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UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

Quality Assurance External Audit Report

CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MANAGEMENT (CEQUAM)

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EVALUATION REPORT

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of the University of Namibia (UNAM) performed in the framework of the project *Europe-Africa Quality Connect: Building Institutional Capacity through Partnership*. The project is a two-year Erasmus Mundus programme launched in November 2010, aiming to address the need for assessing and enhancing institutional capacity for change, as well as to contribute to the international dialogue and cooperation on institutional development and quality assurance, as core elements for partnerships between universities in Europe and Africa.

The methodology of the evaluation is based on the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP), an independent EUA (European University Association) service that stresses institutional responsibility in defining quality and the means to achieve it. IEP has carried out nearly 300 evaluations worldwide since 1994, and has become a distinct European approach to quality enhancement and a flexible tool for strategic development. The idea of IEP is to provide a flexible tool for assessing a university's institutional goals and sharpening its missions. The evaluation report highlights the good practices identified by the team, but it also provides the university with recommendations for further improvement in order to achieve its mission and goals, in the continuing development of the strategic management and internal quality culture. The recommendations provided herein are specifically tailored to the context of the University of Namibia, based on the on-site observations and the data provided by the university.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme

Europe-Africa Quality Connect (EAQC) shares the Institutional Evaluation Programme's approach (more about IEP at www.eua.be/iep), but in the context of the project the methodology was further refined and developed by the partners in cooperation with the evaluation team members. The focus of the IEP methodology used as a starting point is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses on:

- Decision-making processes, institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 The Institution and the National Context

The University of Namibia has its origins in the Academy for Tertiary Education, some of whose activities it subsumed when it was established by Act of Parliament, in 1992, following the recommendations of a Special Commission for Higher Education. As a national, public university, UNAM has a key role to play in national development. It is one of three higher education institutions in Namibia (the others being a publicly funded polytechnic, and a small specialist private university). The University of Namibia has recently assimilated, through merger, four colleges of education specialising in teacher education. As a public university, in accordance with the law relating to higher education (Act 18, 1992), though receiving a large part of its funding through a state block grant, UNAM is largely autonomous in terms of budgetary and planning matters and the general operation of the university. At national level, external government influence and involvement includes institutional accreditation and the accreditation of academic programmes, exercised under the aegis, respectively, of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), and the Namibia Qualifications Authority.

1.3 The Self-Evaluation Process

In accordance with the agreed *Europe-Africa Quality Connect* (EAQC) guidelines, and reflecting the established IEP methodology, a 24-page Self-Evaluation Report (SER) carried out by the university was sent to the evaluation team prior to the first visit. The SER described and analysed the university's institutional context, vision, mission and goals, its organisational structure and quality management arrangements, as well as its strategic management and capacity for change. The SER listed areas for improvement and contained an action plan. The university also provided several appendices, including an organisation chart, the university's Strategic Plan, information on government legal requirements, an academic calendar, and information on quality management policy.

The self-evaluation process was directed by a fifteen-member Self-Evaluation Panel, appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, and chaired by Ms Y. Dausab, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law. Members were selected from the academic and administrative staff of the university, and the students' representative body, reflecting the university's view that the involvement of and input from all units of UNAM was important to the process of preparing the institutional self-evaluation. The self-evaluation methodology included a series of interviews and focus groups undertaken by members of the Self-Evaluation Panel with various members of the university community, including senior staff, academic and administrative staff, and students. The information generated, including data collection, was analysed for inclusion in the SER. The university's SER reports some difficulties regarding the self-evaluation process, including time constraints and, amongst some staff and students, a degree of lack of involvement in and understanding of the nature, purposes, and importance of the self-evaluation. Even so, from meetings with staff and students during the first visit, it became apparent from the beginning that there was a reasonable awareness of the broad nature and purposes of the EAQC Team's visit to the university, and the team members were warmly and openly received at all levels of the academic community. The team appreciated the work done in preparing the

SER and accompanying documentation, and found this to be valuable in enabling them to undertake their deliberations.

1.4 The Evaluation Team

The evaluation took place during two visits. The team undertook a first visit to the university from 5 to 7 September 2011 and a second visit from 26 to 29 February 2012. For its second visit, the team requested some additional information and documentation regarding UNAM's organisational structure; strategy and planning; financial and resourcing arrangements; learning, teaching and research; community engagement and external links; committees and groups; and quality assurance. Some additional data, and further clarification on a number of matters, was also requested. These requests related to issues discussed during the first visit but which were not fully reflected or explained in the SER. This additional information was provided well in advance of the second visit and addressed a number of aspects of the issues identified by the EAQC evaluation team.

The evaluation team consisted of:

- Tove Bull, former Rector, University of Tromsø, Norway (Chair);
- Yasser El-Wazir, Director of the Quality Assurance Centre and Chairman, Department of Physiology, Suez Canal University, Egypt;
- Olugbemiro Jegede, Secretary General, Association of African Universities, Ghana;
- Apiyo Okwiri, Erasmus Mundi Alumna, Kenya (Student Member);
- Jethro Newton, Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, University of Chester, UK (Team Coordinator).

The team members would like to express their sincere thanks, respectively, to the UNAM Vice-Chancellor, Professor Lazarus Hangula, and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research, Professor Osmund Mwandemele, for the welcome and hospitality provided during their two visits. The EAQC Team also thanks Ms. Y. Dausab, Chairperson of the university's Self-Evaluation Panel, for her work in leading and overseeing the coordination of the self-evaluation visits.

Thanks are offered by the team to Dr F.S. Nyathi (Director) and Ms J.Aipanda (Administrator) of the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM), for their work in facilitating and supporting the evaluation process. However, the team places on record their disappointment with some aspects of the logistics, and arrangements and attendance levels for some of the scheduled meetings.

2. Setting strategic directions: vision, mission, and general context

The mission and vision, norms and values of UNAM derive from the mandate of the university as set out in the enabling legislation, the 1992 University of Namibia Act. UNAM's vision is 'to be a beacon of excellence and innovation in teaching, research and extension services'. Its mission, also focused on teaching, research, and services to external customers, places emphasis on the quality of the higher education provided by UNAM, and highlights the university's wider societal role in assisting the

national drive towards a 'knowledge-based economy, economic growth, and improved quality of life'.

The view of the EAQC Team is that, in seeking to achieve its vision and mission, UNAM is playing a leading role in Namibian society, not least in supporting national strategic goals through contributing to the realisation of the nation's *Vision 2030*, and is to be encouraged in its commitment in this regard. The team learned of the financial and other constraints placed upon the university. The team also noted the challenges inherent in the distributed nature of UNAM in geographical terms, as a multi-campus university with campuses and sites across the whole of Namibia. Despite such factors, by inviting a team of independent experts to evaluate its organisational arrangements, UNAM has shown itself to be a forward-looking university. The team learned that, in seeking to achieve its mission and vision, the university acknowledges that it has further work to do in gaining improved understanding amongst staff and students of the UNAM mission, vision, and strategic plans and goals, and in the communication and institutionalisation of arrangements for strategic planning, decision making, and quality management and quality assurance. The team also notes the particular challenges posed by the university's desire to achieve an appropriate and workable balance between 'centralisation' and 'decentralisation' in operational matters.

In looking to the future and setting strategic directions, the team recognises the progress that has been made in a number of areas, and notes that a number of organisational changes have already been introduced. In their deliberations regarding the quite extensive number of recent, new or emerging policies, strategies and initiatives across the range of the university's activities, the team's view is that in facing continued transition, the university has set itself a formidable change management challenge, with an extensive policy and strategy implementation agenda. If this agenda is to be achievable, the team urges the university to proceed with care to ensure that governance, management, and committee structures are not unnecessarily complex and that this is reflected in the organisational chart. The team also advises the university to avoid the potential pitfalls of policy, procedure, and strategy overload amongst the members of the UNAM academic and administrative community, and to ensure that quality review and management planning procedures have a clear focus on impact and improvement.

When it comes to addressing future challenges, the team identifies five strategic priority areas for the university to consider:

- Governance, management, strategic planning, and organisational issues;
- Quality assurance, quality management, and quality culture;
- Developments in learning and teaching;
- Research, knowledge transfer, and consultancy;
- External relations.

3. Governance, management, strategic planning and organisational issues

Governance, management and academic organisation

The university's academic organisation is structured into eight faculties, including a School of Medicine and a School of Nursing and Public Health. In view of UNAM's remit to meet diverse needs across Namibia, it has eleven campuses and nine regional centres distributed across the country. Reflecting the university's mission and mandate, which includes an emphasis on making higher education accessible and responsive to societal needs, the delivery of regional academic operations is facilitated through UNAM's open, distance and lifelong education arm, the Centre for External Studies (CES). The success of this key function, which delivers 21 programmes (some 4,000 students, all part-time), is dependent on CES drawing staffing resource and curriculum offerings and expertise from the university's faculties and academic departments. UNAM also has a number of research divisions, whose applied research activities are organised and coordinated under the umbrella of the Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre (MRC), established in 1993. Each of the MRC's divisions – the Social Sciences Division (SSD), the Life Sciences Division (LSD), and the Engineering, Science and Technology Division (STD) – delivers a number of research programmes. These programmes and activities are funded partly by the university, and partly through external grants and donations. Alongside the MRC, UNAM's consultancy activities and knowledge transfer capabilities are supported through the University Central Consultancy Bureau (UCCB). Research and knowledge transfer are discussed further in section 6.

As with budgetary and planning matters, UNAM enjoys management and administrative autonomy. The university is, though, heavily dependent on its government block grant for funding purposes, with up to 80 per cent of the total UNAM recurrent budget being derived from that source. The remainder of the university's income is drawn from student tuition fees, with additional reliance placed on income generated from research grants and donations, and the short courses and consultancy activities of departments and centres. The team learned that government funding is largely reliable, based as it is on a planned three-year Medium Term Expenditure Framework. However, the team noted that in relative terms, the real value of government support was diminishing.

The Chancellor acts as the titular head of the university, while the day-to-day management of the UNAM is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor, as Chief Executive Officer. A new Chancellor was inaugurated on 18 November 2011. For the purposes of governance, management and decision making, there are two main bodies at the top of the organisation: the Council of the University of Namibia, and the Senate. The Council, chaired by a person of high standing external to the university, has overall responsibility for governance and is the highest executive authority of UNAM. The Senate, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, and which is empowered to make recommendations and to submit reports to Council, has responsibility for academic matters such as 'the organisation and superintendence of instruction, examinations, lectures, classes, curricula, and research'. To assist the business of the Senate, an Executive Committee of Senate meets from time to time, making recommendations for consideration by the full Senate. The membership of

the Executive Committee reflects this purpose. Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, and including both Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Academic Affairs and Research, and Administration and Finance) and other officers, the committee also includes strong representation from the membership of the Senate who serve on a rotating basis. The statutory regulations governing the university have also led to the establishment of the Students' Representative Council, as approved by the University Council. The Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors are appointed by the Council, while the Deans, line-managed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs and Research) - PVC (AAR), are elected for a four-year term along with Deputy Deans and are appointed by the Vice-Chancellor. The senior management team of the university is comprised of the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar, Bursar and Librarian.

The deliberative and committee structures of the university also include a number of other committees that support the Senate, including: Research and Publications; Admissions and Examinations; Staff Development; Library and IT; Postgraduate Studies; and the Academic Planning Committee (APC). The latter in particular appeared to the team to play an important role in terms of reporting between the Executive Committee of Senate and Faculty Boards. The team noted the significance of the APC in considering matters such as portfolio development, applications from the faculties for curriculum changes and amendments, monitoring student enrolments and considering academic policy. The team also recognised the oversight exercised by the APC, since 2008, over the initiative for the registration of programmes and qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), as required by the National Qualifications Authority (NQA).

Although they were not part of the formal committee system, the team were interested to learn of the work undertaken by the informal fora established by each of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, namely, the PVC Academic Forum, and the PVC Administration and Finance Forum. The former, whose members include Deans, addresses issues of wider and topical academic interest, while the other forum covers matters relating to the operational functioning of the university, such as administration, estates and finance. The university also has a Quality Assurance Committee, serviced and chaired by CEQUAM, which includes representation from all faculties. It was formed recently and the EAQC Team learned that, to date, it is not fully integrated into the formal deliberative and committee structure and its minutes and activities are not formally reported through the Senate sub-committee system.

When reflecting on the governance and committee arrangements described in the foregoing and, in spite of acknowledging the important work done by the Senate and its sub-committees, the team considers that there is overlap between these, and recommends that the university should undertake a critical review of these committees to explore possibilities for streamlining and for making 'quality' and 'learning and teaching' more central to the work of one of these sub-committees. Further, in considering the operation of the Academic Planning Committee, the team heard from various sources that its deliberations and decisions on proposals for new academic programme proposals seemed not to be informed fully by discussion of resourcing needs, for example in areas such as library and IT. It

occurred to the team that this committee might be re-designated as an academic planning and resourcing committee. In view of this, the team recommends that in future APC should give full and transparent consideration to resource-related requirements linked to new programme proposals, and that the senior management team should be advised accordingly.

At faculty and department level, UNAM's deliberative and management processes, and communication mechanisms, are supported by a system of Faculty and Centre Boards and also Faculty Management Committees. These same arrangements are mirrored at department level. Faculty Boards are responsible for the academic (teaching and research) and administrative affairs of the faculty, for coordination of departments within the faculty, and for links with other faculties, departments and divisions. The Boards make decisions and recommendations to the Dean, on matters such as curriculum planning, staffing, and research matters, for consideration by higher bodies and committees within the university's governance and decision-making structures. The team endorses the university's view that the Faculty Boards have an important role to play in exercising oversight of quality and standards of provision, and would also stress the critical part that they will play in the implementation of quality assurance procedures and the development and subsequent embedding of a quality culture. Indeed, the team were interested to learn of the process that is underway to establish a quality assurance committee in each faculty and department. The team also noted that membership of Faculty Boards, which normally meet on three occasions per year, is open to all members of staff and also includes external stakeholders. While acknowledging the view expressed to them that these membership and composition arrangements are valued by staff, the team also heard that decision-making through Faculty Boards often involves long delays and protracted time scales. Accordingly, the team recommends that the university should explore ways to make the decision-making and approval process at faculty level shorter, perhaps by delegating authority to Faculty Management Committees.

At the time of the team's visit, there were 16,662 registered students. Of these, 1,927 were international students, and 11,126 were attributed to the Windhoek main campus, while 801 were postgraduate students (74 PhD, 26 Postgraduate Certificate, 501 Masters, and 200 Postgraduate Diploma). The team learned that student fee levels are based on credits studied and reflect the differential costs as between equipment-intensive and laboratory-based subjects, such as medicine and engineering on the one hand, and more classroom based subjects such as education and social sciences on the other hand. Of the 2,000 or so foreign students, drawn mainly from Europe, China, and East Africa, all pay the same fees as 'home' students. While some Namibian students are funded by industry and commercial sponsors, most are reliant on government loans and bursaries for which they apply directly to the Ministry of Education. The university itself has a scheme for more needy students, and this is administered through the University Foundation. Entry is controlled by the university, and the team were informed that some 3,000 applicants are unsuccessful each year. Reflecting national policy, priority is given to science subjects such as medicine, engineering, and nursing, and all obtain full bursaries, with students in other disciplines receiving between 50% and 100% support, and many being supplemented by parental assistance.

The team were informed that, at the commencement of the 2011/2012 academic year, the university had a staff complement of 1,453 of whom 638 were academic, 335 academic support, 211 central administrative staff and 269 part-time. The team noted that 122 were PhD holders, 36 were professors, and 228 were holders of Masters degrees. Of the academic staff, some 20% were non-Namibian nationals. UNAM offers 36 undergraduate degree programmes, 19 Masters degree programmes, and 12 doctoral (PhD) programmes. UNAM is the only higher education institution in Namibia to offer doctoral programmes. The university's portfolio of academic programmes is focused markedly towards meeting local, regional, and national labour market needs. In the team's view, the portfolio is commendably vocational, with the needs of industry, business, commerce, the professions, agriculture and the environment being addressed by UNAM's faculties and departments. The university has a range of links and agreements with government bodies, international organisations, the private sector, NGOs and local organisations, such as schools, and various other forms of community engagement. The team came to the judgement that the university's determination to serve the local and regional communities and Namibian society is one of its distinctive features. UNAM has also recently taken steps to strengthen its external and international links and relations. In the case of the latter, for the purposes of enhancing mobility, research and training opportunities, efforts are being made to extend relations in Europe, North America, Asia and the Far East. To assist in this, a Directorate of External and Internal Relations has been established.

Strategic planning and organisational development

The university's planning and organisational development agenda is helpfully set out in the SER and other documentation provided to the team. Discussions during meetings with various groups of staff, at all levels of the organisation, were also helpful in this respect. Future plans, with costings, are fully identified in the university's *Strategic Plan 2011-2015*, which is still a relatively new document. A comprehensive set of objectives for the five-year period of the *Plan* is listed in the SER, as are full lists of the strengths, improvement areas and an action plan which, while closely aligned to the *Strategic Plan*, were developed through the self-evaluation exercise undertaken in preparation for the team's visits. While the SER refers to what the institution describes as the 'achievable goals and objectives' of the *Strategic Plan*, in the view of the EAQC Team this 'strategic change agenda', as it is referred to in the *Plan*, represents a formidable set of ambitions on the part of the university. From reading the SER, it was not entirely clear to the team what the university's essential priorities are. Nevertheless, the *Strategic Plan* itself presents an informative and comprehensive self-assessment of what are deemed to be the 'current state' and 'desired state' of performance and achievement across a range of activities. This indicates that performance in a number of areas, including research and consultancy, knowledge creation, community engagement, organisational culture, quality assurance, revenue base and resource management, is viewed as 'weak' or 'below average'. From this, the team were particularly interested in how the *Plan* would be operationalised, how widely known and how well received it was in the UNAM community, and also how it would be resourced and funded.

When reflecting on the detailed costings provided in the *Plan*, linked to each of the targets set and the accompanying initiatives, the team noted that, in relative terms, the real value of government support was diminishing year on year as student numbers have grown. Indeed, the *Strategic Plan* itself identifies the pivotal significance of 'continued financial support from the central government'. While the university may well achieve the 'total commitment from academics and staff members' that is desired in its *Plan*, it was apparent to the team that, given that delivery of the university's *Strategic Plan 2011-2015* requires funding of some N$580 million, any potential shortfall would place even greater pressure on what seems to the team to be a very ambitious set of objectives, targets and initiatives.

In its approach to strategic planning, UNAM takes account of the Namibian government's public service Performance Management System (PMS), with its focus on performance management, and effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of customer-focused services. But the central philosophy informing the university's strategic planning process and approach to operationalisation is the Balanced Scorecard approach (The Balanced Scorecard is a strategic performance management tool used by managers to monitor the implementation and execution of agreed activities). At UNAM all units, divisions, service directorates and faculties are required to formulate annual management and business plans for the purpose of 'cascading the corporate plan to units and individuals'. The team noted that the first cycle of 'Management Action Plans' was completed in July 2011, making progress with performance and outcomes difficult to assess at what remains an early stage in implementation and operationalisation. Even so, the team were interested to learn of the process and mechanisms recently put in place that are designed to enable monitoring and evaluation of divisional plans to be undertaken. A key element of this is the series of in-year (2011/2012) quarterly 'Business Performance Reviews' being undertaken with Deans and Directors by the Physical and Strategic Planning Directorate. The latter has developed the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) which is being used to monitor and evaluate the implementation of both the corporate plan and local divisional management plans for progress against the actions and 'scorecards' contained within them. The team learned that performance management reports are to be produced to reflect the performance of each management unit. These reports are being made available in Excel spread-sheet format on the university's network, for review and action by the relevant individual unit and by senior management. In this, UNAM's two Pro-Vice-Chancellors share responsibility for overseeing the execution of plans for the units and divisions in their respective areas of operation. The planning process is facilitated by the establishment of a statistician post in the Physical and Strategic Planning Directorate, to address a perceived weakness in the area of institutional data. The team learned that, having established this central post, progress is now being made in meeting institutional data needs. The team also learned of a further reporting mechanism that had recently been developed, linked to the planning process, and focusing on Faculty Annual Reports (FAR). In contrast to the more forward-looking Management Action Plans, these FAR reports were more reflective, looking back in a self-evaluative manner, on developments in departments within faculties. This quality-related reporting, linked more closely to the university's

quality review procedures, is discussed later in the section 'Quality assurance, quality management, and quality culture'.

With regard to the procedures in place to facilitate implementation of the *Strategic Plan*, the team notes that the university itself acknowledges that, at such an early stage, it is not possible to assess the effectiveness of the overall system for monitoring progress against corporate or local objectives, or the sustainability of intended outcomes, all of which will provide important indications of the success of the strategic planning exercise and the organisational development that it is intended to promote. From meetings with various groups of staff it was apparent that appreciation of such matters was varied and that a better understanding of the *Strategic Plan* and related matters was evident at higher levels of the organisation than amongst staff without management responsibilities. From the team's perspective, all departments and divisions need to engage fully with the action planning procedures, but more progress is also needed in gaining a fuller understanding (at all levels) of the *Strategic Plan* itself and its requirements.

Finance and resources

The team noted that there is, and has been historically, strong central oversight of budgetary, financial and resource-related matters. Notwithstanding the relative stability in recent years in terms of government funding, this relatively tight control appeared to the team to reflect the degree of financial constraint facing the university, as described earlier. The university uses a well-established cost centre approach. Deans and Directors hold responsibility at faculty and divisional level for compiling their local budget and for general financial management for the areas that fall within their responsibility. The team learned that budget priorities are discussed and agreed annually by the Finance Committee of the University Council. Recommendations are then made to the Council. This decision-making process is informed by the work of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Finance) supported by the Bursar. The annual budget-building process, which ends at the October meeting of the Finance Committee, begins some six months earlier in accordance with a published budget calendar. In formal terms, this work is undertaken by the university's Budget Task Force, which prepares final recommendations on the annual budget for consideration by the Finance Committee. Operationally, the budgeting process involves requests from the Office of the PVC (AF) on the projected non-capital and capital needs of each cost centre of the university. The team were advised by senior managers that where faculties have substantial project work to undertake, consideration of this is factored into the budgeting process at this stage, and account is also taken of the size and priorities of the faculties. Following any necessary discussions between the Bursar and PVC and the Dean or Director of the relevant organisational unit, the process enters its final stages with discussions between the PVC's team and the Vice-Chancellor in the context of the senior management team and Budget Task Force, prior to submission of a draft budget for consideration by the Finance Committee. Following approval, responsibility for operational oversight and monitoring of faculty and divisional budgets, including research spend, is held by the Bursar, as 'budget controller', reporting directly to the PVC (AF), who in turn advises and supports the Vice-

Chancellor as Chief Administrative Officer of the university. Matters relating to the capital budget are addressed by the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

From the documentation received and through discussions in meetings with staff at all levels, the team were able to explore how effectively arrangements for finance and resourcing worked, or were perceived to work by various staff groups and constituencies within the university. It was of interest to the team that the university had signalled at an early stage in the external evaluation process that the quality assurance of matters such as financial management arrangements was prominent amongst the issues that UNAM wished to highlight in registering for the evaluation process. In their deliberations the team noted that, while the SER referred to the various policies and procedures in place to facilitate processes for budgeting, resource allocation, financial management and financial reporting, it also pointed to various concerns regarding finance and resourcing processes and arrangements. This resonated with views and comments expressed to the team by UNAM staff, at various levels in the institutional hierarchy, relating to similar concerns. From these various sources, the team learned that, from the perspective of faculties, the budgeting process lacked sufficient transparency, with a relative lack of consultation in the preparation and finalisation of the annual budget. The team also learned of issues around the allocation and distribution to faculties and divisions of funds received from central government. Echoing the commentary earlier in this report and observations on the financial challenges of operationalising the UNAM *Strategic Plan*, the team noted the acknowledgement in the SER that successive annual budgets for the university fall short of what is required to realise the expectations and targets set out in the *Strategic Plan*, thus hampering the ability of divisions to meet all agreed goals.

Through documentary sources and through the spoken word, various possible ways forward in addressing such issues were brought to the team's attention. The SER suggested that there is scope to improve on arrangements and processes for financial allocations and also highlighted the commonly expressed need in today's higher education that lack of finance requires universities to seek alternative sources of funding, beyond income from government and student fees. Accordingly, diversification of income sources in areas such as services to business and industry, through donations, and through pursuing opportunities for involvement in national and international projects, all feature in the university's longer term financial planning. The team also learned that, as a cost-reducing measure, the university had already out-sourced some non-core functions, such as cleaning services and some administrative services.

Of particular interest to the team was the emphasis placed in the SER and other documentation, and in various meetings, on the stated intention to undertake some degree of decentralisation of financial, budget management, resourcing and other operational matters as part of a wider commitment to decentralisation to campus level, commencing in 2012, and which included the integration of the former colleges of education. These matters are discussed more fully in the next sub-section of this report.

Communication, organisational effectiveness, and the change management agenda

In the view of the team, matters relating to decentralisation, integration of newly acquired campuses and efficiency of operational processes, along with earlier reference to concerns around progress in corporate planning, point to much broader challenges relating to organisational development, cohesion and effectiveness. The team believes that these challenges present the university with a substantial agenda for change management in the immediate future and the medium term. From the team's perspective, there are four key dimensions to this agenda. These are:

- more effective communication, in relation to corporate information and decision making;
- the implementation of a range of strategies, policies and the embedding of organisational units;
- the need for more effective operational and management processes, appropriately quality assured;
- the current debate around decentralisation and centralisation and the need to integrate all campuses.

In the course of their discussions in various meetings at a senior level and from institutional documentation, it was apparent to the team that the university was very aware of all aspects of this challenging agenda and that senior managers were open to finding solutions and ways forward.

In its SER, the university signalled to the team concerns around communication on matters as varied as the perceived lack of transparency in the budgeting process on the one hand, to deficiencies experienced with the IT infrastructure and network and email communication on the other hand. Also, during meetings with various groups, some staff reported making increased use of the internet for email and communication purposes, rather than the university's systems. Other staff reported that the tone of communications from a higher level occasionally appeared to be more managerial than collegial and that such communication was more reactive than proactive. Communication in terms of decision-making - with some decisions not reaching staff at lower levels in the university– was raised with the team as a concern. It was pointed out to the team by senior managers that the PVC Forum for Academic Affairs and the Forum for Administrative and Finance matters were endeavouring to communicate information on important institutional matters, with Deans being responsible for communication through Faculty Boards and committees. Nevertheless, the team heard that despite such arrangements, important messages and corporate information appeared not to reach intended recipients, or became distorted or misinterpreted in the communication process. There was also a feeling that decision-making was too 'top-down'. While use was being made of a twice-weekly on-line forum, and some committee minutes were available on-line, as the Pro Vice Chancellors confirmed to the team, communication remained a problem to be solved. The team learned that this generalised problem of communication also extended to the UNAM mission and vision which, though available on the university's website along with various items of strategic information, are not as

widely known and understood as senior managers would wish. The team noted that action was being taken in an effort to raise awareness. Similarly, the team learned of plans to improve the university's servers, bandwidth capacity and other IT-related enhancements.

In their deliberations on this important matter of communication, the team noted that the university refers in its SER to the emerging importance of the initiative to improve the availability and quality of information and that a post had been established in the Directorate of Physical and Strategic Planning. From the team's perspective this is an encouraging development which, in time, may help to alleviate some of the university's communication difficulties. The team also learned of an intention on the part of the Directorate of Marketing and Communication to develop a communication plan. However, given that the principal function of this directorate is to act as the external public relations arm of UNAM, and in view of the somewhat broader scope of the university's communication challenges, the team formed the view that such a plan, though welcome, may fall short of what the university requires at this juncture. If the communication issues raised here are to be fully addressed, and UNAM's capability in corporate information and corporate communication is to be enhanced, then perhaps a more comprehensive communication strategy is needed.

As is noted in section 4, action is also being taken to raise awareness of other important corporate matters that impact upon organisational effectiveness, not least quality assurance and the development of quality systems. As is evident throughout the team's report, the university has a broad range of institutional strategies, policies, and structural arrangements, often recent, that it wishes to implement and embed. The team notes that for academic and related policies the university identifies the Director of Academic Affairs as holding a remit for ensuring effective policy implementation and adherence to procedures. In connection with this, the team advises the university to make every effort to ensure that appropriate training is in place and that equivalent arrangements should be made on the administrative side of the organisation. More broadly, the team were concerned that policies, as they are implemented and reviewed, should not become over-elaborate and burdensome, and that as greater decentralisation is introduced, this is not at the expense of organisational cohesion.

As noted in the discussion of finance and resources (pp. 12-13), alongside these matters of policy implementation, considerations regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of key university processes are equally important from the team's point of view. The team noted that the university's *Strategic Plan* pinpoints the efficiency of operational arrangements as a strategic theme. Indeed, deficiencies are acknowledged in the SER on matters such as the lack of professionalism in procurement and requisitioning processes, the need for customer relations training for faculty administrators, and the absence of a system for facilities management. Echoing this, groups of staff drew attention to commonly experienced delays in equipment procurement and purchasing, inefficient registration processes and poor follow-up action on administrative matters. Such delays and a lack of transparency cause much frustration for staff directly involved in delivering education to students, including in areas such as equipment-intensive practical work. In meetings with staff

and from institutional documentation, the team noted various views expressed regarding the optimal degree of decentralisation in specific matters such as finance, purchasing, recruitment of staff and examination arrangements, as well as perceived benefits in more general matters, such as decision-making and management activities. Taking account of all of this, the team came to the view that, while it is to be hoped that plans for greater decentralisation would bring about the intended benefits, unless improvements are delivered simultaneously in the effectiveness of key processes, then the impact aspired to through decentralisation may not be achieved.

Taking note of the foregoing, the team were interested to learn from UNAM's senior management team of recent developments being taken forward to secure both greater decentralisation and improvements in processes. Heads have now been appointed to take responsibility for operational oversight of distant campuses; these appointees are supported in each case, for academic purposes, by Deputy Deans. The team found it encouraging to hear from some groups of staff that these arrangements were beginning to show progress. Further, the team were advised by senior staff that new systems, such as an online procurement capability and financial monitoring software, have recently been put in place to facilitate decentralisation. Although training will need to be made available, these appeared to the team to represent positive steps forward in terms of improvement to processes.

In connection with these matters, the team were reassured to note that, in engaging with the EAQC project, the university has given clear indications of its desire to make good progress in applying quality assurance arrangements to its administrative and support services, and the administrative processes used to support the core activities of teaching, research and community engagement. The team wishes to encourage UNAM in this and endorses the emphasis being placed by the university on the accountability of support services for the quality of their processes and operational management. The team therefore recommends that early progress is made in taking steps to improve key administrative processes. Moreover, the team believes that, just as with academic units, this should include securing the full engagement of administrative functions with the university's quality assurance procedures and processes for self-review and improvement planning, as described in section 4.

It remains to be seen whether the UNAM debate regarding the achievement of an appropriate balance between 'decentralisation' and 'centralisation' will be resolved in a way that supports the organisational cohesion necessary for effective implementation of the university's *Strategic Plan 2011-2015*, and the various supporting policies and strategies. However, as plans for a greater degree of decentralisation are taken forward, the team would like to alert the university to a number of concerns. In the view of the team there is an element of tension between a desire to unify and strengthen organisational cohesion and organisational culture on the one hand, and a commitment to decentralisation on significant operational matters on the other hand. Moreover, the fact that UNAM has a number of campuses (some new, most distant) adds further complexity to the challenge of achieving an integrated and effective organisational approach in the

general areas of policy, practice and operational processes. Taken together, these are all critical aspects of the drive towards greater organisational effectiveness and an organisational culture that is subscribed to by more staff members.

As the university addresses the full range of these future challenges, as represented in the change agenda listed on page 6, and builds its capacity for implementing successful change, the team notes the contribution and helpful work of the Self-Evaluation Group formed to undertake the self-evaluation that has been central to the preparations for external evaluation. The team were impressed with the work and energy of this group in evaluating and reporting on the organisation and changes being introduced at UNAM, and its members have shown a capability for understanding and influencing the UNAM change agenda in a positive way. Indeed, the team believes that the development of a UNAM capability for internal institutional self-review of its change agenda will be of assistance in going forward. Accordingly, the team proposes that the Vice-Chancellor considers the value of extending the working life of the Self-Evaluation Group, perhaps on a limited time scale, with a remit to assist him in monitoring further progress and change in these issues and other matters in this report, and the recommendations set out on pages 34-37.

4. Quality assurance, quality management and quality culture

Quality assurance and quality management

The team noted that system developments in quality assurance and quality management at UNAM were quite recent. This reflected the acknowledgement at senior management level that the university was still a relatively young institution in terms of structures, systems and stage of development, and the creation of an organisational quality culture across all academic and administrative units. Initiatives in this area provided the team with further insights into UNAM's focus on the wider institutionalisation, harmonisation and modernisation of key systems and processes, and the desire to strengthen organisational cohesion and effectiveness while also meeting external accountability and accreditation requirements of bodies such as the NCHE and NQA. While quality initiatives and the aspirations towards the growth of a quality culture were focused both on academic and administrative divisions and units, most progress in the current change initiative has been made on academic quality assurance, in areas such as approval, accreditation, monitoring and review, and also student feedback and evaluation.

In 2010, the university took the important step of establishing the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) which, reporting to the PVC (AAR), is taking the lead in developing and facilitating the implementation, in faculties and departments, of a wide range of quality policies, guidelines, procedures and reviews. It is tasked with promoting a 'quality culture'. There is a desire on the part of UNAM to encourage the principles of self-evaluation, at all levels and across all institutional units. The team learned that to make progress in these areas, CEQUAM delivers seminars and training workshops for both staff and student communities on a variety of quality matters. The remit of CEQUAM is supported by two Quality Coordinators, one for academic purposes and one to support and advise

administrative departments. The team also noted a recent development whereby the university has approved the appointment of four new positions for Quality Coordinators to be deployed at outlying campuses, including two of the recently merged college of education campuses. The work of CEQUAM is also assisted by the formation of an Advisory Board, which includes external members together with UNAM faculty representatives. The latter are also members of the university-wide Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), which plays an important part as a discussion forum in the work of capacity building in quality assurance matters although it is not part of the sub-committee structure of the Senate. The team noted the importance attached by the university to faculty representation on the QAC and the representation from regional campuses, and also to the role of the representatives in facilitating the promotion and implementation of the quality management system at local level. Faculty quality representatives, who also sit on Faculty Boards, are also charged with the responsibility of establishing quality sub-committees at faculty and department level, a development which is still in its early stages.

The team members were interested to learn that, to date, in developing its quality systems, CEQUAM has designed an extensive range of procedural guidance on internal and external regulatory and developmental requirements, including a 'Quality assurance and management policy', a 'Quality assurance manual', 'Guidelines for departments (academic and administrative) and programme self-evaluation' (together with an accompanying template), and also 'Guidelines for developing programmes for NQF-registered qualifications'. For the purposes of internal review, a five-year cycle has been commenced in 2011, whereby each faculty, department (including administrative support department) and programme is required to complete an annual self-evaluation report (also referred to as self-review) on developments and progress in the area of academic provision and the quality of the student and staff experience, or service delivery, as appropriate. Reports are required to include self-improvement plans for quality development purposes. The team saw a number of such reports but were advised by the university that not all departments or units had yet completed a report and that progress by support departments is less well advanced than that of academic departments. The team learned that all such reports are submitted to CEQUAM which will undertake monitoring of the implementation of recommendations arising from self-reviews.

The team noted that Deans and Directors and Deputy Deans and Heads each hold responsibility for carrying forward the development and implementation, at local level, of quality assurance mechanisms and processes, with Faculty Boards exercising oversight, through the deliberative committee structure, of quality assurance and academic standards and the quality of academic provision in the faculty. These responsibilities also extend to securing conformance with NQA and NQF requirements. In respect of the latter, the university has begun the process of requiring each department to secure the accreditation of its portfolio of academic programmes through registration on the National Qualifications Framework, with the Faculty of Engineering and IT being the first to pilot the programme accreditation system in 2011. However, no qualifications have yet been registered, either at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. An ambitious schedule of curriculum reviews, which UNAM commenced in 2007, is being taken forward with

a view to achieving registration on the Framework of all UNAM programmes by 2015. For internal purposes, it is intended that each programme will be reviewed every four years, with existing and new programmes undergoing the same development and review process. Recommendations on new programme developments from Faculty Boards are submitted to Academic Planning Committee for approval. The team learned that, at this stage, the process for approval of new programmes is underway but that the programme reviews (a requirement of the NCHE) are yet to be commenced.

The team were also interested to learn of the use made by the university of a system of external moderation for annual monitoring purposes, whereby external peers undertake moderation of examinations and assessment and also provide advice to departments on curricula and academic programmes. Though not mentioned in the SER, this is viewed by the team as an example of good practice in terms of assuring both quality and academic standards. It prompted the team to reflect on whether the university might also put in place its own internally-driven annual programme monitoring arrangement to complement this, focusing on matters such as progression, completion, drop-out and retention, as a means of assessing student achievement, rather than relying solely on external monitoring of assessment matters.

In their discussions with UNAM staff and students drawn from across the university, the team found it interesting to obtain a clear picture of how staff viewed developments towards the design and implementation of quality assurance systems. The team wished to assess the degree to which these arrangements were gaining acceptance and whether they were helping departments and faculties to introduce improvements, including in teaching and learning. From this, from documentation made available to assist their deliberations and from meetings with various groups drawn from across the university, it was evident to the team that levels of understanding and awareness amongst staff of the quality systems and of internal and external requirements was variable, that the pace of change was uneven, and that the process of implementation was still in its very early stages. The team fully endorses the importance attached by the university to making early progress in securing improved engagement with the newly developed quality assurance procedures at faculty, department and programme levels. It was evident to the team members that this is essential to the process of gaining 'ownership' of quality at all levels, and as near to the point of academic programme or service delivery as is possible. The team formed the view that the aim of embedding, and even 'fine-tuning', UNAM's quality systems will take some time, but would like to encourage the university and CEQUAM to continue to make progress.

Regarding the foregoing, the EAQC Team notes the challenges facing the university but also thinks that, at this relatively early stage, there are valuable opportunities that UNAM might wish to consider in the subsequent development of its arrangements for quality assurance and quality management. First, in drawing on their experience in these matters, the members of the team advise the university to ensure that quality systems and arrangements do not become too complex or over-elaborate or unnecessarily burdensome and that, as far as possible, procedures and guidance are sufficiently streamlined to be 'user-friendly'. For example, the

university may wish to consider whether a lighter and simplified version of the current Quality Assurance Manual may be helpful. Further, the team advises the university to ensure that the central purpose of quality assurance arrangements is to show improvement, benefits and impact on learning, teaching, and research. Second, given the importance, recognised by the team and by the university, of 'local level' implementation, we would advise the university and its faculties and divisions to make early progress in operationalising the new faculty and department quality committees and also recommend that they should have a clear focus on matters relating to the quality of learning and teaching, and the student experience.

Staff appraisal and staff development

The team paid attention to staff-related matters that have a direct bearing on various aspects of quality development at UNAM, including: support for staff in upgrading their qualifications; staff training and development opportunities; the effectiveness and operation of the university's staff appraisal process; and the use made of student evaluation of teaching performance. Team members found it interesting to learn of the importance attached by the university to its programme for assisting academic staff to upgrade their qualifications. Academic staff– and to some extent, administrative staff – are provided with the opportunity to obtain a Masters or PhD degree. The team noted the rigorous monitoring of progress and the arrangements for consideration and approval of sabbatical leave, as evidenced in the proceedings of the Staff Development Committee of the Senate. From this and other documentation, and from discussions with staff and academic managers, the team concurs with the university that this scheme, as currently designed, is working well and took the view that it is an important element of UNAM's capacity building. The university views its policy and practice in this area as one of the best examples in the region. The team were pleased to note that the process of upgrading of qualifications has been extended to the programme of staff development for the campus integration of the four former colleges of education. The team considered arrangements for general staff development and learned that the Research and Publications Committee (RPC) of the Senate, together with the Research and Publications Office (RPO), play a central role in overseeing the allocation of the budget for funding staff attendance at local and international conferences, either for the purpose of attending or presenting at such conferences. In operational terms, the Research Coordinator, working from the RPO (located in the Vice-Chancellor's office), manages these arrangements for conference support and also the business of the RPC.

The operation and use made by the university of its scheme for staff appraisal and the evaluation of performance was of particular interest to the team. The team noted that this scheme only applied to academic staff and that no such scheme existed for administrative and support staff. The team was also interested to note that, while the Director of Human Resources maintains a degree of oversight over staff appraisal, it is the Director of Academic Affairs, acting on behalf of the PVC (AAR) who exercises *de facto* institutional oversight of the appraisal scheme for academic staff, and of the promotions scheme. The SER had drawn attention to concerns regarding the effectiveness and use made of the appraisal scheme, concerns which had been aired by staff during the process of consultation for

preparing the self-evaluation report. The EAQC Team undertook to explore these concerns through meetings with staff and through examining institutional documentation and processes. The current staff appraisal scheme is helpfully described in the relevant 'Procedures and Guidelines' document. All full- and part-time members of staff are required to complete an annual appraisal form, covering teaching, research and service to the community (community engagement); each element is assessed using a points system. The forms are submitted to the relevant Head of Department who, having added comments, forwards the form to the member of staff for signature and to the Dean of Faculty for 'sign-off'. Deans submit summary reports across all appraisals for the departments for which they are responsible, and these are considered by the Director of Academic Affairs on behalf of the Office of the PVC (AAR). The latter identifies strengths and weaknesses and makes recommendations to the relevant departments and faculties. The team noted that non-completion is addressed by Heads and Deans, as appropriate.

Although the procedural description indicates that the outcomes of this process are considered elsewhere in the management structures of the university, it was not apparent to the team how this was achieved, and it did not appear to the team that any reporting on overall outcomes or the performance of academic units was undertaken by any higher-level committee. Moreover, the issue of 'follow-up' was identified as a concern in the SER, where it was acknowledged that feedback on performance may not be taking place universally. Meetings with Heads of Department and other academic staff provided further evidence to the EAQC Team that not all academic staff completed the appraisal process and, where they did so, there was little or no understanding of how the process was completed at the top of the organisation. Similar issues were revealed when the team considered the use made, for feedback purposes to staff, of the student evaluation questionnaires described later in this section. The team heard that on completion of the evaluation forms teaching staff are informed of any issues where they might improve their performance, including areas of possible weakness, by their Head of Department, but this varied between the members of staff whom the team met. The team were happy to learn that some staff sought feedback from students in addition to the official forms used, and this professional approach is to be welcomed. But although the completed forms are seen by the Teaching and Learning Improvement Unit (TLIU), Deans and Heads, as well as by the individual members of staff, the general feeling expressed to the team was that staff were unaware of how the completed feedback process was used at higher levels. Issues were also raised regarding the timeliness of feedback, in particular where feedback was received too late for staff to make adjustments in subsequent semesters. Further, it was not clear to the team how the TLIU made use of the outcomes of the appraisal and student evaluation processes for the purposes of planning and delivering the unit's enhancement activities.

Regarding arrangements for human resources development and capacity building, particularly where this relates to quality development, the team formed the view that there are several areas where the university may wish to consider introducing changes in order to make further progress and to strengthen arrangements for staff development. Firstly, the team recommends that arrangements for providing feedback to 'appraisees' under the university's staff appraisal scheme (currently

used for academic staff) should be strengthened and improved, and that the scheme is extended to include administrative staff. Secondly, the team advises that steps are taken to secure more transparency (for the benefit of academic staff) in how feedback obtained from students on teaching and teachers is used by senior staff for improvement and feedback purposes, and also on how outcomes are used by the TLI Unit for enhancement planning purposes. These are matters which the university's senior management team may wish to consider with a view to introducing enhancements to existing processes.

Student representation and involvement in quality processes

The team focused some of their deliberations and enquiries on arrangements for student representation and involvement in quality processes and in wider institutional governance arrangements. The documentation provided and discussions with students and staff proved to be helpful in this respect. The team took care to ensure that students were provided with opportunities to indicate whether they were sufficiently well represented and were able to express their views on quality and other matters through involvement in committees or through other channels. The team learned that students were, in general, content with the informal channels open to them, and were able to raise matters of concern with their teachers or heads of department on a day-to-day basis. It appeared to the team that such arrangements worked satisfactorily and that staff were accessible and helpful. Also, the team noted the established arrangements for student representation in the governance structures and decision-making bodies, such as the University Council, the Senate and other committees and boards. The team heard from students that this provided valuable opportunities to meet with university authorities.

However, if staff awareness of the quality systems was variable, this was even more so amongst the students whom the team met, and their representatives. Students made it clear that they would appreciate and value more information on and better engagement with quality assurance processes and the developing UNAM systems and arrangements. The team members were assured, through reading the SER and other documentation provided, and through discussions with the Self-Evaluation Group and staff with formal responsibilities for quality, that this is a matter of which the university is fully aware as it continues its journey towards building a quality culture throughout the entire UNAM academic community. However, while the UNAM quality assurance policy identifies the need for students to participate in quality assurance and points to the opportunity to make their quality-related concerns known through their SRC representative on the QAC, the team invites the university to consider whether this current situation is sufficient. The team recommends that further steps are taken to address this situation, through continued training and support, including for student representatives of the new local level (faculty/department) quality committees. The team believes that CEQUAM is well placed to provide the necessary training and support for students. Fuller engagement of students and their representatives might also involve giving consideration to student awareness-raising of UNAM's evolving quality review processes at programme, department, and faculty levels. When such changes are

adopted they can be incorporated in the university's quality assurance policy document.

Student evaluation and feedback

The team also considered the use made of formal student feedback and evaluation by the university and its faculties and departments and the effectiveness of these arrangements from the student perspective. The team learned that student evaluation forms have been used for a number of years and that current practice is for such feedback to be obtained each semester. In some departments, which are subject to external regulation, such as Medicine and Engineering, additional arrangements are in place. The main institutional survey instrument, which is confidential, invites students to comment on matters such as assessment, student support, teaching, administration and professional conduct for each module studied. As noted on page 21, this process is facilitated by the Teaching and Learning Improvement Unit (TLIU) to enable evaluation to be undertaken of teacher performance. Completed forms are forwarded by the TLIU to department heads and individual lecturers to become part of the evaluation of the individual member of staff. In considering the student feedback aspect of this process, it was apparent to the team from meetings with students and staff that, while this was an area of potential good practice, and despite the obvious opportunities for using this as a tool for quality improvement, these arrangements are not working well for students. Indeed, this is acknowledged in the SER where it is stated that students do not view the system as transparent or effective since they are not provided with feedback or information on follow-up of any actions taken to improve or change courses or teaching and learning. Nor does feedback from this evaluation process seem to be considered by faculty or department boards or committees. The team formed the view that the university should take steps to satisfy itself that appropriate mechanisms are developed and put in place – and consistently applied across all departments, programmes of study and modules – for 'closing the quality loop' for students on the issues they raise in evaluation forms. The team advises that this might be undertaken through joint action between the TLIU, CEQUAM and UNAM's faculties. Taking a broader perspective on UNAM's developing policies and guidelines, it appeared to the team on the basis of their deliberations regarding student feedback and evaluation that this is an area that might benefit from being highlighted further in the university's quality assurance policy, guidelines and templates for department and programme review, in the proceedings of faculty and department boards and operation of the Quality Assurance Committee. The team could find no evidence that student feedback outcomes (as opposed to general student concerns) were routinely considered in any of these contexts.

5. Developments in learning and teaching

The team took a close interest in developments and structures relating to teaching and learning, and the university's learning and teaching agenda and priorities in going forward. The team were aware of the importance attached to higher education in Namibian society and to the wider national role played by UNAM. This became evident to the team through discussions at the university and through reading documentation relating to matters of constitution, governance and strategy,

and through understanding the geographically distributed nature of UNAM's delivery structures and regional presence.

In their deliberations on the wider university context, the team considered matters relating to learning resources and the infrastructure to support the student and staff learning and teaching environment. The team notes the university's acknowledgement that they have a challenging agenda in terms of addressing the problems in this area. From reading the SER and other documentation, the team learned that there are plans to put in place a facilities management policy and a policy for capital development and rolling maintenance. The SER also highlighted the pressure placed on lecture and teaching room space, library space, student access to learning resources such as journals and books, library provision for postgraduate research students, and on facilities such as video-conferencing. It was also evident to the team that inadequate IT systems meant that the introduction of online registration and provision of reliable email communication had yet to be achieved. Not dissimilar pressures were evident to the team in their consideration of student support services, in areas that have a bearing on the academic success, personal welfare and quality of life of UNAM students. For example, health facilities, guidance and counselling, and student hostels are all highlighted in the SER as being in need of improvement. It appeared to the team that, while such services are highly valued and well thought of, increased student numbers place them under growing pressure.

With regard to all of these important matters relating to the student experience and student environment, the team notes that all are recognised amongst the priority areas identified in the UNAM *Strategic Plan 2011-15*, and that costings and resource requirements for each of these are set out for the five-year period of the plan. The team wishes the university well in addressing and managing these challenges. However, from their enquiries and through meetings with relevant staff and students, the team were especially interested in the operation of UNAM's regional centres and satellite campuses, particularly the quality of the learning and teaching and learning environment in those contexts, and the role played by the Centre for Extension Studies (CES). The team took such a close interest in this area because, as a distributed university, with a national remit and responsibility, the role played by CES is vitally important to UNAM. The team explored CES's operations in open and distance learning and its commitment to lifelong learning, all of which have become a key feature of CES as its services have developed. However, in view of the fact that some 45% of UNAM's students follow programmes that make use of open and distance learning, the team were surprised that the SER provided limited coverage of the centre and its activities.

From their enquiries the team learned that the operation and delivery of CES activities and programmes is closely aligned with the functions and structures of the wider university. The centre and UNAM's faculties and departments are inevitably interdependent since these partnerships enable cross teaching and the joint development of educational materials. The services provided by faculties and departments provide the key underpinning to CES. At the level of the individual lecturer, development of study materials for CES purposes is a contributory element in an application for promotion. CES makes use of part-time staff, including for

academic support purposes. The centre is integrated into the university's review processes, including curriculum review, as well as being involved in quality management processes and arrangements for the moderation of examinations and assessment. The centre's links with faculties are augmented through faculty representation on the CES Board of Studies, which approves all new programmes prior to consideration by the Academic Planning Committee. It has good working links with the TLIU. The team also noted with interest that CES is closely involved with the university's E-Learning Committee, and that consideration is being given to adopting Moodle as a Virtual Learning Environment platform, with a view to placing learning and teaching materials online in due course. In considering the valuable and vital role played by CES, the team formed the view that the greatest challenges facing the centre are resource-related, including infrastructural considerations. Discussions with staff and students and documentation considered by the team pointed to needs relating to equipment (including computers), classroom and laboratory facilities, ICT infrastructure and library resources. In some of CES's 10 centres these needs are particularly acute. In view of CES's plans, going forward, to make greater use (from 2012) of online learning/e-learning and technology-enhanced learning approaches, these are matters of particular concern. While the team notes from strategic documentation, and from meetings with senior managers, that there is an acute awareness of these concerns at a senior level, and a commitment to making progress towards addressing them, the concerns expressed to team members regarding deficiencies in learning resources and the learning support environment at UNAM's satellite campuses and regional centres seem especially acute. The team therefore recommends that the university reviews and addresses this situation as a matter of urgency and puts in place an action plan to tackle the issue, as resources become available.

As noted in section 4, the on-going curriculum review project, and the planning and design activity underpinning this, is an important preoccupation for the university. The team members were impressed by the documented examples they saw of the workshops and other activities designed to involve external stakeholders from industry and business in consultations regarding curriculum and portfolio development, and the determination to seek a flexible and responsive approach to curriculum development. In the view of the team, this good practice should be encouraged across the university's faculties and academic support departments. Linked to this, despite the challenges of finding and supporting a sufficient number of appropriate placements, the team would like to encourage the efforts being made to secure work placements for students and note the importance of this in enhancing the employability of UNAM graduates. All of this will serve to enhance the external profile of UNAM. The team also noted the valuable work done by the university's Language Centre, particularly in the area of providing support for English language and academic writing skills. The centre also has an important role in the community in upgrading the literacy and language skills of low-achieving secondary school children.

The team focussed some of their enquiries on matters relating to teaching on postgraduate programmes, both taught (e.g. Masters) and research (e.g. doctoral). The SER acknowledges that there is progress to be made in key areas, such as the development of procedures for ethical approval. Further, discussions with staff

revealed that capacity in faculties and departments for supervising doctoral and Masters theses and dissertations is short of what the university requires. In reflecting on these matters, the team formed the view that the university, through its Postgraduate Studies Committee, has a good awareness of what needs to be done and were reassured that measures, including training for new supervisors, and the production of a postgraduate study guide, are being put in place to address them.

As the SER indicates, teaching is the core activity of the university and the workload formula used reflects this, with a nominal 60% allocated to teaching time, 30% to research, and 10% to community engagement. Matters relating to the operationalisation and implementation of this formula are discussed further in sections 6 and 7. The fact that academic staff viewed themselves primarily as teachers was confirmed to the team from discussions with various staff groups. Reflecting this, the team noted with interest that the UNAM *Strategic Plan* objective 'to improve the quality of teaching and learning' will be measured by the university against the success of a number of learning and teaching initiatives, such as peer review of teaching, the introduction of a university-wide tutorial and mentoring system, staff development in assessment, additional Continuing Professional Development and staff development programmes, and improvements to the external moderation system.

The EAQC Team were very glad to see emphasis being placed at institutional level on such enhancement initiatives, and would like to urge the UNAM academic community to engage with these opportunities for the purpose of improving pedagogy and the student learning experience. In connection with these matters, the team wishes to highlight the importance to the university of its Teaching and Learning Improvement Unit (TLIU), its position in UNAM's structures, and its relations with faculties and departments, and the valuable programme of activities that it undertakes. Established in 1998, and reporting to the Office of the PVC (AAR), the remit of the TLIU is to promote improvement in learning and teaching through various programmes and initiatives. These include: a proposed Certificate in Effective Teaching and Learning in Higher Education; guidelines on teaching (including peer review), assessment practice and technology-enhanced learning; involvement in processing student evaluation forms; and delivery of workshops and seminars on teaching and learning enhancement topics, such as curriculum review. In the view of the team, these are all essential activities for the enhancement of learning and teaching. However, in reading institutional quality review documentation the team noted that while occasional emphasis is placed on such enhancement initiatives and opportunities in faculty and department self-reviews and management action plans, this could be strengthened. Accordingly, the team recommends that learning and teaching enhancement targets and actions could be much more prominent in department and faculty self-reviews and management action plans. From the team's point of view, the foregoing commentary reinforces the acknowledgement in the university's SER that there is work to be done in extending the use made, across UNAM's programmes and departments, of a wider range of teaching and learning methods, and of more student-centred approaches.

More broadly, the team also considered whether the strategic importance that the university wishes to attach to teaching and learning enhancement and to quality is reflected sufficiently well in its management and operational structures. To assist them in this, the team explored arrangements for the management and direction of strategy and operational activities in the areas of: academic affairs; quality assurance and improvement; and learning and teaching. In their enquiries, the team found much overlap between departments. Accordingly, the team recommends that the university considers bringing the office of the Director of Academic Affairs, the Quality Unit (CEQUAM), and the TLI Unit together into one overarching entity, to provide a more cohesive and less fragmented focal point for strategy and management in academic affairs, quality assurance, and learning and teaching enhancement.

6. Research, knowledge transfer and consultancy

The team heard from the university's senior managers that research at UNAM is very closely oriented towards supporting the socio-economic development of the country and towards national development goals. In the documentation provided in preparation for the team's visits, the university states that 'research and development' and an emphasis on 'knowledge creation and application' are prominent amongst the strategic themes that guide UNAM going forward. However, the team noted with interest that the *Strategic Plan* indicates that 'research and consultancy' and 'knowledge creation and publications' are assessed as 'low output' and 'weak', respectively. In assessing the university's profile, along with its strategic goals, the team were particularly interested in the scope for and importance of applied research and knowledge transfer activity for UNAM, relative to 'pure' research. In addition, the team members also recognised the significance to UNAM of efforts to grow capacity at the level of the individual academic in terms of personal, discipline-based or doctoral research. For the team, these are important indicators of the Humboldtian principle of the linkage between 'teaching' and 'research' that all higher education institutions regard as essential. This also illustrates the ways in which the type of applied research that is prioritised by UNAM can contribute to the enhancement, review and renewal (and therefore the relevance) of academic programmes, as well as to national and regional socio-economic development.

The team also noted that the *Research Strategy* document currently in use dates back to 2005. From reading this strategy and other more recent institutional documentation, it occurred to team members that alignment between these various documents may not be optimal and that the matter of the currency of the 2005 document was something upon which the University should reflect. Given the importance attached to these matters in the *2011/2015 Strategic Plan*, the team were therefore pleased to learn that an up-to-date Research Strategy is being developed to reflect the university's current research aspirations and the infrastructure and arrangements that are now in place to support the coordination and direction of UNAM's research and knowledge transfer activities. The team's recommendation is that this should be a brief and user-friendly document, and that the strategy be kept under review to reflect the emerging priorities of the new

National Commission for Research, Science and Technology that is due to be established in April 2012.

The university is not funded separately by government for the purposes of research and, to date, there has been no National Commission in this area. However, the team noted that close working links are maintained by the university with the Ministry of Education's Directorate of Research, Science and Technology, particularly through UNAM's Multidisciplinary Research Centre (MRC). The team learned that there are two ways in which research is funded: internal UNAM funds that are wired from the university's state block grant; and external donor funds, linked to particular projects and grants. A budget of N$2m is set aside for research (equivalent to around US$250,000). No faculty or department allocations are made for research, and financial support for activity at this level, whether for projects or for higher qualifications, is applied for and distributed centrally on a competitive basis. Matters relating to externally-funded research, including contracts for projects, are dealt with through the Bursar's office. The N$2m research budget for the remainder of UNAM research-related activity (e.g. to support higher qualifications and conference attendance and other matters) is administered by the Research and Publications Office (RPO), managed by the Research Coordinator. By considering documentation on the workings of the relevant committees, and also through meetings with relevant staff, such as the Research Coordinator, the team were able to gain insights into how these arrangements worked. For the purpose of approving and monitoring higher qualifications and sabbatical leave, the team learned that the Senate Staff Development Committee is the key organ. In contrast, the team noted that the Senate Research and Publications Committee (RPC) is responsible for the approval of funding research projects proposed by faculties and departments, and for applications to present at national and international conferences, or for publication fees. Project proposals, which are first evaluated at faculty/campus/centre level prior to consideration by the RPC, are rejected by the latter if the quality of the proposals does not meet the required standard. When finally approved by the RPC, these funds are monitored through the RPO.

The team also noted that the *Strategic Plan* identified specific projected costs over a five-year period for the foregoing activities. Initiatives and objectives identified in the Plan include increasing research output, a reward system, research training and mentorship, support for grant-writing, knowledge transfer programmes and research income generation. All are designed to support the continued growth of a research culture across the university. It is acknowledged that progress will be dictated partly by the availability of resources at any one time, and the team members would encourage the university to make progress with such initiatives, as resources allow. However, from the team's scrutiny of various institutional documents it was evident that while information on research outputs was available in various places, there seemed to be no central repository or database that provided a complete picture of research and scholarly outputs. Accordingly, the team recommends that, to enable progress to be monitored, and in order for the university to prioritise and accurately measure progress in this area, a central database and repository should be developed of all research activity and outputs across the university.

The team considered the infrastructure now in place at UNAM to support the university's research activity. As described, the Research Coordinator, located in the Pro Vice-Chancellor's Office and reporting to the PVC (AAR), plays an important role in overseeing and coordinating research activities and developing research-related policies and procedures. In addition to managing the research funds and supporting conference attendance, the coordinator provides the support for the RPC, on which all faculties and centres are represented. The team learned that the coordinator also provides support for staff wishing to respond to research calls, through advice on writing bids and on how to get published. However, from meetings with staff the team noted that some academics were not aware of such support. The team also understood that, alongside the work of the Research Coordinator, the university intends that the Director of External and Internal Relations will also make a contribution to the university's research effort through establishing links and partnerships and facilitating projects, some of which are research-based.

When reviewing the research profiles and activities of each of the university's faculties and departments, the team took the opportunity to consider annual research reports, management action plans and various other forms of information provided. From this, and through discussions with various staff groups, the team formed the view that the level and depth of activity varied across the university, and that this reflected the historical differences, in terms of the strength of research track-record and staff qualifications profile, of the various UNAM faculties and departments. It appeared to the team that the overall picture varied from department to department and between individual members of staff. The university's SER drew attention to perceived strengths in the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) and in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS). The SER characterised these as examples to be emulated by other faculties in terms of setting research agendas and establishing priorities with appropriate timeframes. It appeared to the team that the FANR provided a good illustration of the work being undertaken at UNAM in applied research and knowledge transfer, and showed good alignment with national development plans and the work of various government ministries. In a similar vein, the team noted that other faculties (such as Science, and Engineering and IT) also placed emphasis on knowledge transfer activity. The team noted that all faculties have in place management plans that prioritise an increase in research and related output. Annual reports from each faculty all provided examples of research projects, publications of various kinds, external collaboration and partnerships, and networking. However, in some faculties it appeared to the team that there was more of an aspirational story than an embedded track-record. For example, while the team noted that some UNAM faculties reported benefiting directly or indirectly from external funding from bodies (such as UNDP or the Carnegie Foundation), this did not apply to all faculties to the same extent. For some faculties it seemed to the team that the overriding priority was to improve staff research through doctoral studies. Indeed, to emphasise this point, the team found it of interest to note that even as recently as 2009, while FANR purported to be one of the strongest faculties from the point of view of research, some 40% of staff were still pursuing postgraduate studies.

When reviewing each faculty's research and scholarship profile, the team took the opportunity to explore the nature and level of research output, including

internationally refereed journal publications. Such output includes books and other scholarly works, research project reports and other publications, including a modest level of refereed publications. However, it appeared to the team that some items listed in institutional documentation as 'research' could more accurately be described as 'advanced scholarship', rather than research *per se*. In view of this, the team members took the view that the university might wish to consider whether a clearer distinction could usefully be made in its new research strategy and in its planning and review processes, between 'research' and 'advanced scholarship', as is the case in established universities.

Alongside the work of the university's faculties, departments and centres, the team were interested to explore the part played by the Multidisciplinary Research Centre (MRC) and University Central Bureau for Consultancy (UCCB), each of which fall within the responsibility of the PVC (AAR). As its title suggests, the UCCB's primary focus is on community engagement through consultancy, with a view to income generation through tendering for external work. The UCCB works collaboratively with UNAM's faculties to secure the knowledge and skills necessary for delivering these initiatives. This consultancy focus has been taken over by the UCCB from the MRC, allowing the latter to specialise in applied research. The team paid particular attention to what team members considered to be the particularly important contribution in the area of applied research of the MRC. Established in 1993, the MRC operates principally through its three research divisions. The Social Science Division's (SSD) work includes research programmes for rural poverty and urban development, the Life Sciences Division (LSD) undertakes work in the area of natural resources management, while the Engineering, Science and Technology Division (STD) focuses on conservation and energy research, and technology transfer and industrial projects. In overall terms, the team noted that the role of the MRC is to promote, undertake and coordinate applied and multidisciplinary research that is essential to government and society, and especially to Namibia's rural communities. For the team, a further illustration of this is the work of the Sam Nujoma Marine and Coastal Resources Research Centre (SANUMARC) which, through local, regional and international partnerships, as its title suggests, makes a notable contribution to the community and the environment.

The team formed the view that the sustainability of the activities and research of the MRC and its divisions is dependent to a significant degree on sponsorship, grants and donations from national and international sources, and on project work commissioned by government institutions, industry and NGOs (non-government organisations). Also, collaboration with UNAM's faculties and departments is important as this enables the MRC to draw on necessary expertise and to contribute to the supervision of the work of doctoral students and postgraduate research fellows, jointly supervised by the MRC and academic departments. In looking at the work of the MRC in undertaking scientific research and helping to develop Namibia's resources, it was evident to the team that it provides an important focal point for enabling the university to deliver central elements of the UNAM mission and mandate, particularly as these relate to national imperatives.

When concluding their deliberations on UNAM's research activity and research profile, its strategic intentions for the future, and the role of faculties and

departments in this research capacity building programme, the team commends the support and encouragement for individuals to pursue both personal and income-generating research. The significant staff development programme that has been in place for some years to support capacity building for academic staff research qualifications has made an important contribution through enabling staff to pursue doctoral and other higher level qualifications, often at overseas universities and sometimes on the basis of sabbatical leave. The team were able to gain detailed insights into this through considering relevant committee papers, from discussions with staff, and from institutional data and statistics. The team also noted that this area of priority is prominent in faculty management action plans. The team formed the view that, given the funding constraints noted elsewhere in this report, the university is to be congratulated for its determination to prioritise this initiative to enhance the knowledge and skills of its staff. In the view of the team there are good prospects that this should serve to enhance the teaching at the university and also strengthen the research capability in various ways, from personal research and publications to project and funding opportunities.

However, from the team's perspective, all of the foregoing has to be considered in the context of the university's workload model and the norms and expectations upon which it is based. The expectations regarding research and publications are specified in detail in the guidelines for annual appraisal. As is evident in other sections of this report the use and implementation of the recommended balance of 60%/30%/10%, as between teaching, research and community service, was a recurrent theme in the team's deliberations during visits to UNAM and in team members' on-going discussions. The team observed that this matter was no less prominent in the concerns of the groups of academic staff with whom they met. From their deliberations the team formed the view that this model is generally perceived not to be working well.

For example, confirming the assessment made in the UNAM SER, a notable concern expressed to the team by a number of staff was that they lacked time to undertake research or to become 'research active'. This view was also apparent in the issues of concern identified in some faculty self-evaluations that team members saw. While a proportion of UNAM staff are inclined more towards research, it was evident to the team that many saw their heavy teaching load and administrative duties as prohibiting this. Moreover, some pointed out that they also had heavy community service commitments, particularly within the university, while others indicated a preference for consultancy over research. Most academic staff view themselves primarily as teachers. Though recognising the university's view that the model is intended as a 'yardstick', equally, it appeared to the team that this was a 'one-size-fits-all' approach and that the model does not sufficiently reflect the varying strengths and profiles of faculties in terms of 'research' and 'teaching' or, indeed, the size and distribution of the professoriate. Moreover, while all academic staff can reasonably be expected to undertake research-informed teaching, arguably, not all faculties and departments can be excellent at research. On the basis of the foregoing, the team recommends that the university undertakes a review of this model and considers whether there should be some form of differentiation between academic roles amongst staff whose principal focus might be 'teaching', 'research' or 'professorial'.

7. External relations

Community engagement

The EAQC Team noted the emphasis placed by the university on community engagement and the various activities that this involves. The team learned that, although this area of UNAM's profile is highlighted in its 'Strategic Plan', there is no policy or strategy specific to community engagement. The *Plan* indicates that this is an area where the university is seeking to make progress, referring to a 'lack of focus' and the desirability of developing more relevant community service programmes. This emphasis is linked also to the prioritisation, in the *Plan*, of 'stakeholder engagement' (discussed below). It is also evident in the Faculty Management Action Plans, which the team read with interest, and in the job description of Faculty Deans, which draws attention to the 'community development' role of senior post-holders.

The documentation made available to the team, including the guidelines on staff appraisal given to all staff, provided a range of examples of the types of community engagement, or community service, typically expected of UNAM staff. Such activities, which attract 'points' in the annual appraisal process (up to a maximum allowable ten points), vary from membership of internal university committees or task forces, and organisational activities, to representation on national or international bodies, or academic or educational positions at other HEIs or in the wider academic or charitable communities, or project work and consultancy. The team formed the view that while such activities were important in themselves, they were especially significant in the development of corporate culture and identity and in supporting the outward-facing aspect of the UNAM mission and mandate.

In their deliberations, including meetings with UNAM staff, the team considered how the priority attached to community engagement and community service by the university impacted upon and was viewed by staff. In formal terms, the expectation of the university workload policy is that all academic staff will devote 10% of their academic time (some 4 hours per week) to community engagement. However, the SER acknowledged that, given the *ad hoc* basis upon which this is approached, and given the perceived lack of clarity on the part of staff on how activities should be undertaken, and what it entails, then implementation falls well short of what the university desires and to which the *Strategic Plan* aspires. This general picture was confirmed in the team's meetings with staff, where the views expressed indicated that many felt themselves to be so heavily engaged with community service within the university, or faced with the competing demands of heavy teaching loads and research, that increased external community engagement was beyond them.

When reflecting on these matters, the team noted that there was reference in the SER to the possibility of the Human Resources Directorate and Marketing and Communication Directorate working jointly to develop a policy or strategy to guide practice in the area of community engagement, and that consideration might also be given to the establishment of a community engagement office. Beyond this, the

team also noted that while there were various reports on activities, there was no single, comprehensively documented record of the totality of community engagement activity and no central coordination.

Stakeholder relations

While acknowledging the importance of internal stakeholder relations, the EAQC Team were particularly interested in the area of external (local, regional, national) stakeholder relations. Stakeholder relations represent one of the four strategic themes driving UNAM's five-year *Strategic Plan*. Reflecting this, the university's Balanced Scorecard identifies several objectives, initiatives and measures focused around these relations. The team noted that attention is drawn in this and other documentation to improving the relevance of academic programmes to stakeholders, securing their involvement in curriculum review, increasing the level of consultation and satisfaction, and the need to obtain and to act on regular stakeholder feedback. The strategic importance of building stronger stakeholder relations was stressed to the team at PVC level, where the need to strengthen the academic core and relevance of programmes, extending links with national and international stakeholders, and an enhanced public service contribution, were all highlighted. The team were also interested to learn of the recently established Directorate of External and Internal Relations, reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor, with a broad remit covering formal agreements with other universities and national and international organisations, linkages and networks with government and society, facilitating joint projects with external bodies, and staff and student international exchanges. It was not clear to the team, however, how the joint responsibility for external and internal relations shared by the Directors of External and Internal Relations and Marketing and Communication, worked operationally. It was assumed that the latter took responsibility for internal relations, while the former held responsibility for the external dimension.

In addition to the examples of stakeholder involvement in curriculum review described in section 5, documentation made available to the team provided other good examples of efforts being made by some UNAM departments to engage with and to consult local and regional stakeholders. The team were also able to obtain information illustrating the various ways in which involvement in project work supported the development and growth of stakeholder relations, at local, regional and national levels; aspects of this are described below under 'international dimension'. The team were also pleased to learn that in September 2010, the UNAM Council approved the launch of the 'Friends of UNAM' Forum that from time to time brings together external stakeholders of the university. From the team's perspective, the forum, facilitated through a specially formed UNAM Task Force, provides a valuable opportunity to ascertain how external individuals and bodies view the university. The team also noted the existence of an Alumni Association, that meets occasionally, but the potential of which, perhaps, is not being fully taken advantage of by the University.

With regard to the broad territory of external relations, the team noted the university's acknowledgement in the SER that, while internal stakeholders (students) were invited to provide survey feedback, no equivalent formal mechanism was in

place for obtaining similar feedback from external stakeholders. In view of this, and the strategic importance of stakeholder relations (as emphasised in the *Strategic Plan*), the team recommends that consideration is given to the design and distribution of short surveys, to employers and other local, regional and national stakeholders, and to alumni, to obtain views on UNAM graduates, the services it provides and the programmes it offers. This might then be used as the basis of a 'stakeholder needs analysis' and as an improvement tool. This opportunity is acknowledged in the SER and, having discussed the value of this during a meeting with stakeholders, the team would like to encourage early action on this matter.

International dimension

The team learned that, in common with many universities across the world, UNAM wishes to improve its position and reputation internationally. The team noted a range of international contacts, agreements, memoranda of understanding and partnerships in Africa, Europe, North America and the Far East, from which the university benefits. From meetings and from documentation, including 'links registers', the team understood the increasing importance attached to forging wider academic links and collaboration arrangements for the purpose of obtaining benefits in research, student and staff exchanges, information sharing, seminars and workshops, and general capacity building. For example, in discussions with the university the team learned of the desire to increase the number and effectiveness of bilateral agreements in staff and student exchange and mobility programmes and noted that, currently, much of this activity is undertaken on a unilateral basis, with the tendency for UNAM to be the 'receiving' institution and relatively low levels of activity as the 'sending' university.

The team noted that the appointment of a Director of External Relations was designed to assist UNAM's strategic aspirations in this area, and to help to make progress in the initiatives identified in the *Strategic Plan*. As noted, this office now facilitates international exchanges, and builds networks to support further internationalisation of UNAM. The team notes the additional budget allocation for this area of operation for 2012, but also acknowledges the funding constraints and related challenges that have restricted development in this area to date. The team formed the view that UNAM is determined to work hard to make progress with its internationalisation agenda and wishes the university well with this programme. The importance of assessing the impact and benefits of such developments to UNAM is also noted by the team.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

Governance, management, strategic planning and organisational development

- While noting the important work done by the Senate and its sub-committees, the team considered that there is overlap between these, and recommends that the university undertakes a critical review of these committees to explore possibilities for streamlining and for making 'quality' and 'learning and teaching' more central to the work of one of these sub-committees;

- The team considered the operation of the Academic Planning Committee, and recommend that APC gives consideration to resource-related requirements linked to new programme proposals and advises the senior management team accordingly;

- The team recommends that the university explores ways to make the decision-making and approval process at faculty level shorter, perhaps by delegating authority to faculty management committees;

- The team recommends that early progress is made in taking steps towards improving key administrative processes, and advises that this should include securing the full engagement of administrative functions with the university's quality assurance procedures and processes for self-review and improvement planning;

- The team believes that the development of a UNAM capability for internal institutional self-review of its organisational change agenda will be of assistance going forward and proposes that the Vice-Chancellor considers the value of extending the working life of the Self-Evaluation Group, perhaps on a limited time scale, with a remit to assist him in monitoring further progress against this agenda and other matters raised in this report.

Quality assurance, quality management and quality culture

- The team recommends that early progress is made in operationalising the new faculty and department quality committees and advises that they should have a clear focus on matters relating to the quality of learning and teaching and the student experience;

- The team advises the university to take steps to ensure that quality procedures and guidelines are 'user-friendly', do not become too complex/over-elaborate, and that their central purpose is to show improvement, benefits and impact on learning, teaching and research;

- The team recommends that arrangements for providing feedback to 'appraisees' under the university's staff appraisal scheme (currently used for academic staff) should be strengthened and improved, and that the scheme be extended to include administrative staff;

- The team recommends that steps are taken to secure more transparency (for the benefit of academic staff) in how feedback obtained from students on teaching and teachers is used by senior staff for improvement and feedback purposes, and also on how outcomes are used by the TLI Unit for enhancement planning purposes;

- The team recommends that further steps are taken to address students' variable and often limited awareness levels of quality systems and procedures, through provision of continued training and support, including

for student representatives of the new local level (faculty and department) quality committees;

- The team recommends that action is taken between the TLI Unit, CEQUAM and faculties to put in place mechanisms for consistently 'closing the quality loop' on issues raised by students in feedback and evaluation forms.

Developments in learning and teaching

- The team noted concerns regarding deficiencies in learning resources and the learning support environment, particularly at UNAM's satellite campuses and regional centres, and therefore recommends that the university reviews and addresses this situation as a matter of urgency and puts in place an action plan to address the issue, as resources become available;

- The team was glad to see the emphasis that was placed on enhancement initiatives, including through the work of the Teaching and Learning Improvement Unit, but recommends that learning and teaching enhancement targets and actions could be more prominent in department and faculty self-reviews and management action plans;

- The team recommends that the university considers bringing the office of the Director of Academic Affairs, the Quality Unit (CEQUAM), and the TLI Unit together into one overarching entity, to provide a more cohesive and less fragmented focal point for strategy and management in academic affairs, quality assurance, and learning and teaching enhancement.

Research, knowledge transfer and consultancy

- The team was pleased to learn that an up-to-date Research Strategy is being developed to reflect the university's current research aspirations and the infrastructure to support the coordination and direction of UNAM's research and knowledge transfer activities, and recommends that this should be a brief and user-friendly document that is kept under review to reflect the emerging priorities of the new National Council for Research;

- The team recommends that, to enable the monitoring of progress in growing capacity in research and knowledge transfer, a central database and repository should be developed to encompass all research activity and output across the university;

- The team recommends that the university undertakes a review of its workload model for teaching, research and community service and considers whether there should be some form of differentiation between academic roles amongst staff whose principal focus might be 'teaching', 'research' or 'professorial'.

External relations

- In view of the strategic importance of stakeholder relations (as emphasised in the Strategic Plan), and noting that there is no formal mechanism for obtaining feedback from external stakeholders, the team recommends that consideration be given to the design and distribution of short surveys to employers and other local, regional and national stakeholders, and to alumni, to obtain views on UNAM graduates, the services the university provides and the programmes it offers.

9. Envoi

The members of the Europe-Africa Quality Connect Team wish to thank the University of Namibia for the generous hospitality extended to them by the university and its staff. The team has enjoyed learning about the distinctive characteristics and societal and economic role of UNAM. We have taken great interest in discussing with staff, students and stakeholders the challenges faced by UNAM and opportunities available for meeting them. We hope the university finds the team's comments and suggestions helpful and supportive in planning its future and in achieving its goals and aspirations. We wish the university well in its next stage of development.

Abbreviations

APC (Academic Planning Committee)

CES (Centre for Extension Studies)

CEQUAM (Centre for Quality Assurance and Management)

EAQC (Europe-Africa Quality Connect)

EUA (European University Association)

FANR (Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources)

FAR (Faculty Annual Report)

FHSS (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

IEP (Institutional Evaluation Programme)

LSD (Life Sciences Division)

MEF (Monitoring and Evaluation Framework)

MRC (Multidisciplinary Research Centre)

NCHE (National Council for Higher Education)

NQA (National Qualifications Authority)

NQF (National Qualifications Framework)

PMS (Performance Management System)

PVC (AAR) (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs and Research)

PVC (AF) (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Finance)

QAC (Quality Assurance Committee)

RPC (Research and Publications Committee)

RPO (Research and Publications Office)

SANUMARC (Sam Nujoma Marine and Coastal Resources Research Centre)

SER (Self Evaluation Report)

SSD (Social Sciences Division)

STD (Science and Technology Division)

TLIU (Teaching and Learning Improvement Unit)

UCCB (University Central Consultancy Bureau)

UNAM (University of Namibia)

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

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