Challenges and Opportunities: Mergers within mergers in the context of

Student Counselling

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Abstract

The University of Johannesburg was established on 1 January 2005 as a result of the merger between the Rand Afrikaans University and the Technikon Witwatersrand. The focus of this paper is not on the high-level merger aspects, but rather on the internal 'merger within the merger' of the various Units, Institutes, Bureaus and Divisions dealing with the psycho-social and career-focused activities within the University.

The discussion is presented in a case study format, reflecting and tracking the actual merger process, from inception to implementation along tight timelines. Challenges and opportunities that have emanated as a result of the development of quality promotion processes and activities within PsyCaD are presented in terms of their significance for the promotion of quality and the operation of PsyCaD as a fully contributing Centre under the University's strategic plan, while providing excellent service delivery, promoting entrepreneurship, supporting the implementation of new ideas, generating income and being responsive to community needs.

Key words: Career development, Excellence of service, Innovation and entrepreneurship, Mergers, Quality promotion, Student counselling

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The background to mergers in higher education in South Africa

The aim of the higher education system in South Africa 'to provide for individual aspirations for self-development, supply high level skills for the labour market, generate knowledge that is of social and economic benefit, and develop critical citizens' (Department of Education, 1997). To better meet these intended outcomes in the pos-1994 South Africa the higher education landscape underwent major changes between 2003 and 2005 with the merging and restructuring of institutions and the introduction of universities of technology and comprehensive universities (Higher Education Monitor, 2009). The higher education landscape in South Africa changed from having 21 public universities and 15 Technikons to a new landscape, as approved by Cabinet on 29 May 2002 (Asmal, 2002). As a result the Higher Education Act (South Africa, 1997), which set the policies under which universities and Technikons operated, required amendment.

The merger to form the University of Johannesburg

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) came into being on 1 January 2005 as a result of the merger between the Rand Afrikaans University and the Technikon Witwatersrand. This occurred one year after the incorporation of two campuses of Vista University into the former Rand Afrikaans University.

UJ is positioned to offer multifarious programmes that range (a) horizontally through a full spectrum of vocational, professional and general formative programmes, and (b) vertically through the full range from undergraduate certificate to doctoral programmes.

The internal merger to form the Centre for Psychological Services and Career Development (PsyCaD)

Student counselling and career development units are a known feature of all higher education institutions. Under the erstwhile Technikon Witwatersrand, this counselling unit resided under the Dean of Student Affairs, with the Director: Academic Student Development and Counselling reporting to him, and with a separate Cooperative Education Unit, (whose Director reported directly to the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic). Contrarily, in the Rand Afrikaans University the Student Services Bureau was a freestanding unit (separate from Student Affairs) that reported to the Pro-Vice Chancellor. The Rand Afrikaans University also hosted the Institute for Child and Adult Guidance, which delivered psychological services to external non-UJ clients.

In order to achieve a unified student counselling and career services unit in UJ, the merger process addressed the integration of Academic Student Development and Counselling (ex-Technikon Witwatersrand) and the Student Services Bureau (ex-Rand Afrikaans University) through the Renewal and Integration Process. This process was finalised in July 2007 and the Student Counselling and Career Development Unit was subsequently established. In

March 2008 the small Cooperative Education Unit (ex-Technikon Witwatersrand) was integrated with the Student Counselling and Career Development Unit, with an office on each of the four UJ campuses. During this period the UJ Management Executive Committee decided to integrate the Institute for Child and Adult Guidance (also offering psychological and career services, largely on a fees basis and functioning as a training site for intern Psychologists) should also be with the expanded Student Counselling and Career Development Unit in order to deliver unified student counselling, psychological and career services to the UJ community as a whole. This unit would be located within the broader UJ framework in the Division of Academic Development and Support (ADS).

In this paper the authors outline and document the integration process that was followed and the establishment in September 2008 of a unified and comprehensive centre, the Centre of Psychological Services and Career Development (PsyCaD). The purpose of this centre is to contribute to academic access through the delivery of psychological and career services to UJ students and employees.

Method

A qualitative research methodology was used in this study (Mayan, 2009). As the merger occurred within a bounded system (i.e. the merger process leading to the formation of PsyCaD within UJ), a case study format was employed. The case study method was considered appropriate as it allowed

for "an in-depth description and analysis" of the unit under investigation (Merriam, 2009, p. 40).

Data collection and analysis

Case studies desist from providing an absolute means of data collection and analysis – various sources of information (such as interviewing and archival records) may be consulted (Merriam, 2009, pp. 39-54). In this study the authors used data obtained through reviews of documentation and personal observations of the merger process.

Analysis of the descriptive merger study led to the conclusions drawn.

Discussion of results

The integration process is considered a success story by the authors and the model followed deemed to be worth sharing, especially as it is generally recognised that change is 'a given' and also an ongoing and re-occurring process: other student counselling structures that are considering review may benefit from the insights shared. The process outlined was complicated as it brought together two contradicting models – one focused on service delivery to internal clients and prospective students and that was thus fully funded by the university with most services offered for free to student clients, while the

other was an income generation model dependent largely on third stream income generation for funding.

The Director of the former Institute for Child and Adult Guidance was tasked with the integration of the five sites of service delivery across the four campuses from 1 May 2008: the UJ Management Executive Committee indicated that it expected to approve a final structure on 12 August 2008.

The model followed by her to achieve this objective in the short time frame allocated is outlined in this paper and describes what is considered by the authors to be a well-conceptualised process that was tightly managed.

Management principles

The points of departure and management principles to be followed were communicated as a process that would be (a) participative and fair, (b) accountable, (c) responsible and transparent and that would be (d) completed by the date set down by the UJ Management Executive Committee. The tight time-lines necessitated that the process be intense while simultaneously focusing on the end goal. This goal was to design a consolidated student/psychological counselling services solution to be implemented for UJ. The latter statement is clarified as follows: merger with VISTA University (2004), followed by merger to become UJ (2005), then the merger of the two legacy institution Student Counselling units (2007) and the inclusion of the Cooperative Education Unit (2008).

7

Since late 2007 the Division of Academic Development and Support had fallen under the leadership of an Executive Director, who reported directly to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic. During 2008, the line management of the Division of Academic Development and Support was assigned to an experienced Chief Director, who reported to the Executive Director: Division of Academic Development and Support and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic. The Chief Director's role was to coordinate governance structures and enhance financial management within this Division. These three senior line managers were involved in every step of the integration process and their full support was afforded to the Director of what was then known as the SCCD/ICAG (the UJ acronym for the combined Student Counselling and Career Development Unit (SCCD) and the Institute for Child and Adult Guidance (ICAG)).

The Director outlined the integration plan to SCCD/ICAG staff members. This outline was essentially an establishment of the facts of the Student Counselling and Career Development Unit's functioning, how the internal staff and structures related to and functioned with each other, and the processes that were followed. A well-documented and clearly communicated schedule of activities served as a guide concatenated with written feedback on the processes. All communication was formally worded and communicated through email (in the form of notifications, agendas and minutes). These emails were copied to the relevant Operational Director and the Executive Director in order to keep them fully informed on the process and to further

promote transparency, one of the management principles of the merger process.

A phased integration approach

A phased integration approach was used where reflections and conclusions were communicated to staff at the finale of each stage.

The detailed and comprehensiveness of the fact-finding is considered by the authors as a key aspect of the ultimate success of the integration process. During this period the SCCD/ICAG Participative Management Meetings were held on a monthly basis. The meeting attendees were the former Senior Coordinators (each of them was requested to ensure that a nominated person in his/her line function attended to act as an observer and hereby ensure greater transparency and participation in the process.)

The nominated line reportees rotated in order to afford more staff members an opportunity to participate. In the subsequent section a timeline of the various phases is presented.

Phase 1: Campus visits to the Student Counselling and Career Development Unit offices on the four campuses with the Operational Director: Division of Academic Development and Support in attendance.

The objectives of this phase were to understand the functions and functioning of the facilities on all four UJ campuses, and also to create an opportunity for all staff members to personally meet the Director.

Phase 2: Deliberations with each Senior Coordinator and his/her team members (line functions) with relevant administrative staff included.

The objectives of this phase were firstly to be informed of the functioning of each of the line functions and/or campuses, and secondly to deliberate with one another in regards to the interface, coordination and coherency of the four line functions, four campuses, the Institute for Child and Adult Guidance, as well as the Cooperative Education Unit. This allowed a common understanding of how each function and campus was supported (or not supported) in order to ensure quality delivery of services and the horizontal and vertical accountability of each line function and campus. This in turn created a forum for individual staff members to express their role(s) in the line function, deliberate on a possible 'wish list' and to form a tentative understanding of how the former ICAG and SCCD functions overlapped and therefore how this could be integrated into the new centre.

Phase 3: Attendance and observation of the Senior Coordinators' Meeting and the Financial Committee Meeting.

In this phase the objectives were to allow the Director to understand the process of financial and operational governance of the Student Counselling

and Career Development Unit. She was also afforded the opportunity to create an understanding of the differences and similarities in the governance, management structures, and cultures of the then still functioning SCCD and ICAG.

Phase 4: Individual interviews with each staff member (40 meetings).

The objectives of this phase were three-fold. In the first instance the Director was provided with an opportunity to personally engage with each staff member. Secondly, the staff members were afforded an opportunity to voice their own views of their potential role(s) in the future integrated centre. Lastly, they critically reflected on a possible structure for their roles. Thus, this phase provided a forum for seeking clarity and for sharing of pertinent information.

Phase 5: An integration workshop on a future organisational structure.

All permanent staff from the SCCD and ICAG were invited (together with a representative from each of the intern Psychologists, intern Psychometrists and contract Assistants in SCCD and ICAG). Their respective line managers appointed the representatives of these temporary employees. As this was a workshop format, no prior agenda was proposed. The workshop was facilitated by a Human Resources Consultant and was assisted by the UJ Human Resources Project Manager.

Deliberations revolved around the structure, governance and name of the new centre. In addition, conversation was held in regards to meeting forums, stakeholders, clientele, quality assurance and financial accountability.

Participants agreed that the name of the new centre should be *The Centre for Psychological Services and Career Development* (with the acronym of PsyCaD). Participants considered this a 'catchy' acronym that flowed easily off the tongue and would assist in the marketing of the Centre. Another decision made was to follow a team approach, with rotational team leaders to be appointed as managers of the various functional areas. This would allow for the creation of opportunities for capacity building.

On completion of the workshop the agreed proposal was submitted to the UJ Management Executive Committee who approved the formation of PsyCaD on 12 August 2008. The addition of an Advisory Board for the new Centre and the positioning of the Shared Services Unit parallel to that of the Business Partner were made.

The final integration phase dealt with the actual population of the functions and the functioning of the new centre.

Phase 6: Population of the PsyCaD organisational structure.

The agreed upon process followed commenced with an opportunity for all staff to submit nominations for the respective Team Leaders and Business

Partner positions. Eligibility guidelines and two template documents (a Declaration of Availability form and a Nomination form) were provided to staff on which they could declare their availability for a position and/or nominate existing staff for such a position. The Human Resources Department of the University managed this process. The due date for completion of these forms was 28 August 2008 and the Team Leaders and Business Partner were announced on 29 August 2008.

PsyCaD would be governed by the Division of Academic Development and Support and the Director would manage the executive functions of PsyCaD. The structure consisted of a Business Partner and six units for delivering the core services of the Centre. These are Academic Services (including the Office for People with Disabilities and Work Integrated Learning); Career Services; Psycho-Educational Services; Shared Services; Therapeutic Services; and Training and Development Services (refer to Appendix A: Figure 1: The PsyCaD Wheel of Services for a diagrammatic representation of these services in relation to the Director).

The Director, Team Leaders and Business Partner finalised the distribution of positions within the approved organogram on 8 September 2008 (Appendix A: Figure 2: PsyCaD Organogram). The populated organogram was then circulated to the staff for comments, and, concurrently, staff were requested to indicate their top three preferences for positions in the structure. After considering the comments and preferences the Director, Business Partner, Team Leaders and Human Resources Department allocated staff to the

structure, all existing employees being accommodated. The principles of the Integration and Renewal Process were followed in this process. This tentative detailed design and proposed population was submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic for approval on 10 September 2008, and was announced at the first PsyCaD Staff Meeting on 11 September 2008. The Human Resources Division was requested to assist with the implementation of the organisational structure by the end of September 2008.

The process unfolded according to the principles of inclusion, participation, responsibility, accountability and democracy.

The implementation of the integration approach

The first official PsyCaD Management Meeting was held on 19 September 2008. In this meeting the management principles of PsyCaD were confirmed, a proposal for the financial management of the Centre proposed, and the beginnings of a quality focus for PsyCaD implemented. Accordingly, the meeting structures and forums, job descriptions, and the establishment of the PsyCaD Advisory Board, were spelled out.

For the period from October to November 2008 the Service Units launched projects and collectively took responsibility for the planning and roll out of all services to all stakeholders for 2009.

Concurrently during this period, day-long PsyCaD Management Meetings were held. Key quality mechanisms relating to staff, such as job descriptions leading to their performance contracts and the comprehensive evaluation of PsyCaD structures were discussed. Furthermore, the establishment of the Board of Governance was confirmed. PsyCaD was to be governed by a Constitution, with formal policies, procedures and a code of conduct. The process and owners of the aforementioned were allocated, and a central PsyCaD Year Plan was drawn up.

PsyCaD has physical infrastructures on all four campuses, with five sites of service delivery. Initially the human resources within PsyCaD was comprised of 88 staff members (including intern Psychologists and intern Psychometrists) to service the roughly 45 000 students and approximately 3500 staff members. Professional staff members are required to be registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in their respective categories (e.g. counselling psychologist). Thus, each professional functions according to relevant HPCSA legislation and ethical requirements.

The Centre endeavours to incorporate more than only the usual counselling and career development functions for students and prospective students. Accordingly, PsyCaD has retained its focus to serve as a training site for intern Psychologists and intern Psychometrists. Furthermore, the Centre itself also offers psycho-social services to external (non-UJ) clients. For these reasons, PsyCaD is considered to be unique among student counselling and career development centres in the South African higher education system.

PsyCaD was integrated into the larger UJ community and the broad outline of the PsyCaD plan for 2009 was disseminated on 18 September 2008. Brainstorming sessions were aimed at identifying opportunities for the new centre to make a real difference, and to contribute positively to UJ and its students, staff and external clients. Some of the resultant innovations are succinctly discussed below.

Resulting innovative implementations

It was agreed upon by all internal stakeholders that the PsyCaD Service Units would not operate independently of each other but as crosscutting teams with team members working across functions. The traditional organogram (Appendix A: Figure 2: PsyCaD Organogram) did not seem an appropriate way to depict the new Centre and therefore the idea of the PsyCaD wheel of services was conceived. This innovative concentric circle design quickly translated into a handy mouse pad that became an effective marketing tool and is still currently used as a PsyCaD promotional item. Service Units also came up with innovation(s), which in turn have contributed to service enhancement.

The development and launch of a slogan for the Shared Services Unit, "*Keeping the wheels of PsyCaD turning*", appeared to be a successful unifying factor for the staff who would work on the five sites under the relevant Team Leader. The Shared Services unit comprises of a diverse range of staff

members who play key roles within PsyCaD, such as the Administrative Staff, Researcher, Psychometrists, Information Technology Assistant and the Financial Officer. The re-conceptualisation of certain key functions within PsyCaD (such as the implementation of updated psychometric assessment tools), as well as the effective management of confidential information, the updating and maintenance of the electronic tracking system, the ongoing quality evaluation of PsyCaD services rendered, as well as the management of diaries with the effective implementation of pie charts are additional implemented innovations within this Unit.

An innovation of the Academic Services Unit was to allocate dedicated Psychologists to each faculty of the University for them to become Faculty Liaison Officers. In this way they acted as direct links into the faculties and departments. This allowed for PsyCaD and the faculties to establish a close working relationship aimed at improved student throughput.

From 2009 the Career Services Unit employed Career Consultants. These professional staff members focus on the delivery of career-relevant workshops, interacting with students on an individual or group basis, the management of psychometric assessments, and as the re-conceptualisation and implementation of the Career Resource Centres on each site. The on-line launch of the Career Portal with its deemed attractive design appeared to be an effective draw card for students, assisting them with employability skills and graduate placement opportunities. In addition, extensive work was done

to update and re-develop the Career Services Unit's on-line website, and ongoing quarterly newsletters would be disseminated to students.

PsyCaD's Therapeutic Services Unit conceptualized a 24-hour crisis line together with the Campus Health Clinic, Protection Services and Student Housing and Residences. The 24-hour crisis line is staffed by intern Psychologists under the supervision of registered Psychologists from the Therapeutic Services Unit. It was formally launched to UJ students and staff in February 2009. Crisis line stickers were widely distributed to students and poster were put up on all the University's campuses on which the contact number of the line was provided.

The Psycho-Educational Service Unit introduced the Peer Buddy system. This system consisted of selected students who are intensively trained to assist their fellow students with student-related problems on the campuses. At the same time a Residence Development Programme - consisting of workshops based on needs as determined by students themselves - was rolled out. In addition, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) workshops were designed, advertised and presented – raising the awareness of the new Centre, providing a valuable income generation mechanism and allowing the opportunity for professional development of staff members. Accruing CPD points is a legal requirement for professionals registered with the HPCSA, and, therefore, advertisement of these workshops reaches professionals throughout South Africa.

The key tasks of the Training and Development Service Unit are to address the development needs of professional and administrative staff within PsyCaD, and also to select, train, and supervise intern Psychologists. The allocation of a development budget per permanent staff member for 2009 is one of the innovations of this Unit.

PsyCaD's initiatives are supported by the office of the Business Partner. Her role is to ensure effective marketing of the Centre and to manage relationships with internal and external clients. Working with other departments within UJ resulted in staff and students frequently hearing the term PsyCaD, which was reinforced by a poster campaign, bookmarks and rulers provided to the 2009 intake of students. The small promotional items, which accompanied PsyCaD staff as they interacted with clients and staff members, have also proven to be an effective attention attracter. It appears that the relatively simple matter of making business cards available to PsyCaD staff has been an important motivating factor. The development of the PsyCaD website was another deliverable from the Business Partner. The innovative introduction and use of the PsyCaD intranet can be seen as providing the Centre with a technological edge: all PsyCaD documents, including the minutes of meetings, are available to PsyCaD staff, hereby ensuring that the principle of transparency is upheld. As a password is required for access, only PsyCaD staff is able to access the internal PsyCaD Intranet.

The laying of the groundwork and innovative designs needed to achieve the ideals of the new Centre was intense. The effective use of small tokens in order to show appreciation and to build employee support, such as the 'Thank you' lunch at the end of November 2008, generated a feeling of appreciation and common purpose.

All PsyCaD activities are guided by relevant quality processes implemented in the Centre. Therefore it will be relevant to discuss certain of these quality processes and measurements in the next sections.

Quality processes within PsyCaD

The quality focus within PsyCaD has been evident since the first integration talks. The establishment of the PsyCaD Quality Promotion Committee in January 2009 is an indication, on the part of PsyCaD management, of its understanding that "good quality is not accidental and that it does not result from mere wishful thinking" (Gitlow et al., 2005, p.31). Hoyle (1994, p.12).

An important aspect of a process is a feedback loop (Gitlow et al., 2005, p.72). Quality may be seen as such a process. The importance of feedback is viewed as a critical aspect of continuous improvement. An example of continuous improvement and its related principle is "the relentless pursuit of gradual unending improvements in quality by getting the maximum out of existing resources" (Hoyle, 1995. p.1), which has been adopted by PsyCaD.

Another aspect of quality in PsyCaD is the deliberate and intentional underscoring and foregrounding to PsyCaD staff that they are valued and are a valued part of the Centre. Goetsch and Davis (1994, p.122) state that organisational cultures need to be created. Many of the characteristics they indicate were either already met or, at the least, being actively pursued within PsyCaD.

These characteristics include that behaviour is to match slogans; customer input is actively sought and used to continually improve quality (as may be evidenced by the various surveys undertaken); employees are both involved and empowered; work is done in teams (as in the PsyCaD projects); executive level management is committed and involved in quality matters (the Director: PsyCaD is Chair of the Division of Academic Development and Support Research and Ethics Committee); sufficient resources are made available to improve quality (the electronic tracking system, which has been funded from PsyCaD trust funds); education and training is provided (each permanent PsyCaD staff member has a training and development budget at his/her disposal); reward systems are in place (bonuses, other motivators and recognition systems); fellow employees are viewed as internal customers; and suppliers (i.e. other UJ departments) are seen as partners.

Quality measurements within PsyCaD

All PsyCaD activities are underpinned by ethical considerations and professionalism, in line with the HPCSA's legislation. All PsyCaD staff

members are expected to adhere to these requirements – administrative staff included. CPD workshops on Ethics and Professionalism are presented every six months in order to allow every registered professional to achieve at least six Continuing Education Units (CEUs) each year, as required by the HPCSA.

One of the key responsibilities of professionals within the Health Care Services is the safekeeping of confidential information. As PsyCaD deals with personal information of a psychological nature, the Centre has a responsibility to act as the guardian of this information. 'Personal information' means personal information as defined in the Promotion of Access to Information Act (South Africa, 2000, Section 1). 'A psychologist shall safeguard the confidential information obtained in the course of practice, teaching, research or other professional duties, subject only to the exceptions set forth as limits to confidentiality in the rules of conduct pertaining specifically to psychology of the HPCSA. A psychologist may only disclose confidential information to others with the written informed consent of a client.' (HPCSA, Form 223, Sections 24.1 & 24.2).

Signing of a confidentiality oath

PsyCaD required that confidentiality oaths be signed by staff - in accordance with the HPCSA legislation - before a Commissioner of Oaths. An official notification from the Director's office was sent to all staff members. Attached to it was the confidentiality oath and relevant South African and HPCSA

legislation. This was done in order to familiarize staff members to this ethical and legislative requirement and to clear uncertainties prior to signing this oath.

Legislation in South Africa requires that '[t]he person in charge of a health establishment in possession of a user's health records must set up control measures to prevent unauthorised access to those records and to the storage facility in which, or system by which, records are kept' (South Africa, 2003). All PsyCaD staff members adhere to the above mentioned. Accordingly, PsyCaD is currently in the process of implementing a uniform filing system across all service delivery sites to enhance the privacy and safe keeping of confidential information.

A uniform filing system

Prior to the formation of PsyCaD, there was no centralised filing system in the former Student Counselling and Career Development unit. Each campus had its own system thus no reliable and accurate record of students who were seen by professionals, and no means to track previous clients seen across campuses was possible. The former Institute of Child and Adult Guidance possessed a filing system, which was manually managed. This system was considered to be archaic and therefore unusable in the new Centre.

After careful consideration, investigation and deliberation, the decision was made to choose a physical filing system that is used by large medical practices in South Africa. Although this system was costly, it included the

installation of appropriate shelves and cabinets, the integration of all files, and the final implementation of the system as a whole. One of the most important features of this filing system is that the filing products are approved by the National Archives Society for longevity and are also certified acid free. This means that the documents in the files will last indefinitely (or at the minimum for the five year period after the termination of psychological services as required by law). An investigation into an electronic document management system for future use is currently being conducted. This investigation will lead to further discussions on ethical and other related issues within the Centre.

The approved filing system was presented at various PsyCaD meetings in order to inform staff members of it and the procedures associated with its use. All relevant administrative staff received training on the filing system and training on how to use the filing products optimally and effectively.

An important step in the current filing procedures is the signing in and out of clients' files. All files must be signed off by the front desk administrative staff and by the professional (receiving/returning it) on the client's file record. A file number is also allocated to the client's file. No personal information appears on a file so as to ensure confidentiality. Site visits were (and will continue to be) conducted to ensure the continued effective use of the filing system. Hereafter site-specific feedback was (and will be) provided. Together with PsyCaD's electronic tracking system this filing system will enable PsyCaD to manage data, perform research, and allow PsyCaD to account to the MEC regarding clients. This electronic tracking system is subsequently discussed.

PsyCaD's electronic tracking system

The electronic tracking system will capture and store important information for PsyCaD, including clients' personal information. This information will be protected through the application of certain computer based security measures such as login requirements, passwords and blocking of certain screens. It is envisaged that this system will assist PsyCaD in the monitoring, tracking and reporting on of clients. In this way there is a tangible means of providing evidence of the number of clients requiring support and other statistics.

In addition, all professionals will have the opportunity to capture their workload on the system. The appended information, which can be retrieved from the system through the generation of reports, will hopefully play a crucial role in decision-making and strategic planning.

The decision was made that all statistics be captured onto the system from the appointment books (carbon copy books signed by the client and the professional), the walk-in/advisory book (also signed by the client), and attendance registers of workshops (which are linked to other psychological services captured on the system). These quality measurements are planned to ensure more reliable statistics.

PsyCaD surveys and quality evaluation of services

Ongoing evaluation of PsyCaD services is implemented on all sites of service delivery. Intern Psychologists also complete a Quality Enhancement Questionnaire after the completion of their internship in which they reflect on their training. This questionnaire will also be provided to intern Psychometrists after their internship training. Together the surveys and questionnaires will monitor client satisfaction and assist in identifying areas in need of improvement.

A Student Needs Survey was recently conducted to develop and implement relevant supporting programmes and/or workshops that aim to focus on the areas of identified needs of first year students. This in turn may contribute to enhancing academic success. During 2005 to 2008 a research project was undertaken to monitor the progress of first year students over their first three years of study at UJ. A comparison of the profiles of successful and unsuccessful students was done. A decision needs to be made on the continuation of this longitudinal study. A survey to determine the needs and satisfaction of people with disabilities is also conducted by PsyCaD's Office: People with Disabilities, on a recurring yearly basis.

The above mentioned quality evaluation of services, as well as the needs surveys, not only serve as evidence for the quality and impact of the Centre's services, but also serve to initiate development of workshops and further investigation or research projects. Building a research capacity within PsyCaD is a future goal. This is especially important, as the Centre is

currently host to two research projects – the Job Destination Project and a project on substance use in UJ residence students. Several current PsyCaD research projects are subsequently listed and discussed.

<u>The building of a research capacity within PsyCaD</u>

In PsyCaD research is conceptualised on three levels (1) intra-centre research, which is research that serves the Centre to enhance quality, service delivery and shared goals; (2) research projects relating to services and projects of PsyCaD, which is research regarding effectiveness of projects and services, for example the faculty liaison project, the food bursary project, the 24-hour crisis line project, the Peer Buddy project, the Student Needs Survey and diversity training in UJ residences; and (3) personal research projects, e.g. for Masters and Doctoral degrees. All research outcomes should be either disseminated in publications (peer reviewed and accredited) or presented as research papers at conferences (national and international).

PsyCaD's research function is positioned as a shared service in the current organogram and is in the portfolio of the Director as a key performance area. All PsyCaD activities are underpinned by appropriate research.

It is envisaged that all PsyCaD quality measurement activities will be guided by appropriate and ratified procedures and be formally recorded according to the ISO9001/2000 standard. This will hopefully assist PsyCaD with process management and improvement. It is planned to include the processes and

procedures on the PsyCaD intranet and also that they form part of the "New Staff Guide and Welcome Pack" (a pack containing all relevant information for new staff members to orientate them to the PsyCaD environment).

Besides the integration phases and the implementation of the mentioned processes, the Centre participated in the 2009 UJ institutional audit and will undergo a self-evaluation in the near future. This is a compulsory step in future service enhancement.

UJ institutional audit, self-evaluation and reviews

The precursor units to PsyCaD underwent a self-evaluation process to prepare for the HPCSA evaluation in 2007. This was done in accordance with the HPCSA self-evaluation form, which follows the Higher Education Quality Committee criteria. PsyCaD was part of the UJ institutional audit in 2009. The theme of the audit was *from the merger to (wards) unity*. The formal audit report is not yet available. Although PsyCaD was only established in September 2008, a decision was made to perform a self-evaluation in November 2009.

Conclusion

The decision for the UJ Student Counselling and Career Development Unit and Institute for Child and Adult Guidance to merge was made by UJ Management in February 2008. The Director of the combined structure was

appointed on 1 May 2008, tasked with creating a unified and comprehensive centre to serve both student and staff needs as well as those of external clients and to present a final structure to the UJ Management Executive Committee for approval on 12 August 2008.

This paper is presented as a case study outlining the process that was followed, a six-phase approach within tight time-lines that resulted in the approval of the structure and name of the Centre of Psychological Service and Career Development (PsyCaD) on the stipulated date. The fully populated structure was formally announced on 11 September 2008.

The integration process to form PsyCaD is hailed as a success story by University management. The key to success may be attributed to careful planning, effective and extensive communication, the involvement and support of top management within UJ, as well as a participative, transparent and an inherently fair process. The structure of PsyCaD was developed as a team: each and every permanent staff member participated in the process. The relatively short timeframe this was achieved in is to be commended. It is time now, however, according to the recognised quality principles to which PsyCaD subscribes, to reflect and review, to look critically at the various functions and processes and to adjust these appropriately.

Note: The PsyCaD Quality Peer Review took place from 9-11 May 2011, with a summation of 'centre of excellence' being delivered.

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