 1979). In addition, an extensive literature shows that family background is an important determinant of the schooling decision (see, among others, Cameron and Heckman 1998, 2001; Eckstein and Wolpin 1999; Ge 2008; Kane 1994). Recently several papers have argued empirically and theoretically that expected marriage is important in determining the schooling decision (e.g., Chiappori, Iyigun, and Weiss 2006; Ge 2008; Iyigun and Walsh 2007).

On the basis of this literature, we construct a life-cycle model that includes potential costs and benefits from the labor market and marriage market, which determine individual college decisions. In our model, individuals with differing learning abilities first decide whether or not to enter college. Then they might get married and have children. Parents are altruistic and value their children's learning ability, which increases with the parents' education. Forward-looking individuals take into account the impact of their own schooling on their children's learning ability. Other factors that affect an individual's decision on whether to pursue higher education include the expected direct labor market returns to college over one's lifetime, the expected marriage market returns to college, and the financial and effort costs of attending college. These costs and benefits can differ by gender.

We calculate from Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) and Current Population Survey (CPS) parents' education distributions; the life-cycle profiles of single, marriage, and divorce probabilities by education; and the life-cycle profiles of earnings by education and marital status as exogenous inputs of the model. We observe that the number of college-educated parents increases over time. In the marriage market, a substantial increase of single probabilities and an increase of divorce probabilities has occurred for both genders, regardless of college attainment status. Lifetime earnings by cohort are decreasing slowly for males of all marital statuses, especially for married males. Lifetime earnings for married and divorced females are increasing gradually, whereas those for single females are decreasing slightly. To formally endogenize those changes is beyond the scope of our paper. We instead focus on the mechanism in which, under perfect foresight, these changes affect education decisions.

We estimate the parameters of the model by matching data on college attainment by gender from the PSID. We present evidence on how well the model fits the data. We then use the parameter estimates to simulate counterfactual experiments, which break down the sources of changes in college attainment into the effects of changes in relative earnings, changes in parental education, and changes in the marriage market.

What accounts for the increase in college attainment over the past few decades? We find that the increasing gap in earnings between college and high school graduates has important effects on the increase in college attainment for both genders. When earnings are fixed at 1946 cohort levels, attainment rates in 1996 drop by 15.5 and 14.2 percentage points for males and females, respectively. We also emphasize the importance of intergenerational persistence in schooling on the increase in college attainment for both genders. If the parents' schooling distribution is fixed at the 1946 cohort levels, college attainments in 1996 drop by 9.1 and 8.3 percentage points for males and females, respectively. The model endogenously generates the pattern that a college-educated parent is substantially more likely to have a college-educated daughter or son than is a non-college graduate, even after controlling for the education of the other parent. This link between parents' and children's schooling provides an intergenerational propagation mechanism: as the number of college-educated parents increases, their children become more likely to attend college. Thus, the gradual transformation of parental education acts as a mechanism to propagate changes in college attainment.

What accounts for females in the last generation overtaking males in college attainment? We find that increasing divorce probabilities are crucial in explaining the relative increase in female college attainment. The rise in divorce probabilities decreases college attainment for males and increases college attainment for females. Without the observed changes in divorce probabilities, females' college attainment would have been always lower than that of males. Two factors are relevant here. First, among married persons, the returns to college education are higher for males than those for females. Second, among divorced persons, the return to college education is higher for females than for males. As divorce probabilities increase, the returns to college for divorced females become high enough to compensate for the low returns to college for married females, and thus female college enrollment exceeds that of males.

This paper contributes to an active and growing literature on gender differences in educational attainment. Several papers have studied college enrollment and graduation by gender for one cohort. Averett and Burton (1996) focus on the gender differences in college enrollment for young individuals in 1979. Rios-Rull and Sanchez-Marcos (2002) construct a model to explain why males had higher college attainment than females in the 1970s. Jacob (2002) finds that higher non-cognitive skills and college premiums among women account for most of the gender gap in higher education enrollment in 1988. Those papers focus only on one cohort and thus cannot examine the trends. To our knowledge, our paper is the first that incorporates several factors in a structural model to quantitatively account for the reversal of the gender gap in college attainment. For the full paper go to: *www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1465-7295.2010.00338.x/full*

By Linda Babcock, Sara Laschever, Michele Gelfand, and Deborah Small. Published in the Harvard Business Review.

NICE GIRLS DON'T ASK

Women negotiate less than men – and everyone pays the price.

Men and women are still treated unequally in the workplace. Women continue to earn less, on average, for the same performance, and they remain underrepresented in top jobs. Research has shown that both conscious and subconscious biases contribute to this problem. But we've discovered another, subtler source of inequality: Women often don't get what they want and deserve because they don't ask for it. In three separate studies, we found that men are more likely than women to negotiate for what they want. This can be costly for companies – and it requires management intervention.

The first study found that the starting salaries of male MBAs who had recently graduated from Carnegie Mellon were 7.6%, or almost $4,000, higher on average that those of female MBAs from the same program. Tha'ts because most of the women had simply accepted the employer's initial salary offer; in fact, only 7% had attempted to negotiate. But 57% of their male counterparts – or eight times as many men as women – had asked for more.

Another study tested this gender difference in the lab. Subjects were told that they would be observed playing a word game and that they would be paid between $3 and $10 for playing. After each subject completed the task, an experimenter thanked the participant and said, "Here's $3. Is $3 OK?" For the men, it was not OK, and they said so. Their requests for more money exceeded the women's by nine to one.

The largest of the three studies surveyed several hundred people over the internet, asking respondents about the most recent negotiations they'd attempted or initiated and when they expected to negotiate next. The study showed that men place themselves in negotiation situations more often than women do and regard more of their interactions as potential negotiations (See the exhibit "Can We Talk?")

Getting What You Settle For

Women are less likely than me to negotiate for themselves for several reasons. First, they often are socialized from an early age not to promote their own interests and to focus instead on the needs of others. The messages girls received – from parents teachers, other children and the media, and society in general – can be so powerful that when they grow up they may not realize that they've internalized their behaviour, or they may realize it but not understand how it affects their willingness to negotiate. Women tend to assume that they will be recognized and rewarded for working hard and doing a good job. Unlike men, they haven't been taught that they can ask for more.

Second, many companies' cultures penalise women when they do ask – further discouraging them from doing so. Women who assertively pursue their own ambitions and promote their own interests may be labelled as bitchy or pushy. They frequently see their work devalued and find themselves ostracized or excluded from access to information. These responses from women's colleagues and supervisors may not be conscious or part of any concerted effort to "hold women back". More typically, they're a product of society's ingrained expectations about how women should act.

As a result, women in business often watch their male colleagues pull ahead, receive better assignments, get promoted more quickly, and earn more money. Observing these inequalities, women become disenchanted with their employers. When a better offer comes along, rather than using that offer as a negotiating tool, women may take it and quit. This happens even in organizations that make concerted efforts to treat women fairly. Managers who believe (rightly) that an important part of their jobs is to keep employees happy may give women smaller pieces of the pie simply because they give their employees what they ask for. They do not realize the men are asking for a lot more than the women are.

Making the World Negotiable

Managers need to confront this problem. At the individual level they can mentor the women they supervise, advising them on the benefits (and the necessity) of asking for what they need to do their jobs effectively and fulfil their professional goals. Managers also can make sure that women understand how many aspects of their working lives can be negotiated. This can effectively compensate for women's more limited access to many of the professional and social networks in which men learn these lessons. Our studies found that women respond immediately and powerfully to advising and rapidly begin to see the world as a much more negotiated place.

Managers also should pay attention to the different rates at which men and women ask for advantages and opportunities. For example, managers should assume that the person requesting an assignment (often a male) wants it most – and therefore will be most motivated and do the best job. Good managers realize that an equally qualified woman might be just as interested and motivated.

Similarly, when a man asks for a raise and women doing comparable work does not, a good manager should consider giving both, or neither, of them raises. That way, the manager can help to ensure that the company is treating its employees equitably and prevent the woman from becoming disillusioned if she later discovers a pay difference.

Managers can also develop detailed and transparent systems to evaluate whether they're doling out opportunities and rewards to all employees based on skills and merit, rather than who asks who doesn't. Incentives for managers themselves don't hurt either: They should be measured on how *all* of their reports are advancing.

Finally, managers should drive larger scale cultural change. Throughout any organization, undoubtedly, people respond in different ways to the same behaviour in men and women – behavior that in a man might be called assertive or principled in a woman might be considered overbearing and strident, for example. By finding ways to examine different responses, leaders can open eyes to hidden barriers and create an atmosphere in which women and men can ask – and receive – equally.

Mellon Humanities and Social Science Academic Staff Development Grant

The Mellon Humanities and Social Science Academic Staff Development Grant supports the employment of replacement lecturers to allow staff members to take special leave to complete a Doctoral thesis, or an associated scholarly output which will advance their academic career at Rhodes University.

Through a generous grant from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, four teaching relief grants per annum are available over a four year period starting in the second semester of 2008. Each grant provides for the employment of a replacement lecturer, usually for a period of 3-4 months.

Purpose:

The high level objective of this grant is to increase the number of academic staff in the Faculty of Humanities at Rhodes University possessing PhD degrees, and who will actively contribute to the research output in terms of publication of scholarly material and supervision of postgraduate students.

Grants of up to R50 000 will be considered, specifically for the employment of a replacement lecturer (or lecturers) to relieve the applicant of their normal work load for a period of targeted academic leave linked to specific scholarly outcomes.

Eligibility:

Permanent and contract[1]* academic staff employed within the Faculty of Humanities at Rhodes University or an associated institute of this faculty, and who are following an academic career track, are eligible to apply for this grant.

Applicants should normally be close to completion of a PhD thesis, or alternatively should have recently completed a PhD thesis and be in a position to produce research outputs in the period of leave. In exceptional, strongly motivated circumstances, applications from emerging researchers linked to other scholarly outcomes may be considered.

Preference is given to candidates who are able to use the grant to complete a PhD degree, and to black and/or women academic staff. Thereafter, grants are awarded on a competitive basis, based upon the academic strength and the practical likelihood of the intended outcomes being achieved. Where relevant, reports of previous periods of academic leave are taken into account. The financial cost effectiveness of the application is also used as a consideration.

While not a prerequisite for funding under this grant, candidates are strongly encouraged to also make application to the NRF's Thuthuka programme for complementary funding, and to use the funding under this grant as the institutional co-funding component.

Application Process:

Applications should be submitted to the Human Resources Division at Rhodes University using the Academic Leave Application form.

The selection committee comprises the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Development, the Dean of Humanities, and one additional member appointed by the Deans' Committee.

Applications need prior approval from the Dean of Humanities in conjunction with their Head of Department, to ensure that a replacement acceptable to the department is available, and that the departmental teaching programme will not be adversely affected.

The applicant may be required to schedule the timing of the special leave in a way that lessens the impact on their department.

Special leave provided through this grant does not affect the applicant's eligibility or credit towards normal academic leave that might be provided for in their contract with Rhodes University, and the period spent on special leave will earn academic leave credit if applicable.

Consistent with the general conditions of academic leave, an individual granted special leave under this grant may not resign during this period of leave, and will be required to work for the corresponding length of time after the leave has been completed and the individual has returned to their normal duties.

Expected outcomes:

The minimum expected outcome at the end of the period of special leave will normally be a PhD thesis, an accredited journal article, a scholarly book chapter, or a book manuscript.

In exceptional circumstances, the completion of a Masters thesis or the acceptance of a PhD proposal by the Higher Degrees committee may be considered as an expected outcome.

[1] To qualify, contract staff would normally be required to have served the university for at least three years, or be on a 3-year contract.

Kresge Foundation Accelerated Development Programme

Purpose and Intent

The development programme, initiated as a result of the University's strategic intent to enhance the diversity of staff, seeks to accelerate the academic careers of individuals from designated groups thereby better equipping them to compete for permanent positions at Rhodes University. This is done through providing opportunities to acquire, within a mentoring system, teaching experience, research skills and further disciplinary and/or teaching qualifications.

Nature of Development Posts

These are three-year part-time contract posts, at the level of lecturer or junior lecturer, where appointment at the level of lecturer will require at least a Masters degree, and appointment at Junior Lecturer level will require at least a Honours degree.

Each candidate will be required to submit a development plan within the first three months of their contract. The plan should outline their developmental goals in respect of research, teaching and administration for the three year period. Each candidate's development plan will be different depending on his/her academic qualification and experience in terms of research and administration.

Table 1 below provides guidelines for the development plan.

Table 1

Requirements	Appointee with Honours degree	Appointee with Masters degree	Appointee with PhD
Research	Registration for a Masters degree & acceptance of research proposal by end of first year of contract. Completion of Masters degree by end of contract.	Registration for a PhD & acceptance of research proposal by end of first year of the contract. Substantial progress towards the completion of the degree by end of contract.	Active involvement in a research project with substantial progress having been made by the end of the contract. Submission & acceptance of at least one research paper by an accredited journal by end of contract. Presentation of research paper at least at one conference.
Teaching	Appropriate teaching responsibilities (approximately 50% or less of a normal teaching load). Completion of at least the Assessment module of the Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE) offered by the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL). Submission of a teaching portfolio by end of contract. Sustained interaction with a member of the CHERTL to facilitate teaching development.	Appropriate teaching responsibilities (approximately 50% or less of a normal teaching load). Completion of at least two modules of the PGDHE. Submission of a teaching portfolio by end of contract. Sustained interaction with a member of the CHERTL to facilitate teaching development.	Appropriate teaching responsibilities (approximately 50% or less of a normal teaching load). Completion of the PGDHE. Submission of a teaching portfolio by end of contract.
Administration	50% of that which is usually allocated to a junior lecturer.	50% of that which is usually allocated to the level of post.	50% of that which is usually allocated to a lecturer.

Women's Academic Solidarity Association

Breaking new grounds and strengthening sisterhood at Rhodes

By Siphokazi Magadla (Political and International Studies)

In August 2004, the year Rhodes University was celebrating 100 years of life, Women's Academic Solidarity Association (WASA) was birthed. Its original aim was to create a non-threatening and welcoming space for women (both academic and administrative) in an elitist and masculinist institution. The mobilization by the women who founded WASA was therefore a recognition that an intrinsic way to ensure that Rhodes' future resembles its rich diversity was to ensure that better conditions are created for women to thrive and that their efforts which are usually invisible in institutions of higher learning are brought to light.

Eight years later, WASA has the requisite institutional support and funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provides ways to support women in their various efforts and their strengths -- be it through the provision of space for women academics to strengthen their capacities as teachers and researchers, or creation of social and professional bonds that assist them to create a new culture at Rhodes that is receptive to their interests. In specific terms, the overall support and funding to provide ways in which we can ensure that more women graduate at postgraduate levels: by providing writing breakaways where they concentrate on their research work, by funding their conference expenses, putting them in touch with editors of journals and offering a diversity of seminars that speak to the various interests of women.

WASA has truly provided a much needed mentoring space for women at Rhodes who often find academic life isolating and at times irreconcilable with some of their other demands such as family. This first ever issue of the WASA newsletter is a proud moment as it will help us to strengthen the network of women at Rhodes and WASArians all over the globe! The newsletter is a platform to share the various efforts of WASA women and the growth of this love child. In this first issue outgoing WASA chairwoman Corinne Knowles lets us in on her participation on the Red Tent film project in her piece "Telling herstory and painting the sisterhood red: the Red Tent Filming project". The project is led by Darlene Miller, the founder of WASA, who is now with the Human Sciences Research Council. In the second article we celebrate the achievement of a legendary WASArian, Joy Owen who has recently completed her PhD in Anthropology. To inspire WASArians who are either starting their PhD journey, in the middle of it or towards the end, Joy reflects on the twists and turns of her journey in "The Road Less Travelled: Surviving the PhD". The last piece is also a reflection by a new generation WASArian and former WASA administrator Pamella Ntshakaza who is working towards completing her Masters in Microbiology. Her piece is titled "Finding the Master: discovery of self through the thesis writing process".

CONTENTS

WASA Upcoming events

05 March- WASA AGM (5pm, Humanities Seminar Room)

27 April- WASA Writing Breakaway

WASA committee details

Precious Tanyanyiwa, WASA Administrator- g05t4797@campus.ru.ac.za

Mathe Maema, co-Chair- g07m5064@campus.ru.ac.za

Siphokazi Magadla, co-Chair- S.Magadla@ru.ac.za

Teboho Mosuoe, Committee member- mosuoet@gmail.com

Eligibility of Applicants

The following are eligible:

1. Black (African, Coloured, Indian and Chinese) men or women postgraduate South African students;
2. African scholars from the rest of Africa (bearing in mind the Department of Labour's requirements that the post is advertised and there are no suitable South Africans);
3. Those who meet the requirements set out in point 1 and 2 above and who show promise in their chosen academic disciplines and who are committed to pursuing a long-term career in the university environment.

Selection process

Candidates should be:

- about to commence, or be in the early stages of their careers with a clear focus on developing and pursuing an academic career;
- in possession of at least the following minimum educational requirements
  - a Masters degree for consideration for posts in the Science and Pharmacy Faculties
  - a LLM degree for consideration for a post in the Law Faculty
  - a Masters degree for consideration for posts in the Faculties of Humanities and Education.
  - usually a Masters degree for consideration in the Commerce Faculty, although consideration may be given to a Honours degree in specific disciplines.

In addition, candidates should have:

- the ability and desire to develop as a teacher;
- the ability and desire to pursue an active research career;
- the potential to manage the multiple demands of academic life;
- the intention to complete a further degree (if PhD not complete);
- considerable academic achievements;
- an openness to diversity;
- a commitment to collegiality;
- an interest in and abilities related to administration.

In terms of the Department of Home Affairs, in the appointment of a foreign national, the University needs to demonstrate that no suitable South Africans are available for appointment. In terms of South Africans, only Black South Africans are eligible for this particular programme. Thereafter, in line with the Department of Home Affairs' regulations, African candidates are eligible and will be chosen.

Where there is an equal contest between two South African candidates for a single post in a department, consideration will be given to the demographic profile of the department and the need for diversity.

Selection process where recruitment has taken place externally:

Should the posts need to be advertised nationally, after the closing date for applications, the Recruitment & Selection Section will screen all applications, removing those which are clearly not suitable as per the criteria for selection of candidates. In the event of a large number of suitable applicants, the relevant Deans and Heads of Departments will first be tasked by the Selection Committee to screen the applications and place before the Committee a shorter list of suitable candidates;

The Recruitment & Selection Section will then take all applications to all members of the Selection Committee comprising the Vice-Chancellor or the DVC Teaching and Student Affairs as Chairperson, , the Dean of Teaching and Learning, a representative from CHERTL and the relevant Dean/s and Heads of Departments;

Short-listed candidates will go through the usual selection process, including giving a short lecture/ presentation and submitting a copy of work/writing sample produced in the course of their academic studies, and referee reports obtained by HR.

Selection processes where screening takes place

The Selection Committee comprising the Vice-Chancellor or the DVC Teaching and Student Affairs as Chairperson, the Dean of Teaching and Learning, a representative from CHERTL and the relevant Dean/s and Heads of Departments shall sit to consider the application;

The candidate will go through the usual selection process.

Conditions of Employment for the Beneficiary

The beneficiary is appointed to a development post under the following terms:

The staff member shall be employed on a part-time basis of 960 hours per annum (48 weeks x 20 hours per week) for the period of the contract. For this the person will be remunerated at 50% of the remuneration for that of a full-time academic at the appropriate level. The staff member shall receive full benefits including contribution to retirement funds, medical aid, housing, service bonus in birthday month, group life benefits;

The staff member shall be given a scholarship for the further study which is defined by section 1091) (q) of the Income Tax Act 58 of 162 as "as the formal process whereby the person enhances his knowledge, intellect or expertise";

Such a scholarship is exempt from tax provided that "the employee agrees to reimburse the employer for any scholarship or bursary granted to that employee if that employee fails to complete his or her studies for reasons other than death, ill-health or injury" (section 10(1)(q) of the Income Tax Act 58 of 1962). The employee need not actually be awarded as degree or certificate at the end of the course of study given the definition of study above. A lack of completion of the development programme would result in the staff member being liable for the full value of each year of the scholarship;

Where there is successful completion of the development programme, for every year of payment of the scholarship, there shall be one year of service required. This means that after the three years on the Kresge development programme the individual shall be required to work for Rhodes University for a further three years. Should the individual leave before the end of this service contract, the person shall be liable for the costs of the scholarship on a pro-rata basis;

The staff member appointed to a Kresge development post will have the same employment status as any other long-term contract member of staff. S/he will be eligible for the same benefits as these staff including access to available transit housing and payment of reasonable relocation expenses;

Should the staff member join the permanent staff at the end of the three-year contract, s/he will only be required to serve a further probationary period of one year, provided that all probationary requirements are met;

The staff member will accrue academic leave retrospectively from the first day of his/her employment on the contract post at a rate of 1 month per year of service;

Staff appointed at the junior lecturer level on the contract post will usually be promoted to lecturer upon successful completion of the Masters degree within the contract period;

Associated Costs of Development Posts

The staffing costs of these development posts are paid for by the Kresge Foundation grant. The interest accrued from this grant is to be used for costs associated with the appointment of these staff including the recruitment and selection costs, relocation expenses, development activity costs (including the cost of compensating mentors) and other expenses deemed suitable.

(Note: this is abridged version detailing the purpose and requirements of the programme.)

By Dr Nomalanga Mkhize is a lecturer in the Rhodes University Department of History. Published in Oppidan Press and The Sowetan, May 2013
This article is a direct follow-up to a question posed to Dr Nomalanga Mkhize at a Women's Academic Solidarity Association (WASA) discussion entitled: "Teaching the Born Frees: The Dea(r)th of Youth Intellectualism in the Post-Apartheid University".

Re-configuring South Africa's Youth Political Sphere

A challenge was posed to me by the Chairperson of the Rhodes University South African Students Congress (SASCO), Mthobisi Buthelezi, at the seminar on "teaching born frees".

He asked me to define what I meant when I said there was a missing "in-between sphere" in contemporary South African youth politics.

At the seminar I defined two dominant spheres of post-apartheid "youth political activity". I speak here of a type of approach to political engagement, not a type of person.

The first is a largely middle-class sphere whose points of political engagement are informed by the mainstream media and online platforms.

Here you largely find debates which titillate an educated class that believes it is part of a broad 'civic intellectual culture'.

This sphere is mostly confined to the economic elite and driven by a narcissistic individualism cultivated by our Model C and private schools system where we are led to believe we are natural leaders destined to be the most important voices in society.

The pinnacle of achievement in this sphere is the creation of a 'personal brand', 'media profile' and 'fame' and perhaps an appearance on some top young people list.

There are no new political insights to be found here, political conversations follow and regurgitate the mainstream media cycle.

The second sphere is what I crudely termed the 'mass populism' domain.

This sphere is dominated by ANC-alliance structures. Political engagement is largely treated as a mass mobilisation affair or internal party concern. This is the sphere of Floyd Shivambu and Julius Malema, where the majority of politically interested students, learners, and unemployed youth are located.

Here, issues are framed in a hodge-podge of Marxism, African traditionalism, African nationalism, non-racialism, Pan-Africanism, and government bureaucratic speak. More and more, the aim of this sphere is to discourage pointed questioning of the ANC's current malaise and the deep flaws of its individual leaders.

In-between these two political spheres there exists a very small space where the possibility for a more independent youth public politics may emerge.

But does this space exist or is it mere possibility?

It exists, but barely.

We see youth-led groups in townships, informal settlements, rural areas rejecting partisan politics in favour of locally informed concerns; black-driven middle-class campus groups organising critical dialogue spaces; gender and sexuality campaigns critiquing elitism in their own political communities; privileged suburban kids volunteering, teaching, tutoring without drawing attention to themselves or assuming intellectual leadership over the poor; circles of poets, hip-hop heads and tavern-intellectuals who discuss political theory over quarts.

What they all have in common is a strong understanding of African emancipatory traditions and some desire to critically adapt them for today's community concerns.

But this public sphere is tiny. The problem is one of imagination.

Post-apartheid youth, regardless of partisanship, have not yet seen that we have to create a new intellectual tradition from scratch.

Liberation traditions evolved in the context where "capturing" the state was the end goal. However, the "capture" has spawned a litany of failures by African leaders who refuse to give people genuine democratic power.

Thus while we have a political language of "capture", we have yet to institutionalise accountability.

We talk of dismantling "white monopoly capital" by "socialising the means of production" but there's little emphasis on how to "democratise the means of state and fiscal administration" which have been captured by our liberation movements.

The intellectual work is necessary; we must do it on our own terms for our own sakes.

Frustrated young people complain: "But we talk too much, we need to act!"

I disagree with this notion – of importance is what you are talking about, who set the agenda and who does most of the talking.

Within the non-governmental and volunteer sector we regularly see 'well-intentioned' people doing a great many things to 'help'. Yet, their models of action are questionable and at worst, downright self-serving and exploitative.

Furthermore, dissent is often shutdown by the government when it tells us to stop complaining and come up practical and constructive suggestions to problems.

In reality, some of the best ideas come out of fearless disagreement.

There is no need to look far; the rich traditions of debate in the African National Congress and the Black Consciousness Movements attest to centrality of engaged intellectualism to political action.

There can be no credible politics without credible ideas.

THE WASArian
Breaking new grounds and strengthening sisterhood at Rhodes
Issue 3 April 2013

Inside...

An account of my writing breakaways: A lesson into how planning can enhance writing

Tribute to Lady Justice: Adv. Thuli Madonsela

Semester Calendar 2013

A recent report reveals that only 42% of third year female PhD students want a career in academia. Curt Rice looks at the reasons why and warns that universities' survival is at risk
Published in The Guardian, UK, 24 May 2012

Why women leave academia
and why universities should be worried

Young women scientists leave academia in far greater numbers than men for three reasons. During their time as PhD candidates, large numbers of women conclude that
(i) the characteristics of academic careers are unappealing, (ii) the impediments they will encounter are disproportionate, and (iii) the sacrifices they will have to make are great.

This is the conclusion of The chemistry PhD: the impact on women's retention, a report for the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET and the Royal Society of Chemistry. In this report, the results of a longitudinal study with PhD students in chemistry in the UK are presented.

Men and women show radically different developments regarding their intended future careers. At the beginning of their studies, 72% of women express an intention to pursue careers as researchers, either in industry or academia. Among men, 61% express the same intention.

By the third year, the proportion of men planning careers in research had dropped from 61% to 59%. But for the women, the number had plummeted from 72% in the first year to 37% as they finish their studies.

If we tease apart those who want to work as researchers in industry from those who want to work as researchers in academia, the third year numbers are alarming: 12% of the women and 21% of the men see academia as their preferred choice.

This is not the number of PhD students who in fact do go to academia; it's the number who want to. 88% of the women don't even want academic careers, nor do 79% of the men! How can it be this bad? Why are universities such unattractive workplaces?

Part of The chemistry PhD discusses problems that arise while young researchers are PhD candidates, including too little supervision, too much supervision, focus on achieving experimental results rather than mastery of methodologies, and much more. The long-term effects, though, are reflected in the attitudes and beliefs about academia that emerge during this period.

The participants in the study identify many characteristics of academic careers that they find unappealing: the constant hunt for funding for research projects is a significant impediment for both men and women. But women in greater numbers than men see academic careers as all-consuming, solitary and as unnecessarily competitive.

Both men and women PhD candidates come to realise that a string of post-docs is part of a career path, and they see that this can require frequent moves and a lack of security about future employment. Women are more negatively affected than men by the competitiveness in this stage of an academic career and their concerns about competitiveness are fuelled, they say, by a relative lack of self-confidence.

Women more than men see great sacrifice as a prerequisite for success in academia. This comes in part from their perception of women who have succeeded, from the nature of the available role models. Successful female professors are perceived by female PhD candidates as displaying masculine characteristics, such as aggression and competitiveness, and they were often childless.

As if all this were not enough, women PhD candidates had one experience that men never have. They were told that they would encounter problems along the way simply because they are women. They are told, in other words, that their gender will work against them.

By following PhD candidates throughout their study and asking probing questions, we learn not only that the number of women in chemistry PhD programs who intend to pursue a career in academia falls dramatically, but we learn why. (See also Why go for a PhD? Advice for those in doubt.)

This research and the new knowledge it produces should be required reading for everyone leading a university or a research group. The stories surely apply far beyond chemistry. Remember that it's not just women who find academia unappealing. Only 21% of the men wanted to head our way, too.

Universities will not survive as research institutions unless university leadership realises that the working conditions they offer dramatically reduce the size of the pool from which they recruit. We will not survive because we have no reason to believe we are attracting the best and the brightest. When industry is the more attractive employer, our credibility as the home of long-term, cutting edge, high-risk, profoundly creative research, is diminished.

The answers here lie in leadership and in changing our current culture to build a new one for new challenges. The job is significant and it will require cutting edge, high-risk leadership teamwork to succeed. Is your university ready?

Curt Rice is a regular contributor at University of Venus and vice president for research at the University of Tromsø in Norway.

By Aneesa Fazel.
Publised in the Mail & Guardian on 9 November 2012.

Women battle ivory-tower bias

Being overlooked for promotion, racial discrimination and intimidating institutional environments are daunting challenges for women academics.

This emerged at this year's annual Higher Education Resource Services South Africa (Hers-SA) academy, held in Cape Town in September.

Registered as a non-profit organisation in 2003, Hers-SA aims to provide women academics and administrators from South Africa and abroad the opportunities to network with each other and gain skills such as strategic planning to enhance their careers. The organisation has close to 1 000 alumnae, of whom 81 attended this year's academy.

Some of the challenges women experience at their universities must be highlighted and addressed, but their identities must be kept confidential, Hers-SA director Dr Sabie Surtee told the *Mail & Guardian*. "The institutional climate that some of these women are in can be very intimidating, and this makes it difficult for them to speak out. They are afraid of being targeted ... for expressing their concerns at work, and this in itself is one of the problems that women in higher education are facing."

One such example is that of an academic, one of only two black members of her university's senate. A delegate at this year's Hers-SA academy, she said she was still being harassed by her white colleagues after occupying the senior post for two years.

"If you are qualified to occupy a position, they have to notice you and this is because of the country's transformation," she said, asking that she not be named. "But transformation is just a smoke screen. They don't have a choice, but they can do other things to make your life miserable.

"I was asked once by one of the male staff: 'What are doing sitting in that chair, haven't you people taken enough?"

Intimidation and victimisation

Problems such as this "affect everything", she said — "my health, my emotional well-being. I am not sure what I will do from here. I have tried to take it up to the highest people in the university but it never gets addressed. I don't speak about it, because I am afraid of more intimidation and victimisation."

Another delegate to the conference told the *M&G* that other women themselves may pose problems. Some have been "negative about her success" in the institution.

"I feel very isolated and have no support. One of my colleagues once told me not to apply for a certain position because I don't have the necessary experience. I later found out that she had applied for the same position. Even though it is important to look at changing attitudes of men to women, we must also look at the attitude of women to other women," she said.

Surtee said that the annual Hers-SA academy gives women academics the opportunity to gain skills and mechanisms to help them face a variety of problems.

"Many women who are involved in Hers-SA have gone on to occupy higher positions and are better equipped to handle pressure in their working environments."

Prof Nonceba Mbambo-Kekana, director of the school of sciences at the University of Limpopo, told the M&G the Hers-SA programmes have allowed her to manage her work in a better way.

Inspiring

"Attending the academy and other programmes and workshops inspires me because I become aware of how many other women experience the same issues. Since I joined Hers-SA in 2004, I have also had access to information about higher education [through the organisation's newsletter] that I otherwise would not have known; it gives me the bigger picture of things. Hers-SA is a great success because it brings in quality speakers who discuss issues that are relevant to women in higher education today."

Delivering the keynote address at this year's conference, the then minister of science and technology, Naledi Pandor, said: "A great deal of work remains to be done in the higher education sector. The traditional social stereotypes that influence women's progress in higher education remain in place and require dedicated and strategic attention.

"Decades of struggle by women intellectuals have shown that focused and well-crafted joint strategies are the best means of reversing the discrimination that continues to be a part of higher education."

Pandor said that initiatives to increase the number of researchers were under way and the focus would be on ensuring the individuals' gender, age and race were representative of the general population.

One of these initiatives is the Thuthuka programme run by the National Research Foundation. It operates within higher education and aims to enhance the research skills of blacks, coloureds, Indians, women and people with disabilities.

By Anna Karien-Otto, Rhodes news. Published on 12 September 2012, Rhodes University.

"Women in law who the heck do we think you are?"

"Despite having an aversion to presenting myself as a woman first and foremost, it is incumbent upon me to silence the corporate clamour of being a woman," says Justice Belinda Hartle of the Bhisho High Court.

With a talk entitled "Women in law who the heck do we think you are?" it was clear whom she was addressing: young women about to embark upon the "bumpy ride" of becoming law officers. The occasion was a joint initiative of the Rhodes Law faculty and the Office of the Chief Justice.

Currently occupying the Office of the Chief Justice in Port Elizabeth, Ms Hartle is passionate about motivating young people and sharing her experiences. These include having been appointed as small Claims Court Commissioner, a human rights litigator and an honorary member of the Grahamstown rape crisis centre while practicing at Mark Nettelton's attorneys in Grahamstown.

No stranger to Rhodes, she served as presiding officer in the moot courtroom during the faculty opening in 2011. Having completed a B.Juris Degree at the then University of Port Elizabeth as a recipient of a Justice Bursary, she has served on the bench of the Port Elizabeth Bar of Advocates since 2002.

"I have tried to pursue my own struggle in the judiciary outside a gender context, she said. "My self-worth is not rooted in my gender, but in my capacity as a judiciary." Candid and unassumingly entertaining, she invited her audience to ask questions about gender conflicts they may face in the workplace and classroom.

She paid tribute to the Office of the Chief Justice's initiative to encourage and affirm young practitioners and expressed her hope that this interest would extend to offering bursaries and scholarships in the future, besides existing training to equip women with judicial skills.

"Why can't some of us stay the course and achieve the same successes as men?" she asked. In a world beset with gender-based violence, "which has no race, class or professional bias," she questioned the "skewed view" that women are unfit for the demands of the judiciary, using both recent and current examples.

Citing Margalynne Armstrong's *Meditations on Being Good* (1997), she described how when Armstrong joined the faculty as professor at Santa Clara University of Law, two black woman introducing themselves to her exhorted: "Girl, you'd better be good!"

Analysing the various meanings of this statement, she came to the conclusion that "men are unlikely to be warned 'to be good.'" Ms Hartle added that: "Most often these words are uttered mostly silently, for those who break through yet another glass ceiling."

She urged the students to seek advice from a mentor when entering the legal profession, "someone who is actively and intellectually involved" as opposed to a role model, whom one often admires from a distance.

She invited her audience to contact her as she enjoys sharing her experiences and lending assistance, emphasising how those who have succeeded have a moral responsibility to pass on their skills and experience.

Discussing the male personification of the judiciary, right down to the dress code, when Ms Hartle joined the PE bar in 2001, there were only three female members, a marked difference from the present day, where at least a third of its members are women.

"As we evolve as a non-sexist society, we are going to be less and less aware of our differences," she said, recalling a joke that local advocate Dave de la Harpe had made while articled to Netteltons in 1989: "...but you're not really a woman!"

Referring to Carol Gilligan's distinction between men as "rights-based moralists" and women as "care-based moralists," the latter striving to use care and connection to find a compromise position and answer the needs of the greater number of people.

Quoting from *Thinking Like a Lawyer: Gender differences in the production of professional knowledge*, she said: "A number of feminists have noted that women tend to be relational rather than adversarial, co-operative rather than competitive and emotional and intuitive rather than strictly rational."

Returning to the title of her talk, she said a compelling challenge for all women is to gain confidence in their ability. "When asking of another, who the heck do you think you are? that person is invariably asking, what am I not?" and we should not begin with the premise that we have a disability because we are not men."

"I hope you will answer that you are worthy and equal to the task."

By Victoria John. Published on the Mail & Guardian *website on 4 May 2012. Originally published in:* Getting Ahead

Women academics work it out

A woman's association at the University of Limpopo recently celebrated the support its members have provided for each other in higher education.

"Here I get support, advice and inspiration — You find sisters here."

These were the words of Thembi Ncube at a University of Limpopo event two weeks ago that celebrated women's support for each other through the male-dominated quandaries of academia.

"I'm a parent, a wife, an academic and I have also worked part time.

It's not easy to perform all those roles and there are different expectations for women," Ncube told the *Mail & Guardian*. "You might have a child crying all night long and you are expected to care for it, even though you have a deadline the next morning."

Ncube is a mother of three who is in the process of submitting her PhD on the production of biofuels through the use of grass to the University of Limpopo. The event the M&G attended was the launch of the Polokwane branch of the University of Limpopo Women's Academic Solidarity Association on April 20.

A woman's challenges

"This group understands a woman's challenges," Ncube said. Her words echoed what many women have experienced: the conflict between their domestic and professional roles.

It is a difficulty that many universities do not acknowledge or make provision for—and it is one of the reasons why women remain underrepresented in higher education. Numerous national publications have shown that inequalities still exist between men and women at universities and that, despite progressive legislation on employment equity, academia remains a male-dominated world.

Less than half of the postgraduate students who completed their doctoral studies were women, the Council on Higher Education's 2007 report on the status of women in academia said. Men also did most of the research in South Africa. According to the council's studies between 2005 and 2007, women's share of all papers was between 14% and 37%. Furthermore, only a third of National Research Foundation-rated researchers were women.

But when Esther Ramani, a professor in the school of languages and communication studies, founded the University of Limpopo Women's Academic Solidarity Association in 2007, what had once been a solitary journey for many female academics at Limpopo University became a shared experience ("Sisters in the academic struggle", M&G, April 13).

Ramani recognised the urgent need for specialised support for female academics. Since 2007, the group has grown from 27 to 110 members.

The results

They have published 30 papers, seven honours students have graduated, five women have completed their master's degrees, four have obtained their PhDs and four have had their funding proposals accepted.

On the sunny morning of the association's Polokwane launch at the university's Turfloop campus, chairperson Nancy Malema addressed 150 guests.

She told them many institutions did not acknowledge the conflict that female academics experienced between domestic and academic roles — and that "the masculine culture still exists in many [of these institutions]".

Competitiveness and individualism were strong features of academia, but in the association "we call each other sisters because we believe in supporting each other", she said.

The association's aims include exploring ways of dealing with the personal, administrative, financial and institutional factors inhibiting female researchers at the university, encouraging young female academics to consider a career in research and for more women to supervise research, providing support for publication in national and international journals and networking with women researchers at other institutions.

It has also organised workshops to develop time management, assertiveness and academic writing skills as well as writing retreats where members are given a few days away from university and family responsibilities to focus exclusively on academic writing.

Writing retreats

Members spoke highly of these retreats. "You all sit in a room and do your thing with your laptop and papers. You can get through more work during these retreats than you might do in a whole semester," said Ncube.

The celebration also served as an official launch of the association and the university's vice-chancellor, Mahlo Mokgalong, presided over it.

"It is an honour and a pleasure [to say] the University of Limpopo Women's Academic Solidarity Association, for female academics by female academics, is officially launched," he announced to ululation and dancing by attendants against the loud backdrop of gospel music.

In the sea of orange-branded T-shirts that members of the association wear, the celebratory mood intensified as the proceedings continued.

Guests shouted out their approval during the speeches and rose from their chairs to dance alongside their fellow academics between the official addresses.

Pride and solidarity were tangible in the air.

Ramani reminded guests that without Mokgalong's "generous and unstinting support, we would not have progressed as far as we have".

His office has funded all the writing retreats since 2009.

"Take your dreams for reality," Ramani said. "If you have a powerful dream you can work towards making it real and it can destroy reality."

And women must support each other, she said. "The unity that comes from surrender lasts but a day, but the unity that comes from struggle endures."

She said the University of Limpopo Women's Academic Solidarity Association represented unity, love, work, affinity for each other and, especially, strength and aspirations.

WASA Constitution

Name
The organisation shall be officially known as the Women's Academic Solidarity Association (WASA) and shall be an associate of Rhodes University (RU).

Aims and Objectives
The Association's main objectives are to provide academic, intellectual and professional support to developing women senior students and academic staff at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, with special emphasis on previously disadvantaged women.

The Association's secondary objectives will be to assist members in the following areas:

- Writing and publication;
- To complete post-graduate degrees (Honours, Masters, PhD);
- To achieve promotion within their fields;
- To attend conferences and do presentations in their respective fields;
- To work in collaboration with other like-minded organisations to promote women's development in the Higher Education Sector.

Membership
- Membership shall be open to all women academics, students and researchers based at Rhodes University who identify with the aims and objectives of the Association;
- Membership shall be granted by the Executive Committee and ratified at meetings of the general body;
- The Association will seek to work in collaboration with other like-minded organisations to promote women's development in the Higher Education;
- The Association will seek to address gender issues affecting its members, and women and girls in all communities, in all spheres.

Aims
To achieve these objectives, WASA aims:

1. To improve the qualifications of the group members by:
   - Encouraging members to register for postgraduate degrees and diplomas, and disseminating relevant scholarship and bursary information;
2. To provide support and resources to enhance the publication profile of members by:
   - Discussing each other's research material with the intention of improving both writing and presentation skills;
   - Establishing networks with the key role-players in the publication review process;
   - Identifying and accessing sources of funding to facilitate research activities;
   - Encouraging group members to attend and present papers at local and international conferences .
3. To provide developmental opportunities for our members by:
   - Identifying potential academic mentors in the appropriate fields;
   - Inviting academic women role models to address the group on pertinent issues;
   - Disseminating relevant information regarding training programmes, vacancies, etc;
   - Providing efficient career-path guidance for our members;
   - Creating links with active women's organisations with similar goals.
4. To create a social support network.

The Executive Committee
The executive committee is the main decision-making body of WASA and shall consist of the following officers:

1. Chairperson/s
2. Deputy Chairperson
3. Secretary
4. Assistant Secretary
5. Treasurer
6. Ex officio (Mentoring Groups)
7. Ex officio (SEWSA)

Duties of the Executive Committee
The Executive Committee shall oversee the activities of the organisation;
The Executive Committee must present an annual audit and financial report to the membership and the University;
The Executive Committee must liaise with the relevant University offices for assistance in the organisation of WASA activities;
The Executive Committee shall co-opt ad-hoc portfolios if deemed necessary.

General Meetings and Quorums
1. A membership meeting shall be held at least once every academic term;
2. Emergency meetings shall be called by at least two of the Executive Committee members upon request of any member of the Executive Committee or of the membership;
3. A general meeting shall be held twice a year to address official issues and business relating to the association;
4. One third of the members of the membership shall constitute a quorum of any membership meeting;
5. The choosing of officers of the Executive Committee by the membership shall be done through secret balloting at a general membership meeting every academic semester;
6. All nominees for office should be present at time of election but, with prior arrangement, may be elected by proxy.

Financial Transactions
All financial transactions shall be signed by two of the three (3) Executive Committee members whose signatures are filed with Rhodes University.

Constitutional Amendment
The constitution may be amended upon petition by a member and on approval by a simple majority vote of the membership.

Dissolution
In the event of the associations dissolution the remaining funds will be handed over to a like-minded organisation.

Fees
The Association may seek membership fees from all members;
These membership fees should be on a sliding scale to ensure equity of contribution from members;
Additional fees for associate members, supporters or other institutional structures may be sought.

(Note: this is an abridged version of the Constitution. For the full constitution contact WASA)

THE WASArian

Breaking new grounds and strengthening sisterhood at Rhodes

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WASA congratulates Anthea Garman

PhD Comic - for a bit of humour

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