FROM **HOPE** TO **ACTION** THROUGH **KNOWLEDGE**

The Renaissance of the
University of the Western Cape

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Editors

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UWC through the Lens of Strategic Planning in a Rapidly Changing Context

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Introduction

Learning to see and understand differently is still the primary challenge in South Africa's ongoing transition to democracy [...] Transformation of the kind that enables people to move beyond apartheid's authoritarian certainties requires a profound paradigm shift from both oppressor and oppressed. The shift is inseparable from a global challenge. New perspectives and new knowledge are required to respond to the non-linear, persistent and ubiquitous changes, both social and natural, that are now beginning to impact on humans across the world. It is in partnerships across cultures and nationalities that we are most likely to gain these perspectives and find this knowledge. And it is in partnerships that we find the assurance and the social conviction necessary to make the new knowledge and perspective available and ultimately unavoidable.

Extract from a Foreword by Brian O'Connell, in Tapscott, Slembrouck, Pokpas, Ridge & Ridge, 2014: p. v

This understanding of what Prof Brian O'Connell saw as the primary challenge for South Africa in the post-apartheid period was central to his vision for the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and its role in the country's reconstruction and development. However, he was equally aware that building a university able to contribute to these new perspectives and knowledge required careful processes of change within UWC itself.

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He recognised that, on the one hand, such change needed to build on UWC's strong intellectual tradition and the location of this tradition as an oppositional one in relation to the apartheid system, acknowledging this past, but also recognising the importance of moving forward. These change processes also needed to facilitate new understandings and practices across the University, enabling it to confidently take on this challenge within a constantly changing and increasingly competitive national and global context. However, he was acutely aware of the complexities of such institutional change and how important leadership-driven processes of planning, often across traditional institutional boundaries, were to it. This chapter discusses the strategic planning processes taken forward over the thirteen years of Prof O'Connell's leadership. In particular, it reflects on the development and implementation between 2001 and 2014 of three institutional strategic plans, constructed and taken forward as defining frameworks for change to give effect to UWC's mission and long-term aspirations. We consider some of the contextual issues that confronted UWC over this period and reflect on the challenges, inherent tensions and magnitude of effort that accompanied these university-wide planning processes, drawing out what we believe were important understandings articulated by Prof O'Connell of the university and its role in society and how these shaped his leadership of the change processes. We also explore some of the key strategic issues that were important to UWC's development over this planning period.

While each of the periods in the development of these strategic plans was informed by particular political, economic and social issues confronting the broader society, nationally and globally, overall the period discussed here was especially fluid and challenging for the public higher education system in South Africa. Central here was a rapidly changing global environment "increasingly dependent on knowledge and information", and a national environment grappling with redressing the deep inequalities of the past, while simultaneously pursuing the growth and development of the country's 'fledgling democracy' (Badat, 2004: p. 4). For the government, part of this challenge involved steering the higher education system towards a planned, unified and well-articulated national system, which included, among other things, the introduction of new and tighter steering mechanisms (Department of Education, 1997, 2002a). In addition, there was the rapid growth in the higher education sector within a national context of ongoing economic and fiscal pressures, with associated reductions in per capita funding and increased competition

between higher education institutions for students and other resources. All of the above were forces of change, resulting in intensified pressures on planning and the strategic management of institutions.

Key planning moments

UWC's Strategic Plan (2001-2005) and building a case for recapitalisation

When Prof Brian O'Connell took up the position of Rector and Vice-Chancellor of UWC in November 2001, he took over the reins of a university in crisis. He returned to his alma mater to find a university on the verge of bankruptcy and stripped of the majority of its intellectual leaders, who had been called to serve in a range of government and other leadership positions after the democratic elections of 1994. The University's financial position reflected the convergence of a complex set of external and internal forces, historical and contemporary that had resulted, among other things, in significant staff retrenchments in 1998. In 2002 staff morale was therefore still very low with high levels of mistrust of the senior leadership of the institution among many staff members. While the significant drop in student numbers at UWC during the second half of the 1990s had slowed somewhat, they remained low. Prof O'Connell therefore had the daunting task of reshaping UWC's place and identity in a fast-changing post-apartheid higher education landscape, while also having to address the academic and financial sustainability challenges of the University, including trying to unite staff behind a shared vision.

During this period of crisis, although there had been attempts to put in place many of the elements necessary for coherent strategic planning at UWC, the success of these ventures had varied. In 1998 the Senate had approved a new Academic Plan that had been positioned as a framework for strategic planning across the institution. This document acknowledged that to date "(t)oo much planning has been ad hoc rather than organic (or holistic or systemic); academic plans have articulated weakly with financial plans; and there has been a failure to establish clear institutional priorities" (University of the Western Cape, 1998: p. 3).

Although this plan marked a significant step forward for the University, especially in its attempts to move beyond the challenges of the late 1990s, its implementation was to be overshadowed by developments that were taking place across the broader system of public higher education in

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South Africa and that were to have significant implications for UWC and its future. What is important about this 'moment' in the context of this chapter is that it reflected a central planning challenge that Prof O'Connell was confronted with throughout his leadership – the need to persistently manage the inherent tension between moving the University forward along a chosen strategic path and contextual developments that had the potential to significantly undermine this trajectory or to create new opportunities important for the University to consider.

In 2002 the Ministry of Education, in line with its commitment to developing a post-apartheid higher education system, released the report of its National Working Group (NWG) on the restructuring of the higher education landscape. The report, among other findings, expressed concern about UWC's financial sustainability and recommended that it be merged with the Peninsula Technikon (Pentech) (National Working Group, 2002, p.8), to form a "unitary comprehensive institution offering both university-type and technikon-type programmes" (National Working Group, 2002, p.8). Understandably the report was met with huge resistance from the broad UWC community, and Prof O'Connell as the incoming Rector was called on to manage this new crisis for UWC.

In reflecting on this period nearly twenty years later, it is clear that the way in which Prof O'Connell dealt with this challenge reflected key elements of his leadership approach that would become especially important in informing and framing the University's strategic direction and the associated planning. Perhaps the most important of these was the manner in which he drew on a deep and careful understanding of UWC's history and the extent to which the apartheid legacy continued to shape the possibilities for its future. In leading a call through the Senate to challenge the NWG's recommendations for UWC, he argued that UWC's financial vulnerability was strongly related to its apartheid past and its attempts to challenge this legacy, and the University should not be penalised for the persistence of these structural inequalities across the system. Rather, this history and the country's efforts to redress it made it even more important to continue to work towards building UWC as a vibrant intellectual space where working-class students in particular could thrive and new knowledge could be created to support the desired future. However, he emphasised that a rejection of the NWG's recommendation did not mean UWC remained trapped in the past. Instead, significant sacrifice, effort, discipline and dedication would be needed to take UWC forward and, as a critical priority, address its financial challenges. His deep belief in the value

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of these aspirations, but also what would be required to realise them, was evidenced in his call to the UWC community at this time. He asked them to give him and his leadership team a mandate to reject the proposed merger with Pentech and entrust them with the task of leading UWC into a new phase in its development. His recognition of the importance of building aspirations around a desired future for UWC, while also understanding the myriad of challenges facing the institution that would need to be acknowledged and addressed, would frame the processes of strategic planning that followed a decision by the South African Cabinet in 2002 to retain UWC's autonomous status as a public university.

While the first step in building a new future for UWC had begun, the Cabinet decisions on the restructuring of the system and associated government efforts to steer it towards the priorities that had been outlined in its policy framework brought immediate and new planning pressures (Department of Education, 1997, 2002a). The most pressing was the need to arrest the decline in student numbers and to embark on a process of financial recovery through enrolment management, curriculum renewal, cost containment and increasing public confidence in the University. At the system level, the government had also introduced clear directives for the development of new institutional plans. These were aimed at directly linking a new funding framework to the approval of institutional triennial rolling plans (student enrolment plans) resulting in institutional enrolment mandates that would then be used to determine the funding for each institution (Department of Education, 2002a).

The Cabinet's restructuring decisions had also included a directive to incorporate the School of Oral Health Sciences of the Stellenbosch University into UWC's Faculty of Dentistry, and to make UWC the only university in the region offering a first degree in Nursing (Department of Education, 2002b). UWC's leaders, as was the case for many university leaders across the system, were therefore called on to manage a complex process of systemic restructuring, bringing together institutional entities shaped by very different histories and cultures. In accepting this new mandate from the government, UWC had become eligible for recapitalisation, which was essential to address its financial vulnerability and enable it to realise its expanded mandate. Most importantly, however, the recapitalisation was contingent on the submission of an Institutional Operating Plan (IOP) approved by the Department of Education (DoE), a plan that had to provide the details of how it intended to move from where it was to where it needed and wanted to be. For UWC these

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developments meant simultaneously strengthening its capacity to meet the new system-wide planning directives and address the implications of its commitment to move forward as a viable, autonomous institution within a reorganised and restructured system. Collectively they tested the institution's ability to plan, document and execute high-impact projects swiftly, but also to rearticulate its mission and future direction in a changing landscape. What emerged was a range of planning processes aimed at outlining the University's case for recapitalisation and laying the groundwork for the development of a new IOP that could also begin to frame its envisaged future.

Before going on to explore this significant phase of planning at UWC, it is necessary to reflect briefly on an important leadership strategy pursued by Prof O'Connell at this time, which we believe was especially important to UWC's development over the next ten years. This was his decision to position the institutional planning function at UWC centrally within his office, driven and managed by a member of his senior management team. What is especially noteworthy about this approach is that he positioned, both physically and conceptually, the planning around UWC's strategic direction and the institutional change processes necessary to realise these goals as a leadership mandate and responsibility. Moreover, he recognised institutional planning (which included ongoing reflective thinking and overseeing successful implementation) as a critical lever for change, rather than a technical function removed from the leadership's vision and processes of decision-making.

UWC Institutional Operating Plans 2005-2009 and 2010-2014: Rebuilding UWC

Based on the IOP submitted to the DoE, UWC received once-off recapitalisation funds in March 2005. This placed it on a stronger financial footing, enabling it to begin to develop better alignment between planning and resource allocation to deliver on its mandate and planned goals. Not unexpectedly, elements of the planning process continued to render the institution vulnerable, as did emerging contextual challenges, including those arising from the government's efforts to operationalise its restructuring imperatives. The latter included the implementation of processes aimed at aligning institutional missions with their systemic mandates and strengthening their capacity to deliver on these mandates (Higher Education Quality Committee, 2004).

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The planning processes that had been initiated as part of the development of the plan for recapitalisation had resulted in a strategic plan that was to lay the groundwork for essential processes of change across the institution over the next ten years. On the one hand, these changes were about envisaging and reimagining what UWC could be and developing common understandings of this inside and outside the University. On the other hand, it was about translating this vision into meaningful institutional change, involving changes to practice and structures and often requiring significant shifts in thinking.

While Prof O'Connell's leadership during the "crisis of the NWG report recommendations" had been important, it became invaluable as the seismic changes required of the institution began to take shape and hence its planning efforts focused on the implementation of its next two IOPs (2005 to 2009, 2010 to 2014). In reflecting on these and the importance of this period for UWC, we look at four ways in which Prof O'Connell's leadership shaped this implementation process and arguably the significant progress made by UWC over this period.

Making an intellectual case for UWC as an engaged university

In making a case for its recapitalisation, UWC had been forced to consider its future options. It did this by considering possible future scenarios and drawing on a key conceptualisation of its role that had been expressed by Prof O'Connell in his inauguration address in 2002, that is, his articulation of UWC as an 'engaged university'. This process had involved exploring three different scenarios for UWC in the future. The first was recognising that UWC had the option to maintain the status quo and anachronistically trap its future direction in its past as a historically disadvantaged institution (HDI). On the other hand, it could strive to break this mould and entrepreneurially emulate market-orientated universities intent on striving for greater competitiveness within a profit-driven global market place. The third option drew strongly from Prof O'Connell's notion of the 'engaged university' with its distinctive features and particular importance to the South African context at that time. It was argued to be the scenario that best captured UWC's desired future. Such a university it was argued [...] envisions a favourable future that transcends past glories and embraces a complex future in which the realities of transformation and global and technological advances are held in tension. In this scenario, the University's associational engagement puts the individual student-in-community at the centre of its concerns for local and global issues, particularly issues pertaining to the African continent (University of the Western Cape, 2004: p. 21).

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While this notion of UWC as an ‘engaged university’ had been expressed as central to its case for recapitalisation, Prof O’Connell was aware that much more was needed to translate the concept into a frame that could guide UWC’s strategic planning and change processes. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, it needed to make ‘intellectual’ sense so that staff and students would understand precisely what was being asked of them and why it was so crucial to articulating UWC’s role as a public university in South Africa. Unpacking, explaining and exploring his notion of what it meant for UWC to be an ‘engaged university’ was to become a central feature of Prof O’Connell’s leadership of UWC over the next ten years so that whatever institutional changes were planned and called for were located within this broader understanding.

Central to this understanding was the conceptualisation of an engaged university as one that is capable of maintaining the dynamic link between academic knowledge and the realisation of society’s hopes. An oversimplification of these relationships sets up a false, attenuating and ultimately dangerous binary between the demand for high-end excellence in supporting global competitiveness and the developmental demand to advance the necessary socio-economic changes that go beyond the mere right to vote in South Africa’s transition to full democracy. Similarly, the tensions can be stark when advanced technological solutions require high levels of education and cutting-edge research, while national transformation requires massive extensions of basic academic literacy and numeracy at a relatively low level.

Prof O’Connell began to metaphorically depict this tension and what it meant for UWC by bringing together two contrasting images of Cape Town: one capturing the extreme affluence and industrial advancement of the city, and the other showing the abject poverty of its vast informal settlements (Chapter 1, Figure 1.1). He suggested that, as a university, UWC is positioned between these ‘two worlds’. This means that the university is shaped by the congruencies and contradictions that this reality creates, and as a university it is required to constantly navigate and balance the tensions between them. IOP 2010-2014 delves further into this and states that “UWC speaks of itself as an ‘engaged university’ in an attempt to avoid constraining modern alternatives and to define a high-level intellectual role in a society in rapid transition”. It then goes on to explore what this positioning means for the delivery of its core functions, focusing on excellence in teaching and learning, research, multiple responsiveness, establishing a culture of sense-making and UWC’s role

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in making a sustained difference for a better society (University of the Western Cape, 2009: p. 5). Prof O'Connell increasingly argued that, in a political space that was increasingly anti-intellectual, it was important that UWC, as a public university, became a critical space or 'citadel' for making meaning of the continued tensions.

What was especially important in his persistent efforts to guide the way forward for UWC in this way was that it provided an intellectual frame for planning tasks and change processes that ran the risk in the university context of being dismissed as 'managerialism'. The central goals of the IOP (2005-2009) that informed UWC's recapitalisation began to be graphically depicted within Prof O'Connell's 'two worlds' diagram – the goals were positioned between the two images of Cape Town, suggesting that the realisation of each of these goals required carefully considered processes for managing these tensions. Similarly – and this was a point consistently emphasised by Prof O'Connell and his leadership team as the change processes unfolded – working towards the realisation of these goals would be beset by constant challenges as these tensions played themselves out and staff would be challenged to consistently grapple with the 'discomfort' of being in this space.

Translating the vision into practice through 'sense-making'

While these understandings of UWC as an 'engaged university' were important in providing a conceptual frame for the implementation of its strategic plans following its recapitalisation, it was recognised that the litmus test for UWC would be the translation of this vision into practice across the institution. Prof O'Connell and the planning team were acutely aware at this time that institutional change by its very nature is a highly complex process, especially within higher education institutions. It is influenced by a range of structural and conjunctural conditions external to the university and by 'human agency' which affects the "pace, nature and outcome of institutional change" (Badat, 2009: p. 457). Prof O'Connell often articulated this awareness of the importance of human agency in processes of institutional change by suggesting that planning processes and the changes they seek to bring about must 'make sense' to those who are expected to implement them. But the IOP (2010-2014) recognises that engagement is not intellectually easy and that "the challenges of understanding the dynamics and needs of a society with a long history of neglect require a deep and sustained commitment to making sense of a complex and sometimes contradictory society and to avoiding binary

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simplifications”. It also recognised that it is important “to generate and use knowledge in the interests of bettering South African society” while “grappling with the tensions between valid demands” (University of the Western Cape, 2009: p. 5-6). In the context of the University, this meant trying to ensure that each role player within the Institution, from senior academic leaders to junior support staff, had to be able to understand their role and responsibilities within the change process and be able to ‘make sense’ of the vision that UWC was pursuing. While a number of initiatives were undertaken at this time to strengthen the institution’s capacity to implement its strategic goals, two strategies implemented by Prof Connell were especially important to strengthening and valuing its ‘human agency’.

The first of these was aimed at building trust among the institution’s leadership and strengthening its capacity at all levels. Prof O’Connell spearheaded a leadership development process across the institution that, amongst other things, included what was called ‘All Leader’ engagements. These brought together the executive management, deans, professors as well as heads of academic departments and support divisions. These engagements were facilitated by an external leadership development expert who worked closely with the institution’s leadership. The intention was to create opportunities for the University’s leaders to come together to think and plan together. While some elements to this initiative worked better than others, overall this focused attention on developing leadership capacity across the institution and creating spaces for collaborative engagement on the very real challenges confronting UWC proved to be very valuable.

A second strategy that deepened the ‘sense-making’ that Prof O’Connell called for was the implementation of various strategic projects and change initiatives.¹ While these took different forms and were supported through external and internal funding sources, they were conceived as important spaces for organisational learning. More specifically, as ‘projects’ they created spaces where university leaders could ‘experiment’ with new ideas and practices aligned to the University’s strategic goals and through this experimentation develop the confidence and insight to embed them within “the culture and day-to-day functioning of the organisation” (Howell, 2014: p. 65).

1 One of the most important of these was the South Africa Norway Tertiary Education Development Programme (SANTED), a system-wide initiative enabled through development co-operation between South Africa and the Kingdom of Norway.

Identifying and strengthening strategic levers for change

Institutional Operating Plans are important outcomes of decision-making processes that are meant to be implemented. From the outset Prof O'Connell expressed a keen leadership interest in planning-for-change on the understanding that increased awareness and a culture receptive to change would be vital to UWC's short- and longer-term success. It is not possible to include all of the initiatives that were embarked on over the thirteen-year period in a chapter of this nature, but there are three selected areas considered to be of particularly significant importance.

The first is the focus on reaffirming the primacy of the knowledge project at UWC. Harold Wolpe (1995) argued that research production in South Africa had been powerfully conditioned by the broader social and structural inequalities of South African society, with the result that it displayed a particular racial and gendered character and was strongly monopolised by white males. In addition, he added that there is also an institutional dimension to research production and that within the university sector this was overwhelmingly located in the historically white institutions. While UWC did have a legacy of a strong intellectual tradition, it remained significantly challenged in terms of translation of this into a recognised and robust research base.

Prof Tyrone Pretorius, Vice-Rector (Academic) at the time, started to lay the foundation in this regard and weighted research output started to show a promising upward trend. In 2008 UWC appointed Prof Ramesh Bharuthram, a scientist with extensive higher education leadership experience, as Vice-Rector (Academic). His well-established academic networks and relationships with national funding agencies unlocked various opportunities in support of UWC's academic aspirations and subsequently research output increased at an accelerated rate. Shortly after the approval of the IOP (2010-2014), he set up teams to develop a Research Strategy document, a Teaching and Learning Plan and a Charter of Graduate Attributes, to give effect to the strategic objectives articulated in the academic goal areas of the IOP.

Grant funding from the Department of Education (DoE), which became the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in 2009, was optimised to build capacity amongst UWC's academic staff and to improve support to undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Directorate for Teaching and Learning was established and there was a keen focus on professionalising teaching and learning activities and

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giving more prominence and recognition to it. Funding and other support was also made available to assist staff with the completion of their doctoral studies, increasing the proportion of staff with doctoral degrees as well as UWC's supervisory capacity for its growing number of master's and doctoral students. In addition to the Research Office, a Division for Postgraduate Studies as well as a Technology Transfer Office were established to support different elements of the research and innovation project. Several promising research areas across the human and social sciences as well as the health and natural sciences were identified and supported through a combination of institutional, external and other grant-funding mechanisms, resulting in the establishment of strong research niche areas, research institutes and centres, as well as UWC being able to successfully bid for major national grants, for example, in the DST/NRF South African Research Chair Initiative programme. The number of SARChI Chairs grew from 1 in 2008 to 12, plus one UCT/UWC/SKA Chair in Astronomy in 2014. Moreover, UWC was the first HDI to be awarded the hosting of a national Centre of Excellence, in Food Security, together with the University of Pretoria, as well as the first South Africa university to be awarded a DST/NRF Flagship grant, the Flagship on Critical Thought in African Humanities. In parallel, UWC's DHET-accredited research output units for publications and graduating master's and doctoral students showed a 5-fold increase from 2002 to 2014.

Secondly, Prof O'Connell strongly believed that UWC's future needed to be anchored in broadening its knowledge base, expanding its partnerships and nurturing a culture receptive to change. The first opportunity for a significant new international partnership presented itself early in 2002, when Prof O'Connell met with a senior delegation from the VLIR-UOS (a Flemish agency for university development cooperation). Following a process of extensive negotiation, that first meeting resulted in what was initially intended to be a project with one UWC faculty, becoming an institution-wide partnership, the Dynamic of Building a Better Society (DBBS) Programme. The multi-year programme had a dynamic structure and created opportunities for experts from multiple disciplines from the Global North and South to take emerging issues into consideration as they forged long-term relationships to jointly build institutional capacity, whilst focusing on developing the next generation of researchers and scholars. The programme was a resounding success and resulted in solid international partnerships and a joint PhD framework between UWC and Flemish universities beyond the funding cycles. The final

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VLIR-UOS evaluation report of the DBBS programme found it to be “very successful on all criteria: development, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and change/impact”. The successes of long-term projects such as these indicate why future-orientation and patience is such a virtue in effective leadership. As a result of this programme, UWC has also expanded its partnership with the University of Missouri, which now spans more than 35 years, to include Ghent University, with whom UWC has collaborated since 2002, to extend their respective bilateral connections into a trilateral partnership.

A second pivotal moment for the Vice-Chancellor to tap into international networks and partnerships arose from his leadership experiences during the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Prof O’Connell chaired the Higher Education AIDS (HEAIDS) Strategy Group from 2005. Between 2000-2005 and 2006-2010 UWC participated as a lead partner in the SANTED-funded Regional (SADC) Cooperation programme, initially in collaboration with the University of Zambia (under the title ZAWECA) and later the partnership included the Universities of Malawi and Namibia (under the acronym (ZAMANAWE). In addition to building leadership capacity around HIV/AIDS issues, using peer education as a preventative measure, the programme also sought to strengthen bilateral South-South collaboration between the respective institutions. One of the unintended outcomes of this project has been that the leadership of the respective universities, based on mutual friendship and trust, forged a long-term relationship with Nordic universities and became founding members of SANORD, the Southern African Nordic Centre of which Prof O’Connell is one of the founders.

The second HIV project funded by VLIR-UOS, also over a 10-year period, formed part of the Dynamics of Building a Better Society Programme. The project produced several master’s and doctoral graduates. In 2009 the work of the HIV/AIDS programme became anchored in a virtual Centre for Research in HIV and AIDS (CRHA) at UWC. The Flemish partnership has been strengthened through, among other initiatives, the establishment of a prestigious National Research Foundation SARCHI Chair in Health Systems, Complexity and Social Change, currently held by Prof Asha George. Together with the research programme of the SARCHI Chair in Health Systems Governance, Prof Helen Schneider, who is also in the School of Public Health, these wide range of research projects allow for intensified research collaboration locally and internationally. The VLIR-UOS programme paved the way for the establishment of several

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entities such as the Centre for Multilingualism and Diversity Research (CMDR), the Institute for Water Research (IWR) and the Co-lab for Digital Inclusion and Social Innovation, all with strong international partners. A focus on strengthening the University's emerging and established niche areas, each underpinned by criteria of excellence, relevance and impact, has enabled UWC to expand the number of strategic international partnerships.

The third project entailed a focus on reimagining campus infrastructure in support of its strategic aspirations. In an interview about UWC's School of Public Health, Prof O'Connell made the following remarks about infrastructure:

The symbolism attached to infrastructure is extremely important. Can you imagine how people in ancient Greece travelling to Athens from their rural setting must have felt when they approached the Acropolis and saw the Parthenon? This gigantic building must have filled them with awe and pride. The same goes for the Taj Mahal in India and the Pyramids in Egypt. Buildings tell stories that last for many generations, even centuries and our School of Public Health building is in a class of its own, while being hugely functional. Everybody who looks at it and other buildings on our campus sees what is possible. (Govender, n.d.)

The planning of the campus physical infrastructure forms part of a long-term planning framework that, amongst other factors, takes into account infrastructure capacity in relation to enrolment forecasts. More important, though, it also focuses on reimagining the University and the possibilities of creating a physical environment that supports continuous change in pursuit of excellence.

During the 2001-2005 period not much happened regarding UWC's physical expansion and, despite the pressure from the government on universities to widen access, there was no funding provided to support infrastructure development, even though the IOP 2005-2009 captured an ambitious 'wishlist' of capital infrastructure needs and possibilities, not knowing where the funds would come from. For UWC it all changed in 2005 when billionaire philanthropist, Mr Charles (Chuck) Feeney accompanied by The Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) Board, visited the campus to receive progress reports from UWC's School of Public Health, which obtained funding support from AP. Prof O'Connell hosted the AP Board for lunch and shared with them UWC's journey as a project of hope and as a metaphor for South Africa. Mr Feeney expressed an interest in supporting UWC and invited Prof O'Connell for breakfast two days later and then to visit him in Brisbane, Australia, where he had

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supported the development of significant university infrastructure. In O'Connell's breakfast engagement with Feeney, he shared his vision of developing a new Science building. This vision was partly informed by the need to further unlock opportunities for growth in terms of science, engineering and technology (SET) enrolment, but more importantly by the fact that there were pockets of expertise in UWC's Science Faculty that were showing potential to become niches that would enable UWC to differentiate itself in terms of its contribution to the sciences in South Africa and beyond. With significant financial support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, the Kresge Foundation and the erstwhile Minister of Education, Dr Naledi Pandor, UWC's Life Sciences building arose and was formally opened in 2010. The sheer scale and iconic design of the building served as a significant symbol of inspiration, impacting on the way that the University is seen by the outside world as well as how it sees itself. In the same period a new School of Public Health building was also constructed – fully funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies.

Following the introduction of the Infrastructure and Efficiency Grant (IEG) by the DoE – the Life Sciences building was the first to receive such funding – UWC's building renewal programme was able to gain traction. To guide the process of infrastructure expansion and renewal, a Campus Development Plan was developed in 2012 and updated in 2014. In addition to the School of Public Health building and the Life Sciences buildings that have already been mentioned, other large-scale infrastructure projects that were completed during the period under discussion include a Chemical Sciences building, a ResLife Centre, a 1100-bed public-private-partnership (PPP) student accommodation development on the main campus, the refurbishment of old residences, and the Sports Stadium upgrade and expansion. Excluding the PPP student accommodation, the new developments increased UWC's infrastructure capacity by 29 135 assignable square meters. During this period the planning and initial construction of the following infrastructure projects also commenced: a large-scale facility for some of the programmes in the Community and Health Sciences Faculty; the repurposing and expansion of infrastructure to accommodate the Computer and Mathematical Sciences; and an Arts infill project. Upon completion, these three projects would contribute a further 20 000 assignable square metres of infrastructure.

Conclusion

There is a vast body of literature focusing on the success and failures of strategic planning, and it would be presumptuous to suggest that UWC has been unique in its approach or experience of the planning processes and the strategic management measures it followed. This chapter aimed to illuminate parts of the story of Prof Brian O'Connell's remarkable contribution to the development of UWC. Through planning initiatives and constant strategic thinking, or sense-making as he preferred to refer to it, he stimulated a process of institutional reinvention and reimagination. In doing so, he authentically grounded the University in its mission orientation and traditions while simultaneously pushing the boundaries to new frontiers, constantly in search of new knowledge and new perspectives. With the assistance of government departments, science councils, state funding agencies, international partners, philanthropists and friends, as well as the collective dedication of UWC colleagues and students, he has confidently moved the University from its state of vulnerability towards greater stability and a brighter future.

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