



The NWU way Die NWU manier Mokgwa wa YBB

OVERVIEW OF THE AS IS CULTURE ASSESSMENT

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"NWU is like a teenager - lots of potential, talent and energy - but for some reason it does not want to launch. It takes the path that its forefathers stood for. The past is living in the present, holding the future at random"

Background & Purpose of the Report

NWU's 2015-2025 Strategy statement is to *"transform and position the NWU as a unitary institution of superior academic excellence, with a commitment to social justice"*. Some of the success factors identified as critical to achieving this is an organisational culture that should be: *"welcoming, inclusive and enabling"*. It is stated that: *"organisational practices, staff and students' behaviours should be congruent with NWU's commitment to social justice and an ethic of care"*.

The NWU identified the need for a dipstick assessment of the existing NWU culture with a view to isolating the desirable and undesirable elements of the current culture, defining the desired culture, as well as facilitating inputs with respect to determining the necessary changes needed to achieve the desired culture. Of critical importance was that the process followed should be inclusive, fully participative, representative of diverse views and co-created.

Given the commitment to transparency in the NWU Way process, this report comprises a brief summary of the dipstick "As Is" Culture Assessment for staff and students.

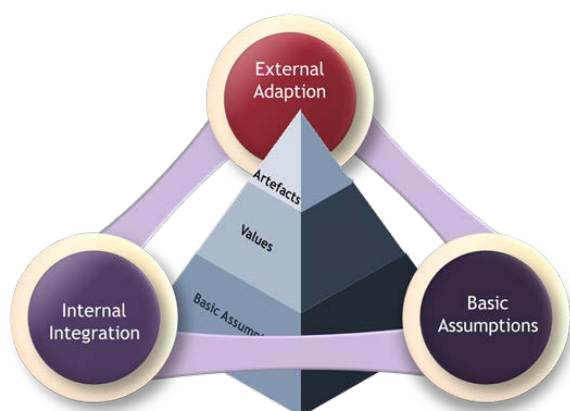
Data Gathering

The "As Is" Culture assessment is based on the 2017 Culture and Climate Survey in which 5918 students participated, 42 Culture Conversations with 723 Managers, Academics and Support Staff across all three campuses (comprising 10.4% of staff) and 24 Culture Conversations with students including SCC members, House Committee members and House Parents, residential and day students. The following challenges and noteworthy concerns arose in data gathering from staff:

- Cynicism - Some Staff members saw the NWU Way process as something that the Leadership is undertaking to achieve a predetermined outcome, citing experiences where they felt that they were not included in a transparent manner, specifically in the rebranding process
- Some participants expressed their discomfort with sharing their experience of the current NWU culture, with some citing fear of victimisation
- Culture Conversations became a platform for participants to express their fear, anger and frustrations about the restructuring processes. A large amount of data about the current climate, as opposed to culture, was shared

Frameworks for "As Is" Culture

The culture framework of Edgar Schein (2009) was chosen as a frame of reference for assessing the various building blocks of the "As Is" culture. As outlined by Schein in the Corporate Culture Survival Guide (2009: 27): *"Culture is a pattern of shared tacit assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. What really drives daily behaviour is the learned, shared, tacit assumptions on which people base their view of reality - as it is and as it should be. It results in what is popularly thought of as the 'way we do things around here'"*.



External Adaption deals with issues such as:

- Strategic intent and goals
- Means to achieve goals (such as organisational design, systems and processes)
- Measurement systems and practises

Internal Integration deals with:

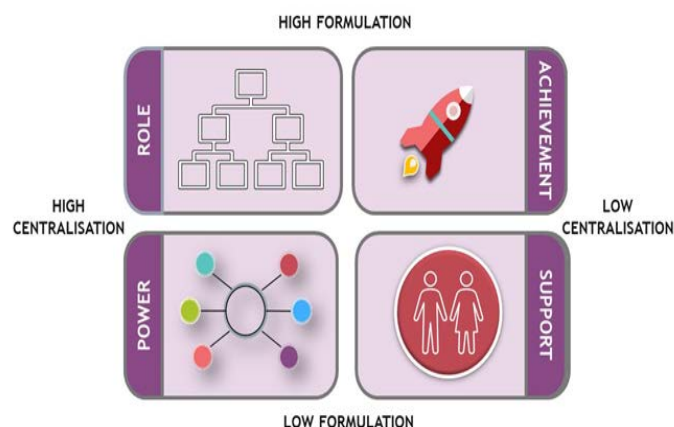
- Common language and concepts (the most obvious manifestation of culture)
- Group boundaries and identity (ways of identifying who is an insider and who is an outsider or members of the in-group vs. out-group)
- The nature of authority and relationships (how relationships, rank and authority are defined, degree of formality,)
- Allocation of rewards and status

As organisations grow, they do not only develop their own cultures, but they also differentiate themselves into many sub-cultures based on occupations, services or functions, geographies and different echelons or ranks in the organisational hierarchy.

The current analysis of "As Is" culture of NWU was designed to focus on those aspects of NWU's culture which do/do not contribute to a welcoming, inclusive and enabling environment. There are many different aspects of culture, ranging from how people treat one another, the specific values they live by, how people are motivated to produce and how power is used in an organisation.

Harrison's (1993) typology of culture is well suited to assist NWU's diverse stakeholders to both understand and have deep conversations about the NWU environment and culture. Harrison (1993) identified four culture dimensions or culture states which were useful in understanding the issues raised in the Staff Culture Conversations. Each culture state involves a unique way of making decisions, a characteristic way of motivating people to work, a typical management style and a set of underlying values and beliefs about work and about human nature. These are:

- Achievement Culture
- Power Culture
- Role Culture
- Support Culture



Desired Culture as per Strategic Intent

External Adaption - the Means: It is clear that NWU wishes to create an Achievement Culture, which focusses on (reflected in words outlined in the Strategic Intent such as "discipline", "high performance", "joint and individual accountability" and "delivery of results"). Words outlining the desired behaviours and leadership style of Leaders in the NWU's Strategic Intent, which include being "results driven" and "accept(ing)", as well as taking "personal responsibility and joint accountability", also reflect an Achievement orientation to culture.

Internal Integration: Group Boundaries, Identity, Authority and Relationships: NWU emphasises an

Ethic of Care in its Strategic Intent as reflected in words such as "trust", "care", "inclusiveness", "team work" and "valuing diversity". This reflects the intention to create a Support Culture in relation to how the NWU interacts with students and also in terms of its desired approach to dealing with internal integration issues. In terms of the nature of authority and relationships, it is clear from the description of Leadership and Leaders in the Strategic Intent, that NWU does not want to create a culture that is typical of a Power orientation. Words such as "participative", "inclusive", "communicative" and "coaching" do not reflect a Power orientation to culture.

Overview of Culture Orientations

Support - Orientated Culture

Based on mutual trust between the individual and the organisation, staff believe that they are valued as human beings. Because they feel cared for, they are "more human" in their interactions with others including students, their fellow staff members, communities and suppliers. Support-Orientated organisations are places where:

- Staff support one another in the work; they go out of their way to cooperate
- Staff value harmony; they make sure that conflicts are resolved and that everyone is on board
- Staff give their time and energy to others; they are available, they care, they listen
- Staff trust that they are viewed as human beings by the organisation
- Staff appreciate one another; they acknowledge one another's contributions
- Staff have a sense of belonging; they feel included by those they work with; they enjoy spending time together

However, the dark side of a Support Culture is:

- Staff may focus on relationships to the neglect of getting the work done
- Out of 'kindness', difficult employee related decisions may be avoided
- Disagreement may be avoided causing issues to fester as they remain unresolved; there is harmony on the surface but covert conflict
- When consensus cannot be achieved, the group may become indecisive and lose direction
- Changes may take a long time because of the need to consult and get everyone on board
- Staff who make unequal levels of contribution are rewarded equally, which frustrates others' ambitions

Achievement - Orientated Culture

This has been called the 'aligned' organisation because it 'lines people up' behind a common vision or purpose. It uses the organisation's mission to attract and release the energy of its individual members in the pursuit of common goals. Because members make their contributions freely in response to their commitment to a shared higher purpose, they willingly give more to the organisation and the whole prospers accordingly. Achievement-oriented organisations are places where:

- Staff share a sense of urgency in attaining worthwhile goals and values; they feel that they are working towards something bigger than themselves
- Staff feel stronger and better for being a member of the group; it raises their self-esteem
- Staff manage themselves, doing voluntarily what they see needs doing
- The rules and regulations are not allowed to get in the way of doing work
- Staff work long hours without complaint
- There is high morale and a sense of 'one for all' or camaraderie
- There is a sense of being unique and different; they belong to an elite with its own special myths and jargon

The dark side of an Achievement Culture is:

- Staff believe so much in what they are doing that the end comes to justify the means
- Staff become intolerant of personal needs, they sacrifice family, social life and health for work
- The group talks only to itself; it becomes isolated from others and from reality
- The group only cooperates internally; others see it as arrogant and competitive
- Dissent and criticism are stifled, meaning that the group has difficulty correcting its own errors
- Commitment to excellence at any cost leads to waste and inefficiency

Role-Orientated Culture

Substitutes a system of structures and procedures for the naked power of leaders. Structures and systems give protection to subordinates and stability to the organisation. The struggle for power is moderated by the rule of law. The values of Role - orientation are order, dependability, rationality and consistency. This orientation is typified by a well-designed system of roles in which individual performance is organised by structures rather than personally controlled by the leader.

Role-Orientated organisations are places where ...

- Individual performance is judged against written descriptions - as long as Staff members meet requirements, they are safe
- Staff are rewarded for playing by the rules and providing reliable, dependable service to the organisation
- Inefficiency, uncertainty and confusion are reduced by rules limiting the arbitrary use of authority
- Authority and responsibility of jobs are clearly defined, minimising power struggles and turf issues
- Work methods minimise variability of performance and reduce the need for individual decision-making

- Staff give the leaders wishes the highest priority, even when these interfere with important work
- Staff are afraid to give bad news to the leader
- Staff do not question the leaders even when they are seen to be wrong
- Staff with power break the rules with impunity and take special privileges
- Information is a source of personal power and is restricted to friends and allies
- Staff rise by being loyal to those in power, even when they are not especially competent

The dark side of a Role-Orientated Culture is:

- Staff follow the rules, even when they get in the way of doing the work
- It is considered a sin to exceed one's authority or deviate from accepted procedures
- It is more important to avoid deviating from the norm than it is to do the right thing
- Jobs are tightly defined and there is little room to contribute one's unique talents and abilities to the organisation
- It is difficult to get approval for changes and thus staff give up making needed improvements
- Staff treated as interchangeable parts of a machine, rather than individual human beings

Student's Experience of NWU Culture

NWU has a general commitment to an Ethic of Care towards students (at least in the way staff speak), which forms a strong anchor in a Support Culture across all three campuses. This is reflected in students' responses in 2017/2018 Student Climate and Culture Survey as reflected in these statements:

- I experience a caring culture
- I experience that NWU embraces diversity
- People at NWU are respectful of different cultures
- I trust that the University has my best interest at heart
- I feel at home on my campus
- Academic staff work effectively with students from diverse backgrounds
- Faculty administration staff treat students with respect

Power-Orientated Culture

The Power-Orientated organisation is based on inequality of access to resources. The people in power use resources to satisfy or frustrate the needs of others, and thus, to control others people's behaviour. Leadership resides in the leader/s and rests on the leaders' ability and willingness to administer rewards and punishments.

- The leaders are strong and charismatic, bringing courage to the fainthearted and clarity to the confused
- The leaders take care of their own; they reward and protect loyal followers
- The leaders are wise and benevolent; they act unilaterally but in the best interests of the organisation and its members
- The leaders are demanding but fair; clear about what is required; and rewarding of compliance

The experience of White, Afrikaans and English home language students was "excellent" on a number of the statements above, while the experience of African, Coloured and Indian students and home languages other than Afrikaans and English were mostly "positive". Students' experiences are a result of Support Staff and Academic Staff not being even handed in their treatment of students.

There were differences between different student biographical groups within campuses. For example, while 86% of White students at Potchefstroom believe that people at NWU are respectful of different cultures, only 50.1% of Black African students at Potchefstroom campus believe it is the case.

The barriers which students experience as potentially undermining of the creation of a caring culture where all students feel welcome and comfortable are:

The dark side of a Power-Orientated Culture is:

Unequal facilities - this barrier is significantly more pronounced at Mafikeng campus

- Artefacts (e.g. sculptures, paintings, photographs, institutional symbols, names) in or on NWU's buildings
- Behaviour of support staff on my campus
- Treatment by academic staff
- Behaviour of other students
- Substance abuse by other students
- Experience of sexual harassment

It would appear that perceptions and experiences of race, language and gender both in social settings and academic settings have a strongly influence on them listing other's behaviour as a factor that undermines a caring culture. Students listed a number of behaviours of academic staff that potentially undermine a caring culture:

- Discussions in class; answering questions in Setswana (Mafikeng) or Afrikaans (Potchefstroom) without translating
- Showing favouritism to, forming relationships with students on the basis of language
- Unwilling to provide assistance or consultations
- Uncaring, impatient and condescending
- late coming, cancelling lectures with little notice, not providing material on time
- Poor proficiency in academic material (reading from book) and technology

Typical examples of behaviours of support staff that undermine a caring culture include:

- failing to display a customer service orientation
- rude, disrespectful and hostile approach
- impatient and unhelpful (especially to Black students who do not speak Afrikaans at Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle, or students who do not speak Setswana at Mafikeng)
- absenteeism
- sending students from "one person to the next"
- sexual harassment

Staff's Experience of NWU Culture

Despite the experience of an Ethic of Care (which is a key anchor of a Support Culture) by students across, staff do not experience the same as part of a Support culture.

The Mafikeng campus seems to have a dominant Support orientation to its organisational culture that developed over time, reflected by caring, collegial and supportive relationships. However, from a group boundary and identity perspective there are sections of the staff and students, especially those who do not belong to the Setswana ethnic group, as well as international and White staff members who feel excluded and thus do not experience a Support

orientation to the same degree. From an Achievement perspective, the emphasis on research publication appears to play a strong role at Mafikeng.

The Potchefstroom campus would in the past have been described as an Achievement Culture, strongly blended with a Support Culture. However, over the last few years staff at Potchefstroom experienced a marked shift to the NWU adopting a stronger Role Orientation in terms of structures, systems and processes. This shift is reflected in the following as reported support and academic staff at Potchefstroom:

- additional levels of reporting implemented
- additional layers of approvals created
- disempowerment of staff
- delayed decision making
- excess reporting has overloaded staff with administrative work and leaves them with decreased time to fulfil their core functions
- time wasted on meetings and administration leaves Academics with decreased time to prepare for classes and conduct research

The Vaal Triangle campus also seems to have a blended Achievement and Support culture. Vaal Triangle staff reflect similar dynamics in terms of their frustration with the shift to a Role Culture as experienced at Potchefstroom.

Integrating Organisational Culture across the Three Geographical Locations

Although officially, the unification process of the three campuses is described as an integration of equals, the way in which it is generally being experienced is very different across the three NWU campuses. During the Culture Conversations at the various campuses, one of the major themes that emerged is the so-called "Potchefification" of NWU - referring to the dominant role that Potchefstroom based units and/or staff members are playing in the process of integrating towards a unitary university, by "imposing their way of doing things" on the other campuses in both the academic alignment and centralisation of support processes.

Part of the challenges being experienced and highlighted can be explained and better understood by using Harrison's four culture orientations as a referring theoretical framework. The typical dynamics and levels of conflict that emerge during mergers and/or integration processes arise from the interaction between the different culture orientations of the organisations/ units being integrated. The interaction between culture of the "dominant merger partner", as the culture of the "other merger partner" or less influential

organisation/unit determines the success and dynamics of the integration.

Although Potchefstroom cannot be described as a dominant Role Culture, Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle campuses experience the Potchefstroom campus as a dominant Role Culture. Given the dominant role Potchefstroom is perceived to play in the integration process, the integration between the campuses may be potentially disastrous/problematic from a Mafikeng campus perspective, as a result of the Role Culture of Potchefstroom "taking over" a dominant Support Culture at Mafikeng (a Role Culture taking over a strong Support Culture).

The integration process between the various campuses from a Vaal Triangle perspective may also be potentially problematic/disastrous (Role Culture taking over an Achievement/Support Culture).

Potchefstroom is seen by staff on the other campuses to play a "dominant" role as the heart of the institution where management personnel i.e. VC and most Faculty, Directors and decision-making power is situated. Placement of the institutional office in Potchefstroom reaffirms the perception that it is "Head Office" or the "Mother Ship" while the other campuses are "add ons". In the academic alignment process, Potchefstroom academics are perceived to "impose their will" on the others (although from a Potchefstroom perspective academics perceive that they have to carry the load as the other campuses are not playing their part), while centralisation of support functions to Potchefstroom based staff has concentrated decision making power in their hands.

Given the dominant role Potchefstroom is perceived to be playing, Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle staff experience that a Role culture is being forced on them with increased monitoring, reporting, administrative responsibilities with early deadlines for Academic staff through SALA and bureaucratic control. They also experience that the "Potchefstroom way of doing things" is forced on them (especially in the academic alignment) even though they believe that they have better systems, processes and approaches than Potchefstroom in certain areas. They are aggravated that best practises from all campuses have not been considered and adopted.

Centralisation of finance, graduation, administration, examination processes, IT etc. have rendered them reliant on Potchefstroom for and subject to delays in procurement of basic goods and services, solving operational issues (IT) and providing student support.

Behaviours such as imposing early SALA deadlines without consulting Academic staff; holding most meetings at Potchefstroom, issuing last minute instructions and delivering material late undermine an Ethic of Care. Perceived domination of academic alignment by Potchefstroom is not the case in all instances - during the Culture Conversations the processes followed by some Faculties were cited as having followed a sound approach in the integration process based on collaborative problem solving, mutual respect and co-operation.

Vaal Triangle feel that they are the "baby campus" and that the integration "... is like removing children and putting them in a foster home where they make none of the rules" (the academic alignment and centralisation have removed their autonomy, ability to solve problems creatively and determine teaching, assessment and scheduling solutions best suited to their unique students, transport, safety and educational challenges). Vaal Triangle campus feels it is losing its character as a "caring campus" as well as its Support Orientation due to stress from workload, overtime and travel caused by the alignment, high student numbers and the disconnect with colleagues on campus due to a shift to working across campuses. This loss of connection is reflected in not knowing who to ask for support where in the past everyone knew everyone else. The Achievement Orientation at Vaal Triangle seems to lead to conflict with Potchefstroom staff in some faculties over academic standards, with Vaal Triangle pushing for higher teaching and assessment standards over traditional methods and old or "outdated" learning material. While Vaal Triangle staff are sometimes excluded from Potchefstroom in academic alignment decisions, they find themselves caught in the crossfire when Potchefstroom excludes Mafikeng.

Mafikeng seems to have the strongest Support culture of the three campuses from a staff perspective. In particular, the centralisation of administrative processes and perceived distant and domineering approach demonstrated by Potchefstroom units and staff, grates against the sensitivities of Mafikeng staff who value relationships based on care, warmth and consideration. This domination exacerbates tensions with Mafikeng which feels it is bullied and excluded from decision making due to being labelled inferior and untrustworthy by Potchefstroom.

Mafikeng staff relates that their campus was "very family orientated" but now it feels like there is a "stepmother" in the form of Potchefstroom that has disempowered them, interrupted the daily functioning of their campus, imposed decisions on them, undermined their academic legitimacy and robbed their campus of its prized and unique

identity, especially in relation to the replacement of its African infused graduation process with the rigid, predominantly formal Afrikaans influenced model utilised by Potchefstroom. The imposition of the Potchefstroom way in terms of timetable and teaching and assessment methods angers Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle staff as it does not accommodate local student and campus challenges and conditions.

Internal Integration within Campuses

One of the challenges with regard to integration from a group, identity and relationship perspective is the lack of agreement and/or understanding on the meaning of "social justice" across the NWU. There seem to be multiple understandings of the concept ranging from social justice being viewed as an expectation, to social justice as an obligation (with a focus on redress and dealing with issues of privilege). Some see the concept as a political instrument. There are divergent views on whether NWU should attempt to better define the concept for the NWU context or whether it should allow for multiple understandings with the institution.

In the Integrated Report of the Organisation Climate Survey conducted in 2017, the following statement is made in describing the general atmosphere at NWU: *"The views on the different campuses were divergent and make it difficult to reach common conclusions ...However, it is safe to say, that in support of quantitative findings, a feeling of mistrust permeated all campuses and this was the prevailing feature of the climate. There was mistrust of leaders and managers, mistrust of systems and mistrust of the new strategy. There were also pronounced feelings of negativity and a tendency to dwell in the past (at Potchefstroom). There was great mistrust between races and a fractured NWU emerges, one separated by race, length of tenure and language, a feeling of unfairness between campuses and between academic and support staff."* This description is still accurate based on the information shared during the Culture Conversations.

There were many participants in the interviews as well as the Culture Conversations (across race groups and staff members) across the three campuses who supported the need for transformation with a focus on affirmative action, redress, diversity inclusion as well as what is required to succeed with this. Based on the conversations, it is clear that there are many staff members at all levels who hold a genuine intent to make diversity inclusion work in the integration between the campuses, but also on individual campuses.

The increased focus on affirmative action measures have resulted in some unhappiness amongst some White staff members who display an apparent lack of buy-in to the case for transformation (their resistance is deepened by the lack of engagement around the restructuring process as well as a perspective that there is a deliberate effort to destroy the proud legacy of the Potchefstroom University and also undermine the use of Afrikaans as language).

In integrating the three universities into a unitary model, challenges with diversity and inclusion feature from an institutional and campus perspective, especially given the predominance of Black and White staff and students at Mafikeng and Potchefstroom respectively. Some challenges are typical of the broader South African society and diverse organisations, including conscious and unconscious bias, stereotyping, aversive racism and sexism, segregation in social settings and suspicion of the motives and intent of "others", which are exacerbated by language use.

The issue of language is a cause of contention and conflict. There appears to be a trend where predominantly Afrikaans speaking staff are seeking to preserve their Afrikaans legacy, identity and privilege while many Black staff view Afrikaans as a barrier to their full inclusion in the academic life, organisational life and social life at the NWU.

On all campuses, minority race and language groups experience some level of exclusion (Black staff at Potchefstroom; White staff at Mafikeng and both groups at Vaal Triangle depending on the composition of a given group). When looking at dynamics between campuses, Black staff at Mafikeng experience the perceived lack of importance placed on addressing under resourcing of their campus "by Potchefstroom" as a lack of sensitivity to issues of structural privilege as a legacy of Apartheid. Simmering tensions between staff at Mafikeng and Potchefstroom campuses appear to have a racial element, with the perceived attitude of superiority by some White Afrikaans staff triggering reaction from of some Mafikeng staff. Potchefstroom campus and town are perceived as unwelcoming to Black staff from other campuses.

While there is an acknowledgement that the NWU is implementing measures to deal with the challenges of diversity inclusion, the transformational nature of these interventions will take time to show demonstratable impact across the three campuses.

Artefacts: Rituals and Symbols

From an internal integration perspective, the NWU is working hard to create shared artefacts that at a visible level will create greater integration

between the three campuses. On a number of the symbols, rituals and ceremonies that are emerging as potentially common artefacts, there are however still dissenting voices of staff (and students) across the three campuses who have not yet fully embraced the integrating artefacts.

The list below provides an overview of the artefacts that were highlighted the most across the three campuses as artefacts that enhance the creation of a welcoming, inclusive and enabling culture. As would be evident from the list, what many of these artefacts have in common is the linkage that they have to a Support Culture as they promote unity and collegiality by bringing people together in social settings as well as artefacts that symbolise and celebrate the Achievement dimensions of the NWU Culture. Where there were opposing views as to the contribution that a particular artefact is making, these opposing views are also presented.

Symbols that were identified include the following and had mixed responses with regards to their impact on the promotion of a welcoming, inclusive and enabling culture:

NWU Logo and Colours: A shared identity is often promoted through the branding of an organisation. In this regard the NWU logo, colours (especially purple) and other branding fulfil an important role in creating a common identity as part of the internal integration process. Staff indicated that they are divided in their sentiments towards the logo and branding. New staff members who joined NWU after the change in corporate colours seem to embrace the branding.

A phrase often used in the Culture Conversations at Potchefstroom was "*Is jy 'n PUK of is jy Pers?*" which reflects resistance to the new identity and brand. It may also signal an intent to try maintain the identity and heritage of the old university.

While the slow uptake of the new brand may be because of a variety of reasons which is perfectly normal and to be expected in a change process of this nature, an important contributing factor that were mentioned in most Culture Conversations was the process that was followed. There is a strong perception that the UMC took a final decision on the branding before staff were asked for their input resulting in a loss of trust in Leadership.

Ceremonies and Rituals that were identified as promoting a welcoming, inclusive and enabling culture across all three campuses were identified as follows:

- Official academic opening and closing

- Graduation ceremonies viewed positively (with the exception of staff at Mafikeng who feel aggrieved by the "Potchefication" of their ceremonies to become more stiff, formal and "boring", reduced invites for family and Faculty)
- Inauguration lectures (however, the lack of attendance by Senior Leadership at Mafikeng lectures undermines their status and makes them feel less important and valued)
- Cultural celebration i.e. Heritage Day
- Middle of year and year-end function
- Recognition and celebration of staff birthdays
- First year orientation and official opening (viewed positively by staff members across all three campuses). It was noticeable that many staff members - especially at Potchefstroom, identify strongly with ceremonies, events and symbols that one would think are mainly aimed at student stakeholders.

There are also artefacts that are unique to the individual campuses which promote a welcoming, inclusive and enabling culture.

Behaviours and Practices of Leaders

Culture is the Shadow of the Leaders

"*Shadow of the leader*" is a phrase used to describe a typical phenomenon in organisations where those in positions of leadership and power, through their behaviour and actions, tend to influence the behaviour and actions of those below them, thus "*casting a shadow*" and shaping the culture across the organisation.

The NWU's Internal Success Model states that Leadership and Leaders should be "*participative, distributed, inclusive, communicative, decision-competent, effective managers, results-driven, accept personal responsibility and joint accountability, transformative outlook (personally and external context), innovative, coaching, leading commitment to diversity.*"

Leadership Behaviours that Support a Welcoming, Inclusive and Enabling Culture

- Open door policy, available, accessible and visible, making an effort to connect
- Caring and supportive, understanding, accommodating of personal circumstances
- Upholding high standards of discipline and performance, balanced with reasonable understanding of staff's concerns as people i.e. allowing sick leave
- Participative and inclusive, providing opportunities for staff to voice their concerns

and frustrations, sincerely listening to staff and taking action to address issues raised

- Behaving in a fair manner, consistent treatment of staff and application of rules (without preference on the basis of non-work-related factors)
- Communicative, sharing information frequently and keeping staff updated at all times
- Transparent on issues of concern, including reasons for decisions and being open about their standards for reward and recognition
- Making staff feel recognised and seen for hard work and effort, using creative methods
- Prioritising activities to boost staff morale and promote teamwork

Behaviours that Undermine NWU's Culture

During the Culture Conversations, it became clear that there are faculties and departments that are well managed. However, a number of Management practises were mentioned as a concern across all three campuses. While some staff attribute negative line manager behaviours to poor leadership skills, others point out a personality mismatch between the individual manager and required leadership characteristics.

The primary leadership behaviours that undermine a welcoming, caring, and enabling culture can be grouped into six broad categories:

- Experience of leadership across the three campuses not engaging Staff in decision making that affects them and in relation to the internal integration challenges in which Staff do not feel that their voices are heard. Related is a concern that decisions not informed by realities on the ground
- Experience within faculties and departments where staff feel that their personal needs and circumstances are not considered by leaders
- Experience of leaders putting undue pressure on staff to achieve certain administrative outcomes and last minute requests (given the shift to a Role Culture, increased bureaucratisation and formalisation of processes, the administrative load and demand for information seem to have increased exponentially)
- Micromanagement of staff: Staff highlight the need to eradicate controlling micro-managerialism by Directors in specific (*"we don't need the watch man, we aren't a creche"*). Staff emphasise the need for the Leadership to reintroduce a *"spirit of humanity"*. They emphasised the need for *"caring"* leadership where leaders *"lead rather*

than rule us" and to adopt an inspirational leadership style exemplified by the VC who *"would walk around campus in with his short pants and say, tell me how we are doing?"*

- Dysfunctional leadership behaviours (including favouritism, ill treatment and victimisation) of *"non favourites"*, lack of people skills to manage staff discipline which manifests in behaviours such as passive aggression and punitive treatment of those who they feel are unreliable or poor performers

Organisational Values

NWU's Brand Promise: *"To be dynamic, values-driven and excellent"*

NWU's Organisational Values: *Academic Freedom and Freedom of Research, Academic Integrity, Embracing Diversity, Ethics in all Endeavours, Responsibility, Accountability, Transparency and Fairness*

A shared culture implies that people in an organisation share the same values, beliefs, feelings and thoughts. This shared mindset means that people in the organisation display the same or similar types of behaviour. An enduring desired culture cannot be developed if the people within an organisation have not, consciously or unconsciously, developed an adherence to a particular set of values.

NWU explicitly states as part of its **brand promise** that it would like to be **values driven**. From this perspective, it was important in the "As Is" Culture Assessment to express a view on the extent to which the current organisational values, serving as a building block of culture, drives the behaviour required to achieve the NWU's Strategic Intent.

Commitment to Social Justice is one of the three key elements of the NWU Strategy Statement (together with superior academic excellence and a unitary institution) and as such, the organisational values should drive the behaviour required to achieve the Strategic Intent. As highlighted, there is a lack of agreement and/or understanding on the meaning of "social justice" amongst stakeholders in the NWU. The meaning and living out an Ethic of Care (which is an important similarity across the campuses and a key element of a Support Culture) is also central to building a shared understanding of social justice.

Although there was some consultation on the organisational values, NWU did not follow an inclusive process that involved the whole organisation when determining the set of values. It

should be noted that, best practice indicates that an inclusive process to creating Values is a key condition for success when organisations truly intend to become values driven. This is a gap that may be addressed in the second phase of the culture project.

In terms of whether the NWU's Values are lived in the organisation, it seems that leaders at UCM have broadly internalised the organisational values. UCM members also feel much more positive that the values are being lived than Senior Managers, Directors, Support Staff and Academics, in contrast to Staff who generally expressed a lack of familiarity with the Values.

The NWU organisational values have not yet filtered down to lower levels of the NWU with a number of Staff relating their lack of prior exposure to them in the Culture Conversations. An illustrative comment encapsulating concerns about the filtering of the values is as follows: *"At the coal face, in the classroom, IT help Desk, etc. the NWU Values are not equally understood. This creates a mismatch between the values and staff and students' experience and this in turn creates mistrust. The further one goes down in the organisation, the greater the risk of lack of commitment. Support divisions feel that they don't matter - there is cynical disengagement at lower levels"*

While the overwhelming majority of participants in the Culture Conversations believe that the current set of values contains "good" values that are relevant to NWU, the vast majority indicated through a "temperature check" exercise that they do not believe, based on their personal experience, that these values are being lived.

The highest level of agreement that values are lived were for Academic Freedom and Freedom of Research and Academic Integrity. On all the other values, more than 50% percent of participants disagreed that these values are being lived, based on their personal experience. This include the values of Embracing Diversity and Ethics in all Endeavours. The values that came out the weakest (more than 66% disagreement) include Responsibility and Accountability, Fairness and Transparency. The main examples cited by Staff who don't believe these values are lived pertains to:

- the process followed in rebranding the NWU (logo, colour purple and mascots)
- way that the restructuring processes unfolded
- the academic alignment process
- the centralisation of support functions
- management style exhibited by some Line Managers and above

- the decision taken regarding performance bonuses and the manner in which this was communicated to Staff
- Some People and Culture concerns (performance management process; "unachievable" performance bonus criteria; misalignment in salary and benefits; inadequate reward and recognition especially for support staff; access to promotions/growth and internal service delivery)

One of the gaps in the use of NWU's values as a management tool that can be used to shape the culture is the absence of behaviour descriptors that specify what is required for Staff to actually live each value. It is also clear from the Culture Conversations that there is a lack of common understanding of what the different values really mean. This gap may be addressed in the second phase of the project. Despite broad agreement that the current set of values were good and appropriate to NWU, some recommended changes were made during the Culture Conversations.

Proposed Approach to Phase Two

The key output required by the NWU in relation to Phase Two is to facilitate *"high-level mapping of the desirable/preferred NWU Culture for both staff and students, based on the NWU values and the strategic intent."* Based on the outcome of the "As Is" Culture Assessment, the process outlined below will be followed going forward:

- To communicate the results of the "As Is" Culture Assessment to Statutory Committees, Staff, Students
- To identify areas where the UMC can take corrective action on some of the issues raised during the Culture Conversations without waiting for Phase Two to be completed
- The NWU Way Design Team, including anybody else who wishes to participate draft a "chopping block" NWU Way based on the "As Is" Culture Assessment - which will include a culture map for NWU including the values, values descriptors and behaviours linked to the respective values
- Co-creating the desired culture and behaviour descriptors for the NWU Way that will be linked to the values and will ultimately be aimed at driving behaviour that would achieve the NWU's Strategic Intent, through facilitated sessions using the "chopping block" created by the Design Team
- To co-create/brainstorm/recommend next steps to embed and institutionalise the NWU Way (therefore co-creating the journey)