

**A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT
PROGRAMMES AT SELECTED
UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA:**

**with reference to human resources development
for the advancement of African leadership skills**

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that the whole of this thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work and that it has not been submitted for any degree in any other university.

**L E MHLANE
DURBAN**

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Sengingakwenza konke Ngaye oyisisekelo sempilo yami".
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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the evolution of academic support programmes (ASPs) at predominantly White universities in South Africa. The participating institutions include: University of the Witwatersrand, University of Natal, Rhodes University, and University of Cape Town. Since they are selected on the basis of pioneering the establishment of ASP in South Africa and the extent of effectiveness achieved by ASP programmes, the relationship between the stated goals of academic support and the approaches, as well as strategies used to achieve them, are assessed. Throughout the focus is on whether or not the programmes are effective in reducing the failure and drop-out rates at these universities.

The important variables in the intervention process are scrutinised. They include the conceptual framework guiding the formulation and implementation of the programmes and the environment in which ASP operates. A more wider context of ASP is explored to determine those factors that have a significant influence on the successful implementation of the programmes. Among those identified are institutional policy regarding the perceived requirements of disadvantaged students and what are considered to be appropriate strategies for dealing with their disadvantages. For this purpose the experiences of international ASPs are investigated to establish similarities, or lack thereof, with the South African experience. The measures adopted in the United States to deal with the inadequacies of the schooling system, as it impacts on the tertiary sector of education, have especially appealed to educationists in South Africa, since the educational context of Blacks in the United States of America is believed to have many parallels in South Africa. For different reasons racism in the educational arena has resulted in Blacks being underprepared for tertiary education in both countries. The important task then is to ascertain whether the strategies used to resolve

the problems encountered by these students at colleges and universities in the United States have any relevance for the South African situation.

The focus then shifts to what appropriate measures are necessary to bring about a dispensation that will allow maximum benefit to flow from ASP for both disadvantaged students and educational practice in tertiary institutions. It is the author's firm belief that, without scientifically derived solutions, the mistakes committed by local ASPs and elsewhere will be repeated in South Africa, thus delaying ASP from realising its full potential so that institutional policy-makers, staff and students may reap the fruits of functional ASPs that are both efficient and effective. South Africa has the advantage of entering the ASP field when accumulated knowledge on the subject will provide the opportunity to build on the strengths of others and learn from their weaknesses, and so enhance the chances of success for the programmes here.

In an attempt to contribute towards making this objective a reality, twenty-four criteria have been formulated from ASP experiences at the four universities surveyed which participated in the investigation. From conducting interviews with ASP personnel faculty staff and students and personally visiting campuses and, among other things, perusing their records and scrutinising annual reports, it was possible to decide that the best way to address the problem of ineffective ASP is to draw up criteria that can be used, in future, for purposes of setting up ASP units and evaluating the performance of both newly established ones and those already existing. Regular attendance at ASP conferences and the invaluable exposure, through presentation of papers at these and other fora and subsequent exchanges of information and sharing of perspectives, have convinced the writer of the urgent need to approach the problem systematically, scientifically and rationally.

Finally, it is contended that without a procedure for the implementation of the criteria, there is the risk of selecting and using them randomly. Hence the grouping of the criteria according to their common characteristics and functioning will expedite the implementation process and reduce the risk of failure as a result of poor sequence and incorrect utilisation.

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CHAPTER 1

Early beginnings and developments in Academic Support Programmes at selected universities in South Africa

1.1 Introduction

In this Chapter an attempt is made to set the scene for the research on the processes of academic support programmes. It also attempts to raise the problems that have made South African universities consider the incidence of the high failure rate among disadvantaged students at predominantly White universities. This constitutes the first level of the problem. The second level of the problem occurred when universities seemed unable to devise effective strategies for dealing with the disadvantages of underprepared students.

The need for academic support can be traced back to the origins of the different education systems in South Africa. The inequalities that are built into these systems make it impossible for their graduates to enjoy equal opportunity in the labour market. The education systems referred to here were designed to serve different racial groups; thus, there is the education system for Whites, Coloureds, Africans as well as Indians. Therefore, the education system in South Africa is racially based and unequal in terms of financing and quality. It may be expected that graduates from these different departments of education were not destined to share equal opportunities, either in the employment sector or in the institutions of higher education, such as universities, technikons, and colleges of education. According to the Race Relations Survey (1989/1990:767) there are fifteen different major departments of education in South Africa. Since the Black education system is the most under-resourced of all, Black opportunities for advancement, whether in looking for work or in the furthering of studies,

are most limited, especially in the area of university study. Even at universities Blacks experience deprivation and indeed by attending a university of their own ethnic group, Black students have a better chance of success than at a White university.

The graduates of the inferior Black education system cannot compete successfully with White graduates from the White education system. Nationally the end result has been a shortage of skilled manpower, which has made it necessary to import labour on a large scale. The recruitment of foreign skilled labour is still common practice. But the importation of skills is a short-term solution to the problem. In the longer term, adequate skills have to be developed from inside the country, especially as the country has the resources for developing manpower. There is a sufficient number of universities, technikons, technical institutes, colleges of education, and other tertiary institutions to train the necessary skilled manpower to meet the needs of the economy.

1.2 Formulation of research goals

After many years of repeated high failure rates and increasing exclusions from university study, it has become necessary to provide academic support to students from disadvantaged education backgrounds in order to raise their level of competence so that they can undertake study at universities and other tertiary institutions. In the past some Black students were able to enter White institutions of higher learning despite enormous academic handicaps, since historically Black universities did not have adequate resources to meet their needs. Wolpe (1992:84) emphasises the historical imbalances in tertiary institutions:

"...White universities have enormous resources, with sophisticated laboratories, equipment and personnel necessary for high quality education. Then there

are the historically Black universities which have been erected in the Bantu States. One cannot compare these institutions from a resource point of view... Only the White universities which have the conditions of excellence, can contribute to original research and can conduct postgraduate work. Unequal institutional conditions have been created and having been constructed, I find it unacceptable that people cannot think dramatically about possible ways of redressing these imbalances."

Other Black students found places in overseas universities where either academic support programmes already existed or they were allowed to pursue degree programmes at their own pace. Some of these students found it difficult to cope and had to change change to alternative study programmes or be placed at non-accredited colleges. This situation often caused bitterness both against the cause, namely the inferior system of education at home, as well as future employers, who are often perceived as collaborators with the oppressive education system, for showing reservations about diplomas obtained from inferior overseas academic institutions.

Sooner or later local English-medium universities were to realise that they were doing Black students a disservice by not taking action to alleviate the problem. ASP was considered as the solution, though without sufficient organising and planning of resources to implement ASP programmes effectively. Thus, the goals for undertaking this research can be formulated as arising from the concerns to trace the origins of academic support programmes and the aims, which they are intended to serve. It is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes in the light of the continuing high failure and drop-out rates among Black students at these historically White universities.

*What was the foundation
of ASP for academic support?
Capitalism? ed.
Transformation?*

1.3 Background to the Study

The beginning of academic support arose from the recognition that the economic needs of the country had to be satisfied by providing sufficient numbers of adequately trained personnel. Universities and other tertiary institutions had to admit Black students, who had graduated from very inferior levels and unstable conditions of secondary education. These Black students were expected to succeed in completing their studies in the minimum required time. Thus it was incumbent on these institutions to address the problems related to the high failure and drop-out rates. The poor academic performance of the disadvantaged Black students, entering higher education institutions, resulted in their inability to cope with the requirements of their studies. Unless something was done to curb this ominous trend, it was felt that the wastage of human potential would reach devastating proportions.

A realisation of the grave responsibility on the part of higher education institutions led to attempts to devise a satisfactory solution to the problem. On this subject, the former University of Natal Principal, Professor P de V Booyesen, said: "The root of the problem is that integrated universities have been grafted on to this separate and unequal school system", (1989;13). He was addressing a conference which was held, in September 1989 at the University of Natal - Durban campus, because of an acute awareness of South Africa's education crisis and so the object of the conference was to devise ways of coping, through the Intermediate Tertiary College, with the increasing competence gap between school-leavers and the demands of university education. Professor Booyesen had earlier warned that the impact of racially separate primary and secondary education on university education was immense. Speaking at the same Conference, Jon File of Cape Town University argued that:

"Despite 10 years of educational innovation, we will enter the last academic decade of this century with many of these issues unresolved, and with no national plan with which to approach the huge challenges South African universities face... ASPs are not coping with the problem of the general underpreparedness of Black students entering university... A question arises why try to cope. The answer is fairly straightforward; the demands of the economy are such that White students, not a few of whom are also underprepared, will not be sufficient to provide the professional skills necessary to carry the country into the 21st century" (ibid. 1989:13)

The main reasons for the educational gap between secondary and tertiary education are inadequate financing of Black education and the inferior standard of education. Ample evidence can be presented to illustrate the inequalities. One of them is that, in spite of massive increases in State spending on Black education over the past decade, per capita spending in Black schools outside homelands controlled by the Department of Education and Training DET is R655.96 while the figure for a White pupil is R2882.00, Race Relations Survey (1989/1990:795). Even more serious is the quality of teaching. In White schools, only two percent of teachers have a qualification less than standard 10 plus a three-year teaching certificate. By the same standard 87% of Black teachers are under-qualified. These statistics are applicable for the period up to 1990, under review in the survey, when it was expected that the financing of Black education would be reviewed.

In spite of these disadvantages, thousands of Black school-leavers persist in clamouring for places in South Africa's White universities, and many find them. In 1990 nearly 30% of the student population at the "open" universities, meaning the four White universities presently being investigated, which are liberal and English medium, were Black, with the ethnic breakdown as follows: from a total of 49 198 students attending universities in 1989 there were 5 999 (11,5%) Africans, 2 588 (5.5%) Coloureds,

and 4 341 (9%) Indians. The remaining 74% were Whites (Race Relations Survey, "Universities" 1989/1990:872). The difficulties which this influx had caused has given rise to numerous academic support programmes in which attempts are being made to bridge the gap between an inferior schooling system and university study. Some of these programmes are subject specific, meaning that they provide academic support in relation to degree courses in which students experience greatest difficulties. Others attempt to counteract the general under-preparedness, for example, in cognitive and conceptual skills, numeracy and uses of the English language.

It is important to recall that the problem of academically disadvantaged students in tertiary institutions goes back many years, but it was only in 1979 that open universities began to address the problem. The first attempt was made at the University of the Witwatersrand in that year with a financial assistance of a donation from the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund. At that time two things had happened in South Africa, namely rapid urbanisation and economic sanctions, which were to affect tertiary education for many years to come.

1.3,1 Urbanisation and its implications for tertiary education

As a result of the discovery of diamond and gold fields towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, urbanisation began when massive migration to Kimberley and Johannesburg started. The process of urbanisation involved many changes in various aspects of the life of Black people, which has continued to this day.

The decade of the Seventies in the Twentieth Century also saw massive demographic shifts in South Africa. An increasing number of Blacks had become permanent settlers in urban areas and a whole generation of township bred

youngsters had a totally new set of needs, which had to be met. Their political aspirations had no links with whatever developments were taking place in the homelands. In fact, for most of them there was no idea of returning to the homelands, because these territories had no relevance in their lives. Instead, their lives were part of an urban environment in which their social values had been nurtured, through the process of Westernisation, in traditions of Western democratic principles. It should be pointed out that this should not be misconstrued as implying that the concept of democracy was non-existent in the homelands. Democracy is, however, applied differently in African societies, that are nurtured in African democratic principles. In this study, there is no suggestion that the Western democracy is superior to African democracy. But the point being made is that those Blacks, who had grown up in White neighbourhoods, could more easily follow the democratic principles as practised by their White counterparts.

The Seventies also witnessed the repeal of most statutory discrimination in employment practices such as job reservation. Developments in labour legislation were accompanied by official recognition of the permanence of urban Blacks. The concept of migrant labour, with its erosion of family life, was replaced by calls for "orderly" Black urbanisation known as the influx control system. For example, in terms of the Slums Act of 1979 and other legislative measures to combat 'illegal' squatting aimed to restrict the incursion of Blacks into urban areas, by introducing a series of influx control regulations, by which the Government hoped to enforce the maintenance of links with the homelands, so that Blacks would not be able to have permanent residence in White urban areas, deep racial divisions were entrenched in social life. These influx control regulations were part of the Group Areas Act of 1955 which was one of the corner-stones of Apartheid policy, (Race Relations Survey, "Group Areas Act" 1988/1989:62-70).

When in the Seventies influx control regulations were relaxed to accommodate the aspirations of the burgeoning Black middle class, that comprised professionals, most of whom had no links with the homelands, only Black workers, who could afford to have their families with them in the cities, seized the opportunity to acquire housing from property developers and township authorities. Since most township inhabitants tended to belong to this category of employees, Black urbanisation became a reality to be reckoned with and was accelerated by the private sector, which initiated housing schemes for Black employees. Facilities for raising home loans through the banks were thus available to Blacks too. The private sector began to implement enlightened personnel policies on a non-discriminatory basis and now employment practices were geared towards liberalising opportunity structures and access to all employment benefits, irrespective of the racial origin of the employee. The employers also sought to develop skills among Black employees and retain their services in exchange for competitive benefits, such as free and/or subsidised housing and quality education in private schools which, in the mid-Seventies were becoming multiracial, especially those under the control of the missionaries, church organisations, private institutions and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Blacks, who had graduated from urban private schools, were inclined to seek admission to "open" universities, such as the University of Cape Town, Rhodes University, the University of Natal, and the University of the Witwatersrand. These institutions are referred to as open universities, since they operate on the principle of openness and non-racialism in their selection of students for admission. However, graduates from township schools under the Department of Education and Training (DET), with its underresourced schooling system, and those from private schools, in certain instances, are by no means adequately

prepared for study at these open universities. This matter will be dealt with in some detail later in this Chapter.

1.3.2 Economic sanctions and their consequences for tertiary education

The previous discussion cannot be complete without examining the impact of economic sanctions on higher education in South Africa. It is the convergence of these two factors, namely urbanisation and economic sanctions, that resulted in the steady flow of Black students into traditionally White universities.

In the middle of the Seventies there was an international campaign for the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa, in order to force political reform and liberalisation of the political process. The effects of the sanctions campaigns were most widely felt immediately after the 1976 upheavals marked by country-wide school boycotts by pupils protesting the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in African schools. The intensification of economic sanctions, in particular, had far-reaching implications for the educational sector as well as for the development of human resources in various fields.

Commonwealth countries began to implement sanctions against South Africa in many areas and spheres of life. Even cultural exchange programmes were adversely affected as academic boycotts and student exchange embargoes were enforced. Trade links were severed in strategic consumer goods and minerals.

The United States of America and its allies came under pressure to apply comprehensive sanctions against this Country and these calls were so loud and clear that they could not be ignored. In the United States, for example, both public and private institutions mounted protracted disinvestment campaigns that eventually forced the Government to adopt a comprehensive sanctions Draft Bill of

Congress at the beginning of the Eighties. It came after a long struggle between Congress and Government, which resisted the implementation of punitive sanctions for some years. Colleges and universities, town and city councils, began to divest their funds from companies that continued operating in South Africa. Something had to be done to relieve this situation which became unbearable both within South Africa and without in the international community.

On the economic front all these developments caused an exodus of White skills that left a vacuum to be filled. The fields of expertise that were most affected were business management and health services. Commerce and industry began to experience shortages of manpower in engineering technology, administration of both financial and human resources, and economics. In the sphere of health, care providers could not cope with overcrowding in hospitals as a result of fewer medical personnel being available, since many professionals emigrated. The negative practitioner/patient ratios soared to unmanageable proportions.

There was a certain degree of disillusionment among some professionals, especially those specialising in high technological occupations, such as electronics engineering, personalised medical services, and so forth. The spiralling costs of resources made it difficult to carry out their work on a cost effective basis. The United States' "constructive engagement" policy with South Africa had a positive effect, though to a limited extent, on the economic situation in South Africa. This policy had enormous implications on what could have been a devastating impact of the sanctions. The Sullivan Code in particular played a significant role in ameliorating the basis from which the punitive sanctions campaign of that period was launched.

The Sullivan Code came into operation as a calculated measure to maintain The United States economic interests in

the region. This Code stipulated certain basic requirements, which all United States companies, that were doing business in South Africa, had to comply with for them to remain and continue operating in South Africa. By being signatories to the Code of Conduct, which contained those principles such companies were making a symbolic rejection of apartheid in their employment practice. Signatory companies were expected to comply with a stipulated quota of Black management personnel and this quota, if adhered to consistently, operated on cumulative points ratings which were reviewed annually and brought financial rewards, if they increased. For example, if a company had a certain percentage of its management and directors comprising Blacks, its rating, on the Sullivan scale, was reviewable and could be adjusted.

The outcome of these adjustments was an increase in investments to promote the operations of the company. In other words, the Sullivan Code would ensure that, instead of requesting United States investors to divest from its business, monies from city councils, town councils, states, and the private sector were allowed to be invested in the work it was doing in the country. The Code stipulated that companies, that obtained high scores on an affirmative action scale, were to be rewarded.

The performance of a company on an affirmative action programme was based on criteria of non-racial discrimination in business practice. To score high points on the scale a signatory company had to embark on manpower policies of reverse discrimination. In practical terms, this meant ensuring that a certain number of Blacks were employed in management positions in such a way that racial proportions, in statistical terms, were a demographic reflection of the racial composition of the population. By reducing the number of Whites in favour of Blacks in a company, chances of obtaining higher scores on the ratings were enhanced, as would also the image of the company.

As described above, the end result of the Sullivan principles was that all those companies that had subscribed to them enforced, in varying degrees of commitment, personnel policies that required properly trained Blacks in the targeted categories of employment. A certain amount of pressure was necessary to make the Government realise the immensity of the skills shortage and lack of trained manpower, and allow deserving Black students to enter White universities for the purposes of study in those areas, designated in the Sullivan Code, as priority fields of study and thus of strategic importance for the development of Black corporate and business leadership.

In response to private sector representations on this matter, the Government introduced a quota system for admitting Blacks into White tertiary institutions (technikons, and universities) on merit to undertake study in strategic fields like engineering, business administration, and human resources management. The guidelines for the implementation of the quota system, through ministerial approval, are stipulated in the Extension of University Education Act No. 45 articles 31 and 32 of 1959. One of the conditions of admission into a White university was that the field of study, for which an application was made for such approval, was not offered at any of the ethnic tertiary institutions. It will be remembered that, according to the Apartheid plan each homeland was expected to have its own tertiary institutions to serve its own ethnic group at all levels of manpower training and human resources development (teacher training colleges, technical institutes, and short-term skills training courses in designated centres for such purposes).

Students, who were admitted on the quota system, had to score reasonably well in a number of entrance tests. These tests determined whether or not the candidate was suitable for university study, particularly, in the chosen field so that chances of failure and wastage of resources could be

avoided. In most instances, it was private companies that undertook to prepare candidates for the rigorous selection procedures. Among the considerations was, would the student complete the degree or diploma in the minimum time required to do so. In this connection corporate South Africa had an important role to play in facilitating the human resources development process in the country. Businessmen recognised the need for more dynamic Black involvement in technical skills training and technological skills development of Blacks, particularly Africans, who form the majority in South Africa, and so have to play a meaningful role in building the infrastructure that supports the country. In other words, there could be no Black advancement without Black involvement in the process of human resources development.

The private sector had correctly assessed the situation when they made calls for the admission of Blacks into predominantly White universities. They realised that the skills crisis posed a serious challenge and had to be addressed urgently. Consequently small numbers of Blacks were recruited to pursue studies in the fields that were considered to be most crucial for economic development and societal survival. Since the potential employers of these candidates for university study, who had to be admitted on affirmative action grounds, had vested interests in their academic success, it is understandable that they had to be involved at the initial stages of the selection process. The whole undertaking had, of course, huge financial implications for the participating companies. Thus they had to ensure that those who were granted financial assistance, in the form of bursaries or scholarships, possessed the necessary potential to succeed.

It was felt that students, who were selected through stringent selection procedures and awarded adequate bursaries, stood a better chance of succeeding at university compared to others similarly disadvantaged but without

potential for university study. Most of these students were sufficiently talented to cope with highly competitive academic standards in White universities (Hartshorne, 1991:36-51). In addition, there are two main factors that seem to have contributed to their relatively superlative academic performance in contrast to the current intake of disadvantaged students, namely, the overall stability in the learning and teaching environment at high school level and the credibility of the examining authority (DET).

However, as was later to be discovered, the demands on their ability to succeed became so immense that the screening mechanisms, as devised by the institutions admitting them and their sponsors, were in themselves inadequate. The most likely outcome of this selection process was ensuring that the candidates would require as minimal academic support as possible compared with contemporary disadvantaged prospective university students. It would appear that the original form and content of academic support programmes (ASPs) at predominantly White universities were designed to meet the needs of this specially selected population of disadvantaged students. The reason for the failure of the manner in which current ASPs are formulated and implemented is, partly, their inadequate adaptation to the requirements of the present intake.

When all and sundry could avail themselves of the opportunity for university study, the original academic support schemes could no longer address their academic deficiencies. Apparently, since the latter have the privilege to be admitted without ministerial consent and are not required to take part in rigorous testing procedures, but suffer from worse schooling conditions characterised by escalating destabilisation of the teaching and learning environment and rapidly deteriorating standards, the original formulations and strategies of academic support have become unrealistic and irrelevant. These were not based on the teaching content but designed merely to provide

extra-tutorials intended to equip students with learning skills that were applicable to a wide range of courses. For example note-taking and reading skills have general applicability and lack sufficient intensity, which the current ASP intake desperately need.

It is one of the assumptions of this dissertation that, in their present form and content, both original and some recently formulated ASP programmes lack the necessary capacity to meet all the needs of disadvantaged students. Presumably, the main cause is the ASP's frame of reference which is no longer suitable for the present generation of disadvantaged students. The dissertation, therefore, seeks to lay the ground for developing an alternative paradigm and strategies for ASP both locally and internationally. In certain respects, global changes in perspectives on educational innovation have rendered some of ASP models outright irrelevant to solve the increasing number of problems related to academic support. The methods being used in the implementation of ASP programmes should also be the subject of investigation to determine if they can be utilised effectively or be replaced by more efficient ones to ensure the attainment of ASP goals. We now proceed to examine ASPs as they have existed for nearly more than one decade at selected South African universities.

1.4 Academic Support Programmes at selected universities in South Africa

It has been said above that the influx of Black students into predominantly White universities was the direct result of the need to upgrade Blacks for management and other leadership positions. It has been observed already that these students were, in many respects, prepared for study in these institutions. Available evidence suggests that the circumstances, which led to their admission, such as the level of preparation for university and pre-entrance testing procedures to eliminate unsuitable candidates, made them

less disadvantaged and they, therefore, required programmes of less intensity.

Today open universities are besieged by large numbers of high risk students, who have not been screened or pre-tested, to determine their suitability for university study. It happens that when Black students are admitted to White universities they exhibit different levels of ability to cope with their academic requirements. While some relatively competent students experience minor academic problems, despite the fact that they are Black and had to go through an inferior schooling system, others from the same schooling background have seemed to be worse affected by failures and exclusions at these universities.

In this sense, it is not all Black students who experience academic problems at White universities. The high risk category of students exists among Africans, though even among themselves variations are found in terms of the intensity of educational disadvantage. Those who are unable to cope with their studies, in spite of ASP intervention, are excluded from continuing at university. It is this category, that is, those who are threatened with exclusion or are most likely to exceed minimum required time to complete their degrees, that are often referred to as high risk students. The high probability of repeated failure of courses and being thrown out (excluded for academic reasons) of the university makes them the primary concern of ASP.

1.4.1 The origins of Academic Support Programmes at South African universities

Academic support programmes, provided by English-medium universities for their educationally disadvantaged students, have some common aims and objectives. Nevertheless, each has in some respects, a unique student body which makes it necessary for different strategies to be applied when implementing academic support programmes. These strategies

are somewhat influenced by each institution's view of its role in society and also by the resources it has to fulfill its role. We now examine the early beginnings of ASP at each of the universities surveyed.

1.4.2 The Academic Support Programme (ASP) at the University of the Witwatersrand

About twelve years ago, in 1980 ASP was set up at the University of the Witwatersrand (Agar, 1992). This was the first academic support programme, of its magnitude, to be established in a South African university. In an annual publication called ASPECTS, which was the official bulletin of academic support programmes, practitioners issued after their yearly conferences until its discontinuation in 1989, Professor Peter Hunter (1984) of the University of the Witwatersrand explained how his University perceived the role of academic support programmes. He drew attention to the many issues relating to academic support for educationally disadvantaged entrants at this University with special reference to the Vice-Chancellor's historic statement. It was at an intervarsity seminar, convened by the African Institute of the University of the Witwatersrand in 1978, where Professor D J du Plessis (then Vice-Chancellor) said that a university's response to the problems confronting Black students in predominantly White universities entailed substantial changes in the institution itself. He went on to explain that the solving of the problems involved implied substantial changes in South African society.

From then the University of the Witwatersrand has shown its recognition of the increasing racial heterogeneity of its student body by establishing an Academic Plan focused on academic support programmes. The immediate challenge was seen to lie in assisting educationally disadvantaged students to succeed in their courses of study. With regard

to the target of the academic support intervention and its academic needs, Professor Hunter said the following:

"While we would obviously wish to be totally indiscriminating in responding to the academic needs of any students, the shortage of resources has made it necessary to emphasise that our target group is specifically the disadvantaged. Where other high-risk students can be suitably accommodated in class groups or tutorial groups without additional staff resources being entailed, this is done, but at this stage the obvious priorities must be observed..."
(Hunter, 1985:2-3)

It was Professor Nabarro who criticised the Academic Plan and the concept of open university when he remarked:

"... although Wits has freely admitted students of all races and classes, and has vigorously resisted restrictions which have been imposed on this freedom we have historically served predominantly the White middle-class community of the Witwatersrand. We must now strengthen our efforts to become a university which is effectively open to all of those who are qualified to receive a university education in the English language. Some students, who have high innate abilities but have suffered from poor home background or inadequate schooling, will initially need special help if they are to benefit fully from the type of education we offer"
(Nabarro, 1980).

Indeed an increasing number of Black disadvantaged students are enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand each year and voluntarily participate in ASP. Many of these students have, historically, not compared favourably with their White counterparts in real terms of academic achievement, in spite of many years of academic support intervention, since the announcement of the Academic Plan more than a decade ago. The situation is likely to become worse when, as a result of the further deterioration of the Black education system, more students at high risk are admitted in future.

1.4.2.1 Staffing during the initial phase of ASP

When the academic support programme was launched, there were three permanent posts which were occupied by the director, the English language tutor, and a part-time researcher. In 1984 the University allocated a further four posts to ASP which were externally funded. From the beginning of 1985 these externally funded posts included a chief tutor and senior tutorships in the following Departments: English language, Mathematics, Statistics and tutorships in Physics, Chemistry, General Biology, Biology, Zoology, and twenty, hourly-paid, tutors (Hunter, 1985:11).

1.4.3 The origins of the Academic Support Programme (ASP) at the University of Cape Town

At the beginning of 1980 an ASP programme known as a Personal Tutor Scheme for First Year students was established at the University of Cape Town. It marked the start of a formal strategy to provide academic assistance to disadvantaged students. In subsequent years more programmes were formulated to deal with the increasing demand for ASP intervention. These programmes were offered by various faculties to meet specific requirements of each faculty. There were, thus considerable differences between faculties in the ways in which academic support was provided. The many designs and forms which they took were largely determined by what the University considered to be needed by disadvantaged students and participation in these programmes was seldom a matter of compulsion. Although the policy of voluntary participation is still retained, all high risk students are required and strongly encouraged to participate in special programmes designed to remedy their academic deficiencies.

As is the case in other open universities, those students who have attained a certain level of pass mark in their matric examinations are expected to write language

proficiency tests which determine suitability for attending an advanced English course. These tests are administered by the ASP unit. If the test scores indicate inadequate competence, the student is required to take the English for Academic Purposes (EAP), now known as the Language Development Course. The same applies to below average scores in Chemistry and Physics. Admission to a faculty is made conditional on registering for Bridging Courses in these Subjects. In certain instances the term "bridging course" is used interchangeably with the term "foundation course" to denote a non-credit course whose scores do not count towards credit requirements for the degree. Bridging Courses are meant to help educationally disadvantaged students to satisfy the minimum matric requirements as stipulated by individual faculties.

The University of Cape Town has a fully-fledged ASP unit with tutoring staff working in designated faculties, such as, the Arts and Social Science, Law, Education, Science, Engineering, and Commerce faculties. In 1985, Dr S J Saunders the Vice-Chancellor at the University of Cape Town, in his widely publicised 'mission statement' said:

"The University encourages each faculty, department and the administration to plan forward and establish strategies for the years ahead so that the University of Cape Town of the future will not merely be a projection of its past but will be in tune with and reflect the changing environment in which it functions" (Saunders, 1985).

It is unfortunate that, even though this statement was made six years after the establishment of academic support at the University of Cape Town, it still did not specify in exact terms what objectives were being set and what measures would be necessary for the attainment of "planned" objectives. In other words, it did not specify what had to be done for the transformation process to take place. Since it gives no details of its plan of action, it is not surprising that not much has been translated into practical action subsequent to

its publication. Judging by generalised policy statements such as this one and many more issued by the authorities in other open universities, these institutions are not geared for the sort of institutional changes for which the majority of South Africans are clamouring. They continue doing things as they used to before the establishment of ASPs.

1.4.3.1 Staffing during the initial phase of ASP.

From reading the reports of the Mid-Eighties, it appears that at the University of Cape Town the Director's post has always been on a permanent establishment. The Deputy Director's post was originally paid by a donor, but guaranteed by the University. Presently it is on University staff establishment at associate professor rank. In the English for Academic Purposes section of the unit there were two permanent posts. There was one permanent post in subject-specific tutoring, that is, Chemistry and History. External funding was made available for tutorship posts in each of the following subjects: Physics, Sociology, and Mathematics.

1.4.4 The origins of the Academic Support Programme (ASP) at the University of Natal and staffing implications

In May 1981 a full-time co-ordinator of Academic Support Services was appointed and based at Howard College, on the Durban campus of the University of Natal's two Campuses. Its second campus is the Pietermaritzburg branch of the University. The head of the ASP Unit was assisted by two full-time tutors and one academic support officer for the Medical School campus. All three members of staff had to teach ASP courses and were involved in the administration of services, for example, the Book Loan Scheme and provision of equipment, such as drawing boards, for engineering students. There were two part-time administrative assistants to perform secretarial and typing duties. The teaching staff were assisted by part-time tutors drawn from graduate

classes. The participating departments had tutors providing subject-specific assistance to students under the small group or Personal Tutorial Scheme. These tutors were paid on an hourly basis.

A variety of courses were offered in other areas such as the Language and Reading Centre, which offered short but intensive reading improvement courses. A specific study skills course was available at the Student Counselling Centre. The Faculty of Commerce organised a year-long 'Bridging-the-Gap' programme. All these initiatives aimed at helping disadvantaged students adapt to the University environment quicker and more efficiently.

During this period, the Pietermaritzburg campus set up an academic support service, known as the English Language Development Scheme (ELDS), which is similar to the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) offered at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Cape Town. The chief purpose of ELDS is to assist those students for whom English is a second language and who consequently experience difficulties when studying at a White English-medium university.

In more recent years, starting from 1989, the Pietermaritzburg Centre also provides a Pre-University Study Skills Programme, which takes a week to complete and helps, particularly, entrants with reasoning, cognitive, study skills and techniques. From the ELDS has grown a full credit course known as Learning, Language and Logic (3L or LLL) which aims at improving the general academic ability and competence for academic survival of disadvantaged students.

The setting up of ASP on both campuses has been in response to the growing needs of disadvantaged students, as identified by the various departments of faculties. Since the faculties through the departments are in the position to identify academic deficiencies of registered students, ASP

staff relies on faculty lecturers to report these to them as soon as they occur. But the communication process has not been as efficient as it was supposed to be. The omissions in the identification and presentation of students with learning difficulties has had profound negative effects on the academic performance of the affected students. This discrepancy has resulted in many students having no recourse to the resource centre for academic assistance.

This type of loose connection has existed for quite some time, to the detriment of numerous individuals, who might have benefited from the academic support schemes offered by ASP. There is no doubt that this loose structuring and lack of an effective communication system has adversely affected the efficiency of ASP services rendered by the Unit. Recently attempts have been made at reorganising ASP Units and restructuring certain aspects of ASP services. It remains to be seen if these changes, initiated in 1991, will have the desired impact on the efficient and effective formulation and implementation of ASP programmes.

While the restructuring process was being planned and implementation strategies devised, the usual ASP activities in various faculties continued. Therefore, the transition to the new ASP dispensation has had minimum disruptions, if any, to the routine operations and the administrative infrastructure, which remained almost intact. But the inefficiencies mentioned previously appear to have detracted from the full impact of whatever the ASP Unit has tried to offer through the various tutorial programmes in different faculties. As has been mentioned, these programmes were, for a long time, scattered throughout the University's faculties without proper control, to the extent that the demands of the disadvantaged student population could not be satisfactorily met as a result of inadequate co-ordination and control monitoring. The accompanying lack of evaluation, to determine whether ASP programmes are sufficient to meet the needs of the disadvantaged students and whether they are

administered in such a way that they could achieve their aims and objectives, has exacerbated the crisis mode of management of the available resources and perhaps has also had demoralising consequences for the ASP personnel.

In an effort to consolidate the attempts to set up ASP programmes, the Vice-Chancellor of the University dispatched a Circular to all heads of department and student representative bodies outlining the major problems in Black education and giving reasons for greater co-ordination of ASP initiatives. It would be helpful to draw from the major statements of this Circular by quoting from the relevant part of the text in order to gain an understanding of the extent to which he perceived the causes of the problem and the line of remedial action which was contemplated to counteract the ominous consequences of it. Focusing on Black schooling he observed that:

"The University is directly concerned with the inequalities among the population groups in the provision of primary and secondary schooling, and particularly in the inadequacies in the provision of education in Black schools. Difficulties in the development of equitable criteria for student selection and the need to provide academic support for inadequately schooled entrants to the University are examples of the direct effects upon the university of these inequalities in the schooling system" (Booyen, 1985).

1.5 Research methodology and format of thesis

Universities participating in the study will be surveyed using three kinds of research techniques, namely, structured interviews with academic support staff and students at the Universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand, Rhodes, and Natal. Another research technique that will be used is the structured questionnaire and, on a selective basis, participant observation will be deployed.

1.5.1 Interviews

The researcher will interview respondents by undertaking trips to the different institutions that are responsible for academic support. Vice-Chancellors or their deputies will be interviewed on matters relating to university policy concerning principles of academic support. In this way it will be possible to determine the basis on which ASP programmes are provided. It is common practice that these programmes are supported by affirmative action policies, which are premised on philosophical positions of individual institutions, based on the way in which educational disadvantages of students have been conceptualised. The main concern is to obtain as much factual information as possible. For this reason, preference has been given to structured interviews.

In theoretical terms, a structured interview is more reliable, since the framing of the questions allows for the same wording and sequence. In this way the stimuli to which respondents give their answers are guaranteed to be constant. By standardising the questions it becomes possible to replicate interviews in all campuses, where they will be held. Special effort will be made to keep questions as much open-ended, as possible, to allow for greater flexibility from respondents and to encourage originality of responses. Variations in answers provided will be an indication of different perceptions of the issues raised in the questions. Differences of opinion do not necessarily imply negation of the question asked or resentment of it. It is more appropriate for this kind of investigation to show grave sensitivity to issues being investigated and create conditions for volunteering information and free expression during the process of collecting data.

In this connection, Haralambos states "structured interviews are regarded as appropriate for obtaining answers to questions of 'fact' such as age, sex and job of the

respondent. Unstructured interviews are seen as more appropriate for eliciting attitudes and opinion". (Haralambos, 1985:507-508).

1.5.2 Structured questionnaire

It will be necessary to use structured interviews in order to obtain quantifiable data, which can be compared and provide the basis for predictions. As mentioned above, the researcher will conduct interviews on different campuses with academic support programmes staff and senior university administrators, but for comprehensive coverage of various areas under investigation, it is important also to send questionnaires to individuals and groups, whose status and activities became involved with ASP or came into contact with those who worked in them. Respondents will be requested to complete these questionnaires in their own time and return for further processing and continuation of the information marshalling process.

It is envisaged that both types of closed and open questions will be utilised. Closed questions provide respondents with a set of pre-determined categories from which to select only one response. But in open questions, respondents are provided with sufficient latitude and physical space adjoining the question wherein responses can be inserted in their own choice of words. In the interests of efficiency and saving time, serious consideration will be given to the simultaneous administering of the two techniques. In most likelihood, the questionnaire will be administered immediately after concluding the open-ended question session at each university. On the basis of the rationalisation being suggested, this form of survey will expedite the information gathering process, since it is comparatively a fast method, cost effective, and more efficient in obtaining the sort of large amounts of quantifiable data, on a relatively large number of sampled population, that is required for the study. Preference will be in favour of

fixed questions for purposes of standardisation to avoid potential difficulties encountered when classifying and quantifying responses to open-ended questions.

There are two main reasons for questionnaires to be administered by the interviewer himself. Firstly he will be present personally to ensure compliance with the set procedure for completing forms and clarification of any ambiguities that may arise. Secondly, this method guarantees, in all probability, the highest return rate of questionnaires, in contrast to the mailing system which often involves postal delays. Available research evidence has shown that the latter records the lowest return rate of sometimes below 20% which the researcher considers to be too high a risk as conscious effort is being made to prevent anything that may put the interests of the study in jeopardy: for instance, an inadequate database from which to draw valid conclusions.

On basis of being optimistic about the prospects of the interviewer administering questionnaires, it is further advised that "a far higher return rate is usually obtained when questionnaires are administered to a group such as a class of students or workers at a trade union meeting. This method is less expensive than dealing with individual respondents while maintaining the advantage of the presence of an interviewer. However, the interviewer must ensure that respondents do not discuss questions with the group, since this might affect their answers" (Haralambos, 1985:513).

1.5.3 Participant observation

Recent research evidence indicates that one of the most widely used techniques is participant observation, which has become more useful for educational research, than other techniques. This method of collecting data is based on the phenomenological orientation and is supported by humanistic philosophical assumptions that put the needs of ordinary

people and their experiences of life-world at the centre of science. It is largely for this reason that participant observation is included in the techniques for data collection. Its main advantage is that it allows for some form of subjective involvement with the persons whose behaviour is being observed, as Haralambos (1985:193) puts it:

"In participant observation researchers attempt to become 'part' of the group or organisation that is being researched. In this way they are able to keep a complete record of all events, and also to observe the events unfolding from the privileged vantage point of insiders, rather than 'looking in' from outside. Obviously this method can only succeed where the researchers have gained the confidence of the group that is under observation".

As one directly in contact with ASPs and familiar with the work of ASP practitioners, the researcher often meets with ASP staff members, as colleagues, to share information and discuss strategies to overcome problems encountered on different university campuses in the Country. On this basis it will be easy for the writer to have access to the information contained in the thesis. As a matter of fact, the bulk of the information used in this work will be compiled with the assistance of colleagues in the field, who earlier have tirelessly supplied this initiative with annual reports, conference papers and numerous documents that undoubtedly will make the completion of this task possible. Thus it will not be difficult to enter tutorial sessions to gain first-hand knowledge of the experiences and interactions between tutors and students.

It is not likely that the entry process will present an obstacle to the acceptance of the researcher by the participants in tutorials, that is, both students and tutors/lecturers, since these sessions tend to be loosely structured as attendance is mostly optional. In this event it will be relatively easier to join the group and take part

in discussions without being noticed as a stranger. In the case of formal lectures, the researcher will be introduced as a visiting ASP colleague, whom no one should fear, as this is a regular occurrence in ASP practice. For disengaging the same procedure of explanation will be followed. In this context, note-taking will not be viewed with any suspicion since staff members enjoy the liberty of jotting down their impressions and record developments as classes proceed.

By merely listening and interpreting data, one is in a position to come across some answers and questions that could easily have been ignored in both the questionnaire and interview. The interpersonal character of the participant observation method lends itself well to various dynamics of class interaction. Without the exposure to the students' daily routine and anxieties, that can be associated with the anxious periods of the examinations and stressful learning situations as evident in academic support settings, it will be impossible to have access to and knowledge of the extent to which increased stress has an effect on the students' overall performance. It is true that the researcher relies on information that will be collected during interviews in the different campuses. Such limitations, caused by inadequate resource materials, may have made it difficult to have access to some important information base. If this limitation becomes widespread, it may have crippling effects on the results of the study, in terms of making it difficult to draw reliable inferences and conclusions.

By observing what is said and done and also recording all the circumstances in which disadvantaged students are expected to achieve academic success in their individual study programmes, within a, supposedly, perplexing environment, important factual data will be compiled. Throughout the observation period, significant impressions will have to be recorded in order to be able, at a later stage, to classify data for purposes of analysis and

interpretation. Haralambos says the following about the successful implementation of the participant observation method:

"The participant observer joins the everyday routines of those he wishes to study. He attempts to observe action in its 'normal', 'natural' context... As a means of directly observing action in everyday social contexts, participant observation has a particular appeal to those who adopt phenomenological perspectives... Supporters of participant observation have argued that, compared to other research techniques, it is least likely to lead to the (educationist/researcher) imposing his reality on the social world he seeks to understand. It, therefore, provides the best means of obtaining a valid picture of social reality. With a structured interview - a predetermined set of questions which the interviewee is requested to answer - or a questionnaire - a set of printed questions to which the respondent is asked to provide written answers - the (educationist/researcher) has already decided what is important. With present questions he imposes his framework and priorities on those he wishes to study. By assuming the questions are relevant to his respondents he has already made many assumptions about their social world" (Haralambos, 1985:502-504).

1.6 Conclusion

It is necessary to indicate what sampling method will be used in the investigation. Evidently no purpose can be served by allowing the entire academic support communities in various universities to participate in the study. Although some individuals will have the opportunity to be interviewed and receive questionnaires others, obviously, cannot be included in the sample. For this reason, a sampling method of a non-probability nature will involve targeted sectors such as the directors, administrators, programme co-ordinators, tutors and various categories of participating students, as well as faculty staff, where the need warrants it.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that a preview of the study as appears in the foregoing presents a brief overview of the main thrusts of the research. Universities that have been selected tend to show common characteristics, which gave rise to concerns that some form of educational intervention is necessary to expedite the success rate of disadvantaged students in predominantly White universities. In this chapter, it has been shown that depending on the perceptions of university authorities and ASP personnel about the causes and the nature of educational disadvantages of the under-privileged students, different types of academic support programmes were established. Primary focus in this Study is given to the pertinence of intervention strategies for educational development and institutional change, both in the content of programmes and campus wide curriculum innovations. Therefore, as demonstrated in this introductory Chapter, extra-curricular support programmes, such as skills tutoring for note-taking, listening, reading and writing, will be discussed in contrast with substantive academic issues such as course content tutoring.

The following Chapter seeks to broaden the horizons of outlook, by incorporating the international experiences of ASPs. The survey of these programmes in other countries, especially in the United States of America, includes a summary of policy directives, offering guidelines for the implementation of programmes at various levels of school grades and the effects such interventions have had on remediation of inadequate preparation for university education. The philosophical underpinnings of international ASP initiatives will also be examined, in order to determine what South African ASPs can learn from the achievements and failures of those programmes. Special attention will be focused on the planning of remediation activities, minority support programmes in the United States, United Kingdom and other countries, in which it has been imperative to take similar action to improve educational attainment levels of

those disadvantaged, either by family socio-economic background, inadequate schooling, or under-resourced education systems.

Summary

In summary, the first phase of academic support programmes was a period of challenges and triumphs. Many challenges confronting the universities concerned had to do with policy decisions which had to be formulated as guidelines for the implementation of the programmes. Sooner or later, it was realised that disadvantaged students were not only lacking in academic skills, but also needed financial assistance and other forms of environmental support to be able to continue with their studies. It would be difficult to separate academic from non-academic issues, in as far as these had an impact on the failure and drop out rates of disadvantaged students.

The majority of these predominantly White universities chose to give priority to addressing academic issues, as they were considered to be more devastating to the student's potential to succeed and complete their studies. This step was of great strategic significance, when considering, that at that time ASPs were instituted, without an adequate base for resource mobilisation in terms of creating a viable infrastructure (Finance to employ staff and establish programmes) to do ASP work effectively. One of the triumphs in this period of academic support programmes is that, at least, a start was made despite numerous distractions and potent obstacles that had to be overcome.

It should be realised that the world of educational endeavour is not a static one, but is instead characterised by dynamism and continual change (Vilakazi and Tema, 1985). This dynamism of the environment within which education takes place has proved that the deployment of ASPs and

strategies that used to work more than a decade ago have no relevance for the Nineties or even for decades thereafter. It seems that not only students and communities are dissatisfied with the functioning of Bridging programmes or ASPs itself, but also university staff members, particularly Black members of staff, have become very vociferous in their criticism of this state of affairs (Vilakazi, 1986).

There is an abundance of criticism that the methods and selection procedures for screening Black applicants, intending to study at these institutions were being perceived as further retarding opportunities for them to enter and thus could be seen as reinforcement for Government restrictions on the admission of Black students to White universities.

The most crucial issue, which ASPs were set up to resolve is the shortage of skilled employees. It is regrettable that, after more than a decade of ASP intervention, the skills crisis remains unresolved. The objective of providing sufficient numbers of trained personnel to commerce, business and industry as well as the public sector will, for a long time, remain the yardstick for measuring the success of ASP intervention.

From this analysis, we notice a heavy reliance on external funding which could indicate some hesitancy on the part of the universities to claim complete ownership of academic support initiatives. Perhaps, this cautious move of the universities arises from the notion that was generally held then by which these initiatives were conceived to be the responsibility of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), certain specialised agencies and/or private companies. These groups were considered as the ultimate beneficiaries of the academic support system, if pass rates improved and graduation rates increased, hence they had vested interests in what was happening in the academic support arena. The

reasoning behind this assumption is that, if the economic system needs skilled manpower, then, it must be prepared to pay for it. But this assumption overlooks the fact that the general public has vested interests in ASP and that universities, as the embodiment of public interests and societal values, have a moral obligation to be engaged in broader community and NGO struggles to compel the government to provide substantial subsidisation of ASP initiatives.

To some extent, the phenomenon described above, induced a measure of complacency among university communities in the hope that the volunteering of financial support by outside organisations guaranteed the success of the operation. In a way this led to some universities becoming oblivious of their social responsibility. It is only recently that bold and more drastic measures have been contemplated and even, in some instances, implemented in attempting to address the broader educational needs of underdeveloped communities.

In most instances this rising concern about the educationally disadvantaged sectors of our society has prompted a number of universities to formulate mission statements which have become symbolic expressions of a university's position regarding educational imbalances of the Apartheid system of education, which racially discriminates against the majority of the South African population. In their mission statements, universities have made it public knowledge that they do not wish to be identified with the evils of such a system. Some have even gone further by embracing the concept of affirmative action to try and redress the adverse effects caused by the inferior standard of Black education. This is done by lowering university entrance requirements while maintaining their exit standards. Obviously, this vision of their role has far-reaching implications for educational development initiatives and budgetary considerations. This realisation has been accompanied by redefinitions of the university's

role in the shaping of a future society for the country in terms of viewing itself as one of the agencies for social change.

The initial period of ASP programmes was marked by various attempts at different universities to assist entrants from disadvantaged sectors of the education system to adapt academically to these predominantly White institutions. Apparently, ASP at each university is an attempt to respond to areas of need that are perceived to be of high priority. Mention has also been made of attempts to give environmental assistance in the form of finance, transportation, and residence accommodation to students coming from far distant places and those whose families cannot afford to provide adequate study facilities at their homes.

Although spheres of ASP emphasis varied between skills support, subject support, and non-academic (environmental) support, the programmes offered at the University of Natal did not differ substantially from those of the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town and Rhodes University in terms of addressing areas for academic and environmental support. There has been regular consultations among these universities on matters regarding academic support policies, methods and strategies of delivery, organisation of the programmes and their implementation. In their Annual Conferences, staff members from these universities attempt to jointly address academic support issues of common interest.

However, recent indications are that, instead of ameliorating, the situation has deteriorated to the extent that the expected economic recovery may require yet another massive recruitment of foreign skilled workers.

Earlier, it was noted that the employment sector realised that the skills shortage posed a serious challenge and had

to be addressed urgently. But the small numbers of Blacks, who were recruited to pursue studies in the fields that were considered to be most vital for economic survival, have been inadequate to meet the demands of the economy. In the words of the Editor of the Natal Mercury:

"...it is the technical community with manual as well as cerebral skills that designs and creates the buildings, machines, structures and systems that allow modern society to exist. South Africa has been in existence for more than three centuries. But in many ways it is still a young nation and it stands now on the threshold of a re-birth as its millions of disadvantaged Blacks are permitted to find their proper place in the scheme of things" (1990:8).

The Editor took to task the Minister of Manpower, Elli Louw for merely complaining about the shortage of skilled manpower without doing what was necessary to address what the Editor called the "CRISIS OF SKILLS". The editorial suggested the following as part of the solution: focusing

"at the design of our educational systems that stressed the academic career path so highly - and the way that academic skills on their own failed so seriously to keep pace with the technological growth of the country... look also at Government's tardy realisation that technikons are needed as urgently as universities... look also at the over-emphasis placed on technikons at the expense of universities when that realisation finally sank home... look, too, at the failure to provide adequate schooling for the blacks of this country, surely one of the largest untapped potential sources of technical and professional skills available anywhere" (ibid:8).

It is not a mere coincidence that the above comments were made on the tenth anniversary of ASP intervention at almost all of the surveyed South African universities. The issues raised have reflection on the long standing concerns of the corporate sector, who, approximately twelve years ago, took the initiative of nurturing the type of potential the

newspaper Editor suggested should be tapped. The fact that he refers to it as "untapped potential" suggests that ASP existence for more than a decade has not had its desired effect. The Minister of Manpower had warned earlier that year (1990) that within ten years the country would be facing a shortage of more than 400 000 professional and technical people. Indeed this is a frightening statistic, which any developing country cannot afford to ignore.

In the next Chapter the approaches used in the United States to deal with problems of underdevelopment in some communities of American society will be investigated. It will be noticed that while, in South Africa, ASP almost exclusively depends on funding by the corporate sector, the major ASP interventions in the United States are funded by the Federal Government. The analysis of staffing structures shows that during the initial phase of South African ASP there was complete reliance on external funding by non-governmental organisations and potential employers. This fact suggests some hesitancy on the part of the universities to claim full ownership of ASP initiatives. Most probably, the lack of motivation to give funds to projects of this nature has arisen from the misconception that the work of ASP is not the responsibility of a university. In most instances, it is defined as a peripheral activity that has no direct bearing on the academic functions of universities. In terms of such perceptions, the role of a university is bound to lack concrete definition and explicit mandate, as demonstrated by the ambivalence of some Vice-Chancellors' statements on the relationship between ASP and the university.

As the investigation continues on the involvement in ASPs of either the state or the private sector, special emphasis will be on whether the effectiveness of ASP can be guaranteed when there is no sufficient funding and most of available funding is unreliable. In Chapter 2 the

international scenario of ASPs is depicted, using the holistic paradigm, which stresses the importance of the tripartite structure of roles: the Programme - faculty staff - students. To make more explicit as to what model of ASP is preferred in this Study, we will concentrate on those international ASPs that have strong resemblance to South African institutions. The intention is to acquire a global picture of the nature of ASPs and associated initiatives world-wide.

Thus, special attention is given to the American experience with ASPs. It is known that the United States of America has one of the most advanced forms of ASPs and has had a relatively lengthy experience of intervention in this field. It is also true that the United States exhibits a different set of circumstances for its ASPs, especially in the sense that ASP is largely initiated and financed by Federal legislation, compared to the South Africa situation of non-existent Government support for ASPs. However, there are other interesting developments in the American approach to the subject and we need to know about these too.

Chapter 3 deals with the achievements and problems of ASP and how they operate, in order to establish the basis on which they can be critically evaluated. It is quite possible that areas, in which the programmes have been successful, will be highlighted for practical consideration by practitioners in this field, who could benefit from the knowledge base thus created. In like manner, areas of weakness in those programmes that were reported during data collection for the Study, will be noted, wherever it is required to do so. Such presentation will make information available for further scrutiny and research by other interested scholars.

In Chapter 4 evaluation criteria for ASP programmes will be developed on the basis of universally acceptable principles

of compensatory education, academic support, and educational development. From the faculty-specific and other micro-evaluations, general principles and procedures for evaluation will be deduced to provide a basis for laying guidelines that can be used in future. It is most likely that further investigation into issues related to academic support will find this analysis useful for extraction of a more balanced method of understanding ASP and developing a useful conceptual framework. Such a framework would aid in the understanding of practical problems encountered in the field, as well as provide an instrument to facilitate the crystallisation of ideas relating to requirements of structures and theory construction in the process of developing knowledge about ASP phenomena.

The actual evaluation occurs in Chapter 5, where the various academic support programmes, offered at different campuses are assessed in terms of their impact on the basis of formulated evaluation criteria appearing in the previous Chapter. In the assessment of South African ASPs, scientific norms for the evaluation of organisational effectiveness, will be applied. The merits and demerits of these programmes will be weighed, using a number of guidelines that can assist any further study or work in this area, for example, programme planning, design and implementation.

Finally, in Chapter 6 research findings will be reported with possible recommendations to institutions, decision-makers, financiers, and educationists, in as far as they are involved in the provision of ASP initiatives and the shaping of their future. To a certain degree, therefore, this Chapter retraces the paths of previous Chapters and attempts to consolidate the foundations of the knowledge gained from the entire Study. The critical value of the whole investigation, certainly, lies in the interpretation,

within a particular institutional context, of research findings emanating from this investigation for practical application in individual tertiary institutions hosting ASP programmes. This Chapter clearly demonstrates the implications for such an interpretive process.

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CHAPTER 2

An international perspective on Academic Support Programmes: a literature survey of the experience of the United States of America

2.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter, the writer examined the reasons for the establishment of ASPs at specified universities in South Africa. From the previous exposition, it has become clear that students, who come from disadvantaged schooling backgrounds, have unique academic problems that require those concerned to address them by special academic programmes.

The four universities that have been selected for the study, made a bold move by organising tutorial programmes for disadvantaged students on their campuses. While this courageous step should be applauded, it is noted, with concern that these programmes had not been subjected to any form of empirical evaluation to determine whether or not they were adequate in addressing the needs of academically disadvantaged students.

This Chapter will survey the United States scene in order to see whether there are similarities with the South African situation. In particular, the focus will be on the developments, where a disadvantaged student population with severely deficient schooling as a result of discriminatory laws, has not sufficiently benefited from campus-based ASPs. The United States seems to offer the best comparison with South African English-medium universities in support of disadvantaged students.

2.2 Historical background

Before the American Civil War, any effort to make provisions for public education accessible to Blacks was effectively thwarted by the authorities. Black education, in the United States, indeed evolved from severe constraints since only a small minority graduating from high school proceeded to college or university, especially during the period prior to the American Civil War of the Nineteenth Century. The attempts by free Blacks to establish their own schools were crippled by limited resources and had no real impact. Since post-school educational attainment is a major avenue for upward mobility in terms of status and income, Blacks could not attain socio-economic advancement unless two important changes occurred. Firstly, the slave plantation economy had to be dismantled to allow Blacks to freely seek employment of their choice anywhere. Secondly, legislation prohibiting Blacks from becoming educated at any level had to be abolished.

The South, especially, tolerated reluctantly the limited attempts of missionaries. Some Northern states began to allocate funds for the education of Blacks. All these efforts were limited in their effectiveness, and would remain so, until major policy decisions were taken to abolish legalised racial segregation in schools and provide Blacks with the same access to education, as other racial groups. The plight that was experienced by Blacks at that time had to be addressed urgently once legal impediments were removed.

2.3 Abolition of slavery and early beginnings in Black education

By the middle of the Nineteenth Century, it had become apparent that slavery had become unpopular. In 1867 the Fourteenth Amendment was passed. It signalled a new era for Blacks in that, though superficially, citizenship rights

were granted to them. It is a characteristic of American public life that Federal policy is frequently ignored by individual states. In state-funded segregated schools, which were founded on the principle of separate but equal (after the 1896 case of Plessey versus Ferguson), they were given inferior education, that was of little long term benefit. The chances of Blacks gaining entry into university or college were severely restricted, as was their employment prospects.

On the other hand, any attempts to set up alternative structures, in terms of elementary and secondary schools, were fraught with problems of finding adequate resources, including trained Black teachers. Thus, despite the Fourteenth Amendment, Blacks, in many states, continued to suffer deprivation of access to education: thus, they could either attend segregated schools, which were inferior to White schools, or establish their own schools as did various Black communities, churches and the Freedmen's Bureau. These initiatives stressed primary and secondary schooling rather than postsecondary levels of education.

After 1867, the South firmly resisted any change in its racial policies, including the equality of Blacks in all spheres of life, while the North continued to pursue liberal ideals. The South's intransigence resulted in the application of force to ensure compliance with Federal legislation. As early as 1852 the Freedmen's Bureau had, by force, set up its offices in the South. These offices, as we have seen, helped to provide health and educational services. The Bureau also checked that the necessary teachers were imported from the North to teach Blacks in the South, (in states where several court cases had failed to upset the legality of de facto segregated schooling). Through the efforts of this Bureau more than six hundred thousand Blacks had attended school by 1869. Numbers increased as time went by and soon the need for post-school education arose.

The more enlightened approach of the North to the educational needs of Blacks not only followed the policy of the Union enacted in the Fourteenth Amendment, but was also in direct response to the economic demands of the Country. A century later Blacks, especially in the Southern states, still had inferior education. A number of revolts drew attention to their plight. Southern and Northern states followed the same official policy towards Blacks, but with different interpretations. Thus moving in the same direction did not necessarily mean engaging in the same activity of striving for racial equality. It can be expected, then, that different levels of socio-economic attainment existed (possibly persisting to this day), since Blacks who established themselves in the North were exposed to an easier educational environment and the opportunity of upward socio-economic mobility than those in the South, whose educational background has been severely impoverished as a result of restrictions placed on their access to education.

It was during the Nineteenth Century that universities, catering to the educational needs of Blacks, were established, the first of which was the famous Fisk University, which was founded in 1865 in Nashville, Tennessee, during the year when the Talladega College of Alabama was established. These institutions seem to have taught mere extensions of the kind of curriculum that was offered to Blacks at secondary schools. Many of the students who attended these universities had been disadvantaged by inadequate schooling. As Black colleges and universities could be regarded as no more than extensions of high schools it is inevitable that the courses they offered could not all be rated as tertiary education. Historical evidence acknowledges that these post-secondary institutions provided expanded programmes of an inferior education system. Students brought to them had enormous academic disadvantages, which were the outcome of curricular deficiencies at secondary school levels. It is to a great

extent, these sorts of deficiencies that had to be remedied by well mounted ASP programmes.

It is gratifying to note that tertiary institutions in the United States did take the necessary measures to address the deficiencies mentioned above, albeit not always successfully. When taking into consideration that Black tertiary institutions were experiencing serious problems in terms of a shortage of well trained teaching personnel and sufficient funds, to provide adequate facilities such as libraries and laboratories, it is of great significance that Federal Government considered instituting remedial programmes based on preferential treatment (further details under section 2.2), in order that a greater number of Blacks could improve possibilities for academic success at tertiary level. Once Black communities had their own sufficiently trained professional people, who could plough back their expertise, the crisis of trained personnel could be overcome.

2.3.1 Problems of separate Black education: possible implications for South African ASPs

The difficulties of finding trained Blacks to teach in schools established by the Freedmen's Bureau, which was established by Congress in 1864 (Pulliam, 1982:94) and other organisations, partly, caused the collapse of these initiatives. It could not be expected that, all of a sudden Blacks would be ready to fill teaching positions, which require extensive training, when some states still denied them the right to basic education, as was the case in some Southern states, such as Mississippi and Louisiana. The following passage demonstrates the impact of these circumstances of educational deprivation by comparing the situation in the South with the North:

"... given their lack of education and the persisting attitudes of Whites, employers as well as workers, towards Blacks, former slaves could not easily improve their economic status

or move forward. At the same time, Blacks who had never been slaves lived somewhat more easily in the Northern states, able to attend schools for some years, and to move freely to places where they might be employed, while possessing the status of citizenship on the same basis as other residents of those states" (Brock, C. and Tulasiewicz, W., 1985:289).

This in a way sketches the limitations giving rise to adequately trained educators to serve the needs, especially, of Black universities.

Another issue was that there were not enough Black universities to serve the whole Black community. Some of the Black students would, out of necessity, have to be admitted into White universities, which had high admission standards and demanded that students achieve academic success of high standard, (of which many disadvantaged Black students were incapable).

It has been indicated that the history of Black education in the United States is, in fact, a history of an uphill struggle against not only social injustice, but also against racism in educational practice. American Society has, through the years, negatively regulated the socio-economic progress of the Blacks while educational deficiency ensured that even those Blacks, who managed to gain university entrance, cannot succeed because of inadequate schooling. Thus two forces make it impossible for Blacks to advance in an allegedly meritocratic society. Economic repression, in conjunction with educational deprivation, has turned whatever progress may have been made by the Blacks of the United States towards realising "the American dream", into a nightmare. The norms that are set for meritocratic achievement of that dream have become so meaningless that many have become convinced that new and more subtle forms of slavery may not only keep that dream elusive to many Blacks, but may also lead to greater retrogression under the guise of meritocracy. The combination of these factors has left Blacks somehow trailing in all fronts of socio-economic

advancement behind the Whites. Presumably, had affirmative action been launched earlier, some of the damage could have been reduced or even reversed. That significant disparities between Blacks and Whites have existed through much of the twentieth century is revealed in the following:

"By the turn of the century half of all American Blacks remained illiterate. In 1912 expenditure per Black student in the South were one third the amount spent on White students. Black classes, and Black teachers were consistently less well-trained than their White counterparts... In 1930 the average Black American had six years of schooling; the average White ten years. By the beginning of the Second World War about one-eighth of the Black population in the United States remain illiterate" (Sowell, T. 1981:174).

The pattern that has developed so far suggests that slavery was designed to keep Blacks in perpetual subjugation as a people by denying them civil rights, as well as depriving them educational opportunities. In this way, a mind-set of complete dependency was created, however, not always derived from deliberate policy but often as a result of slavery. It would seem then that those who had been slaves, and not entitled to any kind of civil rights, were, also as free men, denied vital educational opportunities and so could not compete successfully for higher education, rewarding employment as well as for upward social mobility. A systematic form of oppression had developed to keep them in check so that their permanent status of "drawers of water and hewers of wood" would be ensured. Throughout centuries Blacks of the United States have struggled against different forms of injustice, that have made them aliens in the land of their birth. Whites formulated and enacted laws and policies for the subjugation of Blacks, so that a pattern of relative deprivation emerged. The theory of Relative Deprivation, which provides a framework for this Study, will be discussed in Chapter Four.

This inquiry provides the background against which calls for the three forms preferential treatment (reverse discrimination, affirmative action and academic support) were successfully made, especially, in the last three decades of the Twentieth Century. In the following Section, a more detailed investigation of the conditions in Black education is made in order to determine the type of educational environment within which the policy guidelines for preferential treatment were implemented. In as far as discriminatory educational policies are concerned, strong parallels exist between the repressive approach of the South towards equal educational opportunities for Blacks and Whites and the Apartheid educational policies of the Nationalist Party in South Africa, which were intended to promote supremacy of the White ruling class on the one hand, while relegating Blacks to the status of "drawers of water and hewers of wood". The only distinction between the two Countries is the absence of legislated slavery in the case of South Africa.

Similarly, South African ASP has to develop its own framework for addressing the needs of disadvantaged students. The training requirements of ASP personnel also require urgent attention, since in the past it has not received adequate consideration, to reduce reliance on imported ASP skills. For example, currently, that is, from the inception of ASPs until 1992, the majority of incumbent ASP directors had to be recruited externally, either from neighbouring countries in the Southern Africa region or from overseas. An under-resourced educational environment, when it is heavily reliant on scarcely available imported skills, tends to compromise the optimal outputs of locally available but over-stretched staff, as a result of under staffing, particularly, the optimal performance of staff and students due to academic pressures and incipient demoralising factors. For example, the early beginnings of ASPs (1980-1985) in studied universities were marked by inadequate staff to do the work. Therefore, the heavy

pressures of tasks to be performed could potentially compromise the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff. Most probably, this explains the high staff turnover during this period, may have occurred as a result the situation becoming unbearable for some of the staff. Optimal performance of ASP may also be affected by the disruption of ASP services when there is a high staff turnover.

The important issue for both the United and the South African ASPs continued to be providing the necessary training to develop local expertise in the field, in order to reduce dependence on foreign skills. In this way, ASPs becomes indigenous to the communities they serve and are nurtured by the people who are familiar with the context in which ASP programmes are developed.

2.3.2 Problems encountered with the deficiencies of disadvantaged students

If the conditions for an enslaved mentality were not upset by the necessary educational intervention, the vicious circle of an oppressed mind-set would continue. Intervention strategies had to be devised and appropriate steps taken to bring Blacks into the mainstream of American society and community life, especially in terms of adequate preparation for their future a part of an advanced industrial society, to which they were expected to make a meaningful contribution in their working lives.

Equal educational opportunity was, to a large extent, imposed by Federal governmental institutions on the education system. Indeed, in certain instances, equal opportunity programmes were imposed upon state and local institutions, without their support. It may well be that the American public at state and local level were not sufficiently prepared for the changes in the position and status of Blacks. To further illustrate the manner in which

affirmative policies were foisted on public institutions Brock and Tulasiewicz (1985:295-296) stress that:

"Court decisions with regard to desegregation and integration of school children eventually reached out toward the need to respond to conditions in society which went beyond the provision of education. Thus the concept of affirmative action was born and written into law with regard to education, job rights, housing opportunities, and the various aspects of participation in the human affairs of the nation. Associated with affirmative action was the need to offer some form of compensation for the effects of slavery, post-slavery poverty, and the conditions of alienation prevalent in Black communities. Blacks received opportunities to come 'to the front of the line', ahead of numerous others, since they had for so many generations been 'at the back of the bus'... The objections of other youths who may have been passed over were seen as having little force of argument in the contentions which made affirmative action necessary."

This is borne out by the numerous court cases fought by individuals against anti-discriminatory laws as illustrated in the following paragraphs.

In the United States the educational system is decentralised so that people in a given area are responsible for the provision of both quality education and equal educational opportunities for all children. The higher authority in each area is a local board of education which ensures orderly administration of the school system. These local education authorities reflect the wishes and aspirations of the majority in the area. Blacks in the United States have not been, for many years, represented at local school board level. In many states an overwhelming number of Black children attend segregated schools, which, because of inferior funding, have also been inferior in quality. In addition to this disturbing state of affairs, the Supreme Court, in 1896, decided in favour of Louisiana's Law of Separate but Equal Facilities which entrenched segregation in schools, despite the efforts to desegregate schools

benefitting from public funds. This situation of segregated schools has a long history. This situation continued for nearly sixty years and has been the main reason for much of the poor quality of Black education in that Country.

To appreciate the extent to which damage was done by the segregated inferior schooling for Blacks, we turn to Ornstein and Levine's (1981:259) analysis of the situation as prevailing at the time:

"The main function of the school seemed to be sorting out students according to their potential for upward mobility, a process that tended to doom lower-class students to remain lower class. The schools served the middle-class, and especially the upper-class, well by teaching those skills that are essential for college preparation and high-status occupations. But the lower-class child who is not prepared to conform to the school's middle-class standards and expectations is handicapped in the school system. One group (the lower-class)... is almost immediately brushed off into the bin labelled 'non-readers', 'first-grade repeaters', or 'opportunity class' where they stay for eight or ten years and are then released through a chute to the outside world to become hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Ornstein, 1981:259).

These observations are still, though under changed circumstances, applicable to present day schooling in the United States and, also, in South Africa, the latter having to date a system of legally entrenched racism in the provision of educational resources. Some educationists, including Ornstein (1981:272) argue that schools tend to reflect middle-class values and ethos and consequently discriminate against lower-class students. They stress that, perhaps, alternative ways of measuring the educational achievement of lower class students should be investigated.

To some extent, a similar concern motivated the launching of a study of Black education by James Coleman and his colleagues in the 1960s. This study, which was commissioned

by the Johnson Administration, has been regarded as the most massive educational research project ever conducted. Its brief was to investigate and report on the state, (nation wide) of equal educational opportunities for racial, particularly Blacks minorities. The report was published in 1966 and it included an analysis of test results in various grades, ranging from one to twelve, for children of different ethnic groups (Puerto Rican, American Indian, Mexican American, and Black). Coleman's Commission found that the effects of home environment far outweighed any effects, the school programme might have on educational achievement.

To demonstrate that some form of special intervention was needed to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged students, Coleman stressed that these ethnic groups attained scores that were much lower, at all grade levels, in terms of educational achievement, than those of the average Oriental or White group. The gap between these categories of disadvantaged and advantaged groups even widened at higher grades. For example, Blacks who started only six months behind in reading at the first grade, ended up three and a half years behind Whites in reading at the twelfth grade. For this discrepancy, Coleman contended, known variables such as the verbal skills of the teacher and the characteristics of the school, could not convincingly account.

Therefore, the study examined other equally significant variables and the findings were stunning. He found that the most important variable in or out of school remained the educational and social background of the child's family. The second most important factor was the educational and social class background of the other children in the school. Coleman argued that both these elements outweighed any physical attributes of the school. For him, therefore, "the most logical method for improving the education of the disadvantaged... is to integrate the school and classrooms

on a social-class basis so as to change the peer group influences", (Coleman, in Ornstein, (1981:283). Thus, the message for the Government, which commissioned the study with the intention of increasing Federal financial commitment to education, was that, in a way, racial integration of lower class Blacks into largely middle class White school might have to be expedited.

It was the doctrine of "separate but equal" of 1896 (in a Supreme Court case between Plessy and Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, 41 L.Ed. 256, 18 S. Ct. 1138,) that was condemned and outlawed as having no place in education as it endorsed inequality by legalising racial segregation (Fife, 1992:2-10). In Federal law, referred to above, the segregation of schools was repudiated by the Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka decision on 17 May 1954 (Brown I, 347 U.S. 483, 98 L.Ed. 873, 74 S. Ct. (1954) and Brown II, 349 U.S. 281, 99 L.Ed. 1083, 75 S. Ct. 753 (1955) respectively) as documented by Pulliam, 1982:88). De jure segregation in schools could no longer be condoned or protected by law. Blacks could now apply to, and be admitted to, any school, provided they had transport to the area where the school was situated. Therefore, when de jure segregation was rescinded, Blacks had an opportunity to attend White schools, which had better facilities. However, White schools were established in distant White neighbourhoods and commuting could be an expensive undertaking, which few Blacks could afford.

The deficiencies of disadvantaged students could not be addressed satisfactorily during the period immediately before and after the American Civil War, which began in 1862 (Pulliam, 1982:67) mainly for two reasons: the lack of the infrastructure (trained teachers and other educational resources) to do so and the educational policies based on the principle of "separate but equal", which endorsed racially segregated schooling. With the abolition of slavery in 1865 by the Thirteenth Amendment and the Fourteenth and

Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, which guaranteed civil rights in 1866 and 1869 respectively, de jure segregation in education had been outlawed. These two Amendments merely provided a framework for civil life but had an insignificant impact on segregated schooling based on the de facto doctrine. As a result of the inadequate infrastructure in Black education, ways had to be found to enable Blacks to attend well-resourced schools to improve their quality of education and chances of success.

2.4 Strategies to cope with increased enrollments and disadvantaged students following the Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka Decision

2.4.1 Background information

It has been shown that the closing decades of the Nineteenth Century as well as the early decades of the Twentieth Century, were a difficult period for the education of Blacks in the United States, both in the South and South West. Young people, who were the descendants of sharecroppers and farm labourers, were compelled to work long hours in the fields and so rarely attended school. In the Northern States, Blacks had access to schooling, although in inferior and segregated schools. Even after the Brown Decision, Black students, in the Southern states, continued to feel that schools were hardly more than an extension of the cotton fields, as landowners dominated local boards of education and used schools as instruments of exploitation in transgression of Federal legislation. This was the case, especially, in the South where landowners used educational policies to meet their own needs for cheap labour, rather than students' academic requirements.

2.4.2 Busing students to achieve racial integration

Pulliam (1982:190) in a comment on Black education in the 1950's writes:

"Considerable progress towards desegregation was made in border states, but in the deep South various measures designed to frustrate desegregation were tried... Perhaps the greatest opposition has occurred when cities have attempted to solve the integration problem by busing students from one school to another in order to achieve some degree of racial balance. A major problem for education has been the mandate given to schools to foster integration while the general public in many communities was unwilling to cooperate."

Busing was one of the strategies used to abolish racial segregation in schools. But it tended to be a local initiative, rather than national strategy such as "Head Start", ESEA, National Education Association programmes and others, which have been described, but need further clarification to determine the extent to which they were effectively implemented to help resolve the problem of Black educational disadvantage.

The major obstacles to the effective implementation of educational intervention programmes in the United States arise from ignoring the two critical factors in decision-making: the use of research evidence and the participatory approach in the decision-making process. As Pulliam observes in the above passage, the authorities relied on legalistic procedures to enforce Federal decisions on educational policies. The exacerbating factor is that the American public had not been adequately prepared to understand and accept those policies. As a result, a number of communities could not identify with the decisions thus taken, especially with regard to racially integrated schooling, and were not disposed to co-operate. To illustrate this issue, we briefly examine the busing of pupils as a strategy for racial integration in schools.

The changes that were envisaged by the introduction of strategies, such as busing, had limited success, because of the dictatorial attitude of the Federal Government, which

funded them. Most states felt that busing was an imposition on de facto segregation which, despite the Brown Decision of 1954, they still supported. Busing was treated with suspicion by many communities who regarded it as a means of retarding the progress of White advantaged children and a serious threat to the status quo: racial integration could only lower both moral and academic standards, as alleged in terms of this perception. From another viewpoint which showed greater understanding of the issues involved, it was felt that money spent in transportation of students was a waste and should, instead, be used in remedial instruction for disadvantaged students. This latter approach dealt with the basic issue in terms of the drawbacks of intellectual and cultural disadvantage. On the other hand, busing does have certain advantages. It exposes children to a desegregated environment and so they learn to live together, thereby reducing the potential for racial tensions and improving human relations in communities. Nevertheless, resistance to integration was strong, especially among more senior White pupils.

In the course of time busing did become more common, as communities recognised that, by busing, they were laying foundations for students to live in an integrated society. Local authorities, however, implemented both strategies, that is, they assigned pupils to schools, which might involve busing, as well as instituting remedial education programmes. Despite the fact that many states did approve busing as the remedy for segregation, the flight of White students from desegregated schools continued and jeopardised the whole desegregation policy. Anti-busing legislation gradually appeared in both state and Federal legislation as the following indicates:

"While the various courts and federal agencies have made rulings in respect to busing, the executive and legislative branches have also entered the debate... Two laws have recently been enacted to limit busing: one states that federal agencies must try alternative methods of desegregation before resorting to busing;

the other prevents the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare from ordering a plan that requires the assignment of children to schools other than those nearest their homes. Anti-busing amendments to the Constitution have been proposed by Congress" (Johnson, 1979:186)

Although a certain measure of racial integration in schools was achieved through busing, not many people in the United States were in favour of it. The controversial nature of the issue led most states eventually to abandon the scheme in preference for local schools improvement programmes. Wynn, (1977:20-21), among others, has documented the reasons for the rejection of busing in the following:

"A factor in the retreat from integration has been the conclusion - based on a number of studies - that the home, not the school, makes the greater difference in the educational and economic destiny of people. Although this conclusion has been debated widely, many people, especially legislators, lost their zeal for promoting equal opportunity for minorities through school integration. Many Blacks have begun to reject integration as a desirable goal and see it, instead - as do many Whites - as the loss of neighbourhood schools. For example, Coleman Young, Detroit's black mayor, says that he "shed no tears for cross-district busing" and "instead, increased financing of schools to improve educational opportunity for all."

Indeed, it is open to question whether there has been any qualitative change in the educational achievements of Black students as a result of racial integration in schools. There is no research evidence to suggest that there has been any. Returning to the busing issue, the most we know is that, to a certain extent, racial balance was achieved in many school districts throughout the United States. However, in some districts with major concentration of Black students, inner-city schools actually became impoverished, that is, the value of education depreciated, as a result of the "White flight".

By the end of the Seventies Blacks enrolled in predominantly White schools had increased, but increase in integrated schools and universities did little to reduce the Black failure and drop-out rate.

2.4.3 The effects of increased enrollments of Blacks at predominantly White universities

In the previous Section the principles, offering guidelines for the establishment of various types of programmes to improve the education of racial minorities in the United States, revealed that the the Federal Government sought to eliminate socio-economic differences between Blacks and Whites through compensatory education and ASP programmes. A number of similar programmes were introduced at different school levels, as already explained. Those described in the foregoing paragraphs were established on basis of preferential treatment, in the sense that they would only be available to those individuals meeting the criteria of the guidelines. In 1965, Lyndon Johnson, as quoted in Grassian (1981:303), explained some of the reasons for setting up programmes targeting racial minorities.

In this Section the focus shifts to examining how the policies governing the inauguration of compensatory educational programmes, were implemented and what effects, if any, they had on reducing the failure rate and improving graduation rates of disadvantaged students. These programmes covered a broad spectrum of educational needs for different age groups and a wide range educational levels. For purposes of this study we concentrate on those that were designed to improve opportunities for success at tertiary levels of education. Throughout, the investigation is directed at the three categories of preferential treatment, namely reverse discrimination, affirmative action and academic support. Where applicable, the relevance of evaluation of programmes is indicated, for where this is felt might have contributed to improved academic results for the benefit of

international and South African ASP. The role of ASP evaluation is emphasised in the entire study, since it is considered as indispensable for efficient and effective implementation of ASP programmes.

A brief historical overview of education for Blacks in the United States is necessary in order to locate the context of the origins of ASP in that country. Initially, Blacks in the United States were denied education on the grounds that, as slaves, they were imported to be mere implements for the use of their masters. Provenzo (1986:170) depicts the plight of North American slaves as follows:

"If the political and social experience of Blacks has been characterised by prejudice and lack of equal opportunity, then their educational experience has reflected the same prejudice and lack of opportunity. Until recently, the mainstream culture has consistently denied them adequate schooling. North and South, Blacks have had to fight for equal education in non-segregated settings. Their struggle has been difficult and not without anguish."

It was the missionaries who came to the rescue of the enslaved Black population. In the interests of evangelism, French and Spanish missionaries, in particular, were in the forefront of efforts to develop the literacy skills of Blacks. The instruction, missionaries provided in the early Eighteenth Century benefited Blacks in many ways. It not only enabled them to read and write, but also developed, in some of them, qualities of leadership so that they themselves assumed missionary roles and preached against the immorality of slavery. This angered slave owners who opposed education for slaves, for the same reason that they would turn against their "masters" as Provenzo (1986:170-171) shows in the following:

"Colonial Americans had little interest in educating Blacks. In a slave society Blacks acted merely as tools for the benefit of their owners... Essentially, compulsory ignorance was the policy established for Black children under slavery. As early as

1740 South Carolina adopted the first laws prohibiting the teaching of reading and writing to slaves. By the first half of the nineteenth century restrictions placed on the education of Blacks became even more widespread... In 1830 Louisiana passed a law that made the teaching of reading to a slave punishable by a year in jail... By the time of the Civil War not one Southern state allowed Blacks to be instructed in either reading or writing. Enforced ignorance provided an important means of controlling slave populations" (Provenzo, 1986:174)

The entrenched system of oppression, through slavery and ignorance, was a formidable challenge to the authorities, who began to seek ways of making public schooling available to Blacks as well. Even by the middle of the Twentieth Century, Blacks were still denied equal educational opportunities. It took a lengthy struggle before American society offered Blacks the right to education. The denial of equal educational opportunity to American Blacks continued to wreck their lives and had a devastating effect on their development as a people. As racial discrimination in the Twentieth Century has tended to be more subtle and impersonal, in the sense that it no longer was a matter of master slave relationship, a systematic strategy of deprivation developed, which sought, primarily to perpetuate the existence of a subordinate class of people. In terms of this strategy, the exploited people would always be ready for exploitation in the pursuit of capital accumulation. Until the rise of civil rights campaigns, Blacks were only afforded the privilege of education for servitude. In the next Section it will be shown to what extent the impact of policies to destabilise Black education influenced Black performance at postsecondary levels of study, such as at junior and community colleges, as well as at universities.

The main reason for the survey to concentrate on the American situation is that Black Americans were, for a long time, subjected to political oppression and slavery, which deprived them of quality education. Similarly, Blacks in

South Africa have been, for a long time, the victims of political oppression and an inferior education system. In this sense, it is possible to draw meaningful parallels between the experiences of both countries. The basis of comparison will, however, depend on the extent to which evaluation of ASP programmes is used to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes.

The education system in the United States is based on educational policies and practices that developed from a peculiar historical setting that was characterised by deep racial divisions that required special legislative measures to redress their effect on the educational sphere. Those measures included reverse discrimination affirmative action and academic support. The United States, though, has a tendency to develop and use its own unique terminology, hence the need to elaborate briefly on the conceptual context of ASPs. In other words, it is essential to determine the causes for the formulation of the programmes and what prompted the Federal Government to play a central role in the process of ASP intervention. In doing so, the results of the inquiry may suggest that the United States experience creates a precedent, which can be emulated in South Africa if comparably suitable conditions exist.

2.4.4 Concepts of preferential treatment: reverse discrimination, affirmative action and Academic Support Programmes

In many ways the implementation of compensatory policies, as a means of redressing students' educational disadvantages arising from discriminatory practices in education, has moral problems, associated with the manner in which compensatory policies, such as reverse discrimination and affirmative action, were implemented. Most writers, on redistributive justice in education, agree that compensation and remedy for past imbalances in the provision of education for disadvantaged students are necessary and required to

normalise the situation. But the means utilized to attain equality in education, especially with reference to reverse discrimination, continue to dominate the debate of whether the end justifies the means.

It is generally accepted that minority groups, and more particularly Blacks, were discriminated against for a long time and that drastic measures to correct this had to be taken. The Civil Rights' Movement, in particular, and other organisations such as the National Association for the Advancement of the Coloured People (NAACP), and the Southern Leadership Conference, brought the question of discrimination to the forefront of the American conscience. Indeed their pleas did shake the conscience of decision-makers and ways were sought to compensate those who had been "treated unjustly in the past and carry the legacy of the injustice today" (Grassian, 1981:293). The most critical concepts in this regard are reverse discrimination, affirmative action and academic support, which need to be defined, before discussing the manner in which they were applied to remedy educational disadvantages of American Blacks and other minority racial groups.

2.4.4.1 Reverse discrimination

As a concept, reverse discrimination arises from the notion that minorities, including Blacks in the United States, are disadvantaged, as a result of privations from various forms of discriminatory practices. Blacks and other minorities were seen as "apt to live in substandard homes, to subsist on improper and imbalanced diets, and to receive inadequate education", (Beauchamp and Pinkard, 1983:330). Reverse discrimination was viewed as a way of neutralizing the disadvantages caused by past privations. Thus reverse discrimination is considered as justified by those who believe that compensation has to be made by those who have benefited from the system at the expense of disadvantaged Blacks and other ethnic minorities.

Reverse discrimination takes the form of the reservation of places in education, employment and social development. A strong argument for reverse discrimination and the quota system, is the importance of role models, which will motivate Blacks and other minorities to seek top positions. But mere reservation of places has been found to be insufficient because of the four ways, in which the adverse effects of past privations affect opportunities for occupying skilled positions and personal development. These are, firstly, inadequate education, which means that people have not acquired the skills required for either professional employment or higher and further education; secondly, is the lack of early childhood intellectual stimulation and sufficient nutrition, both of which affect the acquisition of basic literacy, essential for further education and rewarding employment; thirdly, people who have experienced discrimination in the past have poor self-esteem and hence do not aspire to tertiary education and employment in the professions; finally, environmental factors such as home background and family circumstances, may affect people's capacity for sustained personal effort to succeed in a chosen career path.

The above are the main pillars of the argument for reverse discrimination. Those opposed to reverse discrimination insist that such a policy fails to exact compensation from those who have most benefited from past injustice. Also reverse discrimination can be applied in such a way as to violate the rights of people. The often quoted case of Allan Bakke versus the University of California, Davis Campus, in 1978, illustrates this concern. It is worth noting that Bakke could have attained the high scores he did attain in the Medical School's Admissions Tests as a result of earlier exposure to an enriched cultural and educational environment and better socio-economic conditions. However, it must be acknowledged that without preferential treatment most Blacks, who were admitted under the quota system which

reserved sixteen places for them at the Medical School, could not have been successful in their applications.

On moral grounds, it is no longer possible to defend reverse discrimination. A growing number of Whites in the United States are already suffering from impoverished backgrounds, similar to Blacks and other racial minorities. Moreover, the ethical issue in reverse discrimination is that implementing such a policy inevitably involves violating the rights of people, whose only crime is that they belong to the White group. Many of them have in no direct way benefited from the racial discrimination practised by Government and its various agencies.

Under the policy of reverse discrimination White males are the most prejudiced against. As a moral imperative, the writer agrees that it is unethical to exploit any group for the benefit of another, irrespective of the source of exploitation, which he considers as an act of extreme perversion. In the same immoral way as Blacks were exploited to benefit Whites, reverse discrimination is immorally exploiting some Whites to benefit some Blacks.

2.4.4.2 Affirmative action

In a lot of instances affirmative action represents an attempt to institute procedures to provide special programmes, that are considered necessary to redress past injustices suffered by Blacks and other racial minorities. It has been shown that reverse discrimination was primarily concerned with reserving places for Blacks and other racial minorities, either in employment or educational institutions. Affirmative action seems to go further and encompasses compensatory and remedial programmes in education as well. As the goal of affirmative action is a certain degree of representation of the disadvantaged group, compensatory procedures have to continue. In the end affirmative action deals with the question of attaining a

proportionate share of society's scarce resources such as education and useful and rewarding occupations.

To strive towards this objective, affirmative action is concerned with making certain concessions to Blacks in order that they may gain access to institutions providing quality education. To a certain extent, affirmative action rests on assumptions that Black potential for education and advancement is prevented from developing by historical factors such as racism and socio-economic deficiencies. Therefore, Blacks are seen as requiring preferential treatment. It would seem that the main distinction between reverse discrimination and affirmative action lies in that the former attempts to redress past injustice by Federal legislation which may be prejudicial to Whites, while affirmative action attempts to remedy the effects of past social injustices by compensatory programmes designed to advantage Blacks on an individual basis. An example of the results of reverse discrimination is the Bakke case, mentioned earlier, which is an illustration of how an individual may be discriminated against in order that the intake in an institution might reflect the racial proportion in California and thus remedy social injustice. The argument used by supporters of reverse discrimination is that over time those disadvantaged by past social injustices will be proportionately represented in professional schools and advanced employment categories.

Affirmative action specifically applies to special admissions programmes in colleges and universities and certain areas of employment. Racial quotas, which were prescribed by colleges and universities, eventually were linked with affirmative action programmes, because mere admission under the quota system did not ensure academic success.

In 1965 Lyndon Johnson, the then President of the United States, put it this way when he launched the federally funded affirmative action programme:

"You do not take a person who, for years, as been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race, and then say, "You are free to compete with all the others", and still justly believe that you have been completely fair"
(Grassian, 1981:303).

It is, to some extent, this kind of approach to affirmative action that has generated much interest in the subject. The debate about affirmative action has centred around issues of utilitarianism and considerations of maximizing justice. On the question of the usefulness of reverse discrimination, especially when it involves violation of individual rights, many argue that the compensatory justice envisioned in these programmes fails to distribute the burden of compensation equally among beneficiaries of the discriminatory practices. Among the protagonists of the utilitarian viewpoint are those who see merit in temporary reverse discrimination in admissions and employment on the grounds that such temporary injustice is necessary to balance the scales of redistributive justice.

As a man who had taught for some time before becoming President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson ingeniously designed the Bill in such a way that:

"it was an omnibus bill that was far more comprehensive in its impact on education than any previous legislation. It was also the first bill for federal aid to education that made substantial sums available to private elementary and secondary schools"
(Wynn, 1977:374).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reached a far greater number of young people more profoundly than any other Federal financial support of education at that time. Indeed:

"it marked a watershed in the flow of federal funds for education and ushered in a new era in federal support for schools" Wynn et al. (op.cit.: 375).

But still the failure and drop-out rates among Black pupils persisted. However, in 1972, this Act was amended by the Education Amendment Act, which sought to involve state educational agencies in the co-ordination of federal, state, and local efforts in the distribution of financial aid to educational support programmes. This Act also sought to avoid the direct channelling of Federal funds to local school districts, thereby by-passing state educational agencies. This practice had been sharply criticised by Congress on the allegation that much of the money was wasted, because of the lack of effective supervision of expenditure and misuse of funds, in some cases to replace rather than supplement, local school revenues. Such misappropriation of funds indicates inefficiencies in the United States ASP system which resulted in inefficiencies of most ASP programmes. Another attack, on the way in which ESEA funds were administered, was based on the allegation that providing funds for certain categories of racial groups, like the American Indian children and other non-English speaking children meant diverting them from helping really poor people. Also local accounting procedures for the funds were, in certain instances, shoddy.

Thus (ESEA), and others like it sharing the focus on eradicating poverty through quality education, went a long way in addressing the needs of disadvantaged students. An analysis of the context in which these programmes were implemented will help us understand the reasons for their weaknesses and lack of success in some cases. It is appropriate to begin this discussion with the programme called Head Start, since it had far-reaching implications for pupils' performance in successive programmes through elementary and secondary schooling.

The elaborate description of strategies to improve opportunities for the educational success of disadvantaged students in primary and secondary schools has shown that preferential treatment alone is not the solution to the high failure and drop-out rates of such students. Reverse discrimination, which proposed that educational improvement programmes should only be made available to disadvantaged students, floundered when it was soon realised that neither the quality of schooling nor the pass rates had significantly improved as a result of this policy. Major impediments, such as the institution of slavery and de jure segregation had been abolished in order to facilitate its implementation. At high school and tertiary levels of education attrition rates remained extraordinarily high among disadvantaged students, especially Blacks.

The quota system followed, focusing on the importance of reserving places at schools and at universities benefitting from Federal funding and other resources or facilities. Busing and quota formulae in admissions policies were some of the strategies used. But the failure rates continued to increase, as admission standards had to be lowered to fill the numbers of reserved places. When this strategy did not prove to be successful, affirmative action, which emphasises proportionate representation of disadvantaged groups in numbers of pupils in classes, students admitted to universities and people occupying positions in certain categories of employment was introduced. Affirmative action seeks redress through recognition of potential to succeed in those who are discriminated against. It preferentially offers them opportunities to achieve numbers reflecting demographic realities of the population. But, without adequate preparation for university education, Black students who had been admitted on grounds of affirmative action have consistently failed and many have been forced to abandon their studies.

The writer holds the opinion that both affirmative action and reverse discrimination should no longer use racial criteria as the only indicators of disadvantage. Whites, as well as Blacks, may be disadvantaged and so both may require affirmative action programmes.

2.4.4.3 Academic Support Programmes

Academic support programmes are part of affirmative action and represent an attempt to deal with disadvantaged students who have been admitted through special admissions programmes and other measures, such as reverse discrimination. After the introduction of affirmative action programmes, it was soon discovered that most students were not able to succeed in their academic programmes. As a response to the increase in the failure rate and drop-out rate among disadvantaged students, the Federal Government instituted academic support programmes on various campuses to assist students with reasoning and analytical skills, and enable them to read and write fluently.

With respect to higher education, special programmes were instituted for the identification of students with potential to attend university or college. It was felt that they had to be identified early in their secondary schooling, so that enriched learning experiences would develop their potential for tertiary education. Attempts were also made to lower academic admission requirements at some universities and colleges, just as open universities are doing in South Africa, through alternative admissions programmes at the Universities of Natal and Cape Town.

Bridging or transition programmes were mounted to help colleges and universities, while scholarships, loans, and semester jobs were provided to fund students. Adult education programmes were made available to meet the rapidly growing socio-economic needs of disadvantaged communities of American society. The primary target of these programmes

were illiterate adults, who needed training in basic job skills. These programmes were offered at public schools, colleges, in privately owned industries and special centres, located in impoverished areas.

These programmes represent the third strategy, (the other two being reverse discrimination and affirmative action, have already been discussed), that has been tried. It involves, as has been indicated, ASPs, which are expected to remedy the deficiencies of academically disadvantaged students. We have seen that the quota system (reverse discrimination) encountered many problems, including Supreme Court decisions that declared the policy null and void, as it implied the violation of other people's constitutional rights. It was hoped that academic support would become a means of accommodating academic disadvantages, which Black students bring with them into colleges and universities.

Some universities had academic support programmes prior to the Civil Rights' campaigns for equal educational opportunities: Santa Clara State University, for example, had instituted academic support of some kind as early as 1962; it was followed by the University of Oregon, which in 1963 implemented an academic support programme for athletes. This special type of programme was started in the Athletics Department, with the purpose of preventing athletes from exclusion by the University as a result of low academic achievement, arising from pre-occupation with sports' activities. In another sense, athletes, who did not meet the ordinary entry requirements into the University of Oregon, were made eligible for entry on the basis of their athletic abilities. Two means of funding distinguish programmes funded under the Equal Opportunity Commission and those falling under the Trio scheme.

The Trio scheme has established many programmes that help disadvantaged students to enter universities. It also helps disadvantaged students with academic survival in

universities. There are three main programmes comprising the Trio scheme namely, the Special Service to Disadvantaged Students programmes, the Upward Bound programme, and the Underdeveloped Universities programme. The Trio scheme was launched in 1960. Programmes that came under this scheme were intended to cater essentially for Black universities but, later on, they included White universities with Black students. Among the first institutions to implement the Trio programmes, was the California State Polytechnic and the University of Pomona in Los Angeles. Other initiatives included the University of Wisconsin Academic Skills Programme. This later became a dual programme, in that both the University Regents and the Carter Administration set aside funds for it. Up to now the Federal Government has allocated more than 100 million US dollars annually to the Trio Scheme. However of late less funding, although never falling beneath the 100 million US dollar mark, has been made available by the Federal Government.

Historically, the Trio programme serves underdeveloped institutions by providing courses in academic skills. It also includes a programme, which is designed to improve the skills of university administrators. This is extended to support for Black staff development programmes. Probably, this initiative is designed to make it difficult for the Federal Administration to curtail the work of the Trio programme, and so most Trio programmes have survived cuts in Federal funding.

2.5 Federal education Acts and their effects on the education of disadvantaged Blacks and other racial minorities

While various structures of the Black leadership hierarchy in the United States, like the Civil Rights' Movement and the Southern Leadership Conference (SLC), play an influential role in decision-making processes that affect the lives of their constituencies (ethnic and racial

minorities), in South Africa channels for influencing decision-making at government level, in favour of the vast majority of disadvantaged students and their communities, are severely limited, to such an extent that no basis exists for comparison between the approaches of the two countries as stated in previous section 2.2. In the formulation of official policy, relating especially to the affairs of minority groups particularly in the field of education and socio-economic advancement, the United States Congress, which is the legislative arm of Government, has, to a large extent, sought to accommodate the aspirations and views of these representative groups. As a result of their influential role, particularly at the Federal level of Government, these groups have often successfully agitated for the implementation of equal educational programmes throughout the Country. Some of these were already in existence, but were intended for the general population without preferential treatment, and were developed and funded by various sources. But those initiated for the improvement of educational achievement for Blacks, derived funding from Federal sources. This was largely as a result of concern for the drop-out and huge failure rates among disadvantaged students, the majority of whom are Black.

The following are the programmes that were introduced in response to the demands made by researchers, social scientists, legislators, members of the Civil Rights' Movement and other interest groups that cherish the aspirations of racial minority groups (Wynn 1977:370-378). As will be noticed, the types of programmes and the manner in which they are formulated clearly suggest that they are intended to bring about socio-economic upliftment of these minorities through improved educational opportunities supported by compensatory educational programmes.

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, Federal funds were used for many school programmes such as "Head Start" and "Follow-Through". The Elementary

and Secondary Education Act required that school districts establish advisory councils, comprising parents and school representatives, who themselves had children of school-going age. These councils were to plan, implement and evaluate the programmes funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The James Coleman Report in 1966 encouraged the implementation of the programmes set up by ESEA. Coleman and his colleagues hoped that through desegregation alone there would be a marked improvement in the academic achievements of disadvantaged students. He regarded as misconstrued the apparently substantial achievement benefits of integrated schools, which were revealed during his previous studies of the problem since subsequent studies found smaller effects, and in some cases none at all. However, by 1975, in a follow-up report, Coleman (1975:75-78) admitted that desegregation alone was insufficient.

In addition, it can be said that ESEA not only stimulated the development of early childhood education and other educational programmes for reducing the under achievement of disadvantaged students, but, in opening higher education to them, contributed to their upward mobility and so helped to eradicate poverty among some Blacks. In conjunction with the National Defence Education Act, ESEA also made grants to schools to encourage extensive usage of programmed instruction texts which had been developed. The two Acts stimulated the development of learning laboratories, which involved a special kind of programmed learning, permitting individualisation of instruction. It is often claimed that these initiatives have resulted in a growing Black middle class in the United States, although research evidence based on evaluation of these programmes is lacking.

The Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 provides more than three hundred dollars for assured loans, part-time employment and equal opportunity grants to each student from a low-income

family. The Adult Literacy Programme is also funded under the Equal Opportunity Act. This Programme was designed to provide basic education for adults who have dropped out of school.

The Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1964 constitutes an attempt to solve the problems related to the education of minority groups. This Act provides guidelines for the desegregation of schools. In many communities the enforcement of these guidelines has been a matter of great difficulty and sharp debate. Federal legislation regarding desegregation of schools was passed without sufficient consensus in the sense that individual states and agencies, which would participate in its implementation, were not adequately involved in the formulation of this policy. In some states it was tacitly approved, while others were explicitly opposed to it. Most communities rejecting the policy showed resentment of the fact that it was not their decision, but was simply imposed by the Federal legislature, as will be seen when discussing strategies used to achieve racial integration under 2.4.3 below.

In 1966 the Adult Education Act (AEA) was passed bringing together several programmes such as the Adult Literacy Programme, the Teacher Corps, (TC) and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Programme, which was funded under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, sometimes known as "war on poverty" legislation. Indeed the Equal Opportunity Act is considered to have enhanced opportunities for the educational advancement of minority groups, particularly the Blacks. "VISTA" established a domestic Peace Corps, in which "volunteers worked with poor people for example in the eroded hills of Appalachia, the dilapidated slums of the city ghettos, in drug rehabilitation programmes, in centres for senior citizens, modest sunbaked hogans of American Indians, and among the shanties shanties of immigrant families, all to help break the dreary legacy of poverty", (Wynn, 1977: 370-371). These programmes were under the

control of a new Federal agency called ACTION. The activities of the programmes were not comprehensively evaluated to determine their impact of pupils' success rate.

Another programme, the Emergency School Assistance Act (ESAA) of 1972 was introduced and by 1976, allocated the sum of two hundred and forty two million US dollars to local districts for various projects related to the schools' desegregation programme. The states, which monitored the spending of their allocations, had to ensure that the money was specifically for, firstly, meeting the special problems growing out of school desegregation, secondly, to encourage voluntary integration and, thirdly, to help overcome the educational disadvantages of minority groups, who had been left isolated in society. Among activities funded under this Act were new curricula for instruction in multiracial classrooms, remedial instruction, guidance and community services to improve race relations in schools and other supporting services. Wynn, (1977:372) states: "ESAA had a rocky record because of court orders withholding federal funds from segregated schools. Evidently the paradox of withholding funds labelled for desegregation assistance from districts that have not been desegregated enough has escaped the courts."

The Bilingual Act of 1968 provided approximately one billion dollars per annum for schools to establish bilingual programmes in English and the native languages of non-English speaking students. It was hoped that this would encourage pride in and knowledge of ancestral cultures, as well as improved English language usage. The effectiveness of this programme has also not been measured on country-wide basis.

Although most programmes for school children were usually funded through ESEA, other monetary sources include those already mentioned, as well as the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, the Vocational Education Act of 1963,

the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Emergency School Aid of 1972. From these sources a variety of programmes from pre-school to tertiary education were authorized by the Federal Government. Schools were encouraged to reduce class size and provide remedial programmes and enrichment experiences as well as training personnel to implement them. The following briefly indicates the types of programmes that were implemented: at schools level, albeit with limited positive effects, since they were not based on any thoroughly researched findings or evaluation. The high failure and drop-out rates persisted as before, despite the new strategies adopted, including the following:

- * Some schools extended the school day, as well as the school year and introduced open classrooms and flexible school timetables so as to make possible tutorial programmes for individual students. As both volunteer and paid tutors were usually Black, they were expected, not only to provide tuition, but also to act as role models, emphasising that Blacks could also attain career success. Unfortunately many volunteers and paid tutors were inadequately trained in didactics and this contributed largely to the failure of these programmes.

- * Curriculum development and curriculum revision programmes were also instituted to meet the cultural needs of disadvantaged students and so included ethnic studies. A flood of new instructional materials, focusing on these disadvantaged minority students, appeared. Increasing emphasis was also placed on the content of bilingual education programmes. Children of Hispanic families were the majority target of bilingual education programmes.

- * Guidance and Counselling programmes included drop-out prevention strategies. The programmes offered a wide range of psychological, social, and

vocational services for disadvantaged students. State social workers assisted in bridging the gap between school and home. In some instances, these programmes were incorporated into regular school programmes, while others were offered in special centres.

2.5.1 Legislation and other strategies to improve Black education

It has been stated that efforts to improve Black education in the United States were largely based on ideological, as well as political grounds. As we have seen, simply assigning Black students to schools, in order to achieve racial integration, did not do much to achieve better educated Blacks. However, quantitative increase in Black enrolment in desegregated schools is worthy of consideration, since:

"College enrollments of Blacks has increased by nearly 100 percent in the past decade. Approximately 20 percent of college-age Blacks are enrolled in colleges, compared with 25 percent of the White population. Approximately 72 percent of Black youths complete high school, compared with 85 percent of White youths. Approximately 3 million Blacks are enrolled in schools with White majorities, an increase of more than 2 million since 1968. The percent of Black students in predominantly White schools is highest in the Southern states where it is approximately 50 percent, compared with the national figure of 36 percent. In the South only 9 percent of Blacks attend all-Black schools, compared with 10 percent for the nation. In the North, 71 percent of Black students attend predominantly Black schools" (Wynn, 1977:20)

Increased Black enrolment, without the mounting of ASP programmes, is of no use in improving the academic achievement of Black students. Increased Black enrolment is no more than a cosmetic change as Wynn concludes from research evidence:

"After reviewing research on the relationship between school desegregation and school achievement of Blacks, two writers concluded that low achievement and racial tensions will not disappear through racial balance in the schools. They urge educators to free themselves of the notion that there is something magical in Whiteness - that, without it, Black or Red or Brown children cannot learn... Black children do not need to attend the same school as White children to learn. Such a premise denies Blacks their humanity" (Ibid.:21)

We have already seen that the problem of Black disadvantaged students had to be solved through other means than integration alone. Although, initially, initiatives leading to racially integrated schooling were received with enthusiasm, there is now cautious optimism about their success. In fact in some states the Brown Decision itself was not popular (Provenzo, 1986:175), notwithstanding its historic significance as a turning point in racial integration in schools. To some extent, it had more symbolic justification than practical relevance for a society that had lived racially juxtaposed for many generations.

While the Federal Government was trying to address the deficiencies of children living in squalid conditions and raised in impoverished socio-economic backgrounds through compensatory education programmes, by the late 1950's and the beginning of the 1960's, Blacks in the United States were as equally concerned about their plight, which was compounded by the persistently high drop-out rate from high schools, colleges and universities. There has been more determination that the solution has to be found in better quality education, but how and where to get it, seems more difficult to resolve.

At this time, there was a resurgence of the search for a new deal, which had been attempted earlier by establishing colleges and universities for Blacks. A number of social scientists and educationists deplored the deterioration of socio-economic conditions in the Black communities, and were

appalled by the worsening gap in the quality of education between urban and peri-urban schools and the dwindling success rate of Black students at universities. Among these scholars was James Conant, whose influential writings drew comparisons in the early 1960's between students from slum schools and those from suburban surroundings. The subject generated so much debate that:

"... interest reached "bandwagon" status, and articles, research studies, and workshops appeared in an endless stream. Only gradually as the decade came to a close did we come to the first stage of wisdom: humble confession of how little we knew about educating the disadvantaged" (Conant, 1961:273)

In the mid-Sixties many educationists called for effective educational intervention programmes to be introduced into the schools, in order to reduce the drop-out rates among Black students. Schools were encouraged to introduce programmes to provide Black children with early learning experiences, which would improve their chances of academic success and would provide the means for upward social mobility.

As earlier indicated ESEA provided the largest programme aimed at aiding specifically elementary and secondary education of disadvantaged children. Since 1967, its funding, to assist local districts to meet the educational deficiencies of poor people through remedial programmes and special counselling programmes, was drastically increased into a billion US dollars on an annual basis. Funds were distributed to school districts on the basis of the number of children, from low-income families, enrolled in the school. Additional special grants were given to both urban and rural districts, that had unusually high concentration of children from poor families, migratory farm workers, and delinquent and neglected children in special state or local schools. The Act also made provision to subsidize the salaries of teachers assigned to schools, with high

concentrations of educationally deprived pupils, and to encourage programmes designed to reduce school drop-outs.

Finally, it became clear that, without strong preparation at elementary school level, the majority of Black students could not succeed in tertiary education. Compensatory education programmes were established to address the needs of disadvantaged Blacks from pre-school to secondary school levels. Notable examples of such programmes are Head Start and Follow Through, which will be briefly discussed and linked to academic support programmes at universities in the United States.

2.5.1.1 Head Start and Follow-Through programmes

A variety of programmes were established for pre-kindergarten and primary schools. It is generally conceded that early childhood education must involve parents, for the mother, especially, should become a teacher of her own child. This may also improve family stability. "Parent-child and family interaction are important influences on the cognitive and school readiness development of children", as research evidence has shown, Ornstein, (1981:430). Head Start attempted to assist disadvantaged children to achieve school readiness. Follow Through concentrated on sustaining and improving such progress as gained through Head Start.

Behind Head Start, Follow Through and other such programmes, was concern for the development of basic language and mathematical skills. Deficiencies in any of these skills has been linked to poor academic achievement. In this regard, it may be noted that ESEA projects were, in most cases, designed to deal with the improvement of reading and language skills, through using various materials, machines, and trained personnel. The failure to recruit the best of trained personnel was, as pointed out earlier, partially the reason for the failure of all these programmes.

In the early Sixties, there was growing concern about the living conditions of people in ghettos and slums, especially as this affected the education of children. In 1965 a number of pre-school programmes were created to cater for children from disadvantaged family backgrounds. These programmes were commonly referred to as "Head Start". The concept derives from their functioning which, as stated in the provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964 (that provided the greatest impetus in assisting poor people educationally), was to give a "head start" to young children from poor homes.

The programmes were, to a large extent, motivated by an awareness that early childhood education experience for children from low-income families were disadvantaged as a result of the lack of resources in their families. In contrast middle-class families had, what is often referred to as a hidden curriculum for their young children at home and pre-school, for example, taking educational excursions, travel, story reading, books, records, toys, discussions, and ubiquitous television sets. This "hidden curriculum" does an effective job of preparing young children for kindergarten.

But children, from impoverished families, suffer from deprivation of opportunities to develop their potential at this critical age of development. These children develop a propensity for low achievement and seem destined to failure even before they begin. In Mid-Sixties, there was recognition that a comprehensive approach to the educational development of disadvantaged students was essential, since the earlier strategies, which were based on preferential treatment alone, that is reverse discrimination, the quota system including affirmative action, could not, on their own improve the pass rates at schools and increase graduation rates at universities. These strategies had to be supplemented by various types of compensatory education

programmes at schools and ASP programmes at universities. Therefore, beginning with Head Start, a wide range of programmes were established to prepare Blacks for successful study careers at high school and university levels.

It was this situation, which Head Start was initiated to remedy. And to do this the activities of Head Start had to be fairly similar to those which characterised good nursery schools. Activities in a typical day of a Head Start programme might include free play, such as digging in a sandbox or looking at picture books, as well as group activities like telling stories or singing. There might also be outdoor exercises that involve playing with large blocks or climbing jungle gyms. In addition there might be occasions for field trips, involving excursions to the zoo or a boat ride. Also important after these activities was a rest period and a meal or snack. Head Start programmes made a variety of activities possible to benefit young children. They were designed to accommodate a limited number of children though (fifteen or twenty in one class only).

Undoubtedly, children could gain in many respects from such programmes, if they were properly conducted and accompanied by appropriate methods and techniques. However, Head Start encountered numerous problems and did not finally fulfill its role, as intended by the legislators. The major problem was that Head Start, as an idea, originated in the Federal Government, and communities were only involved in making it work. Head Start was frequently poorly managed and not sufficiently funded and, hence, did not accomplish the mission for which it was established.

It is of utmost importance that in any programme for educational advancement, the beneficiary community should be involved in all stages of its development. In Head Start, the community was involved only at the implementation stage, when teachers for the programme had to be recruited and placed. The unfortunate consequences of the way in which

Head Start, and other similar programmes were approached, led to the ineffective and inefficient use of resources. Another reason for its failure was the acute shortage of trained personnel for the programmes. Unqualified staff were frequently employed and this precipitated major difficulties for the programmes, as can be seen in the following report, (Wynn, 1977:126-127):

"The shortage of qualified nursery school teachers has forced the use of many lay people with little or no preparation for teaching. Some Head Start programmes try to deal with the children as they would first-graders - teaching the alphabet, regimenting the, and assigning them tasks for which they are not yet ready. When Head Start programs are poorly conceived or poorly handled - and many still are - they may help children to hate school sooner. Many programs are run by non-school agencies that are long on good intentions but short on professional know how. In many cases the objectives of Head Start programs are undefined or poorly defined. Frequently the programs are followed by primary units in the elementary school that fail to accommodate the unique needs, problems, and limitations of disadvantaged children. When this happens, the benefits gained from Head Start programs are soon lost."

Lack of adequate funding was only partly to blame for the failure of Head Start programmes. Some estimates put the total cost each year for maintaining these programmes at 20 billion US dollars, which was a significant amount considering that it was provided by the Federal Government alone.

The compensatory education programmes were modified and some improvements introduced. Among these was the "Follow Through" programmes, which were aimed at linking pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. The reason for this was to ensure that experiences, gained from Head Start and other programmes, would not be lost and that kindergarten and primary levels followed the same purposes, methods and techniques as Head Start.

2.5.1.2 Success and failure of Head Start and Follow-Through programmes

It was mentioned earlier that the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) in 1964 was tantamount to a declaration of war on poverty (as some commentators have summed up the Act). In a nutshell, the Act provided for mechanisms, by way of compensatory education programmes for the low-income groups in the United States, to ensure that strong foundations at pre-kindergarten level were laid and followed through kindergarten, primary, secondary and even college levels. The Act made provision for huge sums of money to be used annually for part-time employment for students from low-income families. Its onslaught against the cycle of poverty in the United States was, also, to be accomplished by supporting college work-study programmes to permit needy youths to earn some money to remain in college (ibid.:370). Each of these categories of need for financial assistance, was assigned a programme for reparation and prevention of negative educational consequences as a result of lack of financial resources by the Federal Government.

In a number of ways, this Act embodied a comprehensive strategy in the onslaught against the cycle of poverty in the United States. Assuming that education provides the key to social and economic advancement, compensatory education programmes would be ideal route by which the disadvantaged might catch up and advance in the meritocratic system.

In the case of these programmes, comprehensive evaluation was not done, and this limited the opportunities for developing them into effective instruments for reducing the high failure and drop-out rates at high school and tertiary levels. It is possible that these programmes were responsible for some gains in IQ scores and that other forms of intellectual achievement, such as increased ability to adjust to higher grade levels, could be attained. But it is not certain to what extent the programmes, that have been

described, were successful in providing disadvantaged pupils with better reasoning and analytical skills, both of which are indispensable for college and university study. Formal reliable evaluation of these programmes is not available and this has given rise to many questions being asked about their effectiveness, as well as their merit, for continued funding. In this regard, Provenzo (1986:180-182) gives us insight into the immensity of the problem:

"A considerable debate has emerged in recent years as to how effective compensatory education has been in closing the gap between the disadvantaged and the privileged in the United States. It has been argued that the public schools are middle-class and upper-class institutions that automatically place the poor at a tremendous disadvantage. Early research on compensatory education has suggested that disadvantaged children achieved little sustained gain in these programmes. However, more recent longitudinal studies suggest these programmes may have been much more successful than was at first realized."

While, on the one hand, the strength of compensatory education programmes lies in factors such as substantial Federal funding and a well-resourced infrastructure in terms of personnel employed, though not trained adequately, and many facilities, the tragedy that continuously besieges these programmes, mainly Head Start and Follow Through, is that there has been no regular and consistent evaluation of their activities. Most frequently evaluation that has been undertaken seems to cover one or more of the following objectives: to provide information to funders for continued support or expansion of the programme; to provide justification to officials for the continuation or termination of a particular programme; or merely to compile information for record purposes. As the type of information required, for these goals, is essentially judgmental in nature, the most common approach to evaluation was tended to assume summative forms. The summative approach is known for its lack of concern with the developmental aspects of the programme itself, in the sense that it is, to a large

extent, detached from the immediate objectives of those concerned with improving the capacity of programmes (Stake, 1986:90) to deal with the deficiencies of disadvantaged students. On these grounds, summative evaluation should be used with great circumspection in interventions, such as ASP that is concerned with building the capacity of programmes to deal with disadvantages of students.

In this sense, the question of reliable evaluation causes much controversy. It should be noted that what Provenzo calls recent longitudinal studies actually refers to post facto surveys that are often intended to placate anxious sponsors by implying that students stand to lose something if programmes are discontinued. As this Study is concerned with the importance and relevance of evaluation for the efficiency and effectiveness of ASPs, the appropriateness of an evaluation strategy is extremely important.

So far the writer has examined the types of strategies introduced in the early 1960's, which were intended to enable disadvantaged students, mostly Black, in the United States, to cope with the open opportunity structure, in which the individual is expected to be sufficiently prepared for careers in tertiary education and employment. It has been the writer's observation that much as these strategies had sensible intentions, the approaches adopted in implementing them, contributed to their lack of success. What the programmes did not address are the differences in the schools themselves, which also contributed to the failure of Black students.

Another aspect to investigate is the readiness of the institution to deal with pupils/students' disadvantages. Black students, although inadequately ready for schooling and university education, found difficulties with an inadequately prepared education system to deal with their disadvantages. In this regard, parallels can be drawn with South Africa. Just as the idea, of laying all the blame with

the student for educational deficiencies has prevailed, in the United States, during the initial phase of compensatory education programmes (Head Start, ESEA, and Follow Through), which promoted deficit models of educational intervention, the same applies to South African ASPs. During the initial phase of South African ASP, greater emphasis has been placed on correcting defects of the students and overlooking the defects that might exist within the university itself. For instance in the manner that lecturers handle the problems of disadvantaged students, for which they are often not trained to address, and questions relating to curriculum development are approached.

It is important to realise that the assumptions made in designing and planning the implementation of the programme as well as what requires remediation, determines, to a large extent, theoretical constructs that will underpin the actual work of remediation. For example, if the assumption is that it is the pupils in the schools and students in universities, whose deficiencies must be remedied, special programmes will be organised to do so, that is remedy those deficiencies that have been identified and hopefully the problem disappears. In order not to cause disruption to the continuation and routine of the teaching/learning, the remediation process is conducted separately, often by "specialists" in remedial work, usually, at a venue located outside the so-called normal stream of students. Certainly, this arrangement confirms what the organisers of the remediation process think about deficient students, namely that the fault has been found with them and the education system must be exonerated from any blame for their disadvantages. Soon after the completion of the remedial process, students are returned to the normal stream with the expectation that they will cope with its academic requirements. What is most significant is that the system remains unchanged.

Definitely, this deficit model of educational intervention is characterised not only by its exoneration of the system from any defects but also by permitting institutional resistance to change. The alternative approach, to which this Study subscribes is based on the belief that, it is impossible to reach a lasting solution to the problem without altering the situation in which disadvantages occur and are identified. Apparently, to sustain the process of developing individuals, who are capable, confident and independent learner, the two, seemingly diametrically opposed, approaches can be merged into one, that fosters transformation of the teaching and learning environment. This can be done, effectively through the holistic strategy for ASP efficiency and effectiveness, which is outlined in the final Chapter of this study.

Opinions also differ as to when compensatory education programmes should be introduced for the greatest benefit of black students. While some have advocated the introduction of these programmes in high schools, others, whose notions of educational intervention are based on Piaget's two fundamental characteristics of students' stages of learning and cognitive development [organisation and adaptation] (Pulliam, 1982:149) have suggested that they stand a better chance of success if they are introduced much earlier in the student's educational career. Perhaps the solution lies in a pragmatic approach, whereby the decision is based on the immensity of the problem and factors contributing to its occurrence. As a guiding principle, the sooner the intervention takes place, after the problem is identified, the better for its mediation.

2.5.2 Assessment of compensatory education programmes

For a long time Blacks were concerned about their plight which was compounded by the persistently high drop-out rate at high school, college and university levels. There was determination that the solution had to be found in better

quality education, but how and where to get it, seemed more difficult to resolve. Among those who agitated for a scientific assessment of the problem was James Conant, who encouraged extensive research on the subject of educational disadvantages and agitated for for the upgrading of schools in slum areas and greater expenditure on the educational resources of less able students.

Subsequent to these appeals, the needs of disadvantaged students were reflected in reports such as those compiled by the: National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders established in 1967, National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children of 1969, President's Commission on School Finance of 1972, and Brooking's Report on Setting National Priorities of 1973.

In the Seventies Wynn, (1977) and others pointed to the dangers of simply desegregating schools, and mending the cracks in the school wall, without paying any attention to the content of what was taught in school. He pleaded for more attention to be directed at the education system and the teaching process. He saw many deficiencies in a school system, which tended to entrench disadvantage. On schooling he wrote:

"Recent studies indicate that these effects of early life are neither permanent nor irreversible. Until recently, academic weaknesses of disadvantaged children in school were attributed largely to the cultural deprivation theory. Although cultural deprivation is a contributing factor, more recent thought indicates that the primary factor is the limitation of the schools found in culturally deprived neighbourhoods. The orientation of the school's teachers, students, and curriculum to middle-class values and products may seem unreal and meaningless to disadvantaged children from lower-class families... Handicapped by inadequate language development, disadvantaged children have difficulty in learning to learn at school under conventional instruction. Their crowded homes often

fail to provide a quiet and convenient place for study. Often they are malnourished and lack adequate medical care. If their parents and older siblings are under-educated, they lack exemplars of school success" (Wynn et al. 1977:101).

The capacity of compensatory education programmes and ASPs to deal with the problems of disadvantaged students in the United States could have significantly increased, if the warnings of educationists, including Conant and Wynn, were heeded strongly. Instead, the randomly executed research, on the effectiveness of programmes and the overemphasis on the summative function of evaluation, has inhibited the development of the ASP field. But the strength of United States ASP lies in massive funding for infrastructure and research reports. In contrast, the South African context for ASP lacks the advantages of the massive research that has been done on American ASPs. There is still an extensive amount of work that must be done to bring local ASPs to the same level as those in the United States. The most serious disadvantage of South African ASPs is the total lack of commitment from the Government to fund ASPs. Hopefully, a future Government will learn a lesson from the American experience and emulate the positive aspects of state involvement in providing an academic support system for the education of disadvantaged communities. ASPs, themselves, have the opportunity to be developed even at an accelerated rate, provided the choice of evaluation strategy is informed by the evident inadequacies of the summative function. Nevo, (1986:17) demonstrates different ways in which the formative function of evaluation serves the purpose of "improvement and development of an ongoing activity... or programme."

2.5.3 The failure of compensatory education programmes to deal with the real issues affecting disadvantaged students

In addition to a deficient life environment, Black students, as Conant (ibid.) has pointed out, are the victims of poor

teaching. Schooling for American Blacks is still grossly inadequate in preparing them for tertiary education. In public schools many factors contribute to their difficulties in learning. Wynn distinguished three problems which the school does not adequately address, namely, the failure to match teaching method to children's learning styles, the failure to use material that is related to their knowledge or background of experience and the failure to identify and use materials and teaching methods that engage feelings. These deficiencies affect both White and Black children in the schooling system.

The real issues that contributed to the failure of compensatory education, as Wynn has identified them, relate to what the education system and the teachers it employs can do to alleviate the problems of disadvantaged students. In South Africa, where the vast majority of disadvantaged students are faced with the real possibility of failure and exclusion from university, the choices are limited especially by the huge backlog in the provision of compensatory education at schools level as well as the increasing demand by the economy for trained personnel, particularly, at leadership ranks of business, commerce, and industry. There are many backlogs to be cleared by providing African graduates with leadership skills in all professional fields. Thus, for South African ASPs, it is a matter of a race against time. While in future involvement of the Government will be indispensable for the expansion of ASP services at tertiary level, on the one hand, a more direct role in improving the quality of education and pass rates in schools also awaits immediate Government intervention.

No Government or ASP that is seriously concerned about the future prospects of the economy can be oblivious of the negative consequences of high unemployment and skills crisis such as South Africa is currently experiencing. The situation is most likely to reach worse crisis proportions, if left to its chances. It is the community of ASPs that

bear the responsibility of awakening the Government to the realities of the impending disaster. However, this responsibility can be efficiently carried out if research on ASP is constantly carried out in order to be able confront the Government with sufficiently researched facts and information with clear guidelines for proposed plans of action and recommendations on appropriate strategies.

In the next section the ways in which attempts are made to deal with deficiencies in the schooling of Black students will be examined, as well as how effective schooling can adequately be provided to prepare disadvantaged students for higher education.

2.6 Strategies to deal with inadequate schooling

As mentioned earlier, the Black community believed that schools should expand operations to include enrichment of the social and cultural experiences of their children to make up for the barrenness of their home environments. Therefore, Black children should be given more than the usual compensatory programmes. In addition the curriculum should address some of the real problems they would be faced with in their lives. Included should be programmes which considered Black aspirations. The relation between education and life had long ago been advocated by John Dewey, who stressed the importance of the five steps (activity, problem, data gathering, formation of a hypothesis, and testing) in the learning process (Pulliam, 1982:143) but was now revived for Black children. However, vast resources were required to implement this approach. This was not available from the Black community.

As far as teachers are concerned, their training and attitude play a vital role in ensuring that the learning process is successful. The teacher should be conversant with the most up to date methods of imparting knowledge and facilitating learning. In short, teachers have to be helped

to meet disadvantaged students on their home ground. They should do this not by condescending to students or compromising standards. On the contrary, standards can be maintained, but made attainable to those who need assistance to reach them. It is also important to develop teaching methods that are compatible with the often unique learning styles of disadvantaged students. However, the prerequisite for accomplishing such a task is to research different learning and teaching styles, for which few Black teachers are adequately prepared. Criteria developed for ASP evaluation deal with these issues in greater detail in chapter 5.

Concerning compensatory education, parents should be regarded as co-partners with teachers and students for the learning process to be successful. It is necessary that measures are taken to make parents satisfactorily aware of their crucial role in the education of their children. Studies have shown that the family environment and parental involvement, in particular, is the bedrock of educational experiences for children. Nonetheless, many of these experiences remain informal and sometimes neglected. When the more formal education, initiated by teachers on parents' behalf, attempts to continue the learning process, supposedly, commenced by parents, this does not imply a complete take-over of the education process by teachers, nor does it suggest that parents must now abandon their role. Apparently, part of the failure of compensatory programmes and the high drop-out rate from school among Black children is caused by the indifferent attitude of parents.

The education system, particularly, in South African, where the majority of the schooling population belong to the disadvantaged sector of society (both educationally and socio-economically) needs to consider ways of raising the consciousness of parents to this responsibility. The American experience has revealed that, part of the failure of compensatory education can be directly linked to the

passive role of Black parents towards the education of their children. In 1983 Stixney (1983:182) carried out research on the subject and came up with the conclusion that despite its inadequacies and imperfections, compensatory education is at least a serious attempt to address the problem of educational disadvantages.

Curriculum development is another important aspect, that should be addressed, if the solution to the ineffectiveness of compensatory education has to be found. Suffice to add that many schools, as a result of the Civil Rights Movement, incorporated some elements of Afro-American orientation in their programmes. Such a development came from the realization that Blacks were, in fact, culturally different from Whites and consequently, Black students were vulnerable, meaning that they became highly at risk not to succeed in their subjects, if the schools reflected a curriculum based on White norms and cultural values. The content of the curriculum should ensure that the cultural background of Black students is not ignored, as this could cause educational disabilities, that could not be remedied, even by the best of compensatory programmes.

As recently as the Seventies and Eighties, other strategies have been tried, including those that are based on the requirements of a multi-ethnic society, especially focusing on an Afro-American orientation to education. For example, Black children, including secondary school pupils were to be taught subjects like history, music, drama in the context of their African heritage, as a people who came out of Africa.

There have been constant endeavours by some Black educators to reject racial integration in schools and to emphasize Black cultural norms and values, build self-esteem and promote the rewards of responsible behaviour, as exemplified in the Bell Middle School, which was especially created for Black boys in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Although some have reacted with scepticism to the concept of aiming educational

programmes at people of one race, most people now appear willing to accept almost any programme that may improve the desperate situation of Black boys, who have been identified as having "much more trouble in schools than Black girls because of the common absence of the father at home and because of the lure of gangs" (New York Times, September 30, 1990:1). The statistical figures and facts indicate that nearly one in four Black American men in their 20's is in jail, on probation or parole, while one in five, in that age group, is in college and that fewer than 20% of Black male students in Milwaukee schools maintain a C average or better. In addition, Black boys accounted for 50% of all school suspensions in 1989 in Milwaukee and an alternative had to be found:

"In seeking a remedy, a handful of schools around the country have provided classes tailored for Black boys. Other schools have stressed integrating the experiences and contributions of Blacks into the curriculum in what they call an "Afro-centric approach" (New York Times, September 30, 1990 :18, column 4).

The Milwaukee project, for rescuing Black education, seems to be receiving increasing support among Black educators and community leaders. If racial integration in schools, which busing sought to facilitate, could not resolve Black educational disadvantages, other means have to be explored. The success of this project, whose impact is still too early to assess, since it has been in existence for approximately five years, may have tremendous implications for Black tertiary education. In a way, it could be a vindication for Booker T Washington's idea for establishing Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881, though, certainly not to relegate Blacks "to a second-rate citizenship that deferred to the White society" Provenzo, (1986:174).

However, it is perhaps too early to judge the extent to which these initiatives have had a positive impact. Neither is there sufficient information on the degree to which

modifications in this regard have taken place in the curriculum.

To conclude, White-oriented curriculum development and schooling have resulted in the lack of success of compensatory education and schooling. Since all compensatory programmes, are geared towards adequately preparing students, to succeed in tertiary education, their effectiveness and success should be measured by reduction in failure and drop-out rates at college and university level.

The biggest problem may be in two areas. Firstly, it is possible that the programmes designed to help disadvantaged students are inadequate to cope with their problems. Secondly, these programmes may be inadequate because they have not been properly researched and their strengths and weaknesses exposed.

Among the main factors that have strong potential to contribute to the failure of compensatory education programmes, can be included students' socio-economic conditions at home. Although arising outside the school environment, this remains a crucial factor in determining the success of compensatory education. If, for example, financial resources are inadequate to pay for increase in electricity bills resulting from long hours of study at home a student's progress at school will suffer. When overcrowding at home makes it impossible to secure space for study, school performance is bound to be affected. Similarly, if parents show no interest in the student's school work, such indifference will influence, the student's attitude to schooling. The starting point, is the awareness of the parents of their responsibility to contribute to the success of their children at school or tertiary institution.

Black universities were, in many ways, ill equipped to help underprepared students. Once integration was possible Black students preferred to attend previous White universities,

and so Black institutions suffered financially and were unable to offer ASP programmes.

White universities and colleges, attempting to respond to the needs of academically disadvantaged students, also encountered enormous problems. In the past three decades most of them have relied heavily on Government funds to operate the necessary programmes. But many of these merely supplied "band aid" help. The real problem, lay in inadequate preparation for university or college studies and should have been addressed in the schools.

In the next Section the ways in which universities and colleges endeavoured to cope with the problem of Black disadvantaged students will be considered.

2.6.1 Existing special programmes for disadvantaged students in postsecondary education

A close examination of current ASPs, under the auspices of the Division of Student Services of the United States Department of Education, follows. This Division administers a wide range of programmes at universities and other tertiary institutions. Originally, there were three special programmes, which were established in the 1960's, Upward Bound (UB) established in terms of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act and is the oldest of the programmes for disadvantaged students at tertiary institutions, followed by Talent Search (TS), which was created by the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Special Services for Disadvantaged Students (now called Student Support Services Programme (SSS) was added in 1968 by the Higher Education Amendments to complete the set commonly referred to as the TRIO programmes.

In subsequent years, three more programmes were added, but the "TRIO" acronym remained. These came in the following sequence: the Educational Opportunity Centers was introduced

in terms of the Higher Education Act Amendments in 1972 as the fourth programme; the Training Programme for Special Programmes Staff and Leadership Personnel became the fifth programme created by the Education Amendments of 1976; the sixth programme known as the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Programme was authorised by the Higher Education Amendments of 1986, for which funds were first allocated in 1989.

2.6.1.1 Mission Statement of the TRIO programmes

The goals of the TRIO programmes are more precisely formulated than those for compensatory education programmes. The document issued by the Division of Student Services in the United States Department of Education in 1991 states:

"The primary purpose of the Trio programs is to prepare disadvantaged persons for successful entry into, retention, and completion of postsecondary education. In general, these programs identify low-income and first generation or (potential first generation, meaning intending to attend at college or university for the first time) university or college students who show potential for success and provide them with encouragement, support, and assistance. TRIO services are designed to improve performance, increase student motivation, and facilitate transitions from one level of education to the next" (Leggett, 1991:n.p.).

2.6.1.2 Upward Bound

The programme provides services, that attempt to generate skills and necessary motivation for success at tertiary level among socio-economically disadvantaged groups, mostly, minority ethnic groups, who are enrolled in high school or veterans preparing for entry into university or college.

Participants in this programme are eligible on basis of having completed the eighth grade and within the age range of between 13 and 19, with the exception of veterans who may

join at any age. This programme targets those enrolled in high school and planning to proceed to university. Participants from low-income groups must comprise two-thirds of intake for the programme. One-third must be selected either from low-income groups. To be selected, one is required to submit recommendations from teachers, counsellors, and agencies for social services.

The types of services offered by this programme include: tutorials, special science courses, instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, cultural events, exposure to career options for proportionate representation of disadvantaged groups on affirmative action grounds, administering university or college admissions tests, personal counselling, and information on financial aid. Upward Bound is Federally funded and was sponsored by \$106,005,267 US dollars for the academic year 1990-1991.

Upward Bound offices are situated in universities and colleges, public service agencies, non-governmental organisations and secondary schools, in exceptional cases.

2.6.1.3 Talent Search

This programme identifies disadvantaged youth, who have potential for tertiary education. It offers them encouragement to continue and succeed at high school and proceed to university or college. It also searches for school drop-outs and encourages them to return to school.

Criteria for participation in this programme include the age range of between 12 and 27 and successful completion of the sixth grade. Participants in any project must be comprised of the majority of the low-income group category. For the 1990-1991 academic year, the programme received funds amounting to \$27,034,092 US dollars.

The range of services provided Talent Search covers: academic, financial and personal counselling; exploring careers and aptitude assessment; assistance with re-entry to high school, university or college; information on postsecondary education and financial aid; providing special activities focused on pupils in seventh and eighth grades, and administers university or college admissions tests.

2.6.1.4 Student Support Services

Services rendered by the programme seek to enhance the potential of disadvantaged students for successfully completing study programmes in which they are registered at university. Those selected to participate in the programme must be registered students at university or college, in which the programme is established. Participants are required to show that they deserve academic support. As in other TRIO programmes, two-thirds of the participants must be drawn from low-income groups or physically disabled.

The programme also receives Federal funding, and was allocated \$90,898,762 US dollars for the academic year 1990-1991 to sponsor the following projects: assistance in securing admissions and obtaining financial aid to register at four-year institutions as well as additional funding for two-year institutions, graduate and professional programmes; information on further educational opportunities; academic, financial and personal counselling; tutorial services; and instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, and other necessary courses for success at tertiary institutions.

2.6.1.5 Educational Opportunities Centres and the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program

The Educational Opportunities Centres programme makes information available to adults who want to enter or continue a study programme at postsecondary level. In order

to participate in the programme, the student has to reside in the area served by the programme. As in all current ASP programmes, the majority of the students should come from low-income groups aged 19 or above for whom the services of the programme are needed to pursue tertiary education. Services provided by the programme include: information on opportunities available for postsecondary study; providing assistance in completing applications for university or college admissions, testing and financial aid; counselling on academic, financial and personal matters; co-ordination of career exploration and aptitude assessment in liaison with neighbouring tertiary institutions, non-governmental organisations and secondary schools, in exceptional instances.

For the academic year 1990-1991, the programme was allocated \$11,901,990 US dollars.

The goals and activities of the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Programme are similar to those of the Educational Opportunities Centres. The distinction exists mainly on the scope of the programmes. While, the Centres focus on the needs of students during undergraduate study, the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Programme concentrates on developing research skills for those socio-economically disadvantaged students who are under-represented in graduate study programmes. The latter programme was allocated \$3,000,000 US dollars for the 1990-1991 academic year.

The outlines of the four programmes indicated several ways in which overlaps between the programmes exist. For example, with the exception of Upward Bound, which strictly deals with problems of the disadvantaged at school level, three provide ASP services of one sort or another to students at tertiary levels of study. It is this lack of clearly distinguishable areas of responsibility that, perhaps, has led to the inefficiency in many of ASP programmes in the

United States. Such inefficiency has the potential of minimising the impact of the programmes, in many respects. For example, the duplication of resources used (finance, materials and personnel) can result in inability to reach the highest possible number of the targeted disadvantaged students within the shortest possible time.

Following indications drawn from the experiences of South African universities, with the initial phase of ASPs, possibilities for inefficiencies abound considering the haphazard way in which programmes were established within the constraints of scarce resources. In Chapter 3, the information collected from surveyed institutions will show if this estimation is the correct one. It should also be possible to contrast the funding status support system for South African ASPs with the American Federal Government's direct involvement in the work of ASP, especially in relation to funding.

With reference to the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), we find that its ASPs were introduced, largely, as a result of the Carnegie Commission Recommendations in 1974, which urged that more programmes be established to effectively administer academic support to disadvantaged students. By the end of 1980 most universities, admitting Black students either, had EOC or Trio programmes or some combination of these.

2.7 An evaluation of special programmes: implications for South African ASPs

Undoubtedly, the setting up of ASPs on a much broader basis, as envisaged by the EOC, was in direct response to various campaigns for the upgrading of educational achievement for Blacks and other racial minorities through enhancement of their opportunity for success, especially in tertiary education. In the forefront in these campaigns were the Civil Rights' movement and the Southern Leadership

Conference (SLC), which also agitated for the introduction of Afro-American studies in universities. Subsequently, programmes were designed and implemented to encourage cultural awareness among Black students.

In the beginning, universities set up EOC offices on campus in order to administer Federal funds, which assist disadvantaged students. EOC programmes were largely designed to provide support during the First Year at college or university and so most universities introduced Bridging Year programmes which were sometimes linked to the Summer Pre-University Orientation programme, which also included Study Skills Improvement. To a large extent, ASP programmes were not incorporated into mainstream academic activities in individual faculties. These programmes often operated from units that were associated with student counselling centres for example, Harvard University's Bureau for Study Counsel Source. But many difficulties were encountered in attempting to make the programmes sustainable outside Faculties. Where ASP Units were set up alongside university Departments, it became difficult to maintain funding resources for them and the Federal Government intervened by introducing incentives for their incorporation into academic mainstream activities: for example the Santiago University has incorporated its ASP programmes into its mainstream faculties. After thirty years of existence these programmes continue to operate just like any ordinary departmental programme or course.

ASPs that remained separate, were easy victims of cuts in Federal or state aid, in terms of the provisions of policy guidelines for the administration of EOC sponsored programmes. These measures, which included cuts in aid, were taken to avert the risk of their treatment as being external to the mainstream academic activities of the institution. This had parlous consequences for assistance to disadvantaged students. While recognising the concerns of the legislature in taking such drastic action as termination of funds, there are alternative approaches to those that

endanger the continued academic support of disadvantaged students. Ideally, the views of communities and students themselves, who are directly affected by such decisions, should be sought and considered when decisions are made to minimize negative effects.

In establishing similar initiatives, South African universities have to watch against allowing such programmes to become marginalised, that is, regarded and treated as peripheral to mainstream activities of the university. The United States experience with ASPs has proved that the marginal status to which they tended to be relegated by mainstream faculties, posed a serious impediment to the realisation of what they were intended to achieve.

However the most serious disadvantage for ASPs in South Africa is the persistent lack of ASP recognition by the Government. The absence of co-operation between the South African Government and political groupings, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs) representing the educational aspirations of Black people, caused the lack of appreciation for the needs of disadvantaged students from the disenfranchised Black communities. Something similar to a forum such as the Black Caucus of the United States Congress, which continually consults with the NAACP, representatives of civil rights organisations and other political organisations, is long overdue for South Africa. The important pre-condition for successful intervention of such organisation is the existence of a government which is representative of South Africa's Black majority.

Many times Government officials have consistently displayed its hostile attitude towards the influx of Blacks into predominantly White universities. At various stages, universities have been discouraged from admitting students who are unlikely to succeed in their academic programmes. When addressing the annual conference of Transvaal Chamber of Industries in October 1986, the Minister of the DET Dr

Gerrit Viljoen announced that the Government was considering "a new subsidy formula that would make universities more selective in admitting students. The current system placed too much emphasis on student numbers, which resulted in universities admitting students who did not have a reasonable chance of success." Race Relations Survey (1986:463). On this point there is clearly no similarity between United States and South African ASPs. In the United States they were established as a result of the Federal Government intervention on behalf of disadvantaged students, while the South African Government has discouraged even the admission of disadvantaged students to predominantly White universities.

In South Africa it is the private sector that provides funding to launch and maintain ASPs. As a direct consequence of Government threats, referred to above, to prohibit the admission of disadvantaged students to predominantly White universities, ASPs have suffered various setbacks. Most importantly, ASPs are unable to meet all challenges involved in providing effective and efficient ASP services to the students. As shown in the previous Chapter, ASP Units could hardly afford to employ full-time staff to launch the programmes. If this lack of Government involvement in ASP initiatives, which are presented in Chapter 3 is manifestly, confirmed there is high probability that the programmes will continue being ineffective, since, without substantial funding by the Government, ASP sustainability is in jeopardy. The initial ASP phase, at studied universities, has proved that the lack of funds made the installation of essential services difficult and prevented employment of adequate staff to perform essential services. With barely adequate staff hired to implement the programmes, it is highly unlikely that sufficient funding can be found to perform research and evaluation tasks. It is a recognised fact that, without research and evaluation of ASP functions, the absence of standards for the effective and efficient

implementation of programmes will continue to be a
limitations that prevent the maturation of ASP.

2.8 Conclusion

The United States, has a long history of racially segregated institutions of higher education. In the case of Whites, there have been many instances of privately funded colleges and universities. On the other hand, funds have seldom been made available by the private sector to cater for the establishment of Black colleges or universities. As a result, enormous disparities have become an integral part of the "separate but equal" system of higher education. But the system has thus not been so equal in qualitative terms.

In directly challenging the Principle of "separate but equal", in Sweatt versus Painter in 1950, a Black student alleged that instruction at the Texas State Law School, which was established solely for Blacks, was inferior when compared with the University of Texas Law School, to which the applicant had been denied admission on basis of his colour (Pulliam, 1982:189). The complaint marked the beginning of open protest against segregated education and, when this was brought to the attention of the Supreme Court, it was recognised that the law deprived certain sectors of the population equal rights. A unanimous decision was reached whereby the White law School was ordered to admit the Black student. At least, in practice, the court acknowledged the inadequacies of Black education. This landmark decision indicated that it was virtually impossible to comply with the formula known as "separate but equal" which was, for practical purposes, inconsistent with the spirit of the Fourteenth Amendment. Provenzo (1986:174) recounts numerous complaints against segregation in public schools, leading to the well known Brown Decision of 1954, in which the Court agreed that segregation could be construed as depriving Black students equal opportunity for education.

The Court held that the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment prohibited state law from requiring the operation of racially segregated, dual school systems of public education and requires that the system be converted into a unitary, non-racial system. In holding this view the Court stressed that segregation inevitably stigmatizes Black children.

However, circumventions and delays in desegregating educational institutions did not stop, when the Court decisions were pronounced. One particular example is the University of Alabama, which denied entry to a Black student in 1956. In 1962 violent protests erupted, as a result of the admission of a Black student to the University of Mississippi. The Mississippi Incident illustrates that there were still deep seated problems of integration in higher education in the Country. The exclusion of Blacks from the best known tertiary institutions was perhaps influenced by the popular Essentialist approach, which favoured gifted students, among whom, because of their long history of disadvantage, there were few Blacks. Until 1960 United States educators were more concerned with the maintenance of high academic standards and excellence in scientific subjects, particularly, after the successful launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957 (Pulliam, 1982:164). After 1968 the pendulum swung away from the conservative approach to, Progressivism which favoured the aspirations of Blacks.

Education has always been regarded by Blacks as the best way of advancing the Black population, and, attempts were made to redress disadvantages at the schooling level as well as postsecondary education level. Some of the means, by which the imbalances between Whites and Blacks, in terms representation, at universities, colleges, and superior positions in the work place, could be redressed, was reverse discrimination together with the quota system, affirmative action, and ASP programmes. The main obstacles that prevented early initiatives from redressing the imbalances

effectively were the inefficiencies in the system itself, which has grown into a huge bureaucratic machinery with real possibilities for duplication of programmes and wastage of resources. Lack regular and properly implemented evaluation has also inhibited the attainment of ASP objectives. These trends have enormous implications for ASP programmes in South Africa which seek to emulate what the United States has to offer in order to establish efficient and effective services.

Summary

The idea of preferential treatment in the United States is based on attempts to correct perceived previous injustices in terms of opportunities for access to education and other resources for socio-economic advancement and social status through a series of interventions including reverse discrimination, quota system, affirmative action and ASP programmes. When reverse discrimination, which created programmes that were specially designed for Black students, encountered difficulties in obtaining the necessary resources, for example, trained teachers and relevant materials to do the work, resulting in the unabating failure and drop-out rate, an alternative solution had to be found.

A different strategy was found in the quota system, which reserved places for disadvantaged Blacks in public schools, universities and Medical Schools benefitting from Federal funds. White flight from integrated schools and widespread protests against integration, as well as numerous complaints that were adjudicated by the Courts on grounds that the system constituted a violation of individual rights, in terms of the Fourteenth Amendment, made the scheme unpopular and frustrated all attempts to implement it. In the meantime, disadvantaged students continued to fail and drop-out of schools and universities.

As with reverse discrimination and the quota system, affirmative action, which includes ASP programmes, has been imposed on the public of the United States as yet another strategy to resolve the high failure rate. The Federal Government, in its attempts to satisfy the aspirations of disadvantaged racial minorities, has tended to hastily formulate ASP programmes, without adequate consultation with states, institutions and communities concerned. The exclusion, in the decision-making process, of important participants whose co-operation is required for successful implementation of the programmes has retarded much progress in the ASP field. In spite of ASP intervention at universities in which the TRIO programmes have been established, large numbers of disadvantaged students are excluded each, on grounds of unsatisfactory academic performance. Apparently ASP still remains aloof of the real needs of the majority of disadvantaged students. Major problems seem to centre around the inaccessibility of ASP services to many students who desperately need them to succeed in their studies. The problem is compounded by the paucity of evaluation, which is oriented towards the improvement of the functioning of the programmes. The missing link between ASP practice and formative evaluation function, has, most probably contributed to the immense limitations of ASP in the United States.

In Chapter 3 different settings of ASP in the South African scene are explored to identify common characteristics among the programmes and to highlight differences of approach. Each institution develops programmes it finds suitable for the needs of its students. The speed with which ASPs were set up may not have allowed much discretion in the formulation of programmes and the selection of strategies to implement them. The presentation of accumulated data from the various sources will reveal the actual situation as pertains to the period between 1980, which is the inception date of ASPs at predominantly White universities in South Africa and 1992 the closing date for this investigation.

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CHAPTER 3

Review of Academic Support Programmes at selected South African universities

3.1 Introduction

In the foregoing chapter we looked at the United States' experience with inadequate schooling and some strategies for dealing with it. We turn now to the South African experience.

Inadequacies in Black schooling in South Africa are more severe as, for more than four decades, the legacy of apartheid schooling has aggravated the deteriorating state of Black education. Implications for tertiary education have been overwhelming as increasing numbers of inadequately prepared students enter universities and other tertiary institutions in South Africa.

In Chapter 1, it was mentioned that academic support programmes exist at the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Natal, and the University of Cape Town. Rhodes University is included in this study, although its initiative is referred to as an "Academic Skills Programme", which means that it is confined to providing technical skills for coping with academic work. The Rhodes University's approach to ASP is distinguished by a number of peculiarities, which include adherence exclusively to the skills tutoring scheme outside course content.

The other three surveyed universities provide subject-based tutoring, which relates academic skills to a particular subject while actually teaching those aspects of the course in which students experience difficulties. These include listening, reading, note-taking, critical and analytical

reasoning-skills, which disadvantaged students are required to use in their courses. We will be looking at how well these ASP programmes have fared over the years. Our overall intention is to use the United States' experience, together with the South African experience, so as to derive criteria for the evaluation of both existing and future academic support programmes.

3.2 Reasons for selecting the four South African universities

The Universities of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Natal, and Rhodes have been selected for the following reasons: firstly, they were the first to recognise the inability of disadvantaged students to cope with university study and started doing something about it in order to address the problem of the high failure and drop-out rate among these students. Secondly, the strategies they implemented to remedy the situation were two-pronged in that, while attempting to bridge the gap between school and university, they also sought to reduce the high failure rate that was prevalent among disadvantaged students. Thirdly, they strove to make their support programmes go beyond the mere offering of academic survival skills, such as study/reasoning skills and reading/notetaking skills. Finally, these universities are expected to have conducted some evaluation of the programmes they mounted. In the course of the review of ASP activities in these universities, it will be possible to find out which institutions have evaluated their ASPs and in what manner the evaluation process was executed.

Evaluation is the means by which the success of the programme towards achieving its goals can be determined, since "since it is part of all serious scientific activities" Scriven (1986:58). Having learned from the weaknesses of American ASPs, including neglect of regular evaluation and reliance on the summative approach to evaluation which may not be appropriate for the evaluation

of ASP programmes. Among the existing definitions of evaluation, the common belief is that evaluation reveals the value or worth of something for individuals or groups. Stake and Denny (1969:370) recognise that the function of evaluation pervades the broad spectrum of activities when they view it as:

"...the discovery of the nature and worth of something... we may evaluate students, teachers, curriculums, administrators, systems, programs and nations. The purposes of evaluation may be many, but always evaluation attempts to describe something and to indicate its perceived merits and shortcomings... Evaluation is not a search for cause and effect, an inventory of present status, or a prediction of future success. It is something of all these but only as they contribute to understanding substance, function and worth."

It is with this notion of accountability in evaluation practice that researchers now stress the need to make evaluation responsive to the needs of those it serves, as Kirkup (1986:70) emphasises, thus:

"Responsive evaluation is an iterative process by which the evaluator presents and represents her findings to the various clients, each time attempting to increase their understanding of the issue and her understanding of their needs."

The evaluation of ASPs in United States is not sufficiently grasped in terms of accountability to the clients of the programmes. It is, almost exclusively, approach as an instrument to be used by decision-makers or to sway their decisions when judging the worth of programmes. It is, essentially, this manner of approach which has detracted from the value of ASP evaluation for clients of ASP services. This background will assist to determine the use-value of ASP evaluation in South Africa. We turn to an analytical description of ASPs offered by the universities mentioned above.

3.2.1 University of the Witwatersrand

It was important to inform ASP staff at the University of the Witwatersrand about the dissertation and the necessity to establish communication links so that essential information could be communicated for the benefit of Wits ASP and the researcher. For this purpose, initial contact was formally established with both the ASP Director and the ASP Evaluator at Wits. Ever since formal and informal communication channels have been maintained, throughout, not only with these two, but also, with subsequent contacts that ensued through frequent liaison with other members of ASP staff.

Considering the vast geographical distance between the University of Natal, which employed the writer at its ASP Central Unit in Durban, and the University of the Witwatersrand being approximately six hundred kilometres away, the researcher relied, greatly, on faxes, telephonic conversations and enquiries, and survey questionnaires. Eighteen blank questionnaires were forwarded to the Central Unit, which functioned as a distribution point for these and other materials and a venue for meetings with various ASP personalities. Thirteen completed questionnaires were returned for further processing.

Two personal visits, which were made possible through a research grant awarded by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), were undertaken to conduct interviews with the ASP Director, ASP Evaluator and other ASP staff including tutors and co-ordinators. These occasions were also used to collect questionnaires and gather current information on ASP developments, through magazines, newsletters, reports, bulletins and policy documents. During visits to the ASP Central Unit in-depth interviews were recorded on tapes, which are stored in files designated

to Wits ASP. A minimum of twenty eight interviews were conducted in addition to numerous telephone calls with individual staff members to discuss matters pertaining to their work at Central Unit level and in faculties to which they were assigned.

With assistance from the College of Science and others in the ASP Central Unit, fourteen ASP students were randomly selected to take part in interviews. The College of Science represented the ideal venue in which both former and present ASP clients could be found. These students were eligible to be interviewed on basis that they either had attended the mandatory First Year ASP programme or were now current ASP students in the College. Their comments would be used to determine the extent to which they considered to have benefitted from their attendance of ASP courses.

3.2.1.1 Historical background

When the University of the Witwatersrand became aware of the immensity of the problem confronting students from disadvantaged backgrounds (predominantly Africans matriculating through the Department of Education and Training - DET), many students had already been lost to higher education. Those who were admitted were either forced to abandon their studies or were excluded from the University because of unsatisfactory academic performance. Poor academic results at university level can be linked to structural factors in the DET itself, such as lack of sensitivity to matters relating to curriculum development or meta-curricular during their schooling experience, as Hartshorne (1991:37) concludes that:

"the future does not rest in concentrating on the secondary school as the prime source of the problems plaguing. It is the whole school system that is at issue, and particularly primary schooling, which is a foundation built on sand."

Invariably, the majority of disadvantaged students, whether in the United States or South Africa also suffer from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. In the United States, though, the effects of low-income on academic performance have been drastically reduced to the level of insignificance for those participating in the TRIO scheme, who are much fewer than those requiring the services of the scheme. The tragic situation about the plight of disadvantaged students is that, the start has not been to address the two crucial issues, affecting matriculants, which are, lack of compensatory education programmes at high school (an equivalent of Upward Bound in the United States) and finance to create and operate programmes. Therefore, the installation of ASP programmes at tertiary level of education will continue to be inadequate in solving the problems encountered by disadvantaged students at postsecondary level until Upward Bound types of programmes are introduced in high schools.

The two aims of ASP, that is, reducing the failure and ensuring academic success, can be regarded as two sides of the same coin. The rationale for assisting disadvantaged students to pass their first year at university is to lay a foundation for their academic progress through to graduation. But, for purposes of research these two different aspects will be treated separately. In actual fact, they do happen at different stages of a student's academic career and as such are influenced by different factors at any given time. They also act as important variables in assessing the ultimate effect of the programmes.

The Faculty of Arts introduced academic support in 1981 which comprised tutorials in English, logical and lateral reasoning skills and a course in study techniques. These courses were offered, exclusively, to First year students, but intended to equip them with academic skills to cope with their study materials and succeed at the end of the year.

These skills were expected to be used in subsequent years of study as well and enable the student to graduate. In the years following 1981 more academic support courses were added, some of them credit-bearing courses, that is counting towards a degree. But the majority were non-credit bearing courses. The result was that ASP students had to reduce the number of degree courses for which they registered in order to accommodate the courses belonging to the support programme. In actual fact, since the introduction of the ASP courses, participating students, because of an increased work load generally take an extra year to complete their degree programme. Thus while the minimum time required to complete a BA degree is three years, it would take an ASP student four years to fulfil all the requirements for graduation.

According to Agar's (1990) evaluation report some ASP students, meaning students who participate in ASP programmes, were not in favour of a reduced curriculum of subjects in any one year. In the following years, ASP course structures were modified with an emphasis on academic support that is based on the content of the subject perceived as presenting difficulties. The object was to make academic support through course content in order that ASP students could benefit more directly from the aid they were receiving. Subjects, such as sociology and psychology, were included among those offered to ASP students.

Other Faculties, for example Architecture, Social Work, Commerce, Speech and Hearing Therapy, Science, Law, Engineering and Dentistry began to offer academic support of one kind or another. However, some Faculties have just recently started to offer academic support such as the Medical Faculty, which embarked on a peer-tutoring scheme or supplemented instruction (SI) in which senior students, preferably final year undergraduates or post-graduates, in the department offered tutorials on course content already covered in regular lectures. Those faculties which established academic support, were reported to have partly

achieved their objectives. But it was clear that in the final analysis success of the programmes largely depended on the availability of adequate resources and the existence of a stable infrastructure.

3.2.1.2 Mission Statement and the 1980 Academic Plan

As we have said above, admission of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds into tertiary institutions meant that their ability to cope with rigorous study programmes, such as they encountered at the University of the Witwatersrand, was severely limited. Towards the end of the Seventies, the University of the Witwatersrand became aware of the crippling effect of deficient Black schooling and expressed concern that, unless something was done, the situation would become more serious as numbers of disadvantaged students increased. David Agar (1990:435) puts it succinctly:

"Universities in South Africa have a relatively high student drop-out rate. The drop-out rate for Black students at White universities is however disproportionately high (when compared with the drop-out rate of White students at the same institutions)... In 1979 the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) was aware of the disproportionately high drop-out rate of its Black students. The high drop-out rate of such students was accounted for largely by the 'disadvantaged' education they had received by attending schools run by the Department of Education and Training."

Indeed the University of the Witwatersrand has become a forerunner in the field of academic support for disadvantaged students in South Africa. As mentioned in Chapter 1, one could, perhaps, attribute the vigorous efforts made at Wits to the declaration of intent by the administration which paved the way for academic support programmes.

The action taken by the University of the Witwatersrand, in 1980, to institute an academic support programme was an act

of admission that, firstly, the University had not been sufficiently aware of its responsibility toward disadvantaged students and, secondly, that the University saw itself responsible for taking care of these students. To show acceptance of the challenge the University devised a strategy in the form of ASP, as Agar (1989:1) recalls:

"The Academic Support Programme (ASP) at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) was set up in 1980 in response to the deliberately "disadvantaged" educational background of Black... students... and their consequently high drop-out rate at university... as well as in response to the projected increase in the numbers of such students who would register at WITS."

The important point to bear in mind is that academic support was not merely to help the disadvantaged students to succeed, but was also intended to serve the survival interests of the University. Much as the interests of the South African economy could not be served by the Whites alone, hence the need for increasing efforts of training Blacks in leadership and technological skills, predominantly White universities could not survive in the face of dwindling numbers of White students as a result of demographic factors without recruitment of African students on basis of affirmative action admissions policy, which disregards their disadvantaged schooling background and emphasises potential to succeed at university.

In terms of the above argument, it is more appropriate to conjecture that predominantly White institutions were as under prepared as the disadvantaged students for the challenges of meeting the needs of these students. Therefore, the fallacy that is perpetrated by the deficit theory of ASP (putting all the blame for academic deficiencies on students and ignoring the deficiencies of lecturers and the university itself), should be dispelled as irrelevant for the implementation of strategies to deal with the problem. This theory assumes that the student is the cause of the problem of academic disadvantage, whereas its

occurrence serves as a reflection of the extent to which the institution is under prepared for its educational responsibility toward these students. For example, academic staff who are sufficiently trained to deal with disadvantaged students would not even perceive them as problematic to the institution. But, based on the assumption of the deficit theory, academic support is in terms of assisting the problematic student to fit into the university set up, which presumably does not need to change: everything is allright with the institution, but it is the disadvantaged student who "rocks the boat". David Agar puts the argument this way:

"When needs are not met, problems arise. Whose problems are these? In some quarters it is assumed that problems reside within the individual, in others it is assumed that problems reside within the institution or within society. The former assumption leads to the conclusion that to address student problems, individuals have to be changed in some way in order to fit into the institution. The latter assumption leads to the conclusion that it is not the individual that needs to change, but rather the institution and society."

Some would argue that the efforts made by the University of the Witwatersrand, and other universities, were "too little too late". But, these efforts are of significance in the development of academic support programmes in tertiary institutions in South Africa. Indeed, it was a bold and imaginative step that was taken by the University of the Witwatersrand, and this, to some extent, paved the way for other universities, colleges, and technikons to follow.

Academic support at the University of the Witwatersrand thus originated in 1980 with the "Wits Academic Plan of 1980". Peter Hunter (1984:3) said the following about the "wits Academic Plan of 1980", at an ASP Conference at the University of Cape Town in 1984:

"What our three years of heart-searching have shown is that we are not doing these things as best we can in the setting of contemporary South Africa. We are not educating our students to be fully aware of the social and economic problems which surround them; we are not doing enough to equip able students who come from disadvantaged sectors of the South African educational system to overcome their early educational disadvantages so that they can benefit fully from their studies at Wits; we are not concentrating enough of our research on the problems of our immediate surroundings, problems which no-one else is likely to solve for us."

The 1980 Academic Plan was applied in selected faculties at Wits. It is of great significance that the Academic Plan made reference to students who may have "high innate abilities but have suffered from poor home backgrounds or inadequate schooling" and consequently needed special assistance to succeed.

Recently educationists have been challenged to investigate alternative admissions criteria and, again, the University of the Witwatersrand has been part of a team, including the University of Natal and the University of Cape Town, that is in the forefront of searching for solutions.

For several decades the Extension of University Education Act No. 45 of 1959 had made access to "White" universities difficult and sometimes, made it impossible through a number of restrictions, which were imposed by law. Numbers of potentially successful students were not eligible for admission because of unacceptable point scores, meaning the selection device device which allocated a number of points to a symbol obtained in respect of a matric subject subject resulting in students scoring the highest number of points being considered for admission before offering places to candidates with low scores. Recently, it has been discovered that the point system is not a satisfactory measure of potential for university study.

It is important to briefly explain the significance of these two concepts, that is, the "permit system" in respect of the Extension of University Education Act No. 45 of 1959 and the "point system". Regarding the control of access to White universities the Act, governing the "permit system" stipulated that:

"no non-White person who was not registered as a student of a university established by Act of Parliament, other than the University of South Africa, on or before the said date, shall register with or attend any such university as a student without the written consent of the Minister: Provided that this section shall not apply to non-White persons in respect of their registration and attendance at the Medical School" (Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1983:506).

The permit system, as it was formulated and contained in the 1959 Act, had met with severe criticism, because it was perceived as an infringement of the autonomy of universities. The quota system, however, had also adverse practical implications. For example, the large number of African students, who apply for admission into White universities, meant that the administration of individual permits was time consuming and inevitably led to delays and frustration.

The permit system was amended by the Universities Amendment Act of 1986 which provided for the quota system, which set limits to numbers of Black students, who could be admitted to White universities. The Amendment Act stipulated that:

"the university authorities would be responsible for the admission of individual students, but subject to certain conditions specified by the minister, including conditions relating to the number of students attending universities established for other race groups. Different such quotas might be applied to different race groups, different universities, and different faculties within universities" (Race Relations Survey, Part 2, 1986:462).

The Amendment Act of 1986 provided that the quotas would be determined by the minister, in consultation with the university authorities. An amendment to Section 25 of the Universities Act of 1955, which provides for the granting of government subsidies to universities, stipulated that the granting of such subsidies would be subject to the quota system being implemented.

The principals of four universities, namely, the Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Natal and Rhodes, publicly condemned the quota proposal at mass meetings and in other fora. Staff and students called upon their universities to defy the provisions governing the quota system contained in this Amendment Act of 1986. The principals of these four White English-language universities issued a joint statement condemning the quota system, describing it as

"another expression of political interference in an academic function... a university should be able to determine the terms on which it appoints staff and admits students" (Ibid., 1986:463).

As a result of inadequate preparation for tertiary education, many Africans, in particular, faced the risk of being denied admission. Consequently, a growing number of institutions for higher education have raised objections to the validity of the point system, as a measure of potential for tertiary education. Much dissatisfaction with this system has been directed at the DET, whose standards of allocating matric symbols have become increasingly questionable as a reliable indicator of potential for higher education, as empirical evidence clearly indicates (Scott, 1989:10-11). As a result of these measures, embodied in legislation either limiting the numbers of Blacks admitted to White universities or prohibiting it altogether, much fewer Africans (comprising the majority of disadvantaged students in the worst category), could be admitted into White universities than would have otherwise been the case.

By declaring themselves "open" to everyone, predominantly White institutions, including the University of the Witwatersrand, were by implication indicating their readiness to take the responsibility for redressing the imbalance suffered by Africans in the inferior education system designed for them by the Apartheid educational ideology. Unfortunately, the University of the Witwatersrand, and others fitting the category of open universities, took far too long to realise the extent of the disadvantage suffered by, mainly, African students. Meanwhile vast potential and talent was lost not to be redeemed again (Hartshorne, 1991:38-50).

It has been shown how vehement the four open universities were opposed to the permit system and the quota system. The attitude of the Government, towards the universities' decision to admit all and sundry, ranged from unmitigated indifference to the problems experienced by disadvantaged students to hostile reaction, as demonstrated in the announcement by the then Minister of National Education, Dr Gerrit Viljoen, when addressing the annual meeting of the Transvaal Chamber of Industries, in reference to the the admission of disadvantaged Blacks at White universities, to the effect that:

"the government was considering a new subsidy formula that would make universities more selective in admitting students. The current system placed too much emphasis on student numbers, which resulted in universities submitting students who did not have a reasonable chance of success. In terms of the new formula, half the subsidy would be given when the student registered and the other half only if he or she passed"
(Race Relations Survey, Part 2, 1986:463).

But the Minister's announcement of the decision to revise the subsidy formula, as already described above, prevented any consideration of pursuing subsidy increase by increasing enrolment figures. Thus, it is clear that circumstances would demand that universities make an accurate assessment

of their position in relation to the Government's attitude. The response of universities would no longer be determined by altruistic motives alone, but an analysis of objective conditions, such as repercussions on Government subsidization in the event of increase in failure rate among disadvantaged students, would be of utmost importance. In this regard, a university's mission statement, as a declaration of values it represents, is considered as fundamental to all its activities. All open White universities identified themselves, through mission statements, as institution serving the academic interests of both White and Black disadvantaged students.

It is in the Mission Statement that the goals of ASP, at the University of the Witwatersrand give an indication of its nature both, in the short term and in the long term, they are to:

"... maximise academic performance in students disadvantaged by the inadequacy of previous educational opportunities... to increase the number of professionally qualified people from the disadvantaged sectors of our society... to contribute ASP's experience and insights to developments in University policy and practice that are directed towards the priorities of a changing South African society"
(Agar, 1988-1990 Report).

3.2.1.3 Identification of target for academic support

As has been explained, as a result of the new formula for granting subsidies to universities, it soon became clear that a high premium was placed on ensuring that students passed their courses (including disadvantaged students). This put universities under enormous pressure to seek ways of assisting the latter to make satisfactory progress in studies. This meant that students had to be first identified as being academically at high risk of failure. The following are the main criteria used for this purpose, as well as discovering those who would need academic support:

- * students coming from schools of the Department of Education and Training frequently find it difficult to cope with university education;
- * those who had obtain low symbols in matric and have to improve their knowledge of specific subjects;
- * those who have already failed in their courses at university, which was an indication that they will not succeed without academic support. The "Falter first" Principle (allowing students to experience failure before ASP intervention), for identification of students at risk of failing a particular course in examinations, is one of the most common means of identifying high risk students. Such students would be advised to participate in ASP programmes for which they are registered.
- * students for whom English is a second language are considered to be at high risk, as some schools that teach English, as a second language are found to be under-resourced, (meaning that they do not have adequately trained teachers, especially in language). Mathematics and science have always represented acutely under-resourced subjects at high schools and the situation remains the same, making the two subjects require special attention through ASP programmes. The teacher/pupil ratio also tends to be disproportionately high.

3.2.1.4 Selection of target group for academic support

All students admitted into the University of the Witwatersrand have obtained a Matriculation Exemption, which is a standard requirement for university entrance in South Africa. In this respect, disadvantaged students meet the ordinary requirements for admission to the University. Once they are registered, the identification process described above is used to select those who require ASP services. Broekman and Frielick (1991-1992:3) state, "Generally registration occurs in the early part of the academic year but can take place throughout the year, whenever a student joins the programme" and argue that an ASP student is selected on basis of having:

- * "at any stage in the year registered as such, by completing a biographical questionnaire for the Academic Support Programme, and by attending at least one ASP tutorial in a course
- * written the final examination in that course" and also having seen:
- * "the ASP as providing them with a means of ongoing academic development
- * the ASP as a variety of 'extra-lessons', with the content of lectures being reviewed
- * ASP as crisis intervention and attend only when essay deadlines or examinations are eminent.

3.2.1.5 Types of programmes offered

Support programmes are found in many faculties at the University of the Witwatersrand and fall into categories:

- * Concurrent courses: These run parallel to credit courses, for which students are registered. An

example of a concurrent course is English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which originated in the Faculty of Arts in 1981, and forms part of the ASP package of three general courses, namely, English language, study skills, and logical and lateral thinking skills.

- * Supplementary courses: These are offered, in addition to the credit course programme, in the form of extra tutorials: for instance, if a students experience problems in subjects such as Sociology, Latin, History, Biology, Psychology or Legal Theory, they would join a tutorial class in these particular subjects.

- * Subject-specific courses: The tutorial content of subject-specific courses relates to the appropriate credit course but also contains general and specific academic and language skills. As of 1990, there were more than thirty-six different subject-specific ASP courses. On average these courses are duplicated two to three times per week which means that, in effect, there are between seventy-two and one hundred and eight tutorial groups running each week. The ASP evaluator stressed that:

"none of the tutorials are exactly the same (in terms of who attends, the times the tutorial takes place and the content of the tutorial) since the structure and content of each tutorial depends on departmental and individual student needs. Since ASPs are concurrent, supplementary and voluntary, students who attend ASP do not necessarily do so on a regular basis. (For example in Arts about 30 percent of students who attend ASP in any one year do so regularly; in Science, regular attendance is on average 70 percent). Equally, the number of tutorials held in each subjects over one year varies" (Agar, 1989:21).

According to Agar's analysis, all but two subject tutorials are linked to first year courses, the exception being tutorials in English 2 and English 3. Most ASP students are usually in their First or Second year of study.

In some faculties and departments, disadvantaged students have to attend special preparatory courses, aimed at preparing them for admission into those faculties or departments. In most cases those courses are non-credit bearing, for example, preparatory mathematics and physics programmes, which are compulsory for students to attend, if they wish to be admitted to a Science degree programme. At the University of the Witwatersrand there is the Wits Integrated Support Programme in Engineering (WISPE), which has been a joint ASP and Engineering Faculty venture, in which those students who perform poorly in their tests (approximately twenty in number during 1991) would be invited to join WISPE. By so doing they would be choosing a five-year curriculum, instead of the official four-year curriculum. In actual fact they split the required four First year credits over two years and do a number of non-credit ancillary courses, which focus on academic and language skills specific to engineering, as well as subject-specific courses, which are aimed at preparing them for the subject content in the following academic years.

It needs to be stressed that academic support focuses on reducing problems associated with specific areas of need such as language competence, study skills and conceptual skills, and it is in these that tutorial programmes are being provided.

3.2.1.6 Voluntary and compulsory participation in ASP programmes

Compulsory participation was initially enforced in all programmes. Lately the principle of compulsory participation

is enforced selectively, as Broekman and Frielick (1992:4) comment:

"Registration for Academic Support Programme tutorials is generally voluntary, although for some students it is a condition for admission as a student to a Faculty."

For example, the general Study Skills Course is made available to all students irrespective of whether they attended ASP or not. Those who participate are expected to pay a fee for the service.

3.2.1.7 Duration of ASP programmes

The factors mentioned above, particularly the move from general to subject-specific courses, have had an influence on the duration of ASP courses. A variety of ASP programmes are available to disadvantaged students who, being Africans, are speakers of English as a second language, in their first year at university. Once they have been identified and selected for participation in the programme, the ASP Unit invites them to attend tutorials, which they find suitable for their needs. However, suggestions are made from the outset as to which courses it would be advisable for most disadvantaged students to attend. Alternatively, the department concerned approaches, or is approached by, students who need for academic support. Ordinarily, the programme runs for one year, but where further assistance is required the duration of that particular programme is extended, or the student is advised to attend other recommended programmes. However, financial constraints often make it difficult to extend ASP services beyond the Second year.

3.2.1.8 Evaluation of actual programmes

The activities of the programmes have been documented by the evaluator of ASP at the University of the Witwatersrand. The programmes, since 1986, have been evaluated on a continual

basis. There are indications that these programmes have undergone innovation through the involvement of ASP staff in a research project to assess the effectiveness of ASP intervention. The major limitation of the research project is that it cannot embark on a full scale and comprehensive evaluation of ASP activities, while, with the exception of ASP evaluator, it relies solely on the services of temporary staff. This category of ASP staff comprises, mostly, part-time tutors, who are contracted on short-term employment (see Figure 1, under Section 3.2.1.9 below). These tutors are also expected to give tutoring and assist in the development of tutorial materials. All these responsibilities, when put together, constitute heavy workload for individual tutors.

It has been discovered that, in its existing form, the staffing structure of the ASP in departments and faculties, as well as their conditions of employment, which are of a temporary contractual nature, could be the factors that contribute to high levels of demotivation among such staff, especially with regard to evaluating the work they are doing.

Since its inception 1980, ASP has been exposed to a small-scale evaluation on a part-time basis. But from 1987 the post of evaluator became full-time and permanent. Prior to that date evaluation was largely a matter of keeping records of students' academic performance and the reports concentrated on the results of the monitoring and analysis of quantitative data. When the post was made permanent, further areas of responsibility were allocated to the evaluator and the task of evaluation itself has been expanded so as to encompass both the quantitative and qualitative aspects. Dealing with the quantitative part involves the maintenance and analysis of student records. The essential tasks are putting together information on the academic progress of students in their First year at the University and at the end of their First year and throughout

their university career until they graduate or drop-out. It also involves compiling records of the biographical characteristics of ASP students as well as recording the attendance of ASP students at ASP tutorials.

The information, thus collected, is computerised and analysed by the computer for use, to a large extent, in the summative evaluation of the programme. At the end of each academic year judgements of what the programmes have achieved and recommendations for overall improvement, where this is necessary, are made. This information provided the basis of evaluation reports which are produced annually and presented to the Steering and Governing Committees, which are charged with the responsibility of overseeing ASP operations as illustrated in the diagram representing the structure of the ASP, (Figure 1 under Staffing and Administrative Infrastructure in Section 3.2.1.9).

Because the needs and contexts of departments and faculties differ, concerned faculties and/or departments, in the case of large faculties, analyse information regarding academic performance of disadvantaged students and forward it to the ASP evaluator. The qualitative aspect of the evaluation involves interviews with both staff and students within and without ASP, and completing questionnaires, as well as observation of students and staff going through their normal routine of academic activities, to assess the circumstances within which ASP activities take place and obtain information on a variety of issues related to such activities. Qualitative information has become an essential feature of the evaluation, since it helps to contextualize the more discrete information obtained from quantitative techniques, through analysis of student records.

The information gained in 1987 and 1988 focused on student and staff attitudes towards and perceptions of ASP in particular, and the University in general, as well as perceptions of the problems experienced by students in their

First year and beyond. That information, instead of being used to make judgements about the ultimate worth of the programme, was used to make decisions about the day to day running of the programme, content of tutorials, ASP structures, and so forth. In that sense, as a general principle, the information is used as a record of academic progress and for improvement of the functioning of the programmes. This information is not used solely in the annual reports, but is also distributed directly to ASP staff as and when it becomes available. Mainstream staff, meaning academic members of staff, whose primary responsibility is to teach students registered in their departments irrespective of their school background, are also presented with the information through fora such as seminars and workshops so that they are aware that such type of information exists and how it can be used.

3.2.1.9 Staffing and administrative infrastructure

We have dealt with issues related to access to the University of the Witwatersrand, the setting up of academic support programmes in various faculties, and briefly considered their effectiveness in offering academic support to disadvantaged students. We now examine staffing and administrative infrastructure for the period under review that of 1980 to 1992. Even at this stage it is apparent that the extent of ASP intervention in academic departments can be linked to staff establishment issues, in terms of availability of suitable persons and finance.

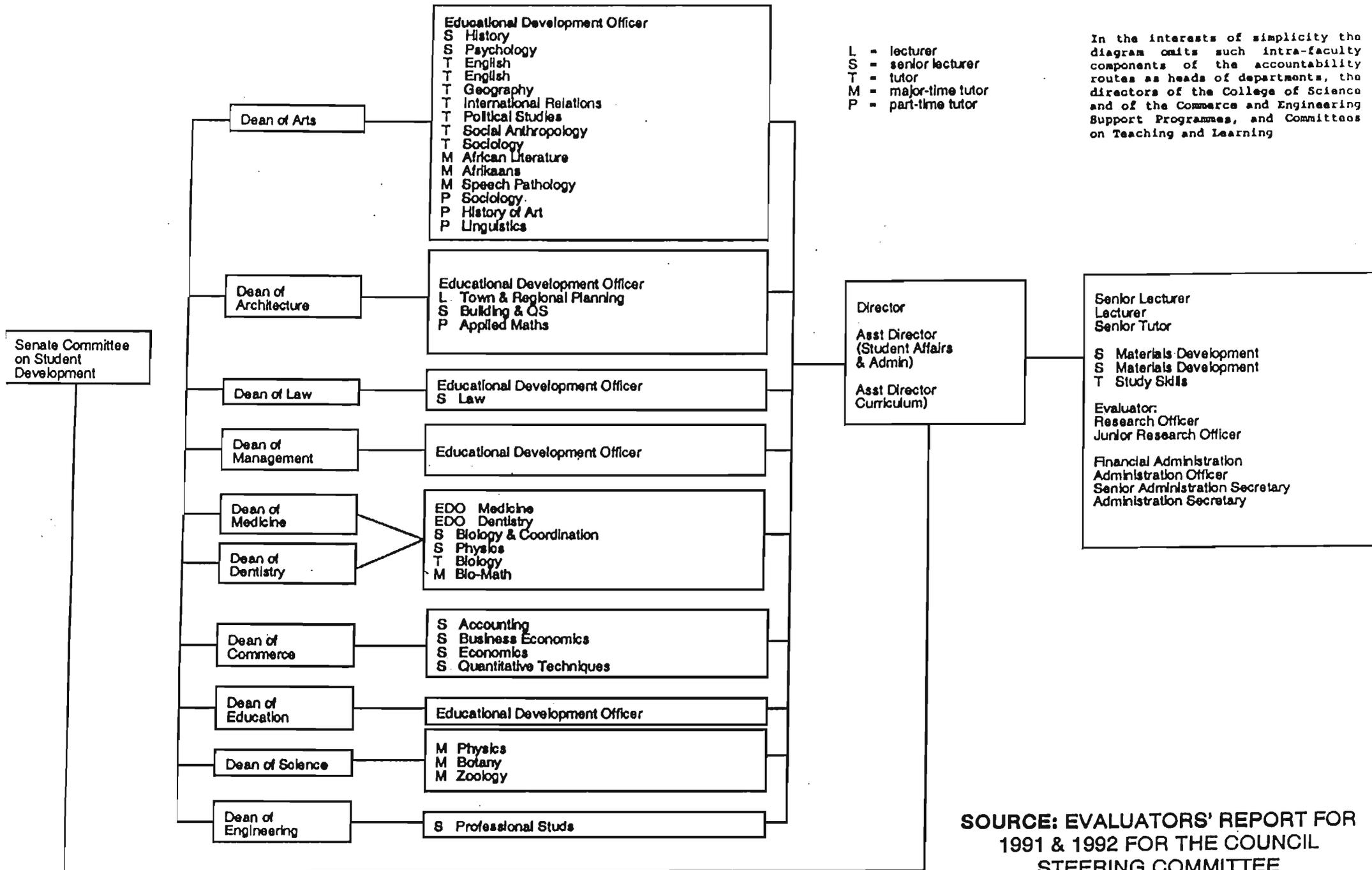
Writing in 1984 for the ASPECTS Bulletin, Professor Hunter, the present Director of the Academic Support Programme at Wits, had the following to say:

"The work of academic support obviously overlaps with that of mainstream undergraduate teaching. But there are distinctive features in the former which require in its staff members certain attributes (to a degree uncommon in

mainstream lectures) such as sensitivity to the particular problems of underprepared students, a preparedness to innovate and to work in an interdisciplinary team, and a genuine concern to promote the academic development of disadvantaged students. These attributes are obviously compatible with ambitions for a mainstream academic career, but the programme will be seriously handicapped if it is considered that only such potential mainstream (and retired) academics are suitable for academic support posts... This implies that each ASP team include a substantial number of permanent posts, and that some of the posts be at a senior rank" (Hunter 1984:9-10)

At the University of the Witwatersrand, one finds that, originally, there was only one post that was permanent, that is, the director's post, compared to the present seven permanent posts allocated to the ASP. From its inception, the ASP has been served by short-term contract and part-time staff resulting in an alarmingly high turnover among its staff. Funding seems to be insufficient for the work being done and the maintenance of a sufficient number of posts. The following organisation chart, showing the staffing structure and reporting relationships among ASP staff in the entire University, illustrates the decentralised functions of ASP with an inadequate staffing infrastructure. In point of fact now, October 1993, of all ASP posts both in the central Unit and in faculties, only eighteen are permanent positions, including the newly created post of Senior Researcher, the remainder are contract posts, including some Educational Development Officers.

Figure 1, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND: PERSONNEL STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ASP) JANUARY 1993



SOURCE: EVALUATORS' REPORT FOR 1991 & 1992 FOR THE COUNCIL STEERING COMMITTEE

As has been shown in **Figure 1** above, the overall functioning of the Unit is under the control of the Director, who holds a permanent post, and is expected to give direction to its staff. The Director's post maintains links with the University's committee structures. In all faculties, academic programmes of the ASP fall under the Assistant Director (Curriculum) such as curriculum development, which involves, among other things, planning, designing and implementing ASP courses. This post is on the University's staff establishment. It oversees the content and structure of academic support functions in all academic departments of the University. It is also the responsibility of the Assistant Director (Curriculum) to organise seminars and workshops for ASP and mainstream staff. This post is a permanent post on the University's staff establishment

The Assistant Director (Student Affairs & Administration) is responsible for non-academic support issues, such as assisting disadvantaged students to obtain residence accommodation, ensuring that these students have adequate finance to pay University fees, purchase books and other goods, as well as organise transport for students living off-campus. In addition, the person who holds this position is expected to provide counselling services or referrals to available agencies where necessary. Finally, this post co-ordinates services rendered to students by on-campus and off-campus organisations or institutions. This post has the responsibility to oversee the administrative section of the Central Unit. Through liaison provided by the Student Affairs Section of the Unit, ASP students in all faculties are aware of the different kinds of services, which can be of assistance to them.

The post of Programme Evaluator is permanent and mainly responsible for the evaluation of all academic support programmes throughout the University and is situated in the Central Unit, together with the Director and two Assistant Directors (already mentioned). Beginning in 1984, evaluation

of the programmes has been done annually on an on-going basis from a quantitative perspective, which was discussed earlier in this Section. Maintenance of student records and the co-ordination of research activities within the Unit is the responsibility of the Programme Evaluator.

Among the core ASP staff, meaning those staff members who hold permanent posts and are situated in the Central Unit, are three ASP senior tutors, who have interdisciplinary responsibilities for tutor training and giving tutoring in certain subjects. They plan and organise workshops for language, study, and conceptual skills. Their functions come under the Assistant Director for (Curriculum), as demonstrated in the diagram above.

Liaison with other departments and service units for the procurement of vital commodities, services, and communication, within and without the University, is filled by the Administrative Assistant, who is also responsible for the co-ordination of all administrative activities of the Unit. There are two Administrative Secretaries who provide administration backup and support services to all core staff in the Unit.

In order to expand on the information given in the diagram and add a few details, support activities in terms of subject support and staffing structures in various faculties are outlined as follows:

Faculty of Science: In the Faculty of Science there is one full-time tutor in each of the following Departments: Botany, Chemistry, General Biology, Mathematics, Physics, and Zoology. The following departments have part-time tutors Actuarial Science, Geography, and Statistics. These staff members are employed by ASP, but their activities are based in their respective departments as shown in the diagram.

Faculty of Arts: This Faculty has part-time tutors in each of the following disciplines: African Literature, Anthropology, English, History, Film and Drama, Latin, Political Studies, Psychology, Religious Studies, Social Anthropology, and Sociology. All staff are situated in the departments concerned. Some of them are employed by the ASP, others by the respective departments.

Faculty of Commerce: There are two full-time tutors in this Faculty. One tutor is responsible for Quantitative Techniques, and another for Commercial Law, Economics and Business Economics. In the Accounting department there is one part-time tutor. All those tutors are employed by ASP but situated in the Faculty. Since 1986 this Faculty has a relatively stable full-time staff with the exception of Accounting tutors, where the high turnover could be a reflection of dissatisfaction with the temporary nature of the post. According to the current Programme Evaluator's Report tutoring in these subjects has already been incorporated into the subject content, which means that it assumes the form of extra classes focusing on subject matter.

Tutorials are voluntary, concurrent and supplementary, that is, four per week for Quantitative Techniques and one per week for the remaining commercial subjects. There has been a constantly increasing number of both Black, (the term denotes Coloured, Indian and African students. Where reference is made to only one of these racial groups it is specified by these terms without the qualification 'Black') and White students. White students in the ASP outnumber Blacks and yet over 30% of the former had attended private schools before entering the University.

The majority of Black students in the Faculty attend ASP. There is a tendency for Black students to reduce their curriculum load to four rather than five subjects per year. Quantitative Techniques had experienced regular attendance,

but during the period under review, which is between 1980 and 1992, there has been only approximately 50% regular attendance in other ASP tutorials.

It is reported that few students are being attracted to ASP at registration. Most probably, it is still too early for them to decide which courses will require ASP assistance. Another reason could be the enormous pressure disadvantaged students, especially, feel during registration planning their curricula and still uncertain whether the workload will allow addition of ASP courses. Although, ASP services are advertised at registration and some students are advised to attend ASP courses, the majority of students attend largely because they have been advised by departments and ASP tutors to do so.

Faculty of Architecture: Only a small number of Black students register in this Faculty and, consequently, a small number of ASP students are to be found. Academic support in the acquisition of skills is integrated into the subject matter that is being taught. In his 1990 Summary Report, that was addressed to the Steering Committee of the ASP, the Programme Evaluator has warned: "Neither the particular skills addressed nor the subjects into which the skills have been integrated have been consistent" (Agar, 1989:7). Academic support is concurrent and supplementary, generally not more than one or two tutorial hours per week. All tutors are employed on a part-time basis and there is a constant turnover of staff. An interesting point about academic support in this Faculty, is that initiatives for ASP intervention come increasingly from students themselves. Such requests for academic assistance are taken up by a few individual members of departmental staff who, in turn, refer students to ASP for assistance.

In this Faculty, students tend to experience an extremely heavy workload which, according to the Programme Evaluator's analysis, mitigates against the concurrent and supplementary

nature of academic support, that is being offered. Students however show a willingness to reduce their curriculum load in order to take advantage of the academic support offered to them. There are part-time tutors in the departments of Graphic Communication and Design and they are situated in the Faculty of Architecture.

Faculty of Law: The Programme provides subject support for B.Proc. students who do ASP-linked Arts and Commerce subjects, as well as specific subject support in Legal Theory and Institutions. It should be noted that the Faculty has initiated ASP for LLB students and has also created an ASP co-ordinator's position. In developing its own form of academic support, the Faculty has held consultations with ASP for advice. The type of academic support offered is holistic by attempting to cater for both the academic (subject matter) and non-academic (environmental - for example, e.g. finance, transport, and accommodation) needs of students.

Faculty of Medicine: Voluntary, concurrent and supplementary academic support is offered for First year students in Human and General Biology and Physics. The number of MB Bch students, using this service, remains fairly constant. The service has been extended to include Paramedics and Nurses. The Faculty has developed a system of identifying potential ASP students and informs them of the facilities available to them. ASP students have the opportunity of academic support in their Second and Third year of study, through a variety of tutorial schemes developed within the Faculty. ASP students have the opportunity of reducing their curriculum and rewrite examinations, through a supplementary examination system.

An ASP Co-ordinating Committee meets regularly to monitor student progress and discuss ASP policy matters. There is an attempt to monitor students' non-academic needs and take appropriate action where necessary. This signals a

deliberate effort towards a holistic approach in addressing the needs of disadvantaged students.

Faculty of Dentistry: The number of Black students in the Faculty of Dentistry is small. ASP in this Faculty is not developed to an extent where trends and patterns of academic support have crystallized and taken a definite shape. Perhaps, in the absence of apparent problems and no clearly defined role of ASP, it is not possible to develop any ASP programme.

Faculty of Engineering: The Wits Integrated Support Programme for Engineering is in its Second year of development. It is a joint ASP and Faculty venture whereby students would reduce their curriculum, that means doing their First year over a three year period, and get extra language and subject assistance in the form of tutoring. There has been no comprehensive evaluation of this Project, most probably, as it has not been seen as part of the Programme Evaluator's responsibility.

Faculty of Education: Academic support is rendered by the core staff, ASP staff stationed at the central unit. Such support is available in a variety of courses offered in the Faculty. There is no structured approach to ASP intervention, students experiencing problems in a particular course approach ASP Central Unit staff for assistance as and when the need arises.

General: In organisational terms, ASP is placed under the Faculty of Education in which the present Director is Deputy Dean. It was felt that this organisational position of the ASP made it possible for ASP to have access to the University Committee structures and that this would, in many ways, benefit the ASP on campus in terms of communication channels available and visibility.

Annually ASP has to issue a report to the Steering Committee, which comprises representatives from Council, Senate, the University Foundation, major funding institutions, and community organisations. At its annual meetings the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs acts as Chairperson. ASP core staff presents, among other things, an overview of the Programme in summary form, an evaluation report and a financial statement at these Committees.

There is also a Governing Committee, which comprises Deans of all faculties and heads of service units in the University. This Committee meets annually under the chairmanship of the Dean of the Faculty of Education. Its responsibility is to ensure compliance with academic standards in the rendering of academic support and to promote the interests of ASP, by seeking ways of introducing it where the need has been identified.

Committees of Co-ordinators have been set up in the Faculties of Medicine and Commerce. The central unit of ASP and departmental representatives, from participating faculties, are represented in these Committees, which meet two to four times a year. At its meetings the Co-ordinators' Committee hears evaluation reports, and tutors, employed by ASP review their activities and make an assessment of what they have been doing. Similar meetings are held in the Faculty of Arts, but in a less formal structure.

Members of the core staff sit, as individuals, on a variety of committees in various faculties, for example, the Education Faculty Research Committee, Senate Committee on Learning, the Committee on Selection and Selection Tests.

3.2.1.10 Funding of ASP programmes

ASP came into existence at the University of the Witwatersrand when a sum of about R100 000 was donated by the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund. This Fund was intended

to develop special tutorial arrangements consisting of, largely though not exclusively, supplementary tutorials. However, within a short period it was transformed to include other aspects of academic support, such as enriched variety of credit courses and Foundation Year courses. The University also contributed a certain amount of money and made available some establishment posts for ASP work.

In 1990 ASP was still substantially funded from donations, which amounted to R656 308, compared to R616 094, contributed by the University for staffing, supplies, and services. In 1990 the Programme funded 18 full time posts. It was anticipated that expenditure for the Year would total R950 000 and, indeed, it did come very close to that estimate.

Overall financial requirements for the period 1991-1993 were estimated at R3 094 855 for 1991, R3 538 810 for 1992 and R3 448 350 for 1993. It was expected that as resources became available, posts would be allocated to subjects with large numbers of disadvantaged students. This would be done in consultation with the deans of the respective faculties.

In his review of more than half-a-decade of academic support at the University of the Witwatersrand, David Agar points out that research and experience has clearly shown that the amount of money a student possessed had, the conditions under which he lived and studied, and how far he lived from university, could have a severe impact on his chances of academic success. The impact could be direct, for example, lack of money might mean lack of crucial prescribed textbooks, or travelling time might take up to three hours in a day, limiting the time which could be devoted to study, or overcrowding at home and lack of electricity might make studying at home difficult or impossible. The indirect impact of these material conditions has led to high levels of stress and anxiety, which sometimes results in students'

health problems and often negatively influenced motivation (Agar, 1990).

While in one sense this is obvious and to a certain extent has been recognised by the University at large, the real extent of the effect of non-academic problems has not been fully recognised by individual lecturers, bursary donors, or by the University. In other words, "what so far has limited recognition is the fact that educational disadvantage is as much a class issue as it is an educational one", (Agar, 1992:94). In a footnote he writes: "The links between race, class and educational disadvantage in South Africa form part of an unresolved sociological debate. What is clear however, is that these links are complex and apartheid related. The introduction of the term 'class' here is not an attempt to enter that debate, but simply to emphasise that educational disadvantage is clearly linked to socio-economic disadvantage" (Ibid.:100). This point has been discussed extensively in the previous Chapter in relation to affirmative action and compensatory education in the United States of America.

Agar (1989:606) conducted questionnaire surveys with students on their perceptions of problems, which most influenced their academic progress. They indicated that non-academic problems were rated as the most influential. This meant that not only did most students experience problems related to financial, material (book, technical equipment, etc.) and accommodation needs, but that for most students the need persisted, or even intensified, over time. On the other hand, surveys of staff perceptions of the problems, which influenced student academic success rated the non-academic sphere as hardly problematic at all.

The amount of bursary money available for Black students and the amount of University accommodation available increased considerably in the period between 1985 and 1990. Despite increased support in both areas, the number of students

affected by problems with finance and accommodation has not diminished significantly. In 1990 the University could accommodate more than 13% of its intake in its residence apartments. About 70% of the students in residence were Black, but this represented about 40% of the total Black student population. In the same vein, the Journal article stated that approximately 275 to 300 Black, mainly African students, were assisted annually during the period under review by the ASP Assistant Director (Student Affairs & Administration). This represented only 15% of the total African student population at the University of the Witwatersrand. The remainder of the students with problems in this sphere (according to the survey over 80% of African students) sought assistance through the University accommodation and Bursary offices or elsewhere. It is unknown how many students actually receive assistance from any Of these offices and Sources (ibid. 1992:96.

Thus preliminary findings of ASP evaluation at the University of the Witwatersrand reveal the following proposition as regards the non-academic sphere in relation to academic success:

"The more an educational support initiative addresses both the educational and socio-economic needs of students, the more impact on academic success that initiative is likely to have.

(Many) students who are not in residence and live in the townships live under conditions which are rarely conducive to academic success. The corollary of this is that students in residence can be expected to perform better than those who are not. This is only true if being in residence also means being relieved of the stress and anxiety associated with unmet financial and material needs.

The financial and material needs of African students are generally greater than those of the traditional student at universities like Wits. This means that the majority of African students require bursaries which cover, minimally, tuition, accommodation, food and,

maximally, tuition, accommodation, food, pocket money, books, stationery, and equipment" (Agar, 1989:6).

In view of the analysis of factors that contribute to the academic performance of disadvantaged students, the inference is that whatever the form of financial support given to African students, full financial support is what is required in most cases of financial need.

3.2.1.11 Response of faculty staff to ASP intervention

On the operational level, David Agar's (1989) Report focuses on organisational issues. It states that the organisational structure reflects two significant levels of contact and communication with the mainstream University structures. At the upper level integration is through University and faculty committees. At the lower level integration is through tutor contact with individual members of the mainstream academic staff, and contact with individuals through their interest in ASP Interest Group Meetings. Agar suggests that another level of interface and integration needs to be fully developed at the middle level of ASP interaction. In motivating this proposition he emphasises its beneficial effects. This medium level of interaction would be the function of faculty and departmental curriculum and teaching interaction processes on matters relating to policy and implementation of strategies for academic support. In three Faculties, that is, Engineering, Commerce, and Medicine, ASP Co-ordinating Committees have been created. These committees are, what can be called, medium level links between ASP, faculty, and departments.

The effectiveness of these committees, in terms of addressing ASP requirements, seems to be varied both in relation to Faculty commitment to their activities and in relation to the principles for which they were established. It was further suggested, in the proposition, that the Medical School ASP Co-ordinating Committee be used as a

model for other faculties to follow, since it is most appropriate for serious consideration in terms of its development and strategies for rendering academic support to disadvantaged students.

For the effectiveness of an ASP co-ordinating committee it would be necessary essential for it to discuss relevant issues and implement decisions unhindered. It is envisaged that people serving on such committees would be empowered to take action as they saw fit, but only in consultation with respective faculty staff. On the basis of evidence from literature, in particular Hewton (1979), it would be advisable that such committees represent the full range of staff within departments, rather than delegating responsibility for serving on these committees to either most senior or most junior staff in a department. According to Agar, this is what change and innovation within universities demands all relevant members of staff should be involved and participating in decision-making and seeing the importance of making the necessary resources available. But for these committees to have time and resources at their disposal, requires the University to first make the funding of ASP activities a high priority (Agar, 1989).

3.2.1.12 Overall achievement and academic outcomes

During the first five years of ASP actively at the University of the Witwatersrand, there was a substantial pool of Black students, who did not participate in any form of the academic support offered. This was so particularly in the Faculties of Arts and Commerce, where large numbers of Black students were found, who were not attending ASP. In the case of the Commerce Faculty, most of the non-participating Commerce students were part-time. The situation has somewhat become stable since then by the positive growth in the numbers of Black students doing ASP in the Commerce Faculty in the years between 1986 and 1992. The fact that many of non-participating Commerce students

were registered on a part-time basis meant that they could not be catered for in existing ASP facilities. To date, numbers of Black students, are relatively small in other faculties and ASP involvement in these faculties, only on a small scale.

In general terms, then, ASP can be considered to be reaching its clients, though this positive view needs to be tempered with caution. In the first place, less than half of students who attend ASP, do so on a regular basis. This estimation is confirmed in the evaluator's Executive Report, Agar (1989:2). This Report points out that, while some of the abler students seem to benefit from minimal academic support, generally, the more tutorials an ASP student attends the better he will perform. That being the case, it is desirable for more students to attend ASP.

At the University of the Witwatersrand, a preliminary survey has been conducted to determine whether students, registering for a reduced curriculum load, performed better than those with a full workload of between four and five courses (depending on requirements for a particular degree).

Another area of concern is that, while ASP is reaching its primary clients, namely Black students from disadvantaged educational and socio-economic backgrounds, it is also true that ASP is attracting a proportionately large number of White students. In point of fact, ASP at the University of the Witwatersrand is not exclusively designed for Blacks, although African students from DET schools are regarded as the primary target group for academic support. In principle, all race groups can attend ASP. The Faculty of Commerce is clear proof the non-rationally discriminatory ASP policy. The distinction between primary and secondary target groups of ASP is merely to safeguard the interests of those, who are at the highest risk of failing and exclusion from the University. In some subjects, such as Accounting, increasing numbers of White students are registered for ASP courses.

If this trend proceeds unchecked or without contingency plans to accommodate it, sooner or later what academic support is available will not be sufficient for the needs of the African clientele group. As has been stated, when numbers of Black students who register for ASP increase, the crisis will be exacerbated as ASP has limited resources to satisfy the needs of students. Indian and Coloured students, who belong to the original target of ASP, by virtue of being defined as Black, nevertheless, make up a small proportion of the original target group. Presumably, the Education Departments of both Coloureds and Indians are, relatively, better resourced, in terms of teacher qualifications, pupil, teacher ratios and funding by the Government than the DET, and also the fact that the majority of them are first English language speakers, may account for their relatively lower level of disadvantage than Africans.

It would seem that the definition of an ASP student is becoming increasingly problematic. The increase in the academically disadvantaged White student intake, who come from the well established education system, with resources and infrastructure, may suggest that the problem has assumed other dimensions, than purely ethnic ones and can no longer be confined to the Black education system, namely, African (DET), Coloured (DEC-HOR), and Indian (DEC-HOD). The increase in the scale of the problem may indicate that either the system of education in South Africa has generally deteriorated in all sectors, or that the university education system sets unattainable standards and as such have become unrealistic and irrelevant for the general public or both (Moulder, 1988).

Agar (1992:2) postulates that, in pedagogical terms, as well as in terms of student perceptions of ASP, it would seem that having mixed White and Black groups is a sound practice. However, judging from the preliminary evaluation, it would appear that current student academic results indicate that White students benefit more rapidly from ASP

and ultimately perform better at the end of their First year, than do the Black students. It is recognised that these two groups of students experience the same problems that are associated with teaching and learning at tertiary level. It is accepted that these problems are closely related and strategies to deal with them should be embarked upon simultaneously.

In the Faculty of Science the disadvantages of African students are exacerbated by the fact that science and mathematics teaching in DET schools is in more of a crisis now. The evidence of declining Black student academic success in the Faculty of Science suggests that Black students are, and will continue to be, increasingly underprepared for entry into the Faculty. This evidence also suggests that mainstream academic courses and ASP courses have not fully taken into account this deteriorating situation and that current curricula, are less appropriate than they have were.

A certain degree of confusion exists among some academic staff concerning the effects of admitting disadvantaged students on academic standards. While some believe that the lowering of entry standards is bound to affect exit or end standards, others maintain that disadvantaged students should not be admitted to university, since they cannot cope with curricular requirements. Regarding the perception exit standards being negatively affected, it must be borne in mind that the very reason for establishing ASP is precisely to ensure that the lowering of entry levels in no way compromises the attainment of academically accepted and entrenched standards. In this way, the eventuality of poor graduation standards becomes a remote possibility.

The other misconception relating to suggestions of prohibiting admission of disadvantaged students, has been the most difficult to overcome. It is premised on a number of erroneous assumptions about the role of university

education as well as the needs of the economy. This view is not informed about the skills crisis in South Africa and that Whites alone cannot meet the needs for human resources development. It also ignores the fact that university curricular structures can be changed and modified as required. This view has led to various forms of resistance towards curriculum change and innovation. But, with a systematic approach to this issue and properly researched methods of curriculum innovation, uncertainties about the possibility of curriculum change contributing to lowering standards and the quality of graduates, should be eliminated. The writer distinguishes between the lowering of entry levels and the lowering of exit standards and maintains that the one should not be construed as implying the other. As a matter of fact, the very reason for establishing ASP is to ensure that the lowering of entry levels in no way compromises the attainment and maintenance of academically accepted and entrenched standards.

3.2.1.13 Pass rates at First Year levels

In reporting about the success rate of ASP students, Agar (1992:4-10) observes that on the whole these students are more successful than they were a few years ago. It should be borne in mind that Agar's evaluation, for the most part, covers the second half of the first ASP decade. The Report (ibid.:2) takes cognition of the fact that ASP students are now passing more of the subjects they attempt and are receiving higher marks, despite the many obstacles they encounter. ASP students are doing better than most comparable groups (students similarly disadvantaged but not attending ASP) that have been identified. This is indeed a positive trend since the comparable groups identified are expected to perform better than ASP students.

While accepting this development, it must be stressed that it does not represent a complete picture, since variations between faculties and particular courses exist. For example,

in the Commerce Faculty results are extremely encouraging (except in the Accounting Department). On the other hand, results in Physics and Chemistry are problematic in the Science Faculty, as are the results for Sociology and Psychology in the Faculty of Arts.

It is significant that the improved First-year results can perhaps be linked with improved financial and accommodation support systems for a large number of Black ASP students. However, indications are that, there is no absolutely direct link between financial and accommodation support and academic results, since students on bursaries do not necessarily do better than those who do not have these material advantages. Agar (1989:15) has ascertained that the extent of financial support can be linked to this situation. Disadvantaged students need full bursaries, that provide for residence accommodation, meals, tuition, books and a living allowance (pocket money). Disadvantaged students, who are on partial bursaries, which only pay academic fees and sometimes include residence fees, feel financially insecure, since it may exclude other critical areas of need. The anxiety related to this financial insecurity, while reduced to some extent, in many cases, still remains and adversely affects academic success.

An assessment of Black students' success rate in the short-term, meaning improved pass rates, reveal that disadvantaged these students are not successful in terms of passing their courses and being able to complete their studies within the minimum required time. ASP Evaluator's recent report shows a slight improvement on the previous situation in this regard (Agar, 1992:2). Just as students, who are awarded partial bursaries remain financially insecure, so do they also feel when they are offered partial academic assistance. They continue to be academically insecure. This insecurity is shown in poor academic results and low graduation rate. At the University of the Witwatersrand, due to limited resources at ASP's disposal,

students are exposed to limited and inconsistent academic support (Agar, 1989:15).

The University is required to demonstrate greater commitment to ASP initiatives than merely relying on externally funded contract posts and allocating only eighteen permanent posts to ASP staff. This situation is the same for ASP students who have been exposed to limited and inconsistent academic support due to the limited resources at ASP's disposal. The situation depicted above relates to occurrences in a number of faculties, but with special reference to the Faculty of Architecture, which has limited resources to meet the needs of students for academic support. The high failure rate, which can be linked to lack of effective ASP intervention, needs to be addressed urgently, through, appointment of required tutors and development of relevant materials for use in tutorials.

3.2.1.14 Graduation rates

The general and faculty-specific graduation rates of ASP students, according to Agar (1992:2-3) indicates no significant change from the previous years, since 1984 when annual ASP evaluation was formally launched. It is a fact that the graduation rates of Black students as a group remain disproportionately low. It is Agar's contention that, in terms of the realities of ASP as it has been functioning within the campus of the University the Witwatersrand and the South African context, a limited improvement in success rates at graduation point is to be expected. To illustrate the immensity of the problem, although ASP has existed since 1980 at the University of the Witwatersrand, it was only in the Faculty of Science that the form which it has taken has in any way been consistent, by providing ASP services regularly. It is alleged that, only in that Faculty has any realistic response been given to the question of long-term student success, meaning assisting them to graduate within the minimum time required. However, at the time, the

tracking of Chemistry and Physics students indicates a low graduation rate among disadvantaged students. On the other hand, when tracking Black categories of students in the life-sciences academic results show a greater student success despite the fact that such students are small in numbers.

In the Faculties of Arts and Commerce ASP has been consistent, meaning that it is provided on regular basis, since 1986. It is thus too soon, at the time of this study, to determine the long-term success of students in these Faculties. In the other faculties, apart from Medicine, ASP has not been developed to any great extent. Numbers of Black students have been very small, and ASP has not maintained a consistent form. On these grounds it is not realistic to make judgement on the long-term success, meaning significantly improved graduation rates, of ASP students.

ASP in its existing form, is limited by resources and by faculty and departmental policy regarding curriculum form and content, meaning the rigidity with which curricular structures are enforced without allowing modification of subject content to be within the range of students' understanding. In some faculties, there are ambivalent notions of which students are actually ASP students, resulting in no clear policy regarding the distinctions between primary and secondary targets of ASP. Consequently resources are utilised inefficiently. For the most part, if students attend regularly any one ASP-linked subject over one academic year, they would still receive much less tutorial sessions annually, comparing with disadvantages to be overcome. In this way, the disadvantages they bring from secondary schooling, would not disappear.

Thus, it is arguable whether such academic support can be expected to have a major impact on the way students think analytically and logically, acquire the necessary writing skills, approach their subject matter, and affects learning

processes and their long-term academic performance. At Wits, a survey of students' perceptions of their problems, indicates that these persist and even intensify beyond First year, particularly in the case of Black students. While there is some reduction in problems associated with language, study and conceptual skills, which happen to be the foci of ASP, these problems do not disappear.

It is becoming clear that the time has come for serious consideration of alternative forms of ASP in order to improve the long term success rate of ASP students, in terms of increasing numbers of graduates. Whatever shape and nature the alternative initiatives take, they will have to contain two crucial elements, and these are: being able to make more time available for academic support, and they will have to involve a re-thinking of the structure, content and teaching of courses, so that while students at entry level have less implicit and explicit demands made on them, they will be brought, as rapidly as possible, to the levels deemed appropriate for tertiary study.

3.2.1.15 Overall impressions

It is a fact that academic achievement is influenced by a complexity of inter-linked variables. These include variables associated with the past and present socio-economic, political and educational experiences of individuals, as well as variables associated with the particular educational context in which students find themselves. ASP, with its aim of contributing to improve the chances of academic success for students doing first year courses, is one such variable. The present circumstances and context of ASP, with much less resources to establish effective programmes (no finance for employing more staff, scarce contact time with students, etc.) and a certain degree of resistance to curriculum innovation, make it impossible to measure, in categorical terms, the extent to which ASP has had impact on academic results. ASP influence

on academic outcomes can be measured on basis of both short-term (improving pass rate of courses for a degree programme) and long-term (increasing graduation rate) dimensions of success.

It would seem that, as students' perceptions showed during Agar's (1989:609) survey of their problems, the majority of students interviewed expressed concern that problems persisted and even intensified beyond First Year, particularly for Black students. For example, while there is some reduction in problems associated with language, study and conceptual skills, that is cognitive and conceptual skills, which are the focus of the Wits ASP, students maintained that these problems did not disappear. In this intensification and continuation of academic problems students also experienced increasing demotivation. The added factor, that further complicates the situation, is ongoing financial insecurity especially among Black students, and this may account, at least in part, for a high level of uncertainty among Black students as to whether they would be returning to the University in their following academic year.

Some of the effects these issues have on the students' performance have been discussed, but to gain further insight into other factors giving rise to faculty-specific problems, it is necessary to briefly examine these.

In the Faculty of Arts students perceived that problems which had to do with language, reading speed and comprehension, marking and learning skills in general reduced slightly when they were beyond First year. However, problems relating to these academic skills did not reduce to the extent that they were no longer a cause for concern. Problems with financial assistance and accommodation tended not to reduce and might even become intensified. Students noted, in this survey, that motivation problems increased rather than decreased. This phenomenon seems to be accounted

for by persistent academic and non-academic difficulties which feature prominently in student evaluations of their academic performance and constantly exert a negative influence in their academic outcomes, in terms failure of and drop-out rates.

3.2.1.16 Evaluation of ASP programmes at the University of the Witwatersrand

As White ASP students seem to be benefiting more rapidly than Black ASP students, as has already been indicated, it will be necessary to determine whether an optimum balance between Black and White ASP students should be established by, perhaps, considering a quota system in admitting White students to attend ASP programmes. In the United States, where Whites form the majority of the population, those minority racial groups, which are disadvantaged, had to have places reserved for them to ensure representation in tertiary education programmes, and in strategic fields of study, such as Engineering and Medicine. Minority ethnic groups, in the United States, had been historically disadvantaged both educationally and socio-economically.

In contrast, the White minority racial group in South Africa has been historically advantaged and privileged both educationally and socio-economically. It is, therefore, by exception that one finds a White student disadvantaged in any of the two categories of disadvantage, namely, educational and socio-economic. The quota formula, one would argue, stands a much better chance of success. It strikes a balance in the equation of striving for efficiency and effectiveness under constraints of scarce resources and escalating numbers of academically disadvantaged students across the spectrum of different racial groups from different educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

While there has been an increase in interest and involvement in ASP, accompanied by responsibility for ASP, within

specific departments in this Faculty, this positive development has come gradually and seems to have remained more on the level of specific individuals, than at departmental or faculty level. The following analysis is focused on ASP activities in individual departments concentrating on potential causes for the continuing high failure rate despite renewed ASP efforts to reduce it.

In the Social Work Department of the Arts Faculty, small numbers of students are involved in ASP. Academic support seems to have maintained a consistent form and content, although tutors in English and Psychology have changed. This Faculty has two subjects which seem to be particularly problematic, namely, Psychology and Sociology, but even so, numbers of students volunteering for ASP in these subjects, have gradually reduced. This trend is accompanied by the steadily worsening short and long-term success rates of Black ASP students in the Social Work Department, although the results for 1988 students showed a slight improvement over the students of the two previous years. Possibly, what could have aggravated the situation is the tendency of the students not to reduce their curriculum load, despite advice to the contrary and despite departmental and faculty policy changes which allow them to do so. Mention has already been made that most students in the Arts Faculty were registering for the English as a Second Language credit course. As a consequence of this, students do not perceive the need for English language support from ASP. In addition to academic problems, non-academic issues may have contributed to the limited success of ASP intervention. It has been found that a high proportion of ASP students doing Social Work are also experiencing financial problems.

Another reason for the ineffectiveness of ASP in the Arts Faculty is relatively poor attendance at tutorials, which may be due to an overloaded curriculum. Students do not seem to have enough time to attend all scheduled lectures and be able to complete assigned tasks or projects. Frequently,

periods for lectures are used to reduce the backlog on allocated tasks, for example, essays, assignments or self-study (reading by students in preparation for next class session) projects. It is in such instances that erratic attendance of tutorials occurs. In the Faculty of Arts absenteeism from tutorials has been most common in subjects such as Psychology and Sociology as well as a sophisticated Language Skills course which is needed for reading texts and for coping with multiple choice examinations.

Research and evaluation of the Wits ASP, by the Evaluator, has given no indication whether the lack of effectiveness of ASP in Psychology and Sociology implies that more time should be given to ASP activities than previously. It has also not shown whether the current form of ASP requires adaptation to the existing constraints on resources through rationalisation of ASP functions and streamlining its activities, including restructuring of mainstream courses. Concerning the English Language support programme, a policy directive is needed to determine whether it should be dropped or not in view of the changed circumstances.

In its present form, ASP is almost totally responsible for academic support in the Faculty of Arts. While there are indications that staff are encouraging students to take advantage of what is being offered, there is no indication of an increase in departmental staff responsibility for ASP. Something has to be done to encourage a shift in responsibility and that ASP would have to contribute towards making such a shift possible. But the more basic issue is whether ASP has established objective standards for measuring its own performance and evaluating the results of academic support activities. It would be a futile exercise to attempt the restructuring of ASP in terms of capacity building and efficient operation as an organisation, without thorough appraisal of the way it is functioning and the extent to which it has succeeded in overcoming obstacles in

the achievement of its objectives. It would be presumptuous of ASP to embark on a restructuring programme, without having conducted scrutiny of its own programmes and activities. It would only be on the basis of ASP's assessment of its own strengths and weaknesses that its contribution to making such a shift possible and successful, would have significant impact. In this direction, the already existing Co-ordinating Committee's influence within the Faculty will have to be appraised and its power in carrying out its duties assessed.

Nevertheless, in the Faculty of Medicine, the short-term and long-term success of ASP can be attributed to the following components of its structure: firstly, ASP offers students a flexible degree structure in terms of the number of courses students are allowed to take each year of study; secondly, students have more than one chance in crucial examinations; thirdly, there is a close monitoring of both the academic and non-academic sides of student life. In this Faculty, ASP activity includes the monitoring of students' First year level academic performance throughout.

When selecting the ASP target ASP, potential is identified through selection tests designed to isolate areas that require ASP intervention. A follow-up system is also used to monitor whether sufficient progress is made to overcome disadvantages. This is accompanied by joint ASP and Faculty responsibility for ASP and ASP-linked developments with an increasing emphasis on Faculty responsibility. Lastly, the ASP Co-ordinating Committee has some power and influence, for example, to ensure that if the Faculty accepts a student that student is not refused the opportunity to live in the University residence. The majority of mechanisms used to implement ASP programmes in this Faculty are within the realms of responsibility for other faculties. There appears to be something that can be learnt from the short-term achievements of the Medical Faculty. The strategies that have been developed for the implementation of ASP programmes

in this Faculty, though appropriate, in many respects, for all faculties, may require adaptation to the needs of special circumstances pertaining to each faculty. These strategies involve, among other things, a commitment to a varied, holistic and flexible approach to ASP and a practical commitment to increase the chances of success of disadvantaged Black students in a context, which is not designed to meet their educational needs.

In conclusion, the highlights and achievements of ASP at the University of the Witwatersrand require more support from the University, in technical and financial terms, as well as encouragement by the corporate sector and other institutions and professional bodies. What has been achieved by Wits ASP at this University lays the foundation for efficient strategies to establish effective ASP programmes. One of the strengths of ASP at the University of the Witwatersrand, is the emphasis placed on evaluation of the programmes, since 1984. The information that ASP evaluation has generated since then has constantly pointed the future direction of ASP and provided guidelines for tackling some of the issues raised in this discussion.

These evaluations have also revealed the main impediments to efficient and effective ASP programmes. The last three evaluation Reports (1989, 1990, and 1992), in particular, have underlined the complexity of the phenomena with which ASP has to deal. It has been stressed that a combination of all the factors considered essential for the success of ASP suggest that ASP, in its present form, cannot be expected, in itself, to have any really significant long-term impact on most of its clients. The implication is that, unless fundamental changes are effected on utilisation of available and anticipated resources, such as contact time with students and existing staff as well as those still to be employed, the long-term success of students remains in jeopardy. In the process of building the capacity of programmes, the University is expected to play an important

role, particularly, in terms of developing a vibrant infrastructure and indicating greater commitment to the cause of ASP through allocation of some resources to ASP initiatives.

On the broader front, the alternative forms of ASP that have been scientifically researched in terms of the criterion-referenced techniques suggested earlier, will require three crucial elements. These include, a serious endeavour to make more time available for academic support, a re-thinking of the structure, content and teaching of courses. The ultimate benefit to the student resides in the fact that a comprehensive strategy for academic support evolves (premised on a holistic paradigm of ASP intervention). While such a strategy has greater potential of success in meeting the long-term goals of programmes, by increasing graduation rates, it empowers students to be more independent, confident, and intelligent learners. Obviously the process of developing a comprehensive approach to ASP intervention would be incomplete without taking into account the influence of non-academic issues (financial insecurity and lack of suitable accommodation for study) on academic performance.

3.2.2 University of Cape Town

At the University of Cape Town initial contact was established with both the former and present ASP Directors. The reason for doing so was that recent staff changes there made it necessary to have as wide consultation as possible, particularly, with regard to the important information held by those who had been involved in the introduction of academic support programmes at UCT. Extensive interviews were held with other members of staff as well. Occasions such as the South African Association for Academic Development (SAAAD) conferences and various fora related to ASP activities were used for interviews, distribution of questionnaires and discussions on a wide range of ASP issues

and initiatives both past and present at UCT. A minimum of fourteen questionnaires were circulated at different times and stages during the survey process of which twelve were completed and returned.

In addition, numerous telephonical conversations were held with the predecessor and the present ASP Directors and faculty co-ordinators. In-depth tape-recorded interviews were conducted during personal visits, which were also sponsored through a research grant received from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). These visits were also used for the perusal of ASP records and to collect additional information from sources such as annual reports, bulletins and magazines. As a standard procedure, to expedite access to ASP activities and developments on a regular basis, the ASP Director agreed to provide the researcher with yearly updated ASP reports, which have been invaluable in the process of compiling the information presented below.

At the University of Cape Town none of the ASP students were interviewed, mainly, for logistical reasons. Firstly, the huge costs involved in travelling the long distance between UCT and Natal were forebidding, especially as the available financial resources, including the HSRC grant, had been depleted. Secondly, the itinerary of visits to all surveyed universities was planned, in consultation with ASP staff who had to be interviewed, in such a way that interviews coincided with their availability and in accordance with the pre-arranged and scheduled appointments. Deviations from these schedules and procedures would have disastrous consequences for the Study and possibly jeopardising its outcomes.

At UCT interviews with ASP staff could be held only before the beginning of the first semester and it was not possible to repeat the visit to UCT at a later stage for reasons already mentioned. Lastly, the amount of research conducted

on students' perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of attending ASP programmes appeared to have adequately satisfied the methodological requirements and covered the whole spectrum of concerns regarding representation of their views on whether or not they benefitted from ASP participation.

3.2.2.1 Historical background

The origin of the Academic Support Programme (ASP) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) lies in the establishment, in April 1980, of a Personal Tutor Scheme for First year students, who were considered at risk in not succeeding academically because of factors, beyond their control, operating before their entry into the University. From the outset the ASP's principal objective was to provide academic support for First Year students, who are considered to have the potential to succeed at the University of Cape Town, but have been academically disadvantaged as a result of factors arising from the under-resourced schooling system of the Department of Education and Training (DET) and particularly their disadvantaged educational background. ASP at UCT includes those Black (Coloured) students whose schooling falls under the Department of Education and Culture (House of Representatives - HOR) in terms of the tricameral political system in South Africa between 1983 and 1993.

Although the terms of reference for ASP have been modified occasionally, (notably by the adoption of the substance of the ASP Steering Committee's "Five Year Plan" submitted to the Academic Planning Committee on 24th June 1982) its principal objective has not changed. Following its original motivation, ASP's function should not be seen simply as an effort to reduce the overall First Year failure rate, or as a way of dealing with the problem of 'weak' student. But, rather, the central element in the University of Cape Town's response to the educational disadvantages arising from the Apartheid system of education in South Africa, is a

commitment to ensure easy access to the academic function of the University. ASP, in other words, seeks to assist students, who possess potential to succeed at university but, have been handicapped by the inadequacies of secondary schooling.

While ASP's programmes are in general open to all First Year students, who would benefit from them, is specifically concerned with problems experienced by students, who have matriculated under the aegis of the Department of Education and Training (DET), and the Department of Education and Culture (HOR). At UCT, Indian students from the Department of Education and Culture (House of Delegates - HOD) in terms of the tricameral political system in South Africa between 1983 and 1993, which totally excluded Africans from the political decision-making process for the country in favour of only three other racial minorities, that is, Coloureds, and Indians, the third of course being Whites of Caucasian extraction.

3.2.2.2 Mission Statement and the ASP Academic Plan

ASP initially concentrated on fundamental matters such as determining the needs of underprepared students, defining the target group for ASP and devising programmes to address those needs. The early structure of ASP reflected these main thrusts. The academic problems of underprepared students were categories as follows:

- * inadequate levels of English language competence,
- * difficulties in basic learning skills,
- * cognitive difficulties relating to specific subjects, for example, Mathematics and Science, Psychology and Sociology.

Various programmes were devised to address these problems, (including the employment of personal tutors to give individual tuition in English and other courses) a

Pre-University School, which concentrated on learning skills and other short skills courses, and departmentally-based tutorial programmes. As a result of the experience gained in implementing and evaluating those programmes, two major trends emerged, which were firstly, a move away from individual tutoring and short courses towards structured full-year courses; secondly, a movement away from generalised Study Skills and language programmes towards programmes that were in specific disciplines or groups of disciplines.

By the end of 1982 it had been decided that ASP's resources should, in future, be concentrated particularly on a discipline-related language programme, namely English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and a range of supplementary First Year courses in a few key subjects in which disadvantaged students were experiencing difficulties. These developments consolidated a decentralised structure, which had been considered most appropriate for ASP. The decentralised model has been of tremendous significance to ASP's subsequent development, not only because discipline-specific programmes have proved to be much as the ASP Director's Report (1992:3-5) points out, but also because it has helped to move ASP into the mainstream of University life and to ensure that the staff and students involved maintained as much contact as possible with their non-ASP peers in faculties and departments.

The Director's Report, Scott (1992:2) suggests that, since its inception in April 1980, ASP has always taken into account the context of its Mission and goals. A mission statement has been described as a means of identification with the context of activity, as follows:

"A hallmark of any intelligent activity, especially intellectual activity, is that the participants know what they are about... The mission statement serves as the foundation on which an institution builds and justifies the grounds for existence... A mission statement can for

the basis of subsequent policy and programme review, planning and legitimisation of executive action and discretion" (Ripinga, 1990:16)

An ASP context is a dynamic one in the sense that it the embodiment of community (including student) aspirations relating to ASP is expected to deliver. In view of community aspirations ASP has to take precautions that its programmes are in accordance with the Mission Statement of the ASP. Among other aims, the ASP Mission Statement stipulates that a great deal of effort must be focused on arranging academic support for students who are enrolled in the University and find it difficult to cope with First Year studies as a result of disadvantaged educational backgrounds, Scott (1992:3).

3.2.2.3 Identification of target group for academic support

The wider socio-political context of education in South Africa determines both racial characteristics and the racial estimates of disadvantaged students will seek academic support in universities. For example, it is common knowledge that, the extent of deterioration of the quality of matric results for DET and TBVC (the latter refers to pupils completing their secondary schooling in schools under the nominally independent homelands: Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei) schools has intensified so much that Hartshorne (1991:50) believes:

"African senior certificate/matriculation results do not provide a reliable reflection of either achievement or potential; because of this they have very limited prognostic value for academic success. The implication for universities is that selection on basis of 'measurable achievement' will continue to be most problematic for some considerable time."

The University of Cape Town has found itself dealing with many contentious issues arising from this situation. One of the most crucial issues is devising credible mechanisms for

measurement of potential. Thus, ASP has had to deal with, among others, the following:

- * finding ways of establishing effective criteria for identification of target without appearing to be in favour of racial discrimination;
- * being obliged to formulate policy relating to compulsory/voluntary attendance of certain ASP courses. This issue has become extremely controversial in ASP circles, since Black students have shown strong aversion to being compelled to attend activities of groups consisting predominantly or entirely of disadvantaged Black students. A policy in this regard could be interpreted as having racial connotations, which are not compatible with an educational institution that is expected to enshrine liberal and democratic ideals based on egalitarian principles;
- * appearing to encourage negative student perceptions of academic support that might be seen as being designed specially for Black students;
- * assisting categories of students, who are predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged. The combination of academic disadvantages and socio-economic disadvantages results in tensions arising from financial insecurity and other non-academic afflictions of unsuitable accommodation and inappropriate diet. All these are aggravating factors that detract from the effectiveness of ASP programmes.

In an effort to define appropriate target groups as accurately as possible, ASP has considered various criteria for identifying underprepared and disadvantaged students. ASP conceded that, given the numerous factors that influence

a student's chances of success at the University and the variety of skills and prior knowledge that are required by different disciplines, no general set of criteria could pin-point individual students at risk with any reasonable degree of accuracy. The basic guidelines for the formulation of a working definition of what would constitute educational disadvantage and under-preparedness at the University of Cape Town are based on similar principles as those of the other universities, more especially the University of the Witwatersrand. For example, the University of Cape Town ASP regards academic support as the preserve of disadvantaged Black students who are doing First Year for the first time, as well as students who have transferred from another university qualify for academic assistance, especially in English. Summing up the overall objective of ASP, J D Bradley (1984:42) says:

"The whole thrust of the ASP programme is aimed at inducting students into a new environment. This involves new ways of teaching, listening and speaking, new ways of reading and writing, new ways of studying and socializing. Most Black students find themselves in a state of culture-shock for the first few weeks, and have to confront numbers of non-academic adjustments before they even consider academic adjustments. ASP, with its slower pace, its smaller groups, its better staff-student ratio, allows time for both types of adjustment."

In depicting the context of ASP, probably applicable to all universities in South Africa, which are predominantly White, Bradley's outline brings deeper insight into the possible reasons for the University of Cape Town to include disadvantaged students who were transferring from other institutions and are equally disadvantaged and comply with criteria for identification of disadvantaged students, and perhaps, in addition experiencing for the first time "culture-shock" to which he refers in this extract.

3.2.2.4 Selection of target group for academic support

Besides under-preparedness, the other necessary attribute of ASP's principal target group is potential to succeed at the University. Methods of selecting students for ASP programmes therefore involve assessing both factors, and this has proved to be a perennial problem, not only for UCT, but for all other universities offering ASP programmes.

The open access policy, which was enunciated by the four predominantly historically White English-medium universities when they successfully resisted the implementation of the quota system in the Mid-Eighties, meant that they had to broaden selection criteria to include matters potential for university study as basis of admissions policy. The problem came from two considerations, namely, the known unreliability of the Black Matriculation results and absence of means to ascertain academic potential of Black students, in particular, since it had been discovered that, as a group, they were at high risk of failure and exclusion from university.

At UCT registration for ASP courses is voluntary except in instances where bursary-holders are required to take part in academic support. Some courses require prospective students to take entrance tests. This requirement applies to those who have not obtained a satisfactory Matric symbol in a particular subject, for example, English or Afrikaans, and cannot pass a departmental entrance test. In such cases the student is obliged to register for a foundation ASP course, which in the case of English used to be offered on a non-credit basis but has subsequently been developed into a full credit-bearing course known as English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Similar arrangements have been made in other departments and faculties at UCT to facilitate the integration of ASP courses into mainstream academic activities.

These measures, which include compulsory attendance of ASP courses, have, however, not resolved the issue of fairness to the student and the university. Therefore, it is more desirable and essential to devise "selection and placement criteria that are fair to all and as effective as possible in identifying ability... More effective selection criteria, which are not based solely on matric results and which will provide some indication of academic potential as well as 'manifest' performance, are urgently needed" (Scott, 1984:19).

In an effort to find more reliable criteria, which Scott is concerned about, ASP has been engaged in devising tests of its own and monitoring the effectiveness of other tests used by faculties and departments. The most successful of the ASP tests is the English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) which is used as a placement test for EAP programmes. It has been standardised and each year ASP are gathering more data on its validity. At UCT, thus, the selection process is decentralised and departments freely choose admissions tests that are appropriate to the requirements of the courses offered. At University level the point system, through which points are allocated on basis of symbols attained in each Matric subject, is applied.

3.2.2.5 Types of programmes offered

Since its inception ASP has explored effective models of academic support. Experience gained in the first few years of ASP's service have led to the recognition of two basic issues in devising academic support:

- * difficulties experienced by underprepared students at UCT require a high level of intervention, so that short courses and weekly sessions, with personal tutors, should be replaced by structured

full year programmes, which are most effective and cheapest.

- * ASP programmes should be directly relevant to specific disciplines. Appropriate study skills should be integrated into subjects, rather than taught in isolation.

These issues have brought about realisation of the important role of academic support and the ways in which this services should be provided. ASP courses fall into four broad categories, which are: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or Language Development course, foundation courses, concurrent programmes, extended curriculum courses. EAP offers a range of courses, which are aimed at assisting students for whom English is a second language. It is available in the Faculties of Arts, Commerce, Education, Science, Social Science and Humanities, and Engineering wherein it includes a component of Communication. Foundation courses bear no credits towards the degree programme. They provide students with broad knowledge, which serves as preparation for university study. Special emphasis is placed on developing key concepts, academic skills, and effective learning approaches to learning. Foundation courses are offered in Chemistry, Life Sciences, Mathematics and Physics. Concurrent tutorial programmes are offered in more than twenty subjects and provide students with background knowledge and academic skills related to a particular subject. Extended curriculum courses are based on the syllabuses of regular First Year degree courses in a particular discipline, such as Mathematics, Economics, Afrikaans, Latin, and Mathematical Statistics. Students, through extended curriculum credit-bearing courses, are provided with intensive study materials on these subjects, (Scott, 1990:9).

3.2.2.6 Forms and content of academic support

In 1992, which is within the period covered in this review of the first decade of ASP at predominantly White English-medium universities, the University of Cape Town has four types of programmes under the aegis of ASP, as already described. The extent and content of the material covered in each of these programmes differs with the type of course in which academic support is offered.

These courses and programmes are taught and funded by ASP. Certain of these courses are combined to form integrated Bridging or Foundation programmes offered in Commerce, Engineering, and Science. On the whole, growth in ASP student numbers is occurring mainly through the introduction of new programmes, as well through the increase in demand for Bridging and Foundation programmes.

Scott (1992:5) points out that it is not possible to provide overall estimates of students attending specific courses since, "global 'headcount' figures are not meaningful as the level of contact with ASP varies greatly from student to student." However, since 1986, enrolments have increased dramatically in terms of individual students, who attend ASP courses and concurrent programmes.

In addition to ASP-sponsored programmes listed above, recent years have seen the introduction of two new ASP-related courses, namely the Introduction to English Language (ELLL103S) and Introduction to the Study of Law (RDL100H), by the Department of English and Faculty of Law respectively. These courses have been designed particularly for Black English Second Language students and, along with the new tutorial programmes in Geology that was introduced as a component of ASPECT, are important additions to the list of ASP-related departmental initiatives.

It is noteworthy that ASP has expanded its direct teaching activities, mainly through the introduction of new courses and programmes with staffing implications. The basic structure of most of ASP's programmes has stabilised over the last three years, and the innovative efforts of the staff, responsible for these programmes, are being directed mainly towards improving their methodologies and adapting to the growing proportion of DET matriculants in their classes, the majority of whom have not experienced stable learning conditions for some years as a result of the ongoing turbulence in Black schools.

New courses and programmes, that have been introduced in the past three years include, firstly, ASPECT Engineering Year 2 in which the regular First Year Curriculum includes enrichment work, before students proceed to senior courses in Engineering; secondly, Commerce ASP is a structured bridging programme based loosely on the ASPECT model. It replaces the previous reduced curriculum programme, which has proved to be inadequate to meet students' learning needs in subjects in which they lack grounding, particularly Economics. Thirdly, Geology provides an alternative stream within ASPECT. Lastly, the Life Sciences Foundation Course (Z00001H) has been introduced as an additional compulsory component of the Science Foundation Programme.

Between 1990 and 1992 Preparatory work had been completed and additional courses and programmes had been introduced into ASP-related activities:

- Afrikaans I Extended Curriculum programme is a new departmental initiative, which is funded by ASP and enables disadvantaged students to spread their mainstream academic curriculum over two years;
- restructuring of the recommended "law stream" B.A. Curriculum is another innovative effort to streamline this particular programme;

- ASP in Medicine is focusing on a proposed bridging programme, based of ASPECT model but featuring Faculty-specific components for the benefit of medical students;
- a "hybrid curriculum" for selected students on the Science Foundation Programme allows for various combinations of Foundation and Mainstream First Year courses. This type of curriculum was introduced in 1991.
- an attempt has been made for concurrent tutorial programmes to be provided, in order to render academic support to mainstream First Year Science courses;
- arrangements had been made for concurrent tutorial and counselling programmes to make academic support available to mainstream first year Engineering courses; and finally,
- a pre-orientation programme for new entrants from DET schools had been organised.
- In 1992 a variety of courses and programmes were introduced as follows: restructured concurrent tutorial programmes in English, Drama and Social Work. Tutorial programmes were introduced in in Information Systems I, Financial Accounting II, and Chemical Engineering. First Year Architecture and Fine Arts students are now offered concurrent tutorials. A course in Physics linked to the Science Foundation Programme is offered to Medical students in MEDASP Years I and II, the latter year incorporating Anatomy and Cell Biology, Chemistry and Introduction to Medicine B. In Environmental and Geographical Science I, an interim concurrent tutorial has been introduced.

Scott (ibid.:10) notes that a most significant feature of ASP in recent years at UCT, and 1992 in particular, has been the spread and quality of departmental initiatives, taken to establish specialised support programmes or new courses, designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged students in specific disciplines. He believes these efforts are a result of existing co-operation between ASP and academic staff in faculties as he puts it:

"Activities of this kind, along with the broader contributions made by ASP staff in their 'home' faculties and departments, are of growing importance to ASP work as it is clear that sustained interaction and collaboration between competent ASP staff and mainstream academic staff is a key means of initiating and implementing AD (Academic Development) on the ground" italics mine. (ibid.:9).

Furthermore, most of ASP's departmentally-based permanent staff, had been increasingly drawn into the planning and teaching of mainstream First Year courses with mutually beneficial results. It seems reasonable, Scott (ibid.:3), concludes in the 1992 Annual Report, to assume that, with the creation of the post of Assistant Director (Student Development and Outreach), which was filled in 1992, ASP's "outreach" function will play a vital role in establishing stronger links with neighbouring schools in which recruitment efforts of talented Black students will be increased, tertiary institutions and relevant community organisations. Within the University, moves by academic departments to accommodate a changing student population were being encouraged through regular meetings between ASP staff and faculty academic staff and workshops.

3.2.2.7 Evaluation of actual programmes

Systematic evaluation of ASP programmes and general progress has always been recognised by ASP staff as essential for effective development of the field. However, it has been difficult to find effective evaluation methods. There is no

keen interest in embarking on evaluation, which entirely depends on statistical techniques. The general view is that statistical techniques have proved to be inadequate for ASP evaluation requirements. Many difficulties were being experienced in obtaining meaningful and objective data, especially in relation to the supply of statistical information on various aspects of ASP activities. Allocating the responsibility of evaluation to ASP tutors and lecturers is susceptible to misrepresentation of data, which it is alleged, on occasions, has inhibited ASP's efforts to extend its work into new areas and ventures. The lack of objectivity, in assessing the situation correctly, has resulted in missed opportunities for the expansion of ASP at UCT. This situation can be remedied, perhaps, by recruitment of suitable personnel for placement in strategic positions, including the central ASP Unit, to conduct research and evaluation of programmes.

It is not clear, at this stage, to what extent arrangements were being made to appoint a person with such specialised research skills. There will be need to conduct interviews and make an assessment of the views, experiences and perceptions of those who have been involved in the programmes, as students, ASP staff and faculty academic staff. In this way, it will be possible to elicit attitudes, opinions, suggestions and advice quality and efficacy of ASP services. It is not clear, at this stage, to what extent arrangements were being made to appoint a person with such specialised research skills. It could be that the shortage of trained personnel in educational evaluation has delayed the appointment. The main obstacle then arises from the realisation that embarking on such a project requires a full-time permanent appointment as is the case at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The choice of appropriate forms of evaluation for ASP activities, as noted in earlier discussion, is never a straightforward matter. This leads us to the conclusion that

no single technique of evaluation is adequate in itself. Thus, the appropriate strategy is to use an eclectic approach, which incorporates the positive aspects of different evaluation methods. This means that statistical techniques have to be complemented by qualitative techniques to yield assessment results that can be reliable.

The main difficulties, involved in statistically based evaluation, stem, largely, from the complexity of the problems that ASP has to address and, also, from the fact that the initial development of ASP, in the early Eighties, involved rapid expansion and constant change. For example, the majority of the ASP's core courses existed, in their present form, for no more than two years. So, no longitudinal evaluation has, as yet, been possible and, in these circumstances, the relevant statistical data that has been collected, should be treated with caution. Added to that is the small number of students involved in most of the programmes. The large number of significant variables affecting students' performance, both in the ASP programmes and in their curricula in general, and the fact that virtually no valid control groups can be identified, all represent stumbling-blocks. Consequently, the predominant belief, among ASP staff, is that sophisticated statistical evaluation techniques and methods based on the 'biological' (natural sciences) research model, cannot at this stage be relied upon to provide valid information as it can, in fact, be seriously misleading. The alternative is a scientific approach based on empirical data.

The complexity of the context within which ASP has developed, requires a full understanding of what the University expects of ASP, which has not yet been accomplished. In other words, it will not absolutely clear what the University expects of ASP until ASP can show, through evaluation, what it is capable of achieving. Therefore, an evaluation forms an essential aspect of ASP's function to assist the University to reach such an under-

standing and be convinced of ASP potential and weaknesses.

The development of ASP should, therefore, be seen, not only in terms of the level of academic assistance it can offer to disadvantaged students, or the performance of students on its programmes, but also in terms of the understanding that has been gained of the difficulties experienced by educationally underprepared or disadvantaged students and of the ways in which those difficulties may best be approached. In this regard, the Advisory Committee of ASP has noted that the functioning and activities of ASP, at this stage may, with reasonable justification, be considered as a 'series of feasibility studies'.

3.2.2.8 Staffing and administrative infrastructure of ASP

By the middle of the First Decade of ASP at the University of Cape Town, ASP's permanent staff had expanded to comprise the posts of Director (formerly at senior lecturer level, currently at associate professor level), Deputy Director (formerly at lecturer level, currently at senior lecturer level), Co-ordinator of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), who is also Assistant Director, formerly at lecturer rank, currently at senior lecturer rank) and Academic Counselling Officer currently at lecturer rank. Today, ASP staff has increased as the functions of ASP have diversified to more adequately meet the challenges of its environment.

The main feature of current ASP is its decentralised structure. The Central Unit, is situated separately from mainstream academic departments. It is both an administrative unit for ASP as a whole, as well as a resource centre to assist ASP staff to perform their functions, either at Central Unit level or in faculties and departments, in which they work. At the Central Unit is found the Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director/EAP Co-ordinator, Academic Counselling Officer, Administrative Officer and Senior Secretary, as well as other academic

staff of the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP). This Unit is responsible for the overall co-ordination of academic support activities across the campus and for the inter-faculty EAP programmes. All other staff are seconded, to or appointed by, the faculties that employ them and are responsible to the relevant dean or head of department as well as to ASP. Thus, dual accountability is applicable to faculty-based ASP staff.

The 1991 ASP Director's Annual Report emphasises that this type of organisational structure reflects the conviction that, while it is important for ASP staff to maintain contact in the interests of co-operation and a process of mutual learning and for the development of common principles, it is equally important that ASP staff and programmes should, wherever possible, be integrated into mainstream academic departments and faculty structures.

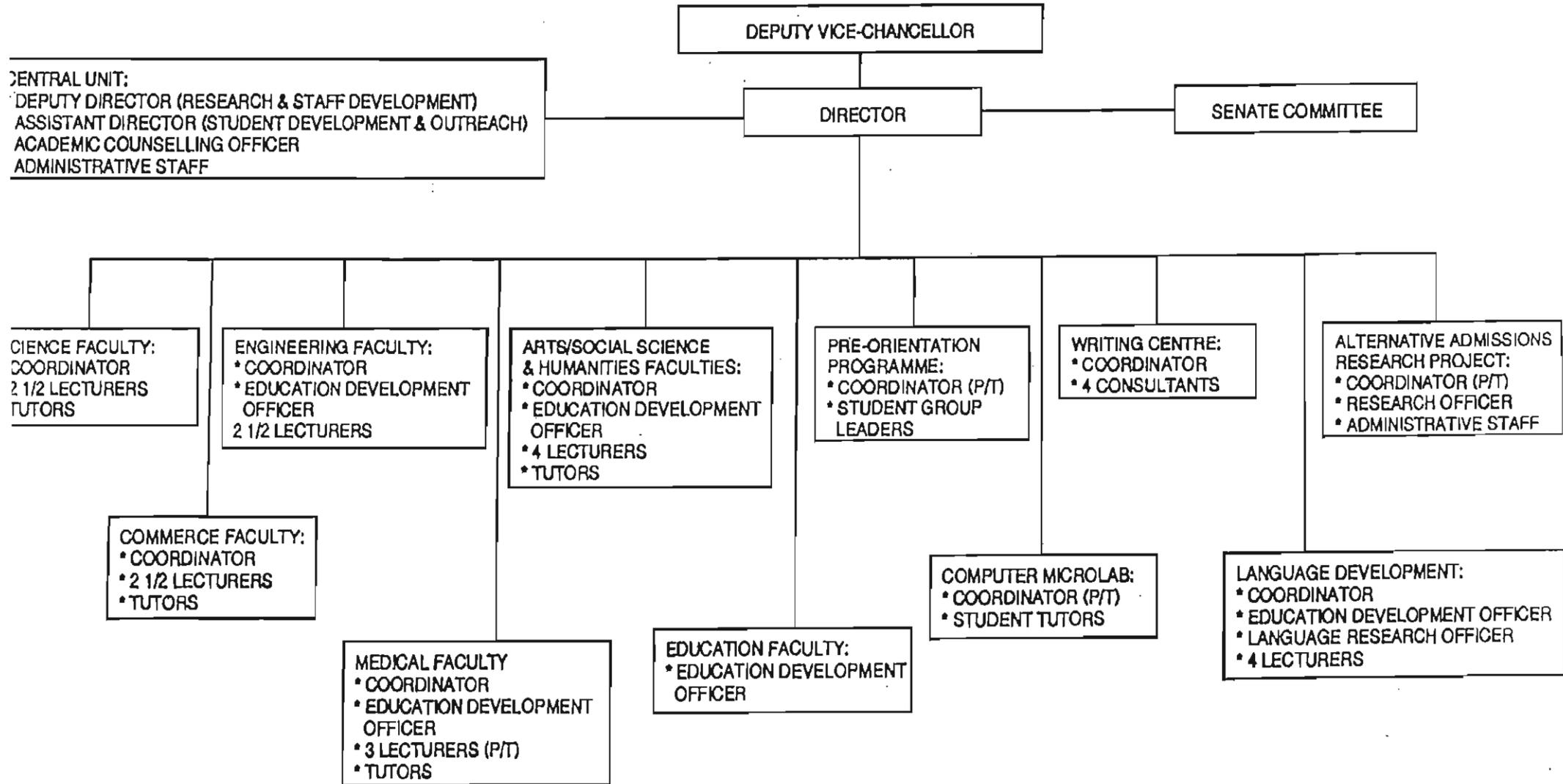
The decentralised structure of ASP is organised in terms of the Faculty-Based Model for providing ASP services. There are programme co-ordinators for the Faculties of Commerce, Engineering, Medicine, Science. Permanent academic staff on the ASP establishment, as well as many of the temporary staff, are also full members of relevant faculty boards.

In 1992 there are 36 full-time members of the academic staff employed by ASP and thirty-two lecturers and teaching assistants with various part-time responsibilities (Scott, 1992:17). Administrative support consisted of an temporary Administrative Officer, a senior secretary, and a part-time administrative assistant for ASPECT (an ASP programme in the Engineering Faculty). The 1992 ASP establishment includes, fourteen permanent academic posts, and the three co-ordinators of ASPECT, MEDASP, and AARP respectively. Six of these posts and additional two at senior lecturer level are financed from donated funds and the remaining posts are financed from the general revenue of the University.

It appears that ASP Models differ from faculty to faculty, as determined by the various needs and approaches of faculties. Periodically, all ASP staff and others associated with ASP work come together to share the knowledge and experiences of their work. But the faculty-based structure is maintained throughout so that academic support is seen to be involved within the context of academic activity and the effectiveness of ASP courses, through devising coherent strategies for addressing the curriculum in a structured way in each faculty, is enhanced.

The perception exists that it is one of the most important activities in staff development for ASP staff to attend conferences and hold meetings with colleagues in other universities or institutions. But, the most important criterion should be the quality of those fora and the expertise that is shared through participation. Therefore, for development of ASP to maturity, greater emphasis should be on ways of advancing knowledge about ASP field, through expansion of horizons of perspectives. The recently announced lifting of sanctions on cultural and academic exchange programmes, will allow ASP members of staff to widen their experiences contact with other academics and relevant organisations at international level. Along the same lines, the ASP Advisory Committee has recommended that ASP pursue an active staff development programme. Similarly, ASP staff has had to be encouraged to undertake educational research projects, particularly in direct relation to their own teaching. Such research, the Advisory Committee has recommended, should be fully recognised in assessment of ASP staff for appointment or promotion purposes.

The organogram of ASP (see Figure 2, below) demonstrates the reporting relationships within the Central Unit as well as between the core (permanent staff in the Central Unit) ASP staff and faculty based ASP staff members.



It will be noticed that, while the Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director/EAP Co-ordinator and Academic Counselling Officer are situated in the Central Unit, other Co-ordinators are situated in the faculties, for example, Commerce, Science, Medicine, Engineering, Arts and Social Science and Humanities to which they are assigned.

3.2.2.9 Funding of ASP programmes

For many years, ASP has continuously relied upon financial assistance from three sources, namely, University funds, external donations from South African and international corporations, and research grants from donor agencies, including levies on bursaries administration. These are the three main sources of revenue for ASP and, it is on basis of these contributions that the financial position of ASP can be described. It is noteworthy that the University's contribution to ASP funding has, in the last eight years, gradually decreased from more than 50% in 1986 to approximately 20% in 1992 compared with 25% in 1991, (Scott, 1992:18). This is an indication that in the future, ASP is more likely to become increasingly dependent on external donations to finance its operations and any further expansion of its activities. Taking into consideration the escalating expenditure on ASP programmes in terms of salaries for staff, who tend to be highly specialised in their fields, reliance on external has increased. The Independent Development Trust (IDT) and Ford Foundation grants currently meet the majority of ASP's full-time staffing costs.

The fortunate part, for UCT ASP, is that income, at present, still exceeds expenditure. ASP administration has invested its current surplus in endowment funds, in order to be able to provide for future needs.

Concerning bursaries, the Vice-Chancellor of UCT observed in 1990 that the availability of adequate bursary funds is

essential to facilitate the admission and academic progress of increasing numbers of Black students on campus. However, some bursary sponsors will withdraw a bursary if the student fails. It is in such instances, that ASP's intervention is recognised, in the sense that programmes provide academic assistance to students so that they pass enough courses to be able to promote to following year of studies, thus meeting requirements of bursary sponsors.

The decision by some bursary schemes, including the British Council and, to a certain extent, the Educational Opportunities Council (EOC) and others, to make continued bursary sponsorship depends on participation in ASP programmes, is to be encouraged. Such a bursary policy decision benefits the students in two ways: firstly, many disadvantaged students come to the University without knowing the actual demands of university study, and have to be persuaded to take ASP courses to help them pass in their courses. It appears that bursary sponsors are in a good position to encourage students, who hold bursaries, to register for ASP to improve their academic performance. Secondly, the linkage between funding and academic progress reinforces the importance of academic success: it rewards students, who are making progress in their studies. In this way, it sets standards for financial assistance, which ensure that funding is available to those who make the effort to succeed by using facilities provided by ASP programmes.

At UCT, some bursary schemes also contribute to the operating costs of ASP. In a way, this is an indication of the developing acceptance of joint responsibility between bursary institutions and ASP and revives the original commitment of the corporate sector to improve the level of education for disadvantaged communities, which was demonstrated during the inception of ASP, when substantial funds were contributed by business. For its part, ASP has agreed to take the responsibility for the administration of

bursaries from sponsors, who have requested this service, for example, the South African Institute of Race Relations, and Public Affairs of Mobil. The role of ASP involves, among other things, liaison on such matters as circulation of information concerning conditions of bursary award, selection procedures, scheduled dates for payment of fees, maintenance of relevant records and submission of academic progress reports.

This responsibility also includes provision of general student counselling, which is co-ordinated by the Central Unit but involves referral to specialist academic and non-academic advisers, in some instances.

3.2.2.10 Results of ASP programmes

While a number of problems can be identified in the current form and operation of ASP, there are nevertheless encouraging signs that ASP programmes have potential to succeed in achieving short-term goals, namely, assisting disadvantaged students to pass courses for which they are registered. Moreover, some of the common problems, such as under-utilisation of the foundation courses and erratic attendance at supplementary courses, may be at least partly due to factors such as selection procedures or inadequate control of the curricula of disadvantaged students.

ASP still plays a central role in assisting a number of underprepared students to overcome disadvantages and proceed with studies. This will be shown below, when the success rate of ASP students is examined. For example, all students, who gained access to a mainstream B.Sc programme by passing the Science Foundation Programme Course would not have had the opportunity of entering the Faculty of Science, because of their poor educational background. In other cases a relatively high proportion of students on ASP programmes, that is students who could be clearly identified as being

very much at risk, have succeeded in passing mainstream courses, that many of them would otherwise have failed.

The statistical information shown below reflects results of ASP students who registered for ASP courses in 1991. Throughout this Section a distinction is drawn between core ASP courses, meaning courses that are designed and implemented by ASP, and departmental programmes, which are tutorials offered by individual mainstream departments in response to the perceived needs of students in particular subject areas. In the core ASP courses seven major programmes are included. **Figures 3a and 3b** below show student numbers enrolled in ASP Core Courses in 1991 and pass rates in terms of numbers and percentages:

Figure 3a, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ASP) STUDENT NUMBERS AND PERFORMANCE IN ASP CORE COURSES IN 1991

PROGRAMMES AND COURSES	No. enrolled	No. Passed	% Passed
ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP)			
Arts, Social Science & Humanities, Commerce, and Education (EAP:A)			
ASP 101F	192	173	90%
ASP 102S	20	19	95%
Overall EAP: A pass rate*			94%
Science (EAP:B)			
ASP005F **	23	18	73%
ASP006S	2	2	100%
Overall EAP:B pass rate	23	20	87%
SCIENCE FOUNDATION PROGRAMME			
CEM002F	32	32	100%
CEM1095	79	41	52%
MTH103H	31	25	81%
ASP103H	31	25	81%
PHY002F	32	30	94%
PHY1065	30	29	97%
ASP ENGINEERING AT CAPE TOWN (ASPECT)			
END100W	43	40	93%
MTH101S	7	5	71%
AMA103W	30	23	77%
END104W	50	39	78%
GLY105F	7	7	100%
GLY1075	7	0	0%
CEM100W	14	13	93%

SOURCE: ASP DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1991

NOTE: FIGURES NOT PREPARED FOR 1992 DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Figure 3b, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ASP) STUDENT NUMBERS AND PERFORMANCE IN ASP CORE COURSES IN 1991

PROGRAMMES AND COURSES		No. enrolled	No. Passed	.% Passed
ASP COMMERCE				
ECO102W	Economics I	48	30	63%
STA101F	Statistics	42	38	90%
STA100S	Statistics 100	42	33	79%
ASP101F	EAP	38	34	89%
ACC105H	Accounting	29	10	34%
MEDASP				
CMH100H	Introduction to Medicine A	22	21	95%
ANT100H	Anatomy	22	21	95%
MBI100W	Human Biology	22	21	95%
PHY105H	Physics for Medical Students	22	13	59%
INTRODUCTORY/EXTENDED COURSES				
ELL103S	Intro to Eng Lang & Lit	120	79	87%
RDL101S	Intro to Study of Law	42	28	66%
CLA107H	Latin Intensive A	63	31	49%
CLA108H	Latin Intensive B	40	17	43%
AFR104H	Afrikaans Extended Prog	39	29	48%
AFR105H	Afrikaans Ext Prog Year 2	23	15	65%
INTENSIVE CONCURRENT PROGRAMMES		***		
Foundation English (Eng I)		35	31	89%
History I		40	40	100%
Psychology I		62	56	88%
Sociology I: 1st Semester		72	52	72%
2nd Semester		96	75	78%

SOURCE: ASP DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1991
 NOTE: FIGURES NOT PREPARED FOR 1992 DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Asterisks below provide additional information on enrollments and pass rates as indicated by a given number of asterisk(s) in both Figures 3a and 3b.

* The ASP102S enrolment comprised 38 students, who were required to continue with EAP in the Second Semester after having failed the First Semester course. The EAP:A overall pass rate, therefore, reflects the total number of students who passed EAP:A in 1990, in either the June or November examination.

** Three of these students de-registered from the Science Faculty in the Second Term, leaving a total of 20 students. This then would make the pass rate 90% for ASPO0%F, and the overall pass rate 100% for EAP:B.

*** The pass rate for the Intensive Concurrent Programme reflects the percentage of the total number of students, who attended and passed the mainstream courses concerned. The pass rate is not necessarily a good reflection of the effectiveness of some programmes which, taking into consideration they they are non-compulsory, in some cases have suffered from erratic attendance.

In the above is given a summary of student participation and performance in ASP courses at UCT. For further clarification of student performance in terms of overall success rate of students, who registered for EAP (ASP101F) which is offered across faculties and considered to be an essential component of academic support for students who are Second Language speakers, the following table demonstrates that over the period of five years there is noticeable improvement in the results. **Figure 4** below reflects 1991 data with a marked decrease in the rate of students, who were excluded from the University. The fact that exclusion rules, meaning rules applied in terminating studies, when a student fails to meet requirements for continuing with studies, have also somewhat

changed is one of the variables that operate and indicate an improved state of affairs.

Figure 4, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ASP) IMPROVED RESULTS IN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP) IN 1991

YEAR	NO. ATTENDING ASP101F COURSE	NO./% GRADUATING	NO./% EXCLUDED	CONTINUING	DROPPED OUT
1987	156	68/44%	67/43%	21/13%	Nil
1988	204	60/29%	78/38%	66/32%	Nil
1989	168	35/21%	32/19%	95/57%	6/4%
1990	200	0/0%	19/15%	163/82%	8/4%
1991	194	0/0%	6/3%	166/87%	1/0.5%

SOURCE: ASP DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1991

NOTE: FIGURES NOT PREPARED FOR 1992 DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

An important aspect to consider is that, as the 1990 and 1991 data do not include students who might still be excluded, it is, perhaps, more appropriate to focus on the 1989 data in comparison with the preceding two years. Therefore, it is noted that of the 1989 intake, 21% graduated within three years, 19% were excluded, and 57% were still continuing at UCT. This shows considerable improvement on the figures for the preceding years and may be as a result of academic support in departments, as well as a strengthened EAP:A course.

Although the content of this Course remains largely the same as in 1990, the focus of teaching has now shifted, from what EAP course designers call Science in Society, to the Language of Reasoning in Science. This shift has occurred for two reasons, namely, as an attempt to integrate content with subject matter - in other words, what is taught in the Course should be closely related to content of a mainstream course, by reflecting how scientific content has developed historically and to provide learners with language, which will be a tool for reasoning.

Overall, student evaluation, especially from those studying Botany, Chemistry and Physics, is fairly positive particularly where students have to read and do practical writing. However, students studying CSC, MTH and SMS do not generally find EAP to be of help in their courses. Moreover, the trend is for students, who graduated from DET high schools to study the Mathematics Course rather than the more scientific literature. This making a Language programme seem less relevant to them. The Science tutor believes that such 'non-literary' courses may not provide students with sufficient opportunities to develop academic language skills and that this could affect their overall performance in mainstream courses.

It has been noticed that the attitudes of students towards the Course have improved. Most probably the reason is that

the students are now able to use the language of scientific reasoning, which is more appropriate to the subject matter of mainstream courses. A fairly high examination standard of performance is a reflection of it.

3.2.2:11 Overall impressions

We have examined, in this survey of ASP results, the structure, content and problems encountered by EAP tutors. This Course has been selected for more in-depth investigation, mainly because it is an ideal example of the types of ASP course offered and embodies common problems with other ASP courses. In order to illustrate the types of problems that are encountered in providing academic support on an autonomous course, which is not linked to another course to count for credit, we will survey the situation in the Faculty of Commerce, which has experienced, relatively, numerous problems in attempting to stem the high failure and drop-out rates.

In 1991, 75% of African students in First Year B.Comm were registered in ASP, referred to as CASP (Commerce ASP). Foundation Accounting is a new Course that was introduced during the Second Semester of 1991. Four areas of concern were raised regarding the role of academic support in the Faculty. To demonstrate the immensity of the problem, the following **Figure 5** below provides some historical background focusing on the high drop-out rate:

Figure 5, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ASP) DROP-OUT RATE IN THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE IN 1991

YEAR OF INTAKE	ENROLMENT	YEAR OF STUDY				EITHER EXCLUDED, DROPPED- OUT OR TRANSFERRED
		1	2	3	GRADUATED	
1987	50	—	—	9	1	40
1988	13	—	3	1	—	9
1989	24	—	12	—	—	12
1990	39	26	—	—	—	13
1991	46	46				—

SOURCE: ASP DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1991

NOTE: FIGURES NOT PREPARED FOR 1992 DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Foundation Accounting Course aims to reduce the number of difficulties encountered by students. It has been identified as one of the subjects in which disadvantaged students fail constantly. Although approximately 60% of the First Year intake are proceeding to the next year of study, urgent measures should be taken to reduce the drop-out rate at the Second Year level, in particular, when students no longer participate in CASP. It appears that academic support is still needed at this level, especially in core courses of Accounting and Economics. This should be done without increasing dependence on such support in the long term.

Besides the high drop-out rate, the second area of concern is the non-credit status of EAP which is anomalous compared with the accreditation of EAP, in other faculties. In recent discussions, the Faculty reiterated that its refusal to consider accreditation was based on fears that this course would be prepared by students at the expense of core subjects in the Faculty. Faculty staff, it seems, were concerned that a 'soft option' course may result in the neglect of mainstream courses.

There appears to be a need to develop innovative tutorial techniques and stimulating reading material especially in Economics and avoid prescribing inappropriate textbooks, meaning that main textbooks seem to be irrelevant to the Course content, such as those that do not deal directly with curricular structure and shift focus exclusively to foreign issues. Finally, closer co-operation between the Faculty of Commerce and ASP staff, since on a number of occasions there have been reports of negative perceptions of CASP in the Faculty and that certain Faculty staff members display a hostile attitude towards the programme. Apparently, these problems are not caused by individuals simply with intent to undermine the efforts of CASP staff or showing lack of concern for disadvantaged students. On the contrary, perhaps, some delicate issues have been overlooked in the enthusiasm to get the programme implemented and functioning.

For example, staff in the Faculty may find it difficult to identify with a programme until its role in it is clearly explained and the extent of their involvement in its implementation outlined more explicitly. Fortunately, indications are that continuous consultations between ASP and Faculty staff will make it possible to remove hindrances by involving the latter more extensively in the activities of CASP. One way of doing this is to establish a consultative forum comprising members from different departments in the Faculty to advise on CASP operations.

3.2.2.12 Evaluation of ASP programmes at the University of Cape Town

In this Section, problems and possible solutions with regard to staffing, and models of ASP to ensure effective implementation and results have been examined. The major impression gained, concerning staffing of the Unit, is the of high staff turnover. Various factors, including unsatisfactory conditions of employment could account for it. This is not peculiar to UCT, for Wits and other universities have similar experiences. At UCT drastic measures are being taken to address the problem and there are noticeable signs that a better deal for staff can be worked out. The ASP Advisory Committee has come to realise that the improvement of staff employment conditions, particularly through the establishment of permanent or longer term contract posts at appropriate levels, remains an important factor in the ASP's ability to attract and retain suitably qualified and committed staff and to continue with the process of establishing a professional orientation to work. What has been achieved in this regard, mainly as a result of the University's readiness to, continuously allocate funds or to underwrite posts, which are financed from donated funds, has produced substantial benefits in curbing the demoralisation of staff.

The University's intervention to improve staff working conditions, has also brought about improvement in the understanding and practice of ASP teaching, as well as revitalising staff commitment to on-going development of teaching programmes, undertaking research related to ASP work and evaluation of ASP programmes. The period spanning the inception at UCT of ASP, to the end of the first decade has brought about the realisation that long term progress for ASP depends, to a large extent, on the high calibre of its staff.

Therefore, assessing the needs of the staff has been of high priority. One way to approach the issue is to establish challenging career paths and goals for staff. Junior ASP personnel can be assured of a clear promotion path through programmes related to their academic and professional development. This would involve, among other things, creating organisational structures of ASP that have an equal and fair distribution of senior posts in all major areas of ASP involvement. For example, a co-ordinator's post at senior lecturer level in one faculty, would entail creation of a similar post at the same rank in another faculty, so that fairness is done in the upgrading of posts and promoting individuals to fill those posts.

Thus, it has been found desirable at UCT to have staff structures organised on the basis of faculty-based groupings, with co-ordinators taking charge of those groupings and reporting to the ASP director as shown in the organogram. Such co-ordinator posts already exist for Commerce, ASPECT (Engineering, EAP (English), AARP (Research) MEDASP (Medicine), Science. This leaves Arts, Social Science & Humanities as the main areas that do not have adequate co-ordination structures.

In response to staff needs mentioned, ASP Advisory Committee mandated the former ASP Director, Jon File and the present incumbent, Ian Scot, with the brief to identify particular

needs in the staff establishment and discuss their findings with the Staffing Committee, chairperson, with special reference to these issues: firstly, the possibility of University funding for permanent posts, still financed by donations; secondly, conversion of certain temporary posts into permanent posts; thirdly, the extension of contract periods; fourthly, the possibility of establishing new posts in recently established initiatives and development areas; and, finally the upgrading of certain junior posts to provide for faculty-based co-ordination and to offer more promotion opportunities to staff.

With regard to instituting a comprehensive approach to ASP, the position at UCT, based on the recommendations of the Reid Report (Reid, 1985:7), indicates that serious problems may be encountered if an attempt is made to select a single model as appropriate for all situations in which ASP is involved. Therefore, ASP maintains diversification of programmes as a way of responding to needs of disadvantaged students according to prevailing circumstances in different faculties.

The main weakness of ASP, at UCT, is the lack of evaluation of ASP programmes and activities. Rein (1985:24) recommended "that further research into and evaluation of key aspects of the ASP should be undertaken, to serve as the basis for future development." However, there are no clear signs that a comprehensive evaluation of ASP is about to begin. Under the Section on Funding, it was mentioned that huge funds have been donated, both locally and internationally. ASP will soon be under extreme pressure from various stockholders, meaning individual and organisations with vested interests in the success of ASP to provide some measurement of the success of the programmes in achieving both short-term and long-term goals of ASP. It is the effectiveness of ASP in this regard, that is likely to determine future development and retain the confidence of

those who have invested in the successful implementation of ASP programmes.

3.2.2.13 Conclusion

It has become clear that ASP at UCT has developed into a visible manifestation of the University of Cape Town's commitment to resolving problems faced by disadvantaged students. The strategies used in ASP initiatives between 1985 and 1992 have introduced changes in the way of dealing with the problems of disadvantaged students.

The inadequacies of the ASP strategies in the early phase, between 1980 and 1985, compelled change in the model of providing academic support. The Skills Tutorial Scheme of the early, which seems to have worked, when numbers of disadvantaged students were still relatively small, soon became inappropriate, when large numbers of such students were admitted. The original ASP scheme was based on a personal tutorial model on academic skills. In the early Eighties, students, who were offered tutoring on academic skills, had been selected for university study on basis of results obtained from selection tests to determine suitability for tertiary education. The screening procedures limited admission to those qualifying to be candidates for university entrance, hence smaller numbers were admitted than is the case today.

When all and sundry could be admitted, on basis of affirmative action policies adopted by open universities, and also as a result of the scrapping of the quota system in 1986, ASP strategies had to change. Primary consideration had to be given to cognitive and curriculum development issues. ASP, at UCT, has since adopted the infusion model, which seeks the integration of ASP courses with faculty curricular structures. Although, initially, ASP programmes met with resistance from some faculty staff, there are strong indications that the majority of faculty staff now

support ASP initiatives. In fact, most solutions to problems of disadvantaged students are reached through joint consultation and decision-making process.

At this stage, ASP possesses the potential of being the embodiment of the University's affirmative action policy in relation to handling the problems of disadvantaged students from so-so-economically disadvantaged communities. The Reid Report (Reid, 1985:21) refers to the significance of ASP in bringing about equality of opportunity for everyone.

3.2.3 Rhodes University

At Rhodes University initial contact was established with the ASP Director and soon thereafter with the former Education, Law and Divinity Faculty Co-ordinator and later other Faculty Co-ordinator, tutors and administrative staff. Subsequently, several meetings were held with them at various venues including the ASP offices on campus, SALAD conferences and seminars/workshops organised by ASP staff. On regular basis the Director's and faculty co-ordinator's annual reports and correspondence, relating to ASP activities and developments, has been received. Communication links with Rhodes ASP were essentially based on lengthy telephonical conversations, which were supplemented by personal visits undertaken by the researcher and other artefactory sources of materials.

As already mentioned, during these visits many documents, including annual reports from the ASP Director and Faculty Co-ordinator, bulletins, and pamphlets were collected. These documents were of tremendous assistance in the compilation of the following report on ASP activities and initiatives at Rhodes University. Twelve survey questionnaires were administered - eleven of these were completed and returned, with the exception of one questionnaire, which is still missing and could not be accounted for by the respondent and for which a replacement

was made available to the respondent concerned, the balance of questionnaires was forwarded by mail, at a later stage. All data gathered from questionnaires has been used to describe, in comparative terms, what is being done to assist disadvantaged students to pass courses for which they are registered and graduate within the minimum time required.

A randomly selected number of eight past and present ASP students was interviewed to determine the extent to which they were benefiting from the skills courses offered to them. The relatively fewer number of students interviewed at Rhodes University compared to Wits and Natal reflects existing as well as historical inequalities of student population figures in all these surveyed universities, i.e. head count enrolments at these universities in 1990: Rhodes University - 3 963; University of the Witwatersrand - 18 473; Natal University - 13 753; University of Cape Town - 14 101 (Hendry, G. and Bunting, I.A., 1990:5)

3.2.3.1 Historical background

In the Eastern Cape, in the area of Grahamstown is located Rhodes University, which is a smaller residential institution, in comparison with other English medium universities in the country. Just like other predominantly White universities in South Africa, Rhodes University (Rhodes), experienced an increase in the numbers of Black students during the 1980s, to the extent that by 1992 they were 22% of the student body.

Rhodes ASP was established to assist disadvantaged students, whose majority comes from DET schools, to pass courses and graduate within the minimum time required. The striking feature about the pattern of disadvantaged communities is its similarity with the United States experiences of minority racial groups, whose majority are Blacks. Although, in South Africa, the institution of slavery is not as direct a factor on the so-so-economic disadvantages of Africans as

in the United States, the correlation between so-so-economic and educational disadvantages exists in the parallels between the two countries.

The situation in the Eastern Cape is the same for Black students in other parts of the Cape Province and other three Provinces (Natal, Orange Free State, and Transvaal). In all Provinces of South Africa Black education is under DET authority, which is the most inferior of all Education Departments, which are designated for each ethnic group.

Students from disadvantaged education backgrounds tend to seek admission into those predominantly White universities, that are situated in metropolitan cities such as Johannesburg (University of the Witwatersrand - Wits) Cape Town (University of Cape Town) Durban and Pietermaritzburg (University of Natal : Durban Campus and Pietermaritzburg Campus - Natal). The reason for this fact has historical origins in Apartheid Laws, particularly, the Group Areas Act of 1966 (Race Relations Survey, 1989/1990:62-63), which prevented settlement of Africans in White residential areas in the cities. Many Africans work in these major cities, but have been prohibited from settling permanently in surrounding areas, until 1990, when Group Areas Laws were repealed (ibid.:63).

But that does not mean that they could not build informal settlements to accommodate their families. The universities, which are situated in these major cities, have been under constant pressure from the Black communities (Africans, Indians, and Coloureds) to de-racialise admissions policies, so that Blacks could be admitted, since ethnic universities are a long distance away from where they live and often have no faculties in which they wish to specialise, such as Engineering and Science. From 1986 onwards, when predominantly White English-medium universities declared open admissions policies, meaning that they would no longer remain exclusively White institutions, there was an

unprecedented influx of Blacks in big numbers. Rhodes University, although, also part of these White liberal universities, has not been under the same amount of pressure, since it is a semi-rural University with not as many Blacks clamouring for admission. Blacks seeking admission at Rhodes are often coming from elitist multiracial or rural elitist Black schools. In this sense they are not as disadvantaged as students coming from township schools.

The fact that Rhodes University has not felt much pressure to abandon its skills orientation to educational intervention, supports the assumption that the disadvantages requiring remediation are not as severe as in Universities such as Wits, Cape Town, and Natal, which are established in metropolitan areas, which are surrounded by many townships, where schooling has deteriorated to unprecedented lowest levels. Consequently, the disadvantages of township matriculants have become worse than those of private schools or rural (Boarding) schools, which tend to be well-resources, in terms of teacher qualifications, pupil/teacher ratios and budgetary allocations. It is possible to notice that, within the category of open universities, relative deprivation exists, since the intensity of educational deprivation can be related to the demographic nature of a particular geographical environment.

After a small and cautious beginning in 1982, despite inadequate financial support, initial academic mistrust and unrealistic expectations, the Academic Skills Programme (ASP) experienced remarkable growth. ASP was established in response to problems experienced by English Second Language students. By 1983 ASP had a staff complement of 7 full time and part time staff. Besides administrative staff there were tutors, who provided skills support in the following areas: study skills, language, reading and writing skills and subject knowledge. In addition to skills support (without

content), a per-seasonal (before the start of the academic year) an intensive on academic survival skills was offered.

At the initial phase of ASP, in approximately 1983, ASP operated on an annual budget of nearly R80 000 for salaries of staff and establishment of programmes. The majority of funds were raised externally, meaning that ASP depended almost entirely on funding from outside the university. The ASP Unit has currently a well established Programme, operating in more than twenty-eight of the thirty-six departments of the University and employing over twenty-nine staff members.

3.2.3.2 Mission Statement and the Academic Plan

The Mission Statement of Rhodes ASP is to provide academic skills for students who, for whatever reason, find themselves underprepared for university study. The main activity of ASP is offering support tutorials, which run concurrently with with most First Year courses. In addition, through a range of support services to academic departments including ASP strives to promote a high standard of education throughout the University. ASP is also striving to promote a high standard of education in the local community by offering a range of support services, through an outreach programme, designed to meet the needs of local Black high schools.

3.2.3.3 Identification of the target group for skills tutoring

ASP programmes are directed at the students described under 3.2.2.1 above, most of whom come, mainly, from disadvantaged educational backgrounds in DET schools. These students are selected for admission, through ordinary selection criteria, which are applicable to all candidates for university study irrespective of educational background. In contrast, open Universities such as Natal and Cape Town, have introduced

what is referred to as alternative admissions programmes, which are designed to facilitate identification of potential, on grounds of affirmation action, for university study and, on basis of the results of the selection process, advise faculties on candidates, who possess such potential. We have seen that Rhodes University has not considered introducing such a programmes for reasons stated under 3.2.2.1. For purposes of identification of the target for ASP programmes, there are no restrictions of attendance to primary or secondary target group as occurs at the University of the Witwatersrand. In principle, anyone can attend Skills Programmes offered in different subjects without prejudice. However, Africans are in the majority of those seek ASP assistance.

3.2.3.4 Selection of target group for skills support

ASP advertises programmes and students join programmes of their choice during times set for each programme activity. Sometimes lecturers identify weak students in their classes and refer them to ASP for assistance. Once a student requests assistance, for example on essay writing and technical presentation of tasks, note-taking or reading and listening skills, registration for a relevant ASP course begins. After registration for a particular skills course, a student is supplied with a schedule of ASP classes.

As the selection process for ASP participation allows any student to enrol, there have been no negative perceptions of ASP as specially designed for Blacks or in any way condescending to them, as has been the case at the University of the Witwatersrand, where Black students' perceptions of ASP were resentful of alleged racial connotations.

With increasing support from both students and staff, Rhodes ASP has not had to contend with these negative perceptions, which are common in other universities. In that sense

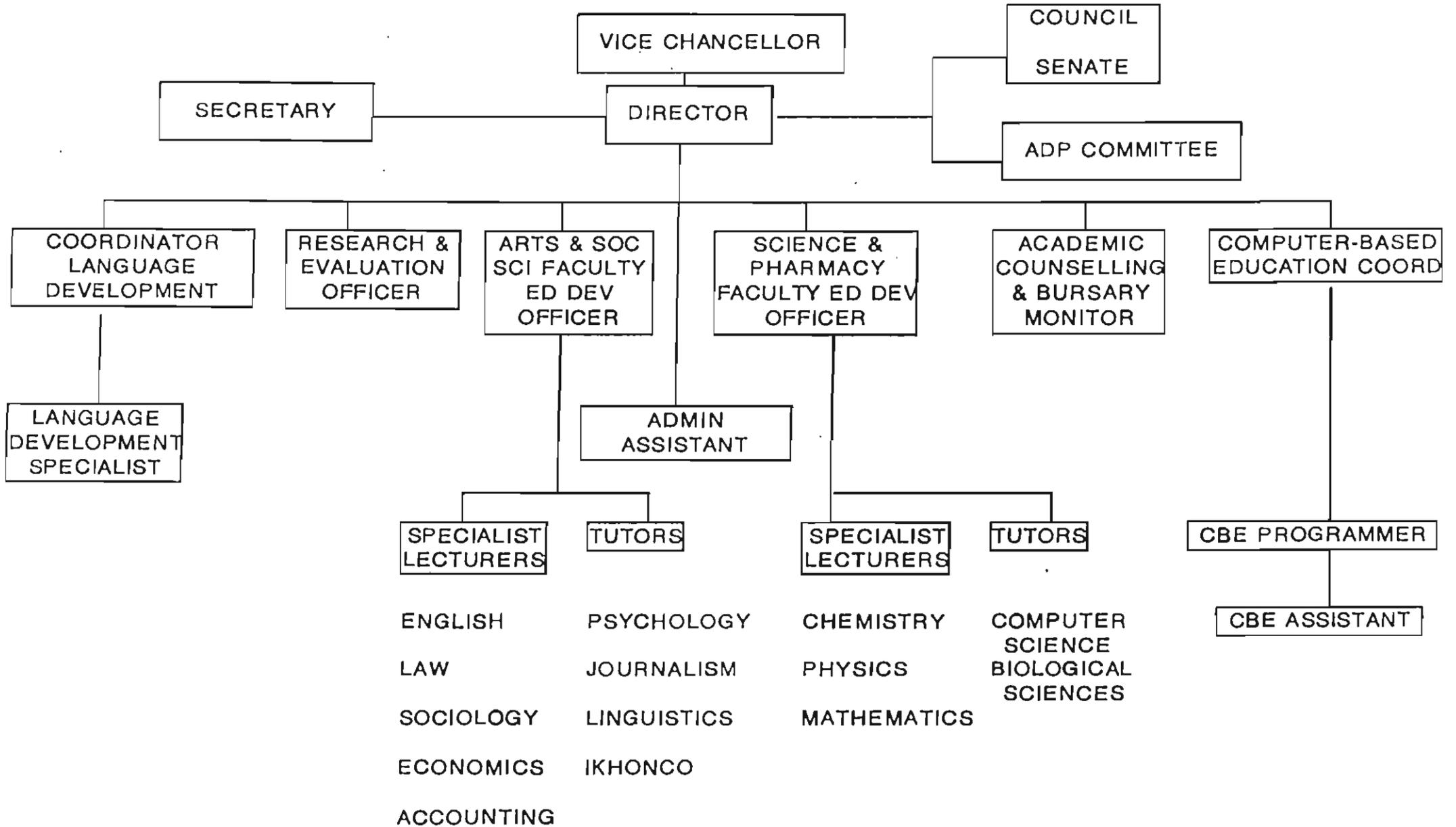
Rhodes' experience is unique. But this, by no means, suggests that the same applies to other issues and problems, with which Rawhides ASP is confronted as happens in other open universities, such as shortage of finances, inadequate staff and so forth.

3.2.3.5 Staffing and administrative infrastructure of ASP

The ASP unit is headed by a permanent full-time Director, who is responsible for the functioning of the Programme to the Vice-Principal. The Academic Skills Advisory Committee (ASAC), a Committee of Senate, links the Central Unit to the Senate, and the Director is a full member of Senate. Recently an ASP Liaison Person was appointed and more such persons were to be appointed in the twenty-five departments in which ASP operates. These liaison posts are concerned with improving communication skills and liaison with academic departments. ASP has the posts of Projects Co-ordinator, Administrative Assistant, and Central Unit Secretary, based in the Director's office. Co-ordinators have been appointed into positions in the three main divisions of faculties as follows: Arts, Social Science, and Divinity; Science and Pharmacy; Commerce, Education and Law, with twenty, ten, and five tutors distributed in departments respectively (see Figure 6 below).

There is also the post of University-wide Modules Co-ordinator, responsible to the Co-ordinator of the Science and Pharmacy Faculties, and that of the Outreach Co-ordinator, responsible to the Commerce, Education, and Law Faculties.

Figure 6, RHODES UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAMME (ASP), JANUARY 1993



SOURCE: ASP DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1992

3.2.3.6 Funding of ASP programmes

As we have seen that ASPs, at Wits and UCT, depend almost entirely on external resources for funding. It has been noticed that, funds obtained in this way are not enough to cover all ASP expenditures and development projects. Rawhides ASP also relies on donations from local and foreign Foundations and Companies. As ASP Directors in other universities, the ASP Director of Rhodes ASP is responsible for the fundraising function. He prepares motivations and submits them to potential donors. In almost all the universities surveyed donations to ASP are not designated for specific programmes, except in cases where external funders have been involved in the setting up, staffing and financing of special programmes, such as Bridging Year or Extended Curriculum Programmes which are commonly found in the Commerce, Engineering, and Science faculties. Thus, when raising funds for ASP programmes, the Director embarks on an 'aggressive' campaign for funding, which includes motivations for projects in the diverse areas, in which ASP involvement is required, for example, an integrated student development Programme, staff development, research on admissions and selection criteria, support for the Rhodes-Kingswood Alternative Admissions Project, support for the IKhonco (Chain) Project, financing specific tutorial posts and general ASP requests for financial assistance.

In the Director's annual Report (1992:11) the list of organisations providing funds for ASP include: Angle-American Chairman's Fund, Australian Embassy, British Council, Caltex Oil, Canadian Embassy, Delta Motor Corporation, Equal Opportunities Council, Human Resources Trust, Industrial Development Corporation, JCI Chairman's Fund, Collage Foundation, Old Mutual, Rawhides University, S A Breweries, South African Institute of Race Relations and others. The Director has recently been in contact with over fifty potential donors, mostly in South Africa but also in the United States, Holland, Belgium and Germany.

It was felt that such an 'aggressive' fundraising campaign is necessary if ASP is to maintain its operating budget of approximately one million rands. In 1990, for example, total expenditure was R614 727.96, exceeding total income by R123 604.76 and, without carry over resources, the Director has, indeed, been compelled to spend most of his time in fundraising. The list of donations which appears in the Financial Reports showed different amounts donated and the constraints of the scope within which ASP expects financial support. Subsequent Director's Annual Reports for 1991 and 1992 do not indicate trends in income and expenditure for assessment of the current position in the funding of ASP. The available figures, however, show that, as in other open universities so far examined, the situation is not much different at Rhodes. Inadequate funding remains a severely limiting factor to the effectiveness of ASP at surveyed universities.

The University approved direct funding of R100 000, starting in 1991, for ASP. The Director believed that such direct financial support would be a major break-through for ASP and represented a clear indication of the growing recognition of the importance of the Programme. Despite all the initiatives and fundraising activities of the Director, ASP still had a deficit of R92 016.92 in December 1990. It is clear, therefore, that, unless meaningful steps are taken to stabilise the funding of ASP, the whole Programme could be in serious jeopardy.

Concerning the non-academic aspects of ASP involvement in providing assistance to disadvantaged students, ASP continues to monitor and provide counselling to students who hold bursars from the following organisations for example, British Council, South African Institute of Race Relations (SEAR) and Equal Opportunities Council (OAK). Regularly, reports on academic progress of these students are sent to the bursary sponsors.

The Bridging Year Programme at Kingswood is monitored by ASP tutors and their observation is that attendance at ASP sessions remains generally poor, which is cause for concern for the medium to long term prospects of the Project.

3.2.3.7 Description of types of ASP programmes

There are three main thrusts of ASP functions, namely, tutorials, modules and projects, which will all be examined as areas of activity within the cluster faculties co-ordinated by three core ASP staff members.

Tutorials are offered on the basis of subject-specific skills training and form the bulk of ASP work. Each tutor works autonomously, which means a certain level of independence in designing and running tutorials according to the needs of the particular disciplines. In some cases, particularly Science, tutors work with actual course material. In other cases the departments prefer the tutors to restrict their teaching to technical aspects of the course, such as imparting relevant skills for the course. The skills covered include : time management, essay and report writing, reading and research, using the library, listening and note-taking, examination preparation and revision, problem solving and laboratory skills.

In some courses, the inventory of skills required extends to remedial language work, critical thinking, punctuation and sentence construction, editing written work, oral presentation, dictionary skills, poetry analysis, vocabulary building, data analysis, comprehension assessment, stress management, drawing skills, dissection skills, microscope usage, and slide identification.

The following analysis investigates the nature of skills required in different faculties and departments, the approaches applied in the acquisition of those skills, and levels of participation by ASP students. As has been done

with the Universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand, the analysis of types of Programmes offered by ASP serves to show the amount of work being done with limited resources: funding and trained personnel, which could be contributing factors to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of ASP in all surveyed Universities.

3.2.3.8 ASP in the Faculties of Arts, Social Science and Divinity

There are twenty tutors in seventeen departments and additional two quarter-time student advisors. Six departments have quarter time tutors and these are in Anthropology, Linguistics and English Language, Afrikaans and Netherlands, History, Divinity, and Social Work. Seven departments have full-time tutors and these include Linguistics and English Language, English, Sociology, Psychology, Journalism, History, and Political Studies. Others have varying part-time tutors, depending on their availability and course requirements. Tutors work in consultation with departments in designing and implementing their tutorial programmes.

Afrikaans tutoring, comprises courses on remedial language work and general academic skills, with particular reference to course work in Afrikaans I. Tutoring in Anthropology is a comprehensive programme covering general academic skills, with reference to course work in Anthropology I. It also includes a course on critical thinking. In Divinity there are general one to one consultations and modules on academic skills and critical thinking with small groups of students from St Paul's and Rhodes' Divinity Department. English tutoring consists of small group and individual consultations on difficult aspects of English I. Open seminars on academic skills, particularly relevant to studying English, such as reading literary texts and poetry analysis, have been held.

In the English Language Development Scheme, work is done with a small group of students from Divinity covering dictionary skills, the development of English, collation of study materials, elementary reading skills, and punctuation. The Co-ordinator of Faculties runs sessions of four groups in the First Semester with students from different educational backgrounds and levels of ability. The Programme varies according to students' needs, covering vocabulary building, sentence structure, oral presentation and editing written work. In the Second Semester another tutor conducts two classes for English Language Development, one for Kingswood Bridging class and another for Divinity students. The following areas of academic skills are dealt with in these sessions: reading aloud, comprehension tests, vocabulary exercises, spelling checks, exercises in concise writing, essay planning, editing and correction, exam techniques, discussion and essay writing.

ASP history tutorials are integrated into the History I as part of the History module. There are also modules on general academic skills. History of Art from First Year to Third Year students have form a group in the Second Semester and consults ASP regarding their tutorial requirements. During the Third Term an essay writing workshop is conducted, followed by individual consultations in the Department of International Studies. In Journalism a basic skills workshop and essay writing course is conducted in the First Semester. In the Second Semester news' writing workshops and individual consultations are offered.

In the first semester of 1992 the Linguistics Department conducted weekly workshops for First Year students on general academic skills, the topics being selected to coincide with tasks set in the subject curriculum. In the Second Term Third Year Honours' students participating in an ASP programme called English Language Teaching (ELT) regularly approached ASP for help on an individual basis. In the Second Semester workshops were run for first year

students on general academic skills, with special reference to sections on the Linguistics I curriculum. The tutor also co-ordinated and facilitated the ELT Honours' involvement with Grahamstown Tertiary Education Bridging Project (GRATEP), (an ASP outreach programme designed "to provide further education for local school leavers who had not been successful in gaining entry either to tertiary education institutions or to formal employment" Carter (1992:8) as the practical component to Paper 5 for the Honours Curriculum.

In Philosophy, tutors in small groups every week deal with an approach to lecturers, a strategy for reading philosophy and, as of 1991, an essay writing course. Students did not attend in the Second Term, nor were there ASP for Philosophy in the Second Semester.

In the First Term Political Studies tutoring for First and Second Year students consist of skills courses and workshops on essay writing and examination preparation for First and Second Year students. The tutor conducts revision courses consisting of twenty-eight workshops, gives individual consultations and uses a full lecture period to conduct a general workshop on time management and anxiety management. In Psychology, two tutors work closely with the subject content and help study groups at First Year through to Third Year level. Small group tutorials and individual consultations are run in the Social Work Department. These sessions deal mainly with subject content. The majority of Social Work students have taken part in the Psychology tutorial programme. In the Sociology Department, small groups, dealing with academic skills and course content, have been formed, but for others individual consultations are organised as and when required.

Regarding student academic counselling, two tutors work in an individual counselling situation dealing with issues, such as choice of courses, study problems, learning problems and managing stress. As the examinations approach, they tend

to focus on offering study group discussions for mutual support.

3.2.3.9 ASP in the Faculties of Commerce, Law, and Education

The co-ordination of ASP activities in the Faculties of Commerce, Law, and Education involves supervision of five tutors by the Co-ordinator of the Faculties. The five tutors are distributed as follows: Accounting and Business Administration, Commercial Law, Economics, Education, and Law. Each tutor is assigned to each of the departments and allotted an office within the department. However, because of shortage of office space in the departments, some tutors have to share offices. This is the case in Education and Law, Economics and Commercial Law. In such cases, tutors have to work out a co-ordinated programme in order to ensure efficiency in ASP operations. Monthly staff meetings are held throughout the year in order to improve communication and get feedback from the tutors. Informal meetings are held with some heads of departments to assess their feelings about ASP involvement in their departments.

One tutorial on listening, note-taking, and time management is offered to Commerce students, one in each semester. In the Faculty of Education, under the Teacher Upgrade Programme (TUP), one tutorial on listening and note-taking was conducted for thirty-three students in 1990. However, most of these students experienced financial difficulties and so could not continue with their studies. Some were able to obtain financial assistance and stayed on the Programme. One tutorial on time management was conducted for thirty-three TUP students.

The Co-ordinator attended three Faculty Board meetings in 1990 during which the following important matters were discussed: firstly, recognition of Linguistics and English Language as a teaching subject; secondly, a proposal

originating from teachers in the schools around Grahamstown, for part-time courses to be offered towards a degree at Rhodes to assist students who wanted to improve their academic qualifications. This proposal happened to coincide with the deliberation at the same meeting, on the proposal for a Canadian sponsored project that aimed to upgrade teachers in the primary schools. Thirdly, establishing guidelines for the supervision of students. Although no resolutions were taken on these issues, satisfactory progress was made towards reaching consensus.

Similar discussions have been held with the Commerce Faculty relating to the last two issues.

3.2.3.10 ASP in the Faculties of Science and Pharmacy

In the Faculties of Science and Pharmacy, co-ordination of ASP activities involves supervision by eight tutors. Approximately all the tutors are employed on temporary contracts, requiring half-time on ASP work in, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, and Zoology. ASP work also includes organising study groups and support activities in Human Movement Studies.

At the beginning of each term, all tutors are expected to formulate and submit their aims and objectives to the Co-ordinator of these two Faculties. These presentations must indicate how ASP activities are geared towards the achievement of stated objectives. Tutors are responsible for compiling modules on departmental tutor training, time management, reading for Science, report writing, problem solving techniques and presenting seminars.

Pharmacy students have the opportunity to spend two periods per week consulting with the Co-ordinator and these consultations were used by the Co-ordinator to give advice on an individual basis. More specific problems for example,

how to answer essay type questions, time management and study methods receive attention in such sessions. The Co-ordinator also acts as a contact person between students, with subject specific problems, and lecturers.

Regarding Business Mathematics and Statistics, six consolidation workshops per week are offered, as well as four revision workshops. During the First Term the focus is on consolidating background knowledge and during the Fourth Term extra time is spent on revision and examination writing strategies. The tutor is available for individual consultation by appointment for seven periods per week.

In Chemistry, the students are asked at the beginning of each tutorial whether there is any section of their lectures, which they do not understand well. If there is, the content is discussed and any further explanation supplied by the ASP tutor. Then students are given the opportunity to do exercises on set problems. The tutor's input is to resolve any difficulties they may encounter. In this way they practise problem-solving techniques. The types of problems they tackle are always closely linked to the lecture material.

During the First Term extra tutorials are conducted for Chemistry I students, who had not done Science in Matriculation. During the Fourth Term five revision tutorials are conducted. Each week the students are told which topic has to be prepared and then, during the tutorial session, they are given questions from old examination papers. In Computer Science, weekly discussions, on low level programming and high level computing, are held. Practical sessions are used as follow up and reinforcement to previous theoretical discourse, if necessary, the Rolf Braae laboratory facilities are utilised. Ad hoc workshops at the beginning of the year gradually change to regular tutorials, during the latter part of the year. Before the June examinations, as well as at the end of year

examination, additional tutorials are organised to re-enforce revision and examination writing skills.

In Mathematics 1A and B, regular weekly ASP tutorials are held, where additional problems are discussed and explained. During the First Term extra attention is given to mature students and those students with problems regarding background knowledge. The lecturers encourage students to use the assistance made available by tutors and, during the Second Term a record number of Maths 1 students often attend ASP tutorials. In 1990, three departmental tutors staffed the seminar room of the Central Unit for three weeks before the final examinations.

In Mathematics 1P and C regular tutorials are held, with particular emphasis on 'problem areas'. Revision workshops are organised on request of the students. The last two weeks of the Fourth Term are devoted to examination writing skills and the tutor guides the students in working through sample questions. In Mathematical Statistics there is no tutor who is formally appointed to assist students. It is expected that a suitable arrangement will be found for students to benefit from ASP services in this Department. Meanwhile, the Maths 1P and C tutor voluntarily takes care of students with problems in Statistics.

In Physics, two quarter-time tutors are responsible for Physics 1L and 1P. They have maintained good rapport with students, which is reflected in the high attendance figures. They use the course outline and address problem areas by using additional problems to reinforce problem-solving skills. Consolidating new work is the main focus during the First Term, first half of the Second Term and the Third Term. During the last part of the Second Term, as well as the Fourth Term the focus is on revision skills and examination writing techniques. Special attention is given to the techniques of answering multiple choice questions,

with particular emphasis on students actually practising these skills.

The tutor, responsible for ASP in Physics 1S, concentrates on clarifying the fundamental principles underlying a specific theme and then proceeds to doing examples with the students. In the past, many students did not understand the importance of a good grasp of the essentials in order to attempt the examples, and dropped out of the ASP course without completing skills exercises on specific problems. For this reason, the tutor has had to change the approach and focus on examples during tutorials. In this way the students get the opportunity to learn the basic principles through problem-solving.

In Biology, Botany and Zoology two tutorial sessions are held every week, one on skills related to the theoretical aspects of the course and one on practical skills. The theory sessions cover a wide range of skills deemed necessary for successful studying. Examples are taken from the relevant course material, but stress is laid on the fact that the skills are applicable to most courses. In the Third Term, course content is covered in a few tutorials, concentrating on sections which the students find particularly difficult to understand. The practical sessions cover a wide range of topics, applicable to the three different practical courses. They include drawing skills, direction skills, data analysis, report writing, microscope use and slide identification.

For the first three weeks after the half-yearly vacation, the June examination for Zoology, Botany and Biology papers are covered in detail. Advice tends to be given both individually, after analysis of the examination scripts, and in groups, with general tips on examination writing techniques. During the last three weeks of the term, past Biology, Zoology, and Botany examination papers are discussed and the students encouraged to answer questions at

home, and bring their answers for discussion during the tutorials. It has been the Co-ordinator's impression that such tutorials appear to be tremendously useful for those students who come with prepared answers.

In Geography, four tutorials per week are conducted, where the students discuss course material. Special attention is given to essay writing skills, which students have the opportunity of putting into practice in small groups eventually writing an essay under examination conditions. The ASP tutor is also responsible for compiling an Evaluation Questionnaire and Report for to the staff members. This seems to be a worthwhile exercise that gives students the opportunity to express their objections and frustrations, as well as their appreciation for assistance. Staff members are able to use the feedback to improve their teaching techniques.

3.2.3.11 Evaluation of Rhodes ASP cluster-faculty programmes and related projects

The results of ASP at Rhodes should be considered in relation to multiple factors, which include those that arise from other projects, as well as the influence of ASP staff involvement in outreach programmes and associated activities, such as alternative admissions and selection procedures. The three Co-ordinators of Cluster Faculties have played significant roles in extension services for ASP.

Their involvement in such services has many direct ramifications for ASP in relation to outreach projects in which Co-ordinators participate. The impact of their involvement in community projects, however, has to be evaluated against what ASP achieves within the University. The effectiveness of ASP programmes on Campus must supersede any other consideration. The first priority of ASP is to render effective academic assistance in order to enable students to pass courses and graduate within the minimum

time required. Any deviation from this objective will result in both neglecting the ASP mandate and inefficient use of ASP resources.

Therefore, since co-ordinators are assigned responsibility for participation in the projects on basis of extending the services of a particular Cluster of Faculties to the community, it is necessary to evaluate such extension of services severally.

3.2.3.12 Evaluation of ASP in the Arts, Social Sciences and Divinity Faculties

Concerning ASP activities, other than providing tutorials concurrent with First Year courses, there are campus-wide modules of general academic skills, which are offered throughout the year. Carter (1990:15) shows that these unspecified and more general sessions have been poorly attended. Consequently, data on the results of these modules has been scantily collected. Departmental requests for single lectures or short courses have been received, to which the ASP unit responds by making tutorial servitudes available, whenever possible. The performance of students in these tutorials has not been evaluated, largely because of the ad hoc nature of such services.

The IKhonco (Chain) Project, which was initiated in 1989, but came into operation in 1990, is the best example of a community-oriented project in which ASP resources are extensively used. Its main aim is to prepare potential candidates for tertiary education. The IKhonco strategy is to link up Rhodes' ASP with the wider community and the Black high schools in particular. This linkage is symbolised in the concept of an IKhonco or, when the Nguni word is translated into English means 'chain'.

It continues to offer assistance to Standard 10 pupils and, possibly, in future, will organise teacher-training

workshops on specific subjects, which they teach in schools in order to improve the quality of teaching in those fields. In 1992 the sphere of operation for the Project expanded to include Standard 9 pupils, which increased the numbers of participants from a mere 50 Standard 10 pupils in 1990, 140 Standard 9 and 10 pupils in 1991, to a total of 180 Standards 9 and 10 combined in 1992, (Carter, 1992:4). As the Project is still at an early stage of development, a comprehensive evaluation is not possible which, would be of assistance in determining to what extent it improves participants' school achievements in the passing of subjects, in which tutorial support is offered.

While IKhonco/Chain Project helps Matric students to pass final year examinations, GRATEP, which is an acronym for Grahamstown Tertiary Education Bridging Project, seeks to prepare high school pupils for post-secondary education. It has been initiated by post matriculants from the townships in an effort to improve their matric symbols and gain experience in the academic skills required in tertiary education. GRATEP is in the process of being formally incorporated into the outreach programme of ASP, perhaps, along the same lines as the IKhonco (Chain) Project.

In evaluating the significance of the IKhonco (Chain), an important observation is that, the concept has noble intentions, although it is questionable whether sufficient justification exists for the appropriation of funds to compensatory education of this magnitude, while disadvantaged students on Campus do not have adequate facilities to meet their needs. In the United States educational programmes of this nature are funded from the Federal Government fiscus and in South Africa, perhaps, more pressure should be applied to force the Government to recognise the need for allocation of funds for purposes of improving the quality of high school graduates. As the situation stands, ASPs cannot afford to embark on Upward

Bound types of programmes without placing in jeopardy the interests of currently registered disadvantaged students.

In the second half of 1989, three tutors and the ASP co-ordinator for Arts/Social Science and Divinity designed and implemented a pilot course in English Language Development. The course, which is non-credit, runs for four one-hour evenings over five weeks, and is limited to ten students, ranging from First Year to Higher Diploma in Education (HDE). From the evaluation of the pilot venture, it has been decided to expand to twenty six sessions, running over the First Semester with forty students participating in the course.

In 1991, reports both the Director of ASP and Faculties' Co-ordinator expressed optimism about ASP initiatives in different departments. Perhaps, one aspect of ASP's contribution is to assist the students to become more comfortable with course content, although this is, of course, not strictly Rhodes' ASP brief, as explained in 3.2.3.1. The plight of disadvantaged students is, seemingly, not resolved as yet by the current ASP approach, which ignores the evaluation of ASP programmes, which are still based on the deficit model of academic support.

We have seen that the major weakness of this model is its partial response to disadvantages of students. Its technical orientation, meaning the absolute emphasis on offering technical skills through extra-curricular tutorials, has universally become irrelevant. Students, whose severity of disadvantages requires more intensive strategies such as the holistic approach, which seeks to investigate all factors whose input is required to resolve disadvantages of inferior educational backgrounds, are left in the lurch by the deficit model.

Apparently, the solution to this dilemma of ASP providing subject-specific support. The current dispensation in

Rhodes' ASP evades the real issues confronting disadvantaged students. Although ASP students at Rhodes may not be as seriously disadvantaged as the majority of township matriculants, who do not form the traditional pool of Rhodes entrants, recent school disruptions and the worsened deterioration of standards in African schools, have also affected Rhodes feeder schools, meaning high schools from which the majority of applicants for university are received.

In 1991 cautious steps were taken to bring to move away from purely skills tutoring into integration of skills sessions with content tutoring. For example the ASP History module is combining tutorials in technical skills with course content. The Sociology Department has also decided to make all First Term tutorials integrated, that is, combine skills tutoring with content teaching. In pedagogical terms, such an integrated learning process facilitates transference of acquired skills directly to the content of the course. In this way, it is more convenient to identify skills with content. This allows quicker understanding of the subject matter and facilitates the learning process.

In this connection, Fielding's (1984) Model of Needs Analysis is worth noting. While it stresses the concept of communicative competence. It operates on the basis of six parameters, which are the exact specification of the learner's area of study. These are specification of present communication competence; specification of communication of events, that is study material at university and at subsequent professional level; specification of register, media channels, and tone; specification of the communication acts accompanying these events and the language skills required to realise these acts. In the words of Fielding himself:

"This model has as its target the achievement of a broad communicative competence that builds of students' narrow school-leaving competence to give them the communicative

competence that will enable them to cope with the specific demands on them at university level and when they leave the university."

The special advantage of the integrated model used in Sociology, where lecturers would make time available for consultation with students, is that it allows the ASP tutor to assist individuals, who are struggling with the course work and makes time available to design modules in a particular course, for example, Accounting, Psychology, Sociology, or History. As a result of such initiative, the History tutor, in particular, reported a slight decline in the failure among History I students at the end of 1991. However, decrease in failure rate in one cannot be attributed to a single factor without proper research and evaluation, which have not been done on Rhodes ASP.

Another initiative on integration of academic skills to the course content occurs in co-tutoring in Linguistics. A tutor in that Department works with two senior academic staff members in three workshops conducted with Linguistics I students. In this context, co-tutoring involves a high degree of co-operation between a faculty lecturer and an ASP tutor in conducting workshops on the application of technical skills, which have been imparted by the tutor, on course content. The faculty lecturer, checks if there is any significant improvement in understanding of content, while the tutor monitors appropriate use of supposedly acquired skills for better understanding of course content. The process seems both time-consuming and expensive to maintain. However it has not been possible for the tutor to experiment any further with co-tutoring in the Fourth Term of the year.

In order to appreciate the extent of ASP involvement in skills support activities, the following **Figure 7** below demonstrates numbers of students who participated in ASP tutorials in 1991 and the number of attendances in terms of contact periods per subject.

The clearest indication of ASP recognition at Rhodes is, perhaps, shown by the growing numbers of students making use of ASP in these Faculties. For example, in Sociology a total of 796 attendances were recorded in 1991 compared with just 200 in 1988 and approximately 600 in 1989. Of the Sociology 1 Class, 58% attended ASP and in Linguistics 1, 68% students attended. Other noticeably high numbers were reported in English, Political Science and Psychology. This increase in numbers of students requesting ASP intervention poses a challenge to ASP appoint more staff to do the work. However, it would be futile to employ tutors without adequate preparation for the work, through training and assessment for competence and skills to be productive employees. It constitutes an error of judgement to expect tutors and other ASP staff to be productive in their work if they are not properly equipped with knowledge and skills. Unfortunately, most of the time ASPs in open universities tend to operate on a basis of crisis management, and are unable to plan and organise sufficiently well before implementing programmes.

In the absence of reliable evaluation procedures it can be assumed that the wide use of ASP reflects its usefulness and that ASP is in fact assisting students in developing their academic skills. Other indications that students are increasingly benefiting from ASP intervention, emerged in the Evaluation Questionnaire, which was distributed to students in different departments, requesting information regarding the degree to which they have benefitted from ASP. From a sample of questionnaires that were completed and returned, responses ranged from "not helpful" to "very helpful", with high responses of positive attitudes towards ASP. In the Afrikaans Department for example, of the 115 questionnaires sent out, 5 found ASP no help at all, 6 found ASP to be of some help, and 32 described ASP as helpful or very helpful. In the Linguistics Department, out of 63 respondents, 4 found ASP not useful and 25 indicated useful or very useful.

Figure 7, RHODES UNIVERSITY: ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAMME (ASP) STUDENT NUMBERS IN FACULTIES OF ARTS/SOCIAL SCIENCE AND DIVINITY IN 1991

FACULTY/SUBJECT	NO OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING	NO OF ATTENDANCES AS CONTACT PERIODS
ARTS/SOCIAL SCIENCE AND DIVINITY		
Afrikaans	56	340
Anthropology	22	80
Divinity	29	280
English	63	390
English Language Development	27	200
History of Art	16	61
History	24	176
International Studies	18	46
Journalism	62	341
Linguistics	145	738
Philosophy	17	28
Psychology	92	554
Political Science	141	609
Sociology	155	796
Student Advising	85	159
Social Work	6	17
SUB TOTAL	958	4815

SOURCE: ASP DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1991
 NOTE: FOR 1992 FIGURES SEE APPENDIX A

Thus, on the whole, tutors especially those who have been in the ASP field for a number of years, have expressed a certain degree of satisfaction that they understand the difference ASP programmes can make. They appear to be determined that future programmes will be improved versions of current ones, once necessary modifications have been made in the light of student evaluations. Rhodes ASP has potential to build a firm base on which to launch future programmes if research is done on all programmes to assess the total impact of ASP intervention on student outcomes, that is, pass rates and graduation rates. Finally, the critical thinking module, which was prepared for implementation in 1991 and a recent addition to the skills programmes, has been widely used and incorporated into regular ASP tutorial work.

The cause for this situation arises from the reliance of the academic skills approach to academic support on students transferring skills, learnt in one context, to another context. This has shown to be a very elusive process that is vividly portrayed in this excerpt: "... while I had this in mind and tried to teach for transfer, I did not believe I was wholly successful. My pessimism is based on the fact that after the course some students came to ask me to help them individually with other sections of the course. My feeling was that I had made them dependent on me instead of empowering them to help themselves," as one of ASP tutors at Rhodes summarises the dilemma. Her experience, which epitomises the inherent weaknesses of the extra-curricular skills model, shows that the abandoning of this approach is long overdue for Rhodes ASP. It is reported that an increasing number of tutors have, on many occasions expressed similar sentiments, not without valid reasons.

3.2.3.13 Results of ASP in the Commerce, Law, and Education Faculties

In these Faculties, perhaps, more than in others at Rhodes, Blacks, especially African students, for whom ASP is primarily designed, appear to unequivocally show resistance to being treated differently from the students of other race groups, as indicated in **Figure 8** below. They want to feel part of the total university community in all respects. They realise that academic deficiencies need to be dealt with in order to succeed in their studies.

From the inception of the Programme at Rhodes these negative perceptions about ASP were formed and have persisted regardless of the many attempts to increase the number of programmes aimed at addressing their academic and non-academic requirements. Recently, the Co-ordinator of these Faculties, in discussions with the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Commerce, resolved that, firstly, students admitted through the Alternative Admissions Programme should all come from DET schools or some disadvantaged background. Secondly, bursaries should be organised for as many of these students as possible.

The Co-ordinator participated in a number of such programmes which are briefly described as follows: through the Alternative Admissions Programme the intention is to make it possible for disadvantaged students, obtain the required Swedish points score, to gain admission to the Commerce Faculty. The Programme is still at an experimental phase with follow-up evaluations still expected to take place. One of the pre-conditions for admission through this programme is that they must attend ASP in all their courses. Monitored by the ASP Co-ordinator in the Faculty, a progress report has to be submitted by the latter to the Dean of Commerce.

The ASP Co-ordinator in these Faculties also monitored academic progress of thirty-three students funded by the

British Council and distributed as follows: four participating in the Kingswood Bridging programme, sixteen First Year and thirteen Second Year students. Matters relating to their non-academic requirements, such as financial assistance, problems of social adjustment and relocation problems, are always referred to the Student Affairs Section, which intervenes on students' behalf.

Figure 8, RHODES UNIVERSITY: ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAMME (ASP) STUDENT NUMBERS AND ATTENDANCES IN FACULTIES OF COMMERCE, LAW, AND EDUCATION IN 1991

FACULTY/SUBJECT	NO OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING	NO OF ATTENDANCES AS CONTACT PERIODS
COMMERCE, LAW AND EDUCATION		
Business Admin & Accounting	116	523
Commercial Law	90	575
Economics	172	707
Legal Theory	121	725
Maths/Statistics	142	1438
Education	35	746
SUB TOTAL	676	4714

SOURCE: ASP DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1991
 NOTE: FOR 1992 FIGURES SEE APPENDIX B

A recent initiative in these Faculties is to have ASP tutors assigned to specific departments to facilitate provision of services and enable mainstream academic staff, tutors and students to come together. In this way, ideally office facilities provided for the ASP tutor should make it easier and convenient for all parties to be available whenever they are needed. The assumption is that the department will provide all the necessary resources and facilities including office space.

While some departments seem to be coping well with this arrangement, others apparently are reluctant to take responsibility for office accommodation. In such situations tutors find it difficult to establish a stable presence in departments which invariably affects the impact ASP initiatives might have on students' academic performance. Therefore, the effects of the programmes, to a certain extent, depends on environmental factors such as having a stable and resourceful work environment.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, there has been overall co-operation and support for ASP complemented by amicable working relationships with departmental staff. Despite the office accommodation crisis, all departments in which there is an ASP presence provide rooms for regular tutorials, and ASP reports claim that Deans, Heads of Department and staff have indicated appreciation of ASP contribution to student development.

3.2.3.14 Results of ASP in the Science and Pharmacy Faculties

The common practice in the Faculties of Science and Pharmacy is for the Deans to send out letter to under-achieving students, particularly, those failing mid-year examinations, encouraging them to attend ASP. Copies of these letters are circulated to the ASP Co-ordinator who convenes a meeting with the students concerned and advises them on the suitable

academic skills programme for their individual requirements. The Co-ordinator also supplies them with the names of ASP tutors and venues for the various workshops and tutorials. The Co-ordinator in turn circulates ASP tutors with the names of students requiring their services and suggesting types of technical skills programmes in which they could be registered. At the beginning of the Fourth Term, the Co-ordinator reports back to the Dean about student's responses to invitations to participate in ASP.

For example, in September 1990 it was brought to the attention of the Co-ordinator that a few British Council bursary-holders were experiencing problems with their subjects. The Co-ordinator arranged a meeting with the relevant heads of department in which the problem was discussed. The matter was then taken up with those students resulting in extra tutorials being organised for them. The Co-ordinator monitors Educational Opportunities Council (EOC) bursary-holders' academic progress which involves submitting bi-annual, that is, mid year and end of year progress reports to EOC. The same process of inviting academically struggling students to join ASP tutorials is followed in all cases where the need for ASP intervention has been identified, especially in respect of those bursary schemes that make ASP attendance compulsory for their bursary-holders such as EOC and British Council.

In these two Faculties, the Co-ordinator compiled an ASP Evaluation Questionnaire which was filled in by first year students. With the assistance of other ASP staff, data is analysed and processed and the ASP staff is informed of the findings. As in other Cluster Faculties, the results of Rhodes ASP are available on the basis of numbers of students participating in the skills programmes without denoting pass rates and graduation rates of ASP students as shown in **Figure 9** below.

Figure 9, RHODES UNIVERSITY: ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAMME (ASP) STUDENT NUMBERS AND ATTENDANCES IN FACULTIES OF SCIENCE AND PHARMACY IN 1991

FACULTY/SUBJECT	NO OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING	NO OF ATTENDANCES AS CONTACT PERIODS
SCIENCE AND PHARMACY		
Biology	78	269
Botany	34	151
Chemistry	98	910
Computer Science	41	432
Geography	86	587
Mathematics	97	973
Physics	106	586
Zoology	26	167
SUB TOTAL	566	4075

SOURCE: ASP DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1991
 NOTE: FOR 1992 FIGURES SEE APPENDIX C

According to the responses of students to the questionnaires mentioned above, ASP gets sufficient advertising coverage to enable those requiring assistance to register for ASP programmes. Limited time available for attendance and lack of motivation attend, on the part of students, have been given as the main reasons for not attending. On the whole, students in these Faculties have found tutors helpful and competent and the programmes useful, although there is still plenty of room for improvement, particularly in such areas as relinquishing ineffective extra-curricular tutorials. It is also important to concentrate on devising strategies for adopting rigorous and comprehensive evaluation procedures to assess the overall effectiveness of ASP programmes at Rhodes University.

3.2.3.15 Overall impressions

In the previous Sections, dealing with Rhodes ASP, it has been established that, in important ways, the Programme has succeeded in organising materials and recruiting staff to teach support tutorials to run concurrently with numerous First Year courses, for which students enrolled in respective faculties and departments. Students who registered for the Programme attended at least one ASP tutorial per week in as many subjects as they feel they require assistance. The analysis of the form and content of ASP in the three cluster faculties, has revealed that tutorials are more interesting and helpful to students if they integrated with course content. It seems that Rhodes ASP still relies strongly on extra-curricular tutorials to impart a range of general skills, communicative and language skills, and effective approaches to university life, so as to develop confident and independent learners.

Noteworthy strides were made from 1989 when ASP expanded in a variety of directions. This expansion made it necessary to increase the number of Faculty Co-ordinators from two to three as well as to appoint the ASP Projects Co-ordinator in

1990. At the same time this phase not only led to the expansion and consolidation of ASP successful initiatives, some of which were in place since the inception of Rhodes' ASP in 1982. Several new initiatives have been implemented since 1989 and student numbers have increased dramatically.

One of the new initiatives is the ASP response to the concern, expressed by the Board of the Faculty of Arts about establishing communication channels and inculcating communicative skills. Thus, in an attempt to improve communication and liaison with academic departments, an ASP person responsible for liaison was appointed. Twenty-five departments have responded by appointing a liaison person in each department. All these liaison persons attended some sessions of the ASP Tutor Training Workshop at the beginning of the academic year. The function of these persons appears to be of vital importance to the success of ASP, more particularly in bringing the Programme closer to mainstream departments.

The introduction of University wide skills modules would be of greater assistance to many disadvantaged students, if it incorporated content teaching as well. There is a general inability of students to transfer academic skills, which are taught for transfer to content at some later stage. At Rhodes too, there is growing resentment by students of such a strategy in favour of a holistic (course content-based tutoring) approach. Nine modules are given during the course of the year on essay writing, reading skills, revision and examination skills, time management, anxiety management, lecture and note-taking skills. After some initial difficulties with logistics and attendance, eventually eighty-six students participated in these modules, representing 374 contact periods. A Modules Co-ordinator for the whole University, reporting to the Science and Pharmacy Faculties Co-ordinator, handles this dimension of ASP activity, while the Outreach Programmes Co-ordinator reports to the Commerce, Law, and Education Faculties Co-ordinator.

3.2.3.16 Conclusion

In some ways Rhodes' ASP is making significant attempts to respond to the problems of disadvantaged students. The most limiting factor to the effectiveness of ASP is the apparent inability of the programmes to be infused with content, in spite of countless indications that students are in favour of programmes that are integrated with course content. The persistent hindrance to the effectiveness is the difficulties experienced by students in transferring skills (taught by the ASP tutor) and learnt at one time to course content (taught by the faculty lecturer) at another time. Nonetheless, various initiatives have been established, including the setting up of study group sessions for ASP students. The grand total of student numbers attending ASP programmes in the three Cluster-Faculties in 1992 was 214. When put together the three Cluster-Faculties gave a total of 13077 number of attendances during contact periods (in 1991 total attendance was 13643 in contact periods). These numbers show duplication, with one student having attended one or more subjects, one or more times. The new ASP Director, who assumed duties in early 1993 could not explain the difference in numbers of attendance.

In comparison with previous years the number of students, who attend ASP, has risen steadily. In 1989, for instance, there were 693 students with 7934 attendances in total; in 1990 ASP had 1112 students with a total of 10564 attendances, contrasted with 1236 students and 13643 attendances in total for 1991. These figures show that, in 1991, ASP has managed to reach one-third of the student population at Rhodes. Although the Programme realised significant expansion in terms of new programmes and student growth, up to the end of 1992, there has been a rather high turn-over of staff which, nonetheless is not expected to negatively affect the achievement of ASP objectives, as contingency plans are underway to deal with the situation.

3.2.4 University of Natal

In many respects the difficulties and challenges encountered by ASP staff, as observed and experienced by the writer at this University, provided substantial motivation for this investigation. In numerous instances, the writer, could depend on work colleagues for informal discussion of work-related issues, clarification of policy matters and what impact these had on ASP practice at institutional level.

Most data for this research was collected, by the writer, during the course of executing academic as well as some of the routine responsibilities, including administrative functions and attendances of meetings at both Durban and Pietermaritzburg Campuses. The writer is, therefore, much indebted to the generous assistance provided by both academic and administrative staff of the University for the successful completion of this ambitious project. The writer also received much needed encouragement and support from presentations and documentary evidence of ASP educational development initiatives, which were provided by fellow ASP employees (See letter from C. Damerell in Addendum 4 and other contributions elsewhere in the text).

In several ways, thus, the University of Natal can be regarded as the intellectual home as well as the organisational base for the Study. On countless occasions, reference is made to the information that was gleaned from the sources already mentioned. At times it is impossible to have always referred to specific individuals when discussing certain points in the dissertation because of the informal nature of the exchange of views on specific issues and particular contexts of ASP endeavour. Some of them, without their conscious effort, have somehow had input in the shaping of certain aspects of the reporting that follows. Nonetheless, their invaluable contributions are hereby

gratefully recognised in appreciation of their effect on the outcomes of this Study.

The ASP resources, both human and artefactual, have made possible the investigation of ASP activities and initiatives at the University of Natal in both Centres in Durban and Pietermaritzburg cities. The researcher spent approximately a total of twenty hours with the ASP Director in discussion of ASP policies and their implications for ASP theorising and practice in the two Centres.

The writer found the Director easily accessible since he was his immediate supervisor and opportunities for meeting were often readily available. Sixteen permanent ASP staff members were interviewed by the researcher for assessment of their degree of association and familiarity with ASP work. Arrangements were made with ASP Co-ordinators to interview twenty-two tutors and three administrative assistants in each Centre. All ASP staff members were asked to complete survey questionnaires, which were personally administered and collected by the researcher.

Nearly fourteen hours were spent with ASP Heads in both Centres. This excludes the time shared in workshops, seminars and University committees in which the writer and the ASP Heads presented papers or served in official capacity. One ASP Co-ordinator and an average of five tutors were interviewed by the researcher in each Faculty. In accordance with numbers of tutorial staff allocated in departments several survey questionnaires (averaging two in a department) were administered and collected after completion. The absence of ASP intervention in several departments seems to have negatively affected the total impact of what ASP initiatives have become available. Nonetheless, consistent efforts are underway to establish ASP eventually in all departments within the University. As a result of the cooperative efforts from ASP colleagues and the constant enquiries to ensure that a maximum number of

questionnaires were completed by the target sample, the overall return rate of questionnaires was exceptionally high at the University of Natal compared to other universities participating in the study.

Besides the University of the Witwatersrand and Rhodes University, it was at the University of Natal where the information on students' perspectives of ASP influence on their studies was obtained. Most of this information was derived from interviews with Undergraduates as follows: twenty-six students at the Durban Centre and eighteen students at the Pietermaritzburg Centre, who were at different levels of Year of Study as well as involvement with ASP courses. Approximately 30% of those interviewed were former ASP students and the remainder were currently registered students. As in other universities, the purpose was to have a methodological procedure that would be as widely inclusive as possible, in terms of representation of perceptions and viewpoints concerning the extent to which students benefitted from ASP attendance.

3.2.4.1 Historical background

The establishment of ASP at the University of Natal dates back to approximately a year before the appointment of the Co-ordinator in July 1981. The Co-ordinator, although based at the Durban Campus (Centre), which is the University of Natal Durban (UND), he was responsible for the co-ordination of ASP services, for the initial period, at the Medical School (MED) and Howard College (Durban Centre) and later the Pietermaritzburg Campus (Centre), which is the University of Natal Pietermaritzburg (UNP). The Medical School, which is geographically closer to the Durban Centre, is, in terms of organisation structure, functioning, and co-ordination, part of the Durban Centre. During the first decade of ASP in Natal, the three Centres have been administratively interlinked, with ASP head office based in the Durban Centre under one ASP Director. But in the new

dispensation, which started in 1992, ASP functions of management and administrative control have been decentralised through separate hierarchies of authority, especially in respect of Durban and Pietermaritzburg Centres. The Medical School still falls under the Durban Centre. Since ASP initiatives have developed separately in the two Centres of the University of Natal, their historical origins are inextricably intertwined with the academic requirements and resource bases provided at each Centre.

Since its inception in 1981 (Silva, 1982:3), ASP has been located at the Central Unit, which is situated outside faculties and academic departments, and is responsible for providing administrative backup and co-ordination of all ASP functions at the Durban and Pietermaritzburg centres of the University of Natal. Initially ASP was accommodated at what used to be called Student Advisory Service Office, now known as the Student Counselling and Careers Centre. However, in recent years attempts have continually been made to relocate some programmes in faculties and relevant departments. Thus, faculty-based academic support has become a common phenomenon at the University of Natal (hereafter referred to as Natal), as increased efforts are directed towards devolution of ASP facilities and resources to departments within certain faculties, such as Arts/Social Science, Commerce, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Science and Architecture.

The unprecedented upsurge in numbers of academically disadvantaged students entering predominantly White universities has drastically changed the composition of the student body in these institutions. When discussing ASP initiatives at the Universities of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town, and Rhodes, various historical reasons have been given to show how it became necessary to establish ASP, especially, in these universities.

3.2.4.2 Mission Statement and the ASP Academic Plan

At Natal the Mission Statement for ASP is closely linked to the Mission Statement of the University, which addresses a range of issues related to its role in a broadly changing socio-political environment in South Africa, and specifically deals with the need to redress socio-economic imbalances, through the provision of high quality education particularly to disadvantaged sectors of society irrespective of race, gender, or creed.

In defining the role of academic support at Natal, the report compiled by Crispin Hemson in January 1991 highlights some of the basic tenets of ASP initiatives as in separating the essence of ASP:

"A programme that has been established to address a range of issues of educational development in an organised way. By "educational development" is meant the process of developing staff, students (particularly those not adequately prepared for university work) and institution, to resolve the mismatch between student capabilities and the requirements of a university - and between the university and the needs of the society. Some of the relevant issues are selection, course design, assessment and above all teaching and learning themselves" (Hemson, 1991:1).

This definition results in the inclusion of vastly diverse programmes some of which cannot be compared to others. As Hemson's Report continues, it distinguishes formally organised programmes from academic support offered at the level of individual staff members. For example, lecturers may give attention to the needs of students by modifying their teaching to meet those needs more effectively. Such type of support initiative has been referred to as departmental support initiative as opposed to ASP initiatives and will be dealt with separately as in previous discussions of ASP at Wits, UCT and Rhodes. Thus the focus is on concerted tackling by faculties or departments of

issues relating to academic support. It is understood that such programmes have arisen in response to the perceived inadequacies of the University's existing resources and facilities to deal effectively with the entry of increasing numbers of disadvantaged Black students into the University.

In addition to the passage referred to, another document defines the role of ASP more clearly as follows:

"in its Mission Statement the University of Natal has indicated its commitment to serve all sections of its community through excellence in scholarship, teaching, learning, research and development. In order to live out this commitment the University must increase its involvement in research in the field of educational development, it has to mount programmes that will assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds, it has to adapt its teaching methods and its curricula to the needs of the new South Africa; and it has to make these adaptations while preserving the highest possible academic standards" (Bulman, 1990:1)

In this report the goals of ASP are stated in more precise terms than in most of the previous reports. Following proposals for the restructuring of ASP at Natal, which involved the transformation of the Student Support Services (SSS) in all centres into a University Educational Development Programme (UEDP) yet another document points to the crucial issues that must be addressed by such a Programme. The document is issued as a Report of the Academic Planning Sub-Committee of the University of Natal Planning Committee whose proposals for the establishment of Centres for University Educational Development at both Durban and Pietermaritzburg were accepted by the University Planning Committee and the Senate Executive in July 1990.

The document seeks to assist faculties of the University of Natal in addressing problems they face in improving degree standards with a changing student intake. The proposals sets out different aspects of the problems associated with the transition from a "White" university into a non-racial

institution. It also sets out the aims to which the Academic Planning Sub-Committee believes the University should commit itself. It further recognizes that faculties are the bodies responsible for developing programmes to address these problems. Consideration is given to the processes that should be established to assist faculties in developing programmes. These processes can operate on basis of academic structures, including central and faculty units to conduct relevant research and provide educational resources to faculties.

The proposal, however, gives no indication, in any descriptive sense, as to how these programmes should be structured and stipulates rather that faculties will be responsible for designing them. For the past decade various faculties and departments have already begun addressing some aspects of academic problems through programmes ranging from Bridging Year to Curriculum Development initiatives which, regrettably, have not as yet been co-ordinated. They have their own philosophies and may even pull in different directions. The work done in these programmes has not been recorded due to lack of resources to do so. There has also been no systematic way for the University to evaluate the programmes or to ensure that they fall within the vision of the Mission Statement.

It is primarily for these reasons that academic support initiatives at the University of Natal do not meet the requirements for a detailed analysis in this survey. Although Natal remains one of the pioneering institutions in the field of academic support, ASP programmes have not been implemented, on a continuous basis. Its programmes were not evaluated, even within a minimum period of three years. Certainly, other open universities that participated in this study have also been found deficient in this respect. But, at least all of them, except Natal, regularly conducted evaluations of individual programmes and other initiatives, though ignoring overall evaluation of the effectiveness of

ASP as a whole. At Natal, for nearly the entire first decade of ASP, there has been no database (either computer based, electronic records or mechanically recorded in any systematic manner).

The Faculties of Architecture, Arts/Social Science and Humanities, Commerce, Engineering, Education, and Science have taken the initiative in this area realising the important role that graduates from these faculties can play in various spheres of leadership. But increasing financial constraints seemed to be militating against the research, human resources, space and time required to initiate such support programmes. Since the University acknowledges, in its Mission Statement, the rapidly changing context in which it is placed and accepts the need for fundamental change within the academic community in all areas, it must ensure that while it keeps pace with changes it faces additional resources are obtained to fund research and development of programmes on basis of properly developed educational principles in order to maintain existing academic standards.

3.2.4.3 Development of ASP at the Pietermaritzburg Centre

The first academic support initiative established on the Pietermaritzburg campus (UNP) was the English Language Development Scheme (ELDS) in 1981. Prior to this date, Bridging-The-Gap and other Pre-University Courses were offered from as early as 1977 (Wortley, 1983:12-15)). But, since these were solely used to orientate University entrants to academic requirements of individual faculties and disciplines and rarely continued after the Orientation Week, they are not considered as part of ASP programmes, which are primarily intended to enable students to pass courses and graduate within the minimum required time.

ELDS offered extra-curricular courses in writing skills, examination preparation and examination techniques. Other limited forms of academic support or 'bridging' courses were

offered through the Language and Reading Centre (L&RC), the Centre for Adult Education (CAE), Students' Counselling Centre (SCC) and a few academic departments.

A further development was the establishment of the course entitled Language Learning and Logic (3L) in October 1984, which is a full-time accredited English for Academic Purposes (EAP) type course. In February 1985 the course was launched. Other courses, which will be presented and described in the next Section, were to follow and give added impetus to the development of ASP.

Since the 3L Course was established on experimental basis, an evaluation was scheduled to take place two years after its inception. In 1986 an informal evaluation was held in the form of a one day workshop, and since then more of such evaluations have been organised. These include questionnaires sent by staff to students at the end of each year and discussions regarding student perceptions of the programme. However these discussions have often been unrecorded and not followed up adequately.

The 3L Course was established on the basis of recommendations by ELDS staff and the findings of the one man study that was commissioned by the University to investigate and report on various ASP initiatives around the country. The Commissioner (Ralph Wortley, Director of the Student Counselling Centre at UNP) issued the Report in June 1983 in which it was stressed that the unprecedented upsurge in numbers of academically disadvantaged students entering predominantly White universities made it absolutely necessary that academic support was needed for them to pass and complete their studies (Wortley, 1983:1).

The academic environment at the University made great demands on their academic skills which often proved to be inadequate if not altogether lacking among DET matriculants. Without the necessary assistance, these high risk students

remained extremely vulnerable, therefore tutoring in subject content and other skills including language usage skills had to be instituted to prevent the incidence of the unacceptably high failure rate. The University had a stake in ASP as, in pursuance of scholarly excellence and other academic values, it had to ensure the maintenance of high exit standards for its graduates by mounting diversified support programmes to meet the needs of such students in the various disciplines.

The Wortley Report (1983:20) made a suggestion in favour of using senior undergraduate (Third and Fourth year) students in setting up the support service. They were to be recruited towards the end of each year and given a course of instruction in the teaching method appropriate to ASP, but did not specify the type nor the source of the ASP "method". The training would last for one full week concentrating on the principles of the dynamics in learner-centred tutoring, with small group interactive learning experiences which were considered indispensable for the participants. This would be done through a variety of simulated problem situations and a discussion of the ways in which those problems could best be handled. The training would also expose trainers to the teaching of specific academic skills. During the training trainee-tutors would concern themselves with the designing and presentation of various tasks related to the selected skills areas, for example, topic analysis, information retrieval, presumably resulting in the acquisition of a variety of academic skills.

The Report concludes by suggesting that the motivation of student tutors be maintained by what it refers to as appropriate rewards. It makes reference to other institutions, especially United States universities where, it is alleged, senior student assistants were granted remission of fees in return for giving tutoring and encourages the University of adopt a similar remuneration arrangement.

It is not clear to what extent the recommendations of the Wortley Report were formulated into policy decisions, except that 3L was the direct outcome of a policy decision taken on basis of its proposal and an input from ELDS staff. What has been established is that in both 1987 and 1988 the course catered for seventy mainly First Year African students thus doubling its 1985 and 1986 numbers.

In 1989 a Co-ordinator for the Faculty of Arts and Social Science was appointed in response to requests for assistance from the Faculty. The establishment of an ASP programme in this Faculty has resulted in many more such requests from departments including some based in other faculties. This development has highlighted the need for academic support for students, tutors and faculty teaching staff across a wide spectrum. As the Arts and Social Science Faculties were until recently (1990) the only Faculties offering academic support and could not extend services to other faculties. Other faculties have been encouraged to establish their own ASP programmes.

3.2.4.4 Setting up of an ASP Unit at the Pietermaritzburg Centre

In 1987 a Student Support Services unit (SSS) was established at UNP. As academic support initiatives, 3L and other forms of ASP intervention, including ELDS, L&RC fell under the auspices of SSS in technical terms but located within the Faculty. In August 1988 a new Head of SSS was appointed and subsequently a number of programmes and projects have been introduced. These will be briefly described in the appropriate Section below.

As regards the establishment of ASP structural bases, the setting up the Central Unit 1 in 1987 marked the first physical installation of ASP within the University community which was to continue in 1988 with the relocation to a geographically central spot on campus making its services

more visible and readily accessible to students. However, from the beginning of 1992 ASP was expected to be relocated in the Education building where spatial considerations have made it the most suitable venue for dispatching of ASP services and office accommodation for staff. Moreover, the association of the new ASP title, namely, Educational Development Programme (EDP) with educational activities makes the Faculty of Education its intellectual home.

After examining the historical origins of ASP at the University of Natal Durban Centre (UND) in respect to what happened during the initial phase of ASP, as well as events that followed, the current position of ASP in the two Centres will be dealt with simultaneously. However, where clear distinctions exist between centres warranting individual focus, the Centre concerned will be discussed separately.

3.2.4.5 Development of ASP at the Durban Centre

The first five years of ASP at the Durban Centre (1981-1985) were characterised by a great deal of planning and mobilisation of resources, for example, recruitment of staff and surveys of the needs both academic and non-academic of disadvantaged students. In an attempt to define the role of ASP the then Co-ordinator spelled out functions that would be fulfilled by ASP. From an undated document (manuscript) entitled "Preliminary Report: To clarify the scope and function of ASS (Academic Support Services) on the Campus" (circ. 1981), which was probably written towards the end of 1981 by the newly appointed Co-ordinator, the following points were raised in connection with the types of programmes that had to be instituted. Firstly, ASS which later became ASP had its main objective to further the overall physical, psychological, cognitive, educational and vocational development of all students. This recognised the unity and complexity of student development and identifies "studenthood" as a significant developmental period for the

young adult. For this reason every effort should be made to avoid the fragmentation of the service. This Report (Silva, circ. 1981) concurred with the Wortley Report (Wortley, 1983:20) that service staff should always strive to be professionals whose work was informed by developments in the fields of education and student counselling, further study, research and continuous updating of staff and expertise. In this connection the writer summarises these concerns thus:

"high standards of training and attendance of preparatory courses should be made mandatory for teachers and tutors considered for appointment into academic support positions... Preliminary findings of some research in this area indicate that some unmet ASP promises may be attributed to insufficiently trained ASP personnel to deal with all disadvantages that are characteristic of traditional ASP students. Therefore, there is necessity for a well formulated and properly structured diploma course to be introduced for such tutors" (Mhlane, 1991:190).

The undated document further stipulated that, in addition to becoming professionally accountable in terms already described, there were three purposes for which ASP had been established at Natal. It had to offer a remedial service to resolve problems associated with underprepared students for university education. In its approach preventative strategies had to be used by developing skills programmes that sought to prevent the high attribution rate at first year level and other personal and curriculum related problems. The service also had to be developmental in the sense of reaching what the Report (Wortley, 1983:18) termed normal student population through programmes aimed at increasing their level of functioning e.g. communication skills and preparation for the world of work and marriage responsibilities.

There, however, had to be guidelines to ensure the attainment of the goals for which the service was established. Silva (1982:1) believed that the overriding

raison d'être of such a service was "to provide asset-oriented rather than deficit-oriented services to normal students with normal adjustment problems and needs."

To meet the needs of such students the services had to be made freely available (no free for service, since these are socio-economically disadvantaged students and no compulsory attendance). These voluntary "open-door, walk-in" type of programmes were, however, not a phenomenon peculiar to Natal but were a dominant theoretical approach in other three predominantly White English-medium universities especially those surveyed in this study. In actual there are many similarities in the theoretical framework and approaches used by these universities.

3.2.4.6 Setting up of an ASP Unit at the Durban Centre

At the Durban Centre of the University of Natal, ASP began as a distinct entity in July 1981 with the appointment of the Co-ordinator, Secretary and Mathematics lecturer. In 1982 the Secretary who was employed on part-time basis was made full-time and a senior tutor in language and study skills was appointed. At the request of the Medical School, ASP extended its activities to medical students in January 1982. However, the Medical School had, for many years included the Bridging Year programme in the MB CH B curriculum for First Year students. An ASP co-ordinator known as ASP officer for the Faculty of Medicine was appointed in 1983 to deal with academic and environmental problems while the ASP Co-ordinator at the Durban Centre office dealt with the same issues and, in addition, was responsible for the overall co-ordination of ASP functions at the Durban Centre and Medical School.

In 1984 a senior tutor with the job title of the ASP officer was appointed being responsible for English tutorials and computer-aided learning and at the Durban Centre. Therefore, in as far as the Durban Centre is concerned, the core ASP

staff between 1981 and 1985 comprised two tutors, a secretary, and an administrative assistant for affirmative action bursaries, which were, in most instances, awarded by overseas Corporations and Foundations to disadvantaged Black students bursaries e.g. Kellogg Foundation, Ford Foundation, and institution-based organisations such as the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) and others associated with the so-called constructive engagement policy of the Reagan Administration in United States. These three members of staff together with the Co-ordinator for the Medical Faculty were accommodated in the Howard College building.

3.2.4.7 Description of ASP programmes

In this Section ASP programmes in all three Campuses (Centres) of the University of Natal will be examined together, since numerous overlaps occur in ASP programmes and activities offered in these different Centres.

To a large extent ASP initiatives at the Pietermaritzburg Centre were, between 1981 and 1986, limited to departmental programmes of a small number of students. These programmes were confined to orientation type of programmes and Bridging the Gap. They lasted for the duration of two to three weeks before registration, or extra-curricular tutoring e.g. the English Language Development Scheme (ELDS), and the Language and Reading Centre (L&RC). With the exception of 3L which is a full credit Arts/Social Science Course, all other programmes carried no credits for degree purposes. During this period, ASP initiatives at the Durban Centre focused on laying solid foundations for full scale subject-specific tutoring. On the basis of the holistic approach to ASP which was advocated by the Co-ordinator for the Durban Centre, meaning that both non-academic and academic needs of students should be addressed simultaneously to ensure the success of ASP students. To this effect, tutors offered extra-curricular tutorials in English language and technical skills such as essay-writing, note-taking and examination

writing skills while the Co-ordinator was involved in the planning and designing of further programmes and undertook extensive environmental counselling, that is, interviewing students regarding their non-academic requirements, such as organising finance to pay for fees, assisting in transport and residence accommodation arrangements. In a nutshell, these were the main areas of focus for ASP on which a more detailed and elaborate description is given below.

The inventory of ASP programmes given in **Figure 10** includes current ASP initiatives. Centres, in which the programmes operate are indicated in appropriate columns as well as the year in which each programme was established at a particular Centre.

Figure 10, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL: ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ASP) SCHEDULE OF PROGRAMMES IN 1990

PROGRAMME	PMB	DBN	MED	YEAR
Arts/Social EDP	@			1989
Science Four-Year Augmented Courses		@		1991
Biblical Studies I	@			1990
Computer-based Learning Programme		@		1987
Economics & Management Bridging Year Unit		@		1989
Engineering Bridging Year Unit		@		1989
Humanities & Social Science EDP		@		1989
Language, Learning and Logic (3L)	@			1985
Medical Communication Programme			@	1991
MESAB-IBM Mentor Programme		@	@	1991
Obstetrics and Gynaecology			@	1978
Paediatrics			@	1984
Philosophy Unit, Phil Dept & Rel Studies	@			1987
Preparation for University (PFU)	@			1988
Pre-University Preparation for Medicine		@		1989
Psychology I Tutorial Programme				1989
School of Law Student Support		@		1990
Science Foundation Programme	@			1991
Teach Test Teach	@	@		1988
Teach Test Teach Extension Programme		@		1990
Tutoring & Tutor Development Programme		@		1987
University of Natal Internship Programme	@	@	@	1987

SOURCE: REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AT UNIVERSITY OF NATAL, by Crispin Hemson, January 1991

NOTE: FIGURES FOR 1991 AND 1992 NOT AVAILABLE DUE TO REORGANISATION OF ASP UNITS AND RESTRUCTURING OF SOME ASP PROGRAMMES

- Denotes Philosophy Unit programme had to be discontinued at the end of 1990 due to staffing problems.

The above represents the entire range of programmes in summary form. But a more descriptive analysis of these in terms of aims and structures is necessary. In the following, programmes are described in such a way that their functioning is clearly delineated into discrete forms and content. It is necessary to do this, since in reality almost every programme seems to share certain features with certain others. But the fact remains that no two programmes are identical.

Arts and Social Science EDP at the Pietermaritzburg Centre (PMB)

It is a programme aimed at students and staff in the Faculties of Arts and Social Science. The main activities are process-oriented, meaning that academic support focuses on tutorials for students in such a way that they are linked to courses in mainstream departments. Workshops are also organised for mainstream lecturing staff and tutors resulting in extensive interaction between departments.

Augmented Courses in a Four Year Curriculum in the Science Faculty (DBN)

In this programme special "augmented" First Year courses are offered as alternative options to the regular courses and the degree is extended to take four instead of three years. The mainstream subject matter is augmented with academic support, learning and language skills that provide additional assistance in understanding the subject matter especially in Mathematics and Physics which are the first two courses for which students are required to register. Throughout, emphasis is on process issues such as skills effective learning and on content.

Biblical Studies I (PMB)

Tutorials in the Course have been redesigned to ensure that the teaching programme meets the needs of the students using a curriculum development approach, meaning that structural changes in the curriculum were desirable and had to be implemented. The aim of support tutorials is particularly to assist disadvantaged students to cope with subject matter.

Computer-based Learning Programme (PMB and DBN)

The aim is to promote both computer-based learning (in the form of student self-study materials) and computer literacy (especially among students who would otherwise have little or no exposure to computers during the course of their undergraduate studies).

Economics and Management Bridging Unit (DBN)

This unit offers African underprepared students wishing to enter the Faculty of Commerce a reduced load of courses in First Year of study by combining foundation courses and two credit courses. It is thus a kind of mixed Bridging Unit, as it is not completely an intermediate programme between matriculation and First Year but incorporates features of both (while supplementing for inadequate matric learning experiences, it allows students to take a maximum of two credit courses at regular First Year level). Participating students include those who have been identified as having potential to succeed at University, although they are below the "cut off" line in terms of the points system (the required Swedish points which faculties use as a selection device for admission, similarly to other open universities.

Engineering Bridging Year Programme (DBN)

Prospective African engineering students, in particular, enter this programme, which aims to provide, those who have

been selected to participate, an opportunity of meeting challenges of an engineering career. The programme attempts to remedy deficiencies in schooling and prepares students for First Year. Part of the programme consists of manufacturing site or factory visits over a period of approximately six weeks.

Humanities and Social Science EDP (DBN)

This is a programme aimed at both students and staff in the Faculties of Arts and Social Science. Most of the activity consists of tutorials and materials development, which involves preparing demonstrations and other learning resources, for First Year students, though students from subsequent years also benefit from these. Departments are assisted to re-examine the needs of students and the curriculum and teaching approaches in the light of perceived needs.

Language, Learning and Logic (3L) in PMB

This is a credit course that aims to develop in students the communicative competence appropriate to a university. It is offered to First Year students for whom English is a second language. It is a full credit course for students in the Faculties of Arts, Social Science, Commerce and Science. The teaching of the Course is presented inter-departmentally involving staff from the Departments of Linguistics and Communication, English and Philosophy.

Medical Communication Programme (MED SCH)

This Programme aims to provide students with learning and language skills needed to cope with both their academic careers and future work as medical professions. There is a credit-bearing First Year course with a core component for all students and an elective component for Second Language students.

MESAB-IBM Mentor Programme (DBN and MED SCH)

The aim of the programme is to provide MESAB bursary-holders with academic, social and environmental support (non-academic support including organising bursaries, accommodation and transport as well as social counselling) through a mentorship, meaning tutoring that is provided by senior students to junior students in the Faculty of Medicine. Selected senior students are trained to be mentors for First Year recipients of bursaries from the Medical Education of South African Blacks (MESAB) organisation. The programme includes Pharmacy and Nursing students.

Obstetrics and Gynaecology (MED SCH)

In the late 1970s this Programme was initiated as a curriculum development effort focusing particularly on teaching methods and new forms of student assessment. The aim is to bring more disadvantaged students to the same level as other students "to enable advantaged students not be disadvantaged". The Programme has entailed considerable organisation in grouping students for small group work, and in balancing practical work with theory. As one member of staff commented that such a programme should be in place earlier in the students' time at University, shows the extent of planning that is required.

Paediatrics (MED SCH)

It involves all students from 4th to 6th Year in the Paediatrics' Small Group Teaching Approach and Family Attachment Programme. The aims include developing students' independence, and their ability to a form professional relationship with a family. This programme is directed towards more effective preparation for the society in which students will be working. Considering that they have spent

more than four years at a university there is less emphasis on the disadvantages of inadequate schooling and special focus on preparation for career requirements.

Philosophy (PMB)

The programme consists of a learning system, which is based on tutorials. During tutorials emphasis is placed on the value of knowledge as an end in itself rather than means to getting marks. Its aim is to ensure that students, who did not receive an adequate education at school are given any additional or special assistance that they may require with their studies in philosophy. The success of tutorials depends on small group interaction and frequent but short assignments with prompt feedback. The tutorials for the First Year course, however, have been discontinued until the programme get another lecturer, because it was felt that the workload on staff has caused a decline in research work.

The contentious issue in ASP has always been the extent to which faculty lecturers can be involved in ASP teaching at the same time. The issue poses many questions about ownership of and responsibility for ASP. While it is appropriate to expect participation of faculty lecturers in attempts to resolve problems of disadvantaged students, it is unrealistic expectation that they can fully be engaged on both faculty and ASP responsibilities without negative consequences. In some cases, departmental staff are compelled to undertake ASP work as appears to have happened in the Philosophy support programme at UNP. The responsibilities of faculty staff in ASP activities should be proportionate to departmental workload. Alternatively, faculty staff can be seconded, on full or part-time basis to ASP work, as the University of Zululand ASP, which was established in the middle of 1993, proposes to resolve difficulties involved in recruiting suitably trained personnel to positions of faculty co-ordinators, by

negotiating secondment of faculty lecturers to ASP on conditions that are satisfactory to all parties involved.

Preparation for University (PMB)

This is a one-week Leadership Training programme (LTP) which prepares senior students, who then become mentors to facilitate a one week Orientation Programme for incoming First Year African students. The programme is run by a joint Black Students' Society/ASP Steering Committee. Staff and senior students (ex-mentors) provide training for mentors the following year to ensure continuity of the programme.

Pre-University Preparation for Medicine (MED SCH)

A three weeks Orientation Programme that aims to build the confidence of students in their potential to cope with the demands of university education by providing orientation to academic and social aspects of University life. The target group is selected from those First Year African admissions whose high school results indicate the need. Senior medical students receive extensive training to enable them to be mentors to the group. The academic aspects of the Programme include problem-solving in Chemistry and learning skills in Biology and Community Health.

Psychology I Tutorial Programme (DBN)

The tutorial programme of this Course assists students in creating meaning from texts and also give them adequate assistance to prepare themselves for multiple choice examinations. The Programme has been completely reshaped to accommodate the special needs of current students.

School of Law Tutorial Programme (DBN)

Tutorials are held on a weekly basis for all First Year students in B.Proc. to enable them to develop strategies to

cope effectively in their courses, specifically with the concepts and methodology of legal studies. This initiative has also led to the development of materials and the provision of feedback to teaching staff on areas of the curriculum that may present difficulties for these students.

Science Foundation (PMB)

This programme takes African students who, according to their matriculation results and symbols, have not been sufficiently prepared for university. They register for a year in the Programme before they enter First Year. The aim is to remedy problems from their learning experiences at school and prepare them to be able to complete a B.Sc. degree. The programme is engaged in developing teaching techniques that are more relevant for the delivery of natural sciences content. It also seeks to inculcate, among staff, approaches that enhance understanding of learning materials. Therefore, the programme is directed at both student and staff development.

Teach Test Teach (PMB and DBN)

This is an alternative student Selection Programme presently operating in the Faculties of Arts and Social Science. Students who have not attained or who are though unlikely to attain the Swedish points level for entry into the University, are recommended by community organisations and teachers in schools to be considered for participation in the Programme. After an intensive period of teaching, focused on the production of knowledge in disciplines in those Faculties, and extensive testing, a decision is made on selection. The basis for the decision is the level of development attained by each student in the programme over a series of tests. Some students are admitted to conventional courses, and some to the TTT Extension Programme, while others are judged to be unsuitable for university entrance.

Teach Test Teach Extension Programme (DBN)

This Programme permits students to take a reduced curriculum load of a Four Year Degree Programme. In both the First and Second Years of study there is a combination of two credit courses and two foundational courses.

In this way, the Programme is likely to contribute to greater understanding of the intensity of disadvantages affecting students from inadequate schooling backgrounds. Provided the necessary information is collected in the duration of study, to determine the adequacy of measures to reduce the curriculum, the spreading of the curriculum over four years may be a more rational, but ad hoc, solution to the problem of high failure rate among disadvantaged students. In order to assess the educational significance of this Programme, a comprehensive evaluation of its impact will be tremendously important.

Tutoring and Tutor Development Programme (DBN)

In the Faculties of Commerce, Engineering, Law, Medicine and Science this programme has been established to give assistance to underprepared students in their learning experiences in selected disciplines. The aim is to develop competence and appropriate thinking skills in the specific discipline. It is also aimed at recruiting and developing tutors so that they are suitably equipped to impart these skills to students.

University of Natal Internship Programme (DBN and PMB)

Its aim is to increase students' confidence and improve understanding between staff and students. It is expected that this will encourage Black students to become academics and also encourage the University to change and be better oriented to current issues in the broader society of which it is a part.

In this Programme students work on a specific research project set up by a member of staff, whether academic or administrative. Depending on their year of study, students are paid on a sliding scale for up to sixty days per year.

As ASP is presently going through a fundamental restructuring phase at Natal, some of the programme are being redesigned, revised or discarded, depending on their compatibility with the envisioned paradigm. Therefore, changes are likely to involve more than name change alone (from ASP to Educational Development Programme, EDP). The change process, in terms of the recommendations of the Review Committee (Dumminy, 1990:13-14) must include a rudimentary shift in the paradigm, referring to the process of abandoning the deficit model of ASP in favour of the holistic approach. It is expected, however, that other programmes will continue being implemented even if they assume different forms and structures from and structure from the present one.

During this transitional phase, Natal ASP has redefined the Mission Statement in such a way that it indicates the extent to which programmes are intended to achieve the aims that have been set by the University for educational development. At joint Senate Executive/University Planning Committee meeting held in July 1990 the University's aims in the area of educational development were set forth as follows:

"Broad aims:

- * To achieve the purposes of the Mission Statement in the area of educational development in a coherent way;
- * To enable access to the University of students with suitable potential

- * To provide more effective courses and services that address the mismatch between students' preparation and the demands of the University
- * To establish flexibility in degree construction, in entry and exit points and in the student's rate of progress

Specific aims:

- * To enable access to the University of students of high potential who are presently excluded purely because of poor education and inadequate assessment structures
 - To provide entry into the university for those who have achieved a particular level at another institution, such as technikon, teachers training college, community college or workers college
- * To select students suitable for university work and to provide them with opportunities for educational development as needed
- * To ensure that courses offered and services provided match student needs and address the needs of the community and of the society and to develop the abilities of university teachers to respond more effectively to the needs of students
- * To enable students to enter subsequent years with the necessary skills, approaches and understandings that are needed for effective learning at that level and with the specific faculty requirements where necessary
 - To provide certification of achievement at a level below that of degree level and to enable exit from the faculty to other faculties, to other tertiary

institutions which may be more appropriate for the student, or to employment

- * To allow for flexibility in the degree construction and modes of delivery" (Hemson, 1991:6-7)

As a result of these more inclusive terms of reference for ASP the target group for the programmes has also been somewhat redefined to accommodate what the University wishes to achieve through these. Although, most programmes still regard students as the target group, some now include staff in the target group. Many such programmes entail continuous staff development. Still a number of initiatives are directed specifically towards African students while for most others the wording refers to "under-prepared" students or students "from inadequate educational systems". This often but certainly not always means African students. There are several programmes that include significant numbers of non-African students and one, that is, PFU targets all Black students in First Year (Indian, Coloured and African).

Those programmes that can be described as oriented towards curriculum development have as their target all students participating in that course for which support is required. For example, it has been explained that "the more "advantaged" students on the Obstetrics and Gynaecology courses are part of the target group as they would be penalised by an approach that relied on "aiming-at-the-middle" didactic lectures" (Hemson, 1991:7), meaning that if lectures concentrated on the level of disadvantaged students progress of other students would suffer.

In general, most programmes are aimed at students at their entry to the University, but, in some instances, tutoring continues beyond First Year. Monitoring programmes such as those in the Faculties of Medicine and Architecture involve

senior students as well as First Years, and some programmes begin at a higher level such as some at the Medical School.

3.2.4.8 Staffing and administrative infrastructure at Pietermaritzburg and Durban Centres

It is important to show numbers of students participating in ASP initiatives for an assessment of the immensity of the tasks involved for ASP staff and the implications staffing requirements. The following **Figure 11** illustrates student numbers enrolled in each programmes and numbers of staff responsible in 1990.

Figure 11, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL: ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ASP) STUDENT NUMBERS AND STAFFING IN 1990

PROGRAMME		NO. OF STUDENTS	STAFF	
			F/T	P/T
Arts/Social Science	(PMB)	270	1	3
Augmented Science	(DBN)	20	1	1
Biblical Studies	(PMB)	68	3	2
Computer-based Learning	(DBN/ PMB)	65	1	0
Economics & Management	(DBN)	39	3	7
Engineering Bridging		47	3	20
Humanities and Social Science	(DBN)	200	3	34
Language, Learning and Logic	(PMB)	80	4	2
Medical Communication	(MED SCH)	300	1	3
MESAB/IBM Mentoring	(MED SCH)	50	1	0
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	(MED SCH)	100	14	17
Paediatrics	(MED SCH)	100	12	6
Philosophy	(PMB)	119	3	0
Preparing for University	(PMB)	160	0	11
Pre-University Preparation for Medicine	(DBN/ MED SCH)	30	0	3
Psychology	(DBN)	700	10	15
School of Law	(DBN)	100	1	0
Science Foundation	(PMB)	25	1	6
Teach Test Teach	(DBN/ PMB)	52	3	varies
Teach Test Teach Text	(DBN)	90	3	6
Tutor Development	(DBN)	250	1	16
University Internship	(DBN/ PMB/ MED SCH)	250	3	0

LEGEND: PMB = PIETERMARITZBURG CENTRE, DBN = DURBAN CENTRE, MED SCH = MEDICAL SCHOOL, F/T = FULL TIME STAFF, P/T = PART TIME STAFF
 SOURCE: REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AT UNIVERSITY OF NATAL, by Crispin Hemson, January 1991
 NOTE: FIGURES FOR 1991 AND 1992 NOT AVAILABLE DUE TO REORGANISATION OF ASP UNITS AND RESTRICTING OF COMMISSION

The spread of programmes spans the spectrum ranging from Bridging Programmes which tend to be more intensive and involve working with small groups of students but requiring large numbers of staff. At the other end, curriculum development programmes deal with all students taking the course but dependent on the resources of existing staff. Partly for this reason, the costs of the latter approach are less visible, nonetheless, it may substantially increase the work load and require additional staff as has happened with the Philosophy and Obstetrics and Gynaecology Programmes.

The two Centres (Pietermaritzburg and Durban, with Medical School being part of the Durban Centre, administratively, have somewhat different organisational structures. There is a tendency also for them to be distinguished by occupation titles in accordance with preferences of staff in either Centre. For example, in the Durban Centre ASP is referred to as the University Educational Development Programme (UEDP) with an Educational Development Officer (EDO) as administrative Head who is also responsible for the finances of both Centres, and academic official who is simply called the Head of the Centre. Faculty co-ordinators are based in five faculties and are referred to as Faculty Educational Development Officers (FEDOs plural form, one a FEDO). Each FEDO has tutors assisting with tutorials in various disciplines. Depending on the nature of the issue a FEDO reports to either one of the Centre's "rotating" Heads, particularly on administrative matters, or to their respective Deans, especially, on curriculum development matters.

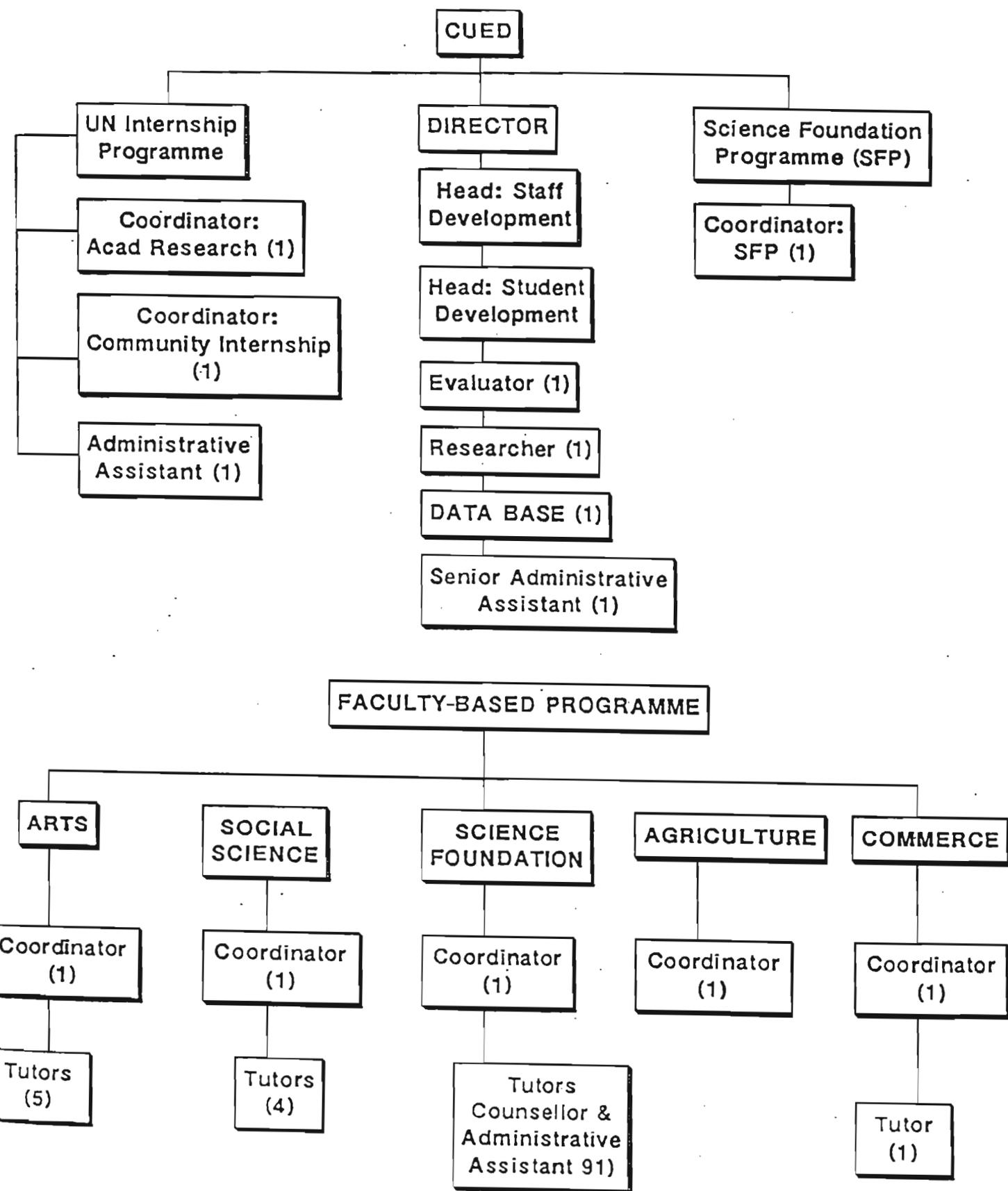
Faculty Educational Development Officers have been appointed in the Faculties of Architecture and Allied Disciplines, Commerce, Education, Humanities and Social Science, Law, and Medicine and vacant posts are expected to be filled in the near future. **Figure 12** below illustrates the distribution of responsibilities in faculties and among Central Unit staff.

NOTE: The Planning Committee for the Durban Centre is responsible for the management of the Centre. The Chairperson of this Committee becomes the Head of the Centre and the chairmanship rotates between academic Head and the Administrative Head (EDO) on the basis of the stipulations of the Executive Committee of the Board of the Centre. The Executive Committee consists of three Deans who set up the structure of ASP. The entire Board of the Centre for Educational Development is the policy-making body for University Educational Development Programme (UEDP). It consists of all Deans at the Durban Centre and is chaired by the Vice-Principal. The Board is responsible to the Senate Executive (SENEX) for the overall functions of the UEDP.

At the Pietermaritzburg Centre the situation is slightly different. As already stated, the ASP Central Unit is known as the Centre for University Educational Development (CUED) with a Head called a Director who is based at the Central Unit together with the core staff of the Centre. Among these are: two Administrative Assistants (one senior) an Evaluator of ASP programmes campus-wide, the Researcher, the Co-ordinator of Student Development, a Database Co-ordinator, a Science Selection Co-ordinator, a co-ordinator for the University Internship Programme and an assistant, and the vacant post of Co-ordinator for Staff Development as illustrated in **Figure 13** below.

There are six co-ordinators who are based in respective faculties as follows: Social Science, Agriculture, Commerce, Science, Arts, Maths and Applied Science. In these faculties there are tutors in different disciplines. The director is responsible to the Vice-Principal for the running of the Centre.

Figure 13, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL (PIETERMARITSBURG CENTRE): PERSONNEL STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UEDP), JANUARY 1993



SOURCE: EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE, a Newsletter of the UEDP, University of Natal, Pmb. Vol 3, No 1, 1993.

The Natal ASP is funded by a number of organisations, some based locally such as the South African Medical Scholarship Trust, IBM and MESAB bursary fund, Kagiso Trust, ASP funds, the University Fund, Mobil Oil Company and Departmental Funds. Other sponsorship comes from multinational corporations and international agencies such as the Ford Foundation, United States Human Rights Lawyers, Kellogg Foundation, the British Scholarship Council, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and others.

3.2.4.9 Results of ASP programmes

The greatest weakness of Natal ASP is that most of the programmes have not been evaluated. The often cited reason for this omission is that it has not been possible to do research on ASP activities because staff are constantly facing work pressures to respond to, what is often perceived as, crisis situations because there are always not enough capable people to do the work. However, the more recently established programmes are placing more emphasis on research, for instance, the Pietermaritzburg Centre has employed a full time Researcher as well as an Evaluator. Already indications are that they have started gathering data on individual programmes and expect to complete a comprehensive evaluation by 1994 if successful in their plans.

At the Durban Centre, there is more determination than ever to subject all ASP initiatives to the scrutiny of an evaluation process. To this end services of an external evaluator have been hired and a comprehensive evaluation report can be expected before the end of 1993.

3.2.4.10 Evaluation of ASP Programmes at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg and Durban Centres

ASP activities in the Durban Centre of the University of Natal have grown remarkably during the past ten years (1981 to 1991), notwithstanding the accompanying malaise, in terms of organisation (control and co-ordination of initiatives and activities) and direction of policy to guide various ASP initiatives towards a common goal. Dumminy et al. (1990:3) refer to what they term "...the haphazard way in which they had developed without centralised planning or control. Not only had different initiatives sprung up, having obtained outside funding, these in common with those of central Students Support Services, had not been evaluated. In the words of one submission (to the Review Committee), 'there was no accountability'".

The earlier programmes often began as responses to a crisis situation as the University was trying to deal with the reality of large numbers of underprepared Black students. The University allowed these programmes to be put into operation without ensuring that some form, of accountability was built into such an undertaking. Consequently, evaluation was not seen as an inseparable part of ASP development and tended to be overlooked.

Some of these responses, as we have seen, started at different points within the University, at times addressing the same issue. As the process of launching various initiatives continued, potential for overlapping programmes existed and duplication, in some of these was not uncommon. The aggravating factor is that poor co-ordination and lack of proper control made it difficult to assess what impact programmes were having on students' academic progress, since, from the outset individual programmes were seldom evaluated.

A related problem is that they tend to be seen by most in the University community as some peripheral activity that deals with transitory issues which have little relevance to the mainstream functions of the University. The tendency has been to regard all initiatives as 'academic support' suggesting that they are an ancillary activity to educational development. While the separation of ASP activities from the academic activities in faculties was inevitable, some common ground had to be found much earlier in the process of developing ASP programmes. The separate identity of ASP might have facilitated the richness of experiences from which ASP staff have gained a considerable amount of knowledge about disadvantages of students. As a result of isolation, faculty staff missed many opportunities of benefitting from the achievements and accumulated learning experiences of ASP staff. This separation has been allowed to continue far too long, to such an extent that, it has created major problems for the integration of ASP programmes with faculty activities.

3.2.4.11 Overall Impressions

The University of Natal ASP of the Nineties seems set to be much different from the ASP of the Eighties. There are already strong indicators that past experiences have begun to inform the types and strategies of programmes that are being formulated for the second decade of ASP at Natal.

The Natal ASP, now referred to as Educational Development, has embarked on an unprecedented change of direction from marginalised support programmes (Hemson, 1991:12) to faculty-integrated educational development. The trend is for most programmes to be within departments and be part of mainstream teaching. In this way, the whole thrust of Educational Development has begun centring around seeking areas of common interest between EDP and faculties. One of the ways to do this is vigorously exerting influence on teaching and learning processes taking place in faculties

and assisting departmental staff in curriculum development where it is supposed to occur.

A realisation has grown that only a drastic change in both approaches to educational development will bring about more effective ways of resolving academic disadvantages of students. Under the new dispensation of academic assistance to disadvantaged students, a different set of assumptions is used. The most important assumption regards the University as underprepared to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. Both Centres of the University of Natal share this concern.

The need for EDP programmes, therefore, arises from the inadequate provision by the University for the diverse needs of its student population. The role of EDP, then, is to assist the University to be better prepared for its function of serving the interests of all students. This approach to the mission of ASP can remove perceptions of programmes as supplementary to the central functions of the University. In many quarters there has been expectation that ASP programmes, as recent innovations juxtaposed to mainstream teaching departments would strive to prove their value. By omitting this responsibility they have become more vulnerable to criticism. Through evaluation they would have shown what they are capable of achieving. At Natal, there has been insufficient recognition of this fact. Until evaluations have been completed, programmes remain vulnerable to unsubstantiated claims being made for or against their efficacy.

3.2.4.12 Conclusion

In this concluding Section of Chapter 3, special focus is on the strengths and weaknesses of ASPs in all four universities.

The initial phase in ASP activities at the University of Natal, is marked by consistent attempts to construct an ASP service that would cater for all the needs of disadvantaged students. This is shown in memoranda and correspondence written by the first ASP Head to University authorities and ASP donors. He constantly requested funds for both non-academic and academic needs of disadvantaged students. ASP of the early Eighties will be remembered by many, who benefitted from the Programme, for the relief brought by bursaries and other financial support, which the Co-ordinator organised through energetic fundraising campaigns.

The belief was that, students, who are not adequately financed do not sufficiently benefit from ASP's academic programmes. This belief has been validated in numerous surveys of student perceptions regarding the relationship between inadequate finance for studies and living expenses and academic success. Wits evaluation Reports, in particular, have consistently stressed the significance of this perception by students for effectiveness of ASP (Agar, 1992:94). Natal ASP deserves praise for some achievements during this phase and later, particularly, when Teach-Test-Teach, University of Natal Internship Programme, Commerce and Engineering Bridging Units and other initiatives were established and took bold steps, in different ways, towards alleviating academic difficulties encountered by disadvantaged students.

While recognising ASP input in attempts to reduce the high failure and drop-out rate among disadvantaged students, ASP has been criticised for not doing enough to help students pass courses and graduate. Major ASP weaknesses emanate from two sources, namely lack of co-ordination, meaning inadequate control and inefficient management of resources, and neglect of research. It is understandable that the small scale of some programmes, the lack of a viable base for research, and their separation from departmental research

initiatives contributed, to some extent, towards the inability to evaluate the performance of the programmes to attain the goals for which they were intended. It appears that the Centre for University Educational Development in Pietermaritzburg and the University Educational Development Programme at Durban will now have sufficient resources to address this issue. Although, research initiatives are still at too early a stage to produce results, indications are that, since the start has been made, it is reasonably within the scope of the present administration to make sustained efforts to ensure that evaluation is carried out.

Concerning the weaknesses in Natal ASP arising from inadequate co-ordination, there is real danger that ASP efforts and expenses can be duplicated unless a more efficient style of management is introduced, especially when considering that most programmes have in different ways addressed some of the same issues (Dumminy, et al. (1990:4). For example, there has been a proliferation of programmes set up around the issue of the use of English, instructional techniques, study skills, and learning, for example, essay-writing, reasoning, critical thinking skills, and so forth. It is, therefore fair to say that the first decade of ASP at Natal has been marked by insufficient co-ordination that had wide implications for the effectiveness of the programmes and the efficiency of the services offered. The setting up of the Centres for University Educational Development is definitely a step in the right direction towards maximising the benefits from the programmes by, inter alia, instituting effective communication channels for ASP staff itself and with faculty staff and pooling research efforts by staff involved in the programmes. The University of Natal has potential to develop a national model for ASP intervention only if the attention of EDP leadership can focus on matters that are crucial for efficient and effective EDP intervention. These include two conditions, which must first be met, namely, efficient and effective management of resources, with regard to administrative

functions and regular (annual) evaluation of all EDP programmes and initiatives, preferably at the end of academic calendar year to coincide with the availability of both progress reports on programmes and various initiatives and students' end-of-year academic results. The example set by Wits ASP in this regard is worth emulating.

In this Chapter, it has become apparent that ASPs, in all universities, have common characteristics. The majority of ASPs have emerged from similar circumstances: as a response to a crisis situation in tertiary education. The four universities surveyed decided that whatever measures were taken to stem the failure and drop-out rates, it would have to be an internal decision of each institution as to how programmes are formulated and what strategies are adopted for presentation of content. Such decisions would be based on each university's view of the role of ASP and the form it is expected to take. Some universities responded promptly to the crisis like the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Natal. Others took time before embarking on intervention.

Rhodes, in 1982 followed the bold steps taken by other open universities. ASP programmes have been instituted in all Faculties, with the aim of providing students with academic skills that will enable them to cope in studies. While Rhodes ASP has been successful in helping students to succeed in some courses, this is not enough because many students are still failing and others find themselves unable to meet graduation requirements and drop-out of the University. But students have discovered that it is more than coping that required of ASP intervention. Similarly, ASP staff realise the inadequacies of the Skills approach to academic support. Students, in assessments of ASP programmes in some Faculties, have indicated dissatisfaction with the technical skills model used by Rhodes ASP. According to the Reports from ASP staff, students show preference for integration of skills teaching into content because of

difficulties they experience attempting to transfer skills learnt earlier to course content being taught by departmental staff (faculty).

Absolute lack of comprehensive evaluation of ASP contributes to the ineffectiveness of the programmes. The result is the danger that, whatever changes are introduced to integrate ASP programmes with departmental course content, not all faculties will accept change to faculty-integrated programmes, unless ASP management is capable of influencing uniform policy direction on this issue, by appealing that faculty boards adopt a resolution to this effect.

Rhodes ASP has many qualities of a potentially effective intervention. But, it takes shrewd leadership to embark on a programme of reform such as expected to take place at Rhodes. This is quite a possibility considering the recent changes in top leadership positions in ASP, with the new ASP Director having to be appointed at the beginning of 1993. Accompanying any reform measures should be regular evaluation of ASP as a whole, not just individual programmes, to assess the impact of all initiatives on the short term goals of ASP (assisting students pass courses) and long term goals of ASP (increasing graduation rate of disadvantaged students). An overall evaluation of ASP should, preferably, take place annually at the end of the academic calendar year, in order that the report may include all progress reports and students' academic results reflecting the situation in the year under review.

Both the Universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand have achieved tremendous progress through judicious use of research to find out what ASP programmes are capable of achieving and what improvements are required to increase the pass rate and reduce the exclusion or drop-out rate so that more numbers of disadvantaged students achieve academic success they deserve.

Wits ASP has for many years, since 1984, been doing more than collecting information on pass rates and graduation rates. Every year, a comprehensive evaluation of ASP ranging from student and staff perceptions of ASP performance (actually examining success and failure rates in each course and possible reasons for these and suggesting models for change where this is desirable) to assessing: the overall record of ASP on the quality of services provided to students and departmental staff and the relationship between ASP and the University.

The Evaluator's Annual Reports serve as feedback mechanism for ASP staff, students and faculty staff. It is also a medium of communication with other ASP stakeholders such as donors and corporate sector, who always want to be informed about the developments in tertiary education. In the Wits context, it seems that future ASP developments will be significantly influenced by formal clarification of two policy issues, namely, definition or redefinition of ASP target group in view of the increasing numbers of non-traditional ASP students (Whites) registering ASP courses. The quota system has been suggested, in this dissertation, as one of the possible solutions to this problem. Another issues, that Wits ASP has not clearly defined is its future role in the University. The nature, content and strategies of programmes formulated by ASP will be determined, to a large extent, by the definition of ASP role in the long term future.

This weakness in ASP policy direction is found most in all surveyed universities. Each of the open universities, and indeed any tertiary institution that hosts ASP programmes or initiatives has to come to some agreement with ASP structures on the form the relationship is likely to take in the long term. At times, this uncertainty is so overwhelming that it leaves some ASP staff members with feelings of job insecurity and inclined to look for job security elsewhere.

The main weakness of UCT ASP is that comprehensive evaluation of ASP, to measure its successes and failures, has not been done till today, in spite of recommendations by the Reid Commission that such evaluation would enhance opportunities of ASP success (Reid, et al. 1985:24)

Summary

Chapter 3 has attempted to portray clearly the structure and processes, adequacies and inadequacies of ASP at four universities in South Africa. It has also been shown that, in their present form and structure, ASPs are not adequately equipped to meet the needs of disadvantaged students. The biggest drawback for the lasting effectiveness of the programmes is the trial and error method adopted in most ASP intervention. From this perspective ASP is seen as a field in which various experiments can be conducted until the "correct" solution is found.

It has been shown, through many examples of programmes that have been tried and failed. Rhodes ASP has even today experiences of students objecting to certain forms of skills training that is not integrated with course content. All other three universities first tried the "skills without content" approach but soon strove to abandon it on the basis that it is irrelevant to solving the real problems of disadvantaged students. It would be more appropriate if this approach was used on the basis of informed decisions instead of randomly carrying out experiments with students careers. As a result of this inefficient approach, many talents were lost and careers destroyed. The longer ASP adherence to this approach persists the more will we have academic casualties (unsuccessful students who are compelled to drop-out of university) we will have with devastating consequences for the economic sector of the Country.

If the prevailing uncertainty on a number of ASP issues is allowed to continue, there will be irredeemable loss of

opportunities for restoration of rationality and a systematic approach. The stumbling strategies for implementation of ASP programmes, has, in certain instances brought discredit to ASP intervention. This is often revealed in results of survey of staff and student (both past and present) perceptions of ASP input in assisting them. Since his crisis situation is among reasons for embarking on this study, it is, then incumbent on this investigation to propose solutions to problems that besiege ASP enterprise. It also provides motivation for developing well researched criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of ASP programmes. Such criteria are indispensable for setting up local ASP initiatives at an institutional level, for periodic review of results at all levels of the practice.

In the next Chapter philosophical foundations for the evaluation criteria will be put forward as elicited from the analysis of data collected from all the universities surveyed in the study.

The measures that have been instituted by the four English medium universities will be examined further and their impact will be assessed. Their experiences in terms successes and limitations of the programmes. From such an assessment criteria for evaluation of ASP will be deduced. Elicited criteria might indicate ways in which all South African and international ASPs can be improved, to the extent that they are empowered and strengthened to achieve, more effectively and efficiently the two objectives of ASP, that is, make it possible for students to pass courses in chosen disciplines and enable them to graduate within the minimum time required.

A number of countries, with disadvantaged communities in educational and socio-economic terms, have mounted some kinds of remedial and compensatory educational programmes in their tertiary institutions, may find these criteria to be a useful resource. Presently, many post-secondary institutions

in countries such as Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States have remedial education, some of which were described and analysed in some detail in Chapter 2. Thus results of the present study, as well as the criteria elicited from its findings, have much wider implications than simply attempting to suggest solutions for local ASP initiatives.

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CHAPTER 4

Criteria for the evaluation of Academic Support Programmes (ASPs)

4.1 Introduction

We have examined the establishment and growth of academic support programmes in four South African universities. Some observations may be drawn from the previous Chapters. In Chapter One factors, which compelled predominantly White universities to institute support programmes for underprepared and disadvantaged students, who wished to pursue their study in these institutions, were explained. Although these institutions, which subscribe to the principle of open admission for all race groups, accepted the need for some form of academic assistance to be given to these students, initially, there was little consensus on what kind of assistance would be most appropriate and what strategies for offering such assistance would be suitable to meet the needs of disadvantaged students.

All four universities, that is, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Natal, the University of Cape Town, and Rhodes University, established almost identical approaches to academic support by providing skills programmes providing extra-curricular tutorials (meaning academic support in the form of tutoring academic skills without course content of a particular discipline in an academic department, for example, history Sociology or Philosophy, for which students are registered). These four universities have become the leading institutions in the field of academic support. Recently, however, some of these universities have decided to transform some academic support initiatives into full intra-curricular, (meaning academic skills tutoring within course content) credit-bearing courses. Rhodes University is today the only open university that has retained extra-curricular tutoring, on a large

scale, though, there are strong indications that soon skills tutoring will be integrated with content.

In this Chapter, while attempting to review successes in graduation rates of ASP clients, the main focus will be on the need to establish sound ground rules to ensure the effectiveness of ASP and its efficient use of all available resources. Some dynamic developments as well as inadequacies of ASPs, will be used to develop evaluation criteria, which will provide a framework within which the existing inadequacies of ASP can be overcome and new ASP initiatives can be formulated. An assessment of ASP context will reveal that in ways the ineffectiveness of ASP can be linked to inefficiencies of ASP systems in the way academic support is offered (Bereiter, C., 1985) The persistently high failure and drop-out rates remain the major cause for concern among all ASP stakeholders.

A scientific assessment of the current position of ASPs is necessary, lest an improper image is created either to deny ASPs any credit or to ignore deficiencies, which are a hindrance to developing the full potential of ASP programmes. While the present over-arching framework guiding ASP functions and implementation policies raises many questions than answers, it would be inappropriate to question the existence of ASP unless a viable alternative is offered. It would also be inappropriate to regard ASP strategies as completely obsolete and irrelevant without suggesting more innovative ways to assist universities to respond adequately to the academic problems encountered by the disadvantaged students. There is no way in which we can judge ASP whether it is good or bad until we have found a way of objectively evaluating it. It would seem that the best way to do an assessment of current ASPs, is to try and elicit the criteria, by which ASP can be evaluated. The writer, through observation of ASP activities, in the course of performing his duties, whilst employed at the University of Natal and through experience at the University of Michigan, United

States, which appointed him as Resident Fellow for the Pilot Program, for bridging the gap between high school and university (especially of minority Afro-American students), has developed a keen interest in the educational development activities of ASPs.

In Chapter 2 we discovered that in the United States various academic support programmes were simply introduced, without guidelines to ensure their success. The same problem has arisen in South Africa, whereby academic support, under the ad hoc approach and different forms of "educational development" programmes have been introduced hastily in an unstructured and often haphazard manner. In the absence of properly researched guidelines, chances of successful implementation of the programmes are reduced. In allowing the unsystematic proliferation of programmes the risk of ineffectiveness, sometimes resulting from duplication of academic assistance, is heightened, a fact that has been established in this Study. In Chapter Three an analysis of the information which was gathered from universities surveyed, reveals that, ad hoc programmes, based on impromptu approaches do not provide an adequate response to the needs of disadvantaged students. In fact, ad hoc academic support delays the implementation of the comprehensive approach to academic support, which is based on the faculty integration model, which is regarded as the most appropriate direction for South African ASPs to take. But a number of obstacles still have to be overcome before this model can become reality for all ASP interventions.

Evidently, the problem confronting ASPs is two-pronged. On the one hand, there is a gap between the demands of university education and the level of preparedness of disadvantaged students. This gap exists because the apartheid system of education did not accomplish what it promised, namely, to provide separate, but equal, education.

In this thesis, a comprehensive faculty integration model is considered as an ideal solution to problems of ASP ineffectiveness and inefficiency of its system. This means that a holistic approach (referring to the whole environment or context in which disadvantaged students find themselves, instead of focusing on students' deficiencies alone) provides a framework for understanding all aspects of ASP environment and viewpoints of stakeholders, Stake, R.E. and Denny, T., 1969)

When ASP is viewed in holistic terms it promises to provide solutions that will enhance effectiveness of programmes at two levels. Firstly, holism offers objective criteria which are intended to facilitate setting up ASP programmes and central Units that can effectively achieve ASP goals. In this sense, these criteria become a check-list that can be used to ensure systematic sequence of steps followed in setting up programmes. Through such a procedure it is possible to ensure the inclusion of different viewpoints and perspectives and interests, especially those of ASP primary stakeholders (students, ASP staff/faculty staff and the university/ donors). Secondly, holistic view of ASP reality focuses on functional aspects of ASP programmes and services. In this way, the elicited criteria indicate which programmes and services are essential for effective and efficient functioning of ASP.

The added advantage is that the comprehensive approach facilitates detection of dysfunctions in the system, in order that appropriate remedial action can be taken to rectify the situation, since it gives a total view of the arena in a particular institution, that is, various aspects of students' difficulties, whether academic or non-academic. This consideration is an important aspect for the development function of ASP. While allowing for creation of new programmes in response to situations requiring it, following guidelines of proposed CRITERIA 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The holistic approach permits termination of programmes,

which have become outmoded and can no longer be regarded as functional assets to ASP.

One example is Criterion Number One: Ensure that you have sufficient funding for starting and running your programme for at least a year. This criterion sets guidelines against the tendency to start a programme and stop it as a result of the shortage of funds. This tendency has become prevalent among practitioners responding to crisis situations and has been the most common denominator in incidents of ineffective implementation of programmes.

The developed criteria focus on discrete aspects of ASP functions, for example, teaching, staff development, and organisational structures. Thus, various categories of criteria can be distinguished according to areas in which ASP is involved. For example, in the first category of criteria are those concerned with the implementation phase of support programmes, while second category criteria, that have been elicited, deal with ways of assisting disadvantaged students without lowering academic standards.

4.2 Rationale for evaluation

When ASPs were established at the four universities, approximately Twelve Years ago, they were considered as an ideal response to persistent pressures for trained African leadership and skills personnel. When these universities declared commitment to non-racial open admissions policies, high expectations were raised that the skills crisis would finally be resolved. But failure rates and drop-out rates have increased, in certain disciplines, than decrease.

The employment sector finds this state of affairs perplexing. At the same ASP staff are experiencing enormous difficulties in attempts to bring ASP programmes closer to students through faculty integrated strategies of academic support. For example, some faculty staff often display

cautious acceptance of the need for ASP, while others show lack of inclination to be involved in ASP activities.

In instances of this kind, ASP staff are often compelled to continue using the inefficient skills without content strategy of offering academic support. It has been shown that this strategy fails to diminish the failure rates and is inhibiting efforts of institutions of higher learning to produce the required numbers of African graduates and thereby contribute to the increase in high level Black well-educated manpower. Universities have been slow in intervening to minimise ASP isolation from faculties. Meanwhile, more disadvantaged students are admitted at an accelerated rate through alternative admissions programmes, which are used at the Universities of Natal, Cape Town and the Witwatersrand. In 1992, Rhodes University employed an alternative admissions researcher with a view to increasing the admissions of students from disadvantaged education backgrounds. However, in all these universities academic support suffer from many problems arising from financial and staffing and structural constraints. As such they are not adequately equipped to resolve crucial problems facing current students.

During the initial phase of ASP, it was not clear to what extent universities themselves would be expected to change as a result of open admission policy. The prevailing view was that disadvantaged students would have to adapt to the university or face the consequence of expulsion if failing to satisfactorily meet the academic requirements and standards set by the university. Not all those working in institutions of higher learning agreed with ASP policy, preferring universities to stay as they were.

To convince sceptics of the value of these developments, a considerable commitment from the university was required to demonstrate seriousness on two crucial issues: firstly, maintenance of academic standards (Beard, P., 1989:73-76)

secondly, monitoring of ASP intervention to ensure necessary measures (appropriate remedial programmes) and processes were established in such a way that the original goals of ASP (reducing failure and drop-out rates) were attainable attained (Agar, D., 1989:219-227). It is open to question whether universities actually fulfilled this responsibility. To a greater or lesser extent, therefore, ASPs were left to their own devices. Areas of mutual accountability were not clearly defined and objective criteria for measuring ASP effectiveness had not been developed from the outset. An evaluation procedure would be the most appropriate means for ascertaining the effectiveness of the programmes.

Nationally, the debate concerning ASP has shifted considerably, since the early 1980s (Agar, D., 1990). Early models of academic support programmes were criticised for being based on the "deficiency" approach to the problems of disadvantaged students (Cloete, N. and Sochet, I., 1986). This located the entire problem in the disadvantaged students themselves and, not at all on the academic institution, which had responsibility to the whole community, Black and White. Discussions, concerning the need for transformation of universities, have taken place in ASP fora like the South African Association for Academic Development (SAAAD), ASP seminars and workshops. SAAAD is composed of representatives from both predominantly Black tertiary institutions and predominantly White universities. ASP practitioners regularly convene regionally and nationally to share ideas and experiences on ways to address disadvantages of students in their institutions.

In many senses ASP's began, in predominantly Black universities in the mid-Eighties, to more consciously define their place not just in universities but in society as a whole, as it moved towards transformation from White minority rule to a democracy. At the ASP Conference, held at the University of Cape Town in December 1984, Professor

Peter Hunter of Wits University dealt with this aspect of ASP's role:

"Our institutional leaders seem very often to be at home most easily with the captains of industry, the senior civil servants and the other members of the powerful establishment. These groups wear the same clothes, respond to each other's body language, communicate through the same nuances; in a word, they understand each other. Many of our students, (I suppose ASP students are referred to here) and the majority of our constituency, belong to another group, and our institutional leaders need to make special efforts to get in touch with and retain regular contacts with grassroots community leaders, trade union organisers, dissident student groups, Black media workers, etc. Without this they will be unable to understand and make appropriate responses to evolving circumstances, and may lead their institutions into political traps with disastrous consequences" (Hunter, 1984:8).

In a number of ways, South African universities are at the most difficult time in their history. They are not only expected to satisfy the leadership requirements of society and the employment sector, but also to recognise the political aspirations of students. To some extent, they have a choice to provide sanctuary for political activists or claim to be apolitical and, thus rendered irrelevant to the liberation struggles of the Black disenfranchised majority in this Country. The academic disadvantages, which threaten to destroy African students' opportunities for university education tend to be seen within the framework of the present racist political system under whose dispensation the inferior DET education system was invented. This puts universities under considerable pressure and renders them particularly vulnerable if they do not identify, not only with the academic requirements, but also their political aspirations.

Delaying the opening of communication channels with student bodies would definitely work against reducing their own vulnerability to disorder. On the other hand, establishing

and maintaining contact with the students concerned would enhance their image in championing the cause of free political activity on campuses, the kind of dialogue they are denied by the political system in the Country.

This is a brief description of an important national context of the ASP macro political environment which cannot be ignored in any holistic view of socio-educational dynamics of the South African ASP context... In this regard a criterion concerned with consulting students on matters affecting various aspects of their studies, attempts more precisely to address their area of need. This illustrates the manner in which proposed criteria have evolved. This point shows ways in which students' contributions, to the programmes and to ASP's in general, can be used constructively.

While the above passage may suggest that ASP's would be driven into engaging in non-academic activities, pertaining to the macro-environment of the institution and so moving away from issues that are centrally related to ASPs' brief, it is useful for purposes of this study to note that concerns that are considered as not within the realm of institutional competence still require ASP consideration when formulating ASP policies. However, it must be admitted that these extra-institutional concerns have potential of diverting the efforts and resources necessary for carrying out, what is regarded as strictly ASP work. The possibility that ASP resources can be misallocated, in this manner, represents another compelling reason for a properly structured evaluation to be instituted in the interests of effective.

Nonetheless, it is an accepted fact that universities should take an interest in the developments taking place in the macro-environment and to re-assess their roles accordingly. Certainly many students believe that universities have a role in the macro-environment through social responsibility

programmes. If a university chooses to ignore the turbulence in its macro-environment, ASP can act as its conscience and keep reminding authorities of the perils entailed by such attitude. However, direct ASP involvement in social engineering programmes, the writer is convinced, falls outside the sphere of ASP's responsibility and as such should be left to other university structures. All that ASP's can do is to make universities more sensitive to the fact that the social environment also has a major part in shaping students' intellectual and cognitive development.

4.3 Important concepts in the formulation of Criteria for evaluation of ASPs

4.3.1 Cognitive development

Earlier, mention was made of the deficient approach to theorising about ASP. In the previous Chapter it became apparent that, although Black and, especially African, students have always been the largest in number, ASP candidates belong to all race groups. In their definition of cognition, Moll and Slonimsky (1989:162) show that the Black (uncertain whether the term only refers to African or Indian and Coloured) schooling system has produced three types of students. In the first category are those who find much of what they are taught at university completely outside their experience. For these students it is enormously difficult to understand concepts. The second category is made up of those who experience linguistic problems, especially when the subject content is presented in the Second Language, despite the fact that in their own culture they are cognitively developed. The third category consists of those who, somehow as a result of the type of education they have received, have become accustomed to superficial or surface approaches to learning and cannot access the deeper levels of knowledge despite the fact that their cognitive structures have been developed.

Moll, I. and Slonimsky, S. (1989:160-166) seemingly, have confined their understanding of the theories of cognitive development to ethnic issues whereas, in South Africa, the problem of cognitive development has become a universal issue, in the sense that it now affects students of all racial or ethnic groups and backgrounds. This fact is borne out by figures of increasing numbers of "non-traditional" ASP students registering for courses offered by ASP units. A conceptual framework, that takes into consideration all the factors associated with cognitive development, should be based on comprehensive approaches to the problem.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of issues involved in the South African situation, there are two important points to consider. A holistic perspective, embracing the notion of relative deprivation is the most appropriate approach. It is crucial that the debate on cognitive development patterns of ASP students is focused on the significance of economic and socio-cultural conditions for Africans, since these continue to be restricting factors in this development. When African students enter a university they are required to operate in unfamiliar socio-cultural conditions, which put them at a disadvantage compared to White students. Criteria dealing with curriculum issues address the problems of cognitive development within the context of Second Language teaching and learning processes.

Therefore, in addition to experiencing an inferior education, in terms of inadequate resources and poor teacher qualifications, African students generally suffer from lack of exposure to a challenging and fulfilling socio-economic environment. It is in this light that the theories of cognitive developmentalists, such as Piaget and Bruner, should be considered. Rather than narrowly focusing on the problems encountered by African students at institutions of higher education, in isolation from the socio-cultural context, it is crucial that sight is not lost of the

influence extra-curricular factors have on the cognitive development of Africans.

Another point to consider, relates to the competence levels of African and non African students. The deficient approach, to a certain extent, ignores the realisation that disadvantaged students, particularly Africans, do have the capacities to fulfil the demands of university tasks and that the greatest challenge lies in eliciting these, through teaching and learning situations that are appropriate to their needs.

4.3.2 Curriculum development and teaching approaches

In this regard Craig, A. (1989:166-171) supports this statement, when she points out that the majority of ASP students possess the necessary competence levels to succeed at university and advocates new approaches in curriculum design, methodology and assessment that will influence lecturers to modify the content of their subjects and the way this content is presented to the students. Naturally, any meaningful attempt to deal with the problem of poor cognitive development for university learning, would have to subscribe to a different set of principles from those enshrined in existing ASP mission statements and justified in the way ASP programmes are designed and implemented. Other models of ASP may emerge at institutional level, rather than as peripheral activities to mainstream academic activities.

It is now certain that the poor level of cognitive development, usually associated with students who have received their education through the DET, is spreading to other education departments, Entwistle, N. (1991) in a paper delivered at the South African Association of Medical Education distinguishes "deep" from "surface" approaches to learning and encourages curricular and methodologies that aim at directing students from surface to deep learning

approaches. Several education departments, nationally, tend to be characterised by teaching and learning strategies that have fostered "surface" approaches to learning, that leave students unable to cope with university demands, where success does not favour note-learning and memorisation. Proposed criteria will show how teaching and learning as well as issues related to curriculum development can be improved through co-operation between ASP and faculty staff.

Clearly, ASP in its present form is not ready to tackle a massive problem, as revealed by the data gathered from the surveyed universities. ASP's structure and location in institutional frameworks do not make it possible to undertake massive projects of educational development. The original purpose of ASP's were to provide short-term solutions by trying to increase pass rates, hoping that graduation rates would increase automatically. But the problem has assumed such proportions that ASP philosophical positions and strategies will prove to be inadequate unless realistic measures are taken to prevent or reverse the trends of persistently high failure rates in some courses. The criteria that have been developed in this study provide some measures to do this objectively. These criteria suggest a move away from the ad hoc approaches to ASP. In addition to guiding established ASP operations, the implementation process can ensure the success of newly launched programmes, including those that are still at a preparation stage.

Before offering the criteria, a brief observation, regarding academic standards, is necessary. In 1987 the Universities and Technikons Advisory Council (AUT) completed a comprehensive investigation into the academic standards at South African universities. The conclusion reached by AUT was that academic standards differed from one university to another and in some cases quite substantially. The AUT findings suggest that, in some instances, the intake of academically disadvantaged and underprepared students might negatively affect the maintenance of academic standards.

This finding underlines a point that ASPs have to be structured so as not to erode academic standards, as was feared by the critics of ASP.

Following the increased demands for university education, especially from the disadvantaged sectors of society, the issue of maintaining sound academic standards became an important aspect of ASP. The sharp increase in enrollment of disadvantaged students has made it imperative for universities to have keen interest in what ASP can offer to allay fears of threatened academic standards. This expectation has not been met satisfactorily by current ASPs. Too much attention is directed at establishing many more programmes without assessing, through evaluation, the inadequacies of failed programmes and devising better strategies of formulating future programmes. While ASP proceeds with experiments of randomly substituting one programme for another, students' disadvantages remain unresolved. The criteria should indicate ways of overcoming the problem of unmet expectations by ASP in relation to maintenance of academic standards.

4.4 Criteria for a system of evaluation

The information collected from universities surveyed suggests the existence of a serious lack of common purpose in the way ASP is formulated and dispatched. On the theoretical level an inadequate conceptual frame of reference, meaning properly researched knowledge of disadvantages that have been identified, prevents the consolidation of viewpoints and approaches to the phenomenon of educational deprivation. There are innumerable perspectives on causative factors for educational disadvantages. But not all of them can be used at any one time. It is important to identify causes of disadvantages before prescribing remedial programmes. But as a result of the crisis mode of operating, ASP staff often find themselves confronted with a immense task of producing

results within severe time constraints. Holding debate, with colleagues or other resourceful people, on perspectives, becomes a luxury, which few ASP personnel can afford under present working conditions. Consequently, individual ASP staff embark on formulation of programmes without pre-tests and other forms of feasibility study.

On a practical level, strategies used to address academic disadvantages apparently lack effectiveness, perhaps because of inappropriate intervention strategies. There seems to be no standardisation of methods in the implementation of ASP programmes. It would appear that, to a greater or lesser, ASP ineffectiveness can be linked to the absence of generally accepted (standardised) strategies for the formulation (theorising content of the course and writing it) and implementation of ASP programmes. Criteria will be presented to consolidate various viewpoints on this issue.

In this Chapter the main objective is to present a strategy that may make ASP intervention a more fruitful enterprise and permit its transformation into a truly educational development exercise. The criteria outlined below have been developed in the course of this research and during consultations with academic support practitioners. In addition, paper and poster presentations at the South African Association for Academic Development (SAAAD) conferences in the past few years, have been invaluable in this process.

It is inconceivable that standards for ASP can be set without a rigorous system of scientific evaluation. The following discussion of criteria for evaluation of ASP programmes and initiatives represents an attempt to contribute to the solution ASP inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Pearce, et al.(1983:57) emphasise that consideration has to be focused on two objectives of evaluation, consisting of:

"the systematic gathering and communicating

of information, not necessarily quantified which is of use in deciding how to amend and develop the programme; the continuing and final assessment of the worth of the programme of which student's results are an important, though not necessarily only part".

The following criteria for evaluation should, perhaps, be considered:

- CRITERION 1: The replacement of an ad hoc approach which is a hindrance, with a thoroughly researched academic support programme.
- CRITERION 2: A clearly identifiable reason that justifies the formulation of an ASP programme should precede the initiative.
- CRITERION 3: ASP staff should consult as widely as possible before formulating a programme in order to ascertain that resources are spent on a worthwhile programme. Instances of duplication of ASP initiatives have been reported resulting in the inefficient use of resources.

A university's principle of acceptable academic performance on basis of reasonably enforceable academic standards, should be the main objective of academic support programmes. In previous sections extensive coverage was given to issues relating to the role of ASP in enhancement and maintenance of academic standards. In this regard every effort must be made to prevent any deflection of ASP's scarce resources (time, human resources, material and financial) on matters that are peripheral to ASP work. This criterion should not be construed as inconsistent with the formulation of

Criterion 11, but should be seen as its reinforcement, since objectives for intervention as well as strategies are compatible with ASPs' goals. For example, an outreach programme in which ASP resources are spent giving assistance to high school pupils preparing themselves for final year examinations while students already registered at the institution suffer neglect and have to contend with insufficient academic assistance. Reports have been received of funds raised to establish ASP initiatives, but being mis-appropriated through purchases of computers for staff, book acquisitions, office furnishings and so forth. Such fraudulent practices can be avoided by auditing of income and expenditure on a regular (annual or biennial) basis.

- CRITERION 4: An initiative should be introduced once adequate funding has been obtained. Introducing a properly funded programme is essential to avoid disruptions when it has to be discontinued because of shortage of funds.
- CRITERION 5: ASP programmes despatched from units separate from faculties and departments, for which they are intended, have proved to be unsatisfactory. Whenever possible faculty-based units should be used, since they have been shown to be the most suitable option for effective results. It is however, important to differentiate between central units, which will be dealt with later, which largely perform administrative functions, and units responsible for particular programmes, for example English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or Bridging Unit. A faculty-integrated

programmes has a better chance of being accepted by students and recognised by faculty staff as contributing to the decrease of failure rates.

CRITERION 6: Programmes require sufficient planning before they are implemented. The planning stage lays the ground for assessment of the impact the programmes will have on improving the academic results of disadvantaged students. Without the necessary planning and design of programmes, prior to being implemented, it becomes difficult to determine the extent to which the programme has succeeded in achieving its goals. The assumption of this criterion is that in the planning process aims and objectives by which a programme may be evaluated, will be formulated. This greatly facilitates the evaluation process, when there is need for one.

CRITERION 7: Instructional methods and techniques should be based on on-going research. Teaching methods and techniques require constant scrutiny and critical review, including the use of relevancy tests. Periodic assessment of strategies for the delivery of the subject-matter serves to ascertain their level of suitability for both course content (subject matter) and student.

CRITERION 8: A learner-directed approach, in ASP context suggests that students learn better if they are involved in determining the learning process. The lecturer's intention is to provide "educational settings which enhance student self-direction" Torbert, (1978:109-135) The important task of the

lecturer is to create what Torbert (1981:110) calls "liberating structures", which ensure that the student-centred approach achieves self-direction. The process involves increased responsibility for learning on the basis of responsible participation in the learning process. The lecturer takes into account the students' perceptions of their level of knowledge, what they consider important to learn and through what means. This approach may be introduced to make programmes more successful, since it is oriented to the needs of the learner. Chaskalson, in SAAAD 91 Proceedings (1991:462) reports on staff development workshops in which faculty lecturers, at the University of the Witwatersrand, are engaged in intensive skills training on this approach. Research evidence indicates that a learner-directed approach is one of the best strategies for the teaching /learning requirements of disadvantaged students.

A programme that is designed to address major learning difficulties needs to be structured in a manner that enriches their learning experiences. Only in this way can we improve the beneficial effects of a programme and optimise opportunities for real educational development.

CRITERION 9: Students should be encouraged to actively participate in the formulation of academic support programmes. Students can be invited to participate in tests to assess the appropriateness of content prior to implementation. It is considered that, up to now, their advice and wishes have been

largely ignored. In this research no evidence has been found to suggest that they have had input in the formulation of ASP courses. It is important to ensure that mechanisms are established in order that future programmes incorporate the wishes of those they are intended to benefit. The modalities for doing that are left to the discretion of individual institutions, since circumstances and requirements that must be taken into account, will vary from one institution to the other.

CRITERION 10: Students also need to be involved in the evaluation of programmes. The decision as to whether group or individual methods are suitable will largely be determined by the nature and structure of the programme. As a principle, it is more appropriate for students, who have participated in the programme to be involved in its evaluation. (For after all, these are helping them to realise their career goals). In some instances, past students may be invited to take part in the evaluation, provided they attended it at one stage or another. It cannot be over stressed that in a post implementation phase, students would have to do an evaluation of a programme in which they received academic support. If the results of evaluation indicate that negligible assistance was received from the programme prompt and drastic corrective measures should be taken.

CRITERION 11: Non-academic disadvantages of students should be addressed satisfactorily to allow academic support to succeed. The effectiveness of ASP

intervention depends on co-operation between ASP Units and university Student Affairs Sections, for example Financial Aid Officers. This involves networking with other non-academic departments to inculcate a culture of student friendly services.

CRITERION 12: Faculty personnel should be involved in the construction of academic support programmes, sharing this responsibility with the staff of academic support units. Ideally, faculty personnel should be invited in the early stages of the preparation of the programmes, especially those which require their input. This would be in compliance with the principle of collective responsibility between the central unit and faculty personnel on the basis of assuming responsibility for implementation of the programmes that they jointly constructed and for which now they remain accountable. The survey has revealed that in some universities a distinction is made between ASP sponsored and faculty sponsored programmes. ASP takes responsibility only in respect of programmes for which funding is received directly by the central unit and faculties assume responsibility in respect of programmes for which they successfully raised funds and would be accountable directly to the funders. While this distinction has a rational basis in terms of the separation of tasks, it should not be an impediment to regular and useful consultation between the different ASP Units.

CRITERION 13: Students attending ASP should be taught by the Programme to persist and demonstrate

relatively higher skills of academic persistence, which are built into programmes. Attrition rates are bound to decrease. In other words, one of the indicators that ASP is having a positive impact on the academic performance of students will also be decreasing failure and drop-out rates.

CRITERION 14: Systematic records of academic progress, made by ASP students throughout their university careers, should be kept by ASP units both centrally and in the faculty. A central statistical and quantitative data-base (arising from maintenance of students' cumulative records) will corroborate the information contained in faculty based records. From these it should be possible to compile substantive reports on students' academic progress. Without keeping records it would be impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of any of the programmes. This is one of the reasons why they must be meticulously checked and updated regularly.

CRITERION 15: Comprehensive, rather than short programmes will be more cost effective and could be analysed more easily for efficiency.

ASP models, based on subject-specific tutoring, tend to require many tutors in each subject which places heavy demands on ASP budgets. Wherever circumstances permit skills tutoring could be grouped by combining subjects into 'blocks.' The Medical School at the University of Natal has for some time been offering skills tutorials on basis of related subjects taken by students.

CRITERION 16: Faculties should perhaps, be encouraged to keep records of their students participating in academic support programmes for periodic assessment of variations in their academic performance.

In accordance with the previous proposal for the establishment of methods based on accountability of methods for the delivery of ASP services such as faculty-based structures to design and plan the implementation of ASP programmes. The same faculties should be encouraged to keep and maintain records of their students within and regular updates made available to the central unit where overall co-ordination takes place. In this way individual academic progress can be recorded and academic persistence measured.

CRITERION 17: Joint faculty and academic support unit meetings could be held with academic support students attending in order to review their performance and plan new strategies to overcome difficulties encountered. These may be useful for assessing the effectiveness of programmes in which students are participating.

CRITERION 18: Much closer co-operation between counselling units and academic support units will be of some assistance in solving problems of inappropriate curriculum choice and unnecessary drop-out, as a consequence of inadequate curriculum, as well as career counselling.

Towards this end, joint planning and review meetings can facilitate discussion of matters

relating to, among other things, suitable methods for aptitude testing, curriculum construction, and assessment of potential. In such meetings agreement can be reached on strategies to improve the overall academic performance of ASP students in particular realising that they could be at high risk to fail their courses and ultimately drop-out. Depending on available resources, on occasion experts in these fields could be invited to address meetings.

The immensity and complex issues involved in the counselling of disadvantaged students make it imperative to consult as widely as possible in attempting to bring under control present trends in failure and exclusion rate of ASP students.

CRITERION 19: There should be pastoral guidance for ASP students by selected members of staff in a faculty. Disadvantaged students require regular assistance with all the problems they encounter and constant monitoring of their performance in order that immediate attention can be given, to whatever academic problems arise, when faltering is noticed before irreparable damage is caused. There are already indications that ASP units have recognised the importance of such a 'personalised' guidance scheme in the sense that staff assist with individual problems that, to a certain degree, may be unique in the treatment of each case. Some of the surveyed universities have tried to respond by instituting a variety of schemes, which in a way encompass basic principles of the concept. For example, the University of Natal

has a mentorship scheme which assists students acquire special academic skills and entrenched a follow-up mechanism, to ensure the application of learnt skills to relevant study projects, (Entwistle, N.J. 1991:249-261). Students are mentored in research skills and other internship programmes which help them put into use theoretical knowledge gained through lectures.

CRITERION 20: High standards of training and preparation should be mandatory for all ASP tutors and any staff involved in student development. The type of training envisaged could be career-oriented and formal in nature. From preliminary evaluation of staff development programmes, it appears that a significant number of ASP personnel are striving to establish their careers with ASP. But as soon as they discover that these programmes are intended to provide them with skills to perform their duties, the majority of them get disillusioned and start looking for alternative employment opportunities. The presently high staff turnover reported by many ASP's bears testimony to the reality of staff dissatisfaction with the lack of sufficient career opportunities.

There is, perhaps, the necessity for a well formulated and properly structured diploma course to be introduced for tutors and ASP administrators.

Considering the vast range of services rendered by ASP units, three distinct areas of specialisation emerge. The first category

comprises junior or assistant tutors, who operate at a level equivalent to a junior or assistant lecturer, and tutors, who often get appointed at the rank of lecturer. In general terms they are expected to possess a degree relevant to the course they intend teaching and must have excelled in their respective majors during their undergraduate studies. At present this seems to be the only minimum requirements for an ASP appointment.

The curriculum of such a diploma programme could, inter alia, include a course on the teaching of English as a Second Language and a "directed" research project on a topic relevant to subjects in which the tutor has specialised, such as, a computer course, and a course on teaching English as a Second Language. ASP faculty co-ordinators, who generally have a Masters degree as a minimum qualification, and are appointed at senior lecturer rank, should also be encouraged to take advanced diploma courses. The third category consists of senior ASP management, namely, assistant directors (associate professor post-level) and director at professorial post-level both require advanced administrative skills. For this category proven administrative ability and competence in educational management, backed by relevant experience, should be the criterion for selection.

CRITERION 21: Employing bodies, public agencies and community organisations should be brought in to advise ASP and to assess the relevance of programmes.

The mounting of fund-raising campaigns and solicitation of funds for ASP projects must be linked to the principle of ultimate accountability to the community that is supposed to be served by the institution. This in itself suggests that community interests should receive priority and necessary steps should be taken to ensure that it is represented (as one of important ASP stakeholders) in any educational programme that has implications for it.

Community involvement should not end with the provision of donations and funding for the programmes but has to be extended to include participation in the formulation and monitoring of initiatives per se. The private sector, as part of the wider community, should be selectively involved, especially in so far as negotiating employment opportunities for ASP graduates and related issues is concerned. Employers know the human resources requirements of the employment market and can assist with the evaluation of the relevance of ASP offered courses and curriculum structures. The input of these community sectors is also required in the evaluation of the overall effectiveness of ASP in as far as the quality of the education of ASP graduates is concerned. Therefore, without any doubt community structures and employing bodies should be brought in to advise from the inception stage of the programme through to the final stage of assessing outcomes (programmes as well as those who go through them) where they have vested interests and can, if necessary, assess for themselves the value of their

investment through donations and bursaries to participating students.

At the University of Natal there are three programmes in which the corporate sector, comprising mostly potential employers of ASP graduates, is involved in setting criteria for student selection to participate in the programmes, as well as provide funding for their studies. These are the Engineering Bridging Programme (UNB), Economics and Management Unit (EMU) also based in the Durban Centre, and the Science Foundation Programme (SFP), which was established, in 1991, at the Pietermaritzburg Centre. The TTT programme is also doing something similar to SFP, as community-based organisations such as non governmental organisations and community development agencies are invited to assist with the selection of participants in the programme. Those selected are expected to take part in the internship scheme whereby, at one stage or another during the course of their studies, they render community service through involvement in projects conducted by the organisations that took part in their selection. The Universities of the Witwatersrand and Cape Town have similar arrangements, especially in the Faculties of Engineering, which have developed elaborate procedures of consultation with the private sector.

CRITERION 22: ASP should establish programmes that are not specifically aimed at a particular race group. ASP students at all surveyed universities surveyed have shown resentment towards programmes that target only African

or Black students. The University of the Witwatersrand has been researching perceptions of Black and, particularly, African students towards programmes, exclusively, designed for them. Their attitudes are negative in the sense that respondents consistently oppose such programmes (Agar, 1992:98). The reason for this kind of reaction has always been that an institution of higher learning that is espousing egalitarian ideals and non-racism should not allow racism to be part of the selection criteria for participation in its programmes. Students concerned have found it difficult to reconcile condemnation of racism coming from the apartheid system and condonation of racist implications in the way programmes are planned and implemented.

CRITERION 23: It is essential to guard against the lowering of entry levels into tertiary institutions.

It is noted that the trend in especially major English-medium universities is to establish alternative admissions programmes which are aimed at instituting selection procedure different from the conventional Swedish points system which has been found to be restricting the admission of disadvantaged students into these universities. The whole idea, then, is to lower university entrance requirements to allow more of these students to enter and mount academic support programmes, perhaps, even more vigorously depending on the level of disadvantage, to make it possible for them to succeed without the necessity to lower exit or end standards. It is noteworthy that the *raison de'tre* for

the existence of these programmes is primarily to prevent the need for lowering graduation (exit) standards (risking awarding non accredited degree). The inception of ASP was, as a matter of fact, in response to the resistance to pressures which were coming from various quarters, such as student demands for admission into these institutions and private demands for increasing numbers of trained manpower.

This criterion seeks to emphasise the importance of limiting admission through these alternative admissions selection procedures such as TTT at Natal and the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP) at UCT, to student with sufficient potential to succeed at university. From interviews with mainstream academics it appears that there is growing concern that programmes such as TTT and AARP have to be more cautious about yielding to pressures for relaxation of entrance standards to bring in students who are not suitable for university education and would not be considered to be university "material". It is claimed that such students delay the process of other students in class and some could not even cope despite the assistance they received from ASP.

CRITERION 24: Concentrate on equalizing competitive abilities between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students, so that the necessity of continued ASP intervention can be ascertained. ASPs total context, taking into account interests of stakeholders, should determine when to adapt, reformulate

or terminate implementation of programmes. ASP flexibility towards contextual issues depends on regular evaluation using developed Criteria to assess ASP impact on overall success of students in their studies. Maintenance of overall academic success can be directly linked to comprehensive programmes being implemented on the basis of a holistic approach to academic support, which takes account of a wide variety of environmental issues which impinge on students' academic performance. Disadvantaged students require assistance with special skills to resolve issues in relation to their personal development, especially, in connection with self-confidence and assertiveness.

Academic counselling of individual students or groups can be undertaken by academic staff to assist students improve communication skills. Workshops on assertiveness and presentation techniques may improve levels of self confidence and articulation. There is general understanding that disadvantaged students often have difficulty communicating. Programme staff, as well as faculty staff, can intervene, through some form of mentoring in skills appropriate for communication with bureaucratic structures, which administer these resources. The outcome of proposed assertiveness skills workshops could have positive impact on academic performance, by improving ways of self expression, and on other spheres of life both within the university and in society. ASP staff have become renowned in general for empathetic skills in a number of ways. But the

temptation always exists to treat non-academic needs of students as peripheral issues which are the exclusive responsibility of administrative departments. There is general acceptance that disadvantaged students often have difficulty communicating articulately at various levels.

4.5 Conclusion

The ultimate success of ASP depends on properly researched criteria. Through an assessment of the prevailing conditions in which ASP is practised, the need for guidelines to evaluate ASP programmes has been acknowledged. As the study proceeded, through to the data collection stage from universities surveyed, further lack of objective guidelines was noticed. It has now become abundantly clear that, in order to ensure the effectiveness of ASP, it is imperative that in future, ASP Units, throughout all tertiary institutions observe these criteria, as minimum requirements for effectiveness and efficiency of ASP initiatives. The future escalation of costs for maintaining and servicing ASP programmes makes it necessary to implement proposed criteria in order that chances of unsuccessful implementation of programmes are reduced or eliminated. A carefully structured approach to the construction and implementation of programmes would, beyond any doubt, be an absolute necessity since the country cannot, at least in the foreseeable future, afford further inefficiency in the preparation of adequately trained personnel in sufficient numbers for economic recovery and social reconstruction.

It is against this background that a dynamic interaction between important role-players in ASP endeavour must be encouraged since it is by taking into account the concerns of those who have vested interests in the success of ASP as a whole that enduring effectiveness of the programmes can be achieved. Since the elicited criteria take into

consideration the total context of ASP, they also attempt to address the entire spectrum of stakeholders' interests. The wide range of problems addressed by the criteria includes the lack of sufficient legitimacy both within the institution and in the macro ASP environment to enable ASP initiatives to command the necessary resources to establish facilities that can adequately meet the needs of educational development in the broadest sense of the word.

Associated with this dilemma is the widespread lack of integration into institutional structures in a way that would positively influence the advancement of ASP objectives in significant proportions. All the inadequacies of the ASP system when combined with intra-structural impediments represent enormous obstacles and require innovative methods for dealing with them. It is for this reason that a national empirical study, which potentially of international significance contemplated these measures. These criteria have been devised as mechanism to enhance opportunities for attainment of ASP objectives. One of the ways to bring about a decisive break with previous inefficiencies is to make ASP practitioners liable to scrutiny on the basis of objective criteria, which are designed also to evaluate ASP services. The centrality, to ASP effectiveness, of the ASP functions focused by criteria is undoubtedly the paramount reason for developing evaluation criteria. ASP programmes and activities to be evaluated on basis of offered criteria play a pivotal role for ASP stakeholders (students, staff and community). It is for this reason that utmost consideration be taken to enhance the credibility of ASP initiatives through properly researched evaluation instruments.

Summary

It is accepted that formal evaluation of ASP is a complex undertaking that requires examination of the stages of the process and institutional goals. ASP goals include promoting academic excellence through programmes that assist

disadvantaged students to pass as many courses as possible to be able to graduate within minimum time required. ASP has not succeeded to decrease the failure rate significantly so that all disadvantaged students have an equal opportunity for academic success with non disadvantaged students.

The worsening inefficiencies, which have resulted in ineffectiveness of ASP programmes provide justification for formulating the objective criteria that can now be used for successful construction and implementation of ASP programmes and initiatives. Elicited criteria suggest procedures to be followed during evaluation process.

The criteria, discussed in this Chapter, will be applied to ASP in the four universities surveyed. Seeing that each of the universities has its own unique circumstances, implementation strategies have to take into consideration institutional context and can be adapted to suit any institutional environment.

In Chapter 5, the information collected from universities surveyed is analysed on basis of the elicited criteria. In a way, the analysis is intended to show how the developed criteria can be applied to concrete situations. The dimensions of ASP programmes and activities measured by criteria are drawn from ASP experiences at the four universities surveyed. Therefore, the application process closely resembles the kinds of procedures, which can be carried out in an ordinary evaluation process.

The thrust of ASP evaluation should be declared in order to make others aware of intentions and expectations of the evaluation. For example, if bursary sponsors request progress reports for sponsored students from ASP, all necessary factors that may have contributed to either successful or unsuccessful academic results should be mentioned, indicating, where required, areas for improvement either on the part of ASP or student.

But the other reason for evaluation, which is one of the most important and for which the criteria have primarily been developed, entails comprehensive assessment of all ASP programmes and initiatives to measure the impact or lack of it on students' academic performance and achievements or failures of ASP programmes. Part of this function of evaluation will be performed in the next Chapter, without detailed precision and certainty about all the factors contributing to a particular trend, for example, low success rate of ASP students or negative perceptions of ASP. Invariably, salient characteristics of the criteria, unequivocally, stress the importance of ASP effectiveness. This means that all the necessary conditions should be created to guarantee that ASP goals and objectives are achieved most efficiently.

Finally, in the next Chapter a more detailed analysis of the practical implications of these criteria will be given. The most appropriate method seems to be the clustering of ASP activities in these universities around individual criteria that deal with the common characteristics of such activities. In this way variations in the manner in which ASP activities are structured and performed can be revealed. Wherever possible discrepancies between the uniqueness of features of ASP activities, from one institution to another, will be indicated for purposes of underpinning suggestions for improvement, modification or adaptation or reshaping of those particular areas of concern by the institution so affected in terms of the recommendations which appear in Chapter Six.

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CHAPTER 5

A survey of Academic Support Programmes (ASPs) at selected universities in South Africa in the light of the Criteria in Chapter 4

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 criteria, which are appropriate for the evaluation of academic support programmes, were exposed and discussed tentatively, as a proposed framework for resolving ASP inadequacies. These Criteria were identified as:

- * replacement of the ad hoc approach, with thoroughly researched academic support programmes;
- * a clearly identifiable reason that justifies the formulation of an ASP programme should precede the initiative;
- * avoiding instances of duplication of ASP initiatives, which results in the inefficient use of resources;
- * introducing an initiative once adequate funding has been obtained, in order to avoid disruptions when it has to be discontinued because of shortage of funds;
- * application of a faculty-integrated model, based on decentralisation from central unit structures;
- * acceptance of the fact that programmes require sufficient planning and design before they are implemented;
- * instructional methods and techniques should be based on on-going research;

- * a learner-directed approach, which takes account of the special characteristics of the individual learner;
- * participation of students in the formulation of ASP programmes;
- * involvement of ASP staff, faculty staff and students in the evaluation of ASP programmes;
- * consideration of the non-academic needs of disadvantaged students;
- * shared responsibility between ASP staff and faculty staff for the construction of ASP programmes;
- * enhancement of success opportunities for ASP students through reduction of failure and attrition rates;
- * the keeping of systematic records of students' academic progress;
- * instituting comprehensive, rather than short programmes for more efficient use of resources and cost effectiveness;
- * the keeping of records of variations and comparable significant trends in students' academic performance, meaning that differences, favourable or unfavourable, in academic progress between ASP students and equally disadvantaged non participating students, should be recorded;
- * the holding of joint faculty staff and ASP staff meetings at which ASP students are present and their contribution is likely to be valued;

- * the co-operation between central units and student counselling centres;
- * the provision of pastoral guidance offered by selected members of academic staff on a university-wide basis;
- * the instituting of formal training of a high standard for ASP personnel at all levels of occupation;
- * seeking advice from funders and potential future employers of ASP interns/graduates when ASP programmes are formulated or evaluated;
- * the establishment of programmes that are not specifically aimed at a particular race group;
- * guarding against lowering entry levels to such an extent that students who, cannot benefit from ASP in whatever form and content, are admitted;
- * equalizing competitive abilities of students by always ensuring that ASP programmes assist them to cope in fulfilling requirements for university study through the faculty integration model which seeks to transform curricular structures, teaching approaches and methods at micro-level, and institutional policies at a macro-level. In this way, through research and regular evaluation, ASP will remain flexible and amenable to change as the context of ASP programmes alters.

This Chapter seeks to evaluate the ASP programmes of four universities in the light of stated Criteria. It also outlines some of the successes these institutions have achieved and limitations encountered in attempting to mobilise resources and attune activities of ASP programmes

to the holistic approach espoused in the criteria. It is the contention of this dissertation, that, if the developed criteria are fully applied, they would constitute a "total strategy" model for dealing with the high failure rate of disadvantaged students. The present fragmented approaches have been blamed several times before, without an alternative to put in their place. Now the criteria are at ASPs' disposal to give programmes and other ASP-related initiatives the opportunity to become more efficient and effective in dealing with the academic obstacles of disadvantaged students.

Universities surveyed reported different systems of academic but there were no significant differences of approach to the issues being addressed. As a result of variations in systems, which tended to emphasise various aspects of ASP functions according to priorities set for ASP in a particular institution, ASP achievements and limitations varied according to the system used to address a particular issue. For example, in their search for the solution to staffing problems, the Universities of Natal and Witwatersrand have instituted the peer-group tutorial scheme, whereby tutoring responsibilities are given to selected senior (fourth to sixth year) students in the faculty by being assigned a number of junior students, who have been identified as being at high risk of failing their courses.

The decentralisation of tutoring responsibilities in this way has, to a certain degree, proved successful and could be tried and emulated in other faculties, such as the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Natal, which introduced this tutorial system in 1992. Progress reports indicate that it has been well received and the evaluation results were expected to be positive. But no evaluation of its impact on academic performance of students has been conducted.

Variations in the levels of successes, in no way suggest incompetence or lack of commitment on the part of those institutions that have not realised the full potential of their programmes. It has been the experience of the writer that the longer the duration of the programme, the more it is likely to succeed in improving students' academic performance. Therefore, ASP initiatives can be evaluated after sufficient time for implementation has been granted in order to influence academic outcomes. It has been shown, in the analysis of ASP programmes in the four universities, that comprehensive programmes tend to deal with more than one aspect of educational disadvantage. For example, the Science Foundation Programme (SFP) has the characteristics of a comprehensive programmes. While it attempts to bridge the gap between the inadequacies of High school education, it develops academic skills in students on a subject-specific basis. In addition, it embraces the concerns of holism in academic support by making registration dependent on adequate funding.

The SFP, as established at the Universities of Natal and Cape Town represents a model of comprehensively packaged academic support so as to enhance opportunities for successful ASP intervention. This is what is meant by modelling ASP support on basis of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, in the sense that funds are raised for one programmes, that eliminates duplication in the inefficient use of resources as would happen if, to accomplish the same goals as SFP, a Bridging Programme was to be established with its own staff, a skills ASP team employed to teach academic skills without content and yet another team of Foundation Programme tutors hired to provide additional classes on content.

The efficiency model guarantees unity of purpose among staff (assisting students to succeed in studies), using shared strategies and values in pursuit a common objects and builds confidence that those participating in the programme have

the best chance to succeed. Comprehensive programmes, if properly structured according to the guidelines of criteria, may significantly improve the morale of staff members and reduce alienation, which may occur as a result of fragmented ASP programmes. The parameters of the efficiency model are delineated in the criteria.

In respect of the surveyed universities, the development of resources, such as expertise and infrastructure still require a great deal of attention for implementation of comprehensive programmes on a large scale. ASP in some of these institutions thrives, presumably, on high levels of motivation to make ASP succeed. This observation was made during field trips to collect data from the four universities. But, to sustain motivation and turn ASP into a more successful venture, a lot more unwavering dedication to the proven ASP strategies, such as comprehensive programmes, is necessary to realise ideals of academic excellence.

For ASP to prosper and gain more strength to accomplish its mission, greater co-operation and consultation between institutions, that are associated with academic support, will doubtless be of value both to these institutions and the students they serve. An opportunity for this already exists, to some degree, as the South African Association for Academic Development (SAAAD) has become the umbrella body for all universities, technikons, and colleges involved in academic support and related educational development activities. It aims to nurture co-operation between tertiary institutions and encourage sharing of information on the formulation of effective strategies to deal with educational deprivation among students at tertiary level of education. SAAAD, as an organisation and other professional associations like it, therefore, can provide fora that foster dissemination of knowledge and strategies espoused in the criteria, focusing on comprehensive rather than ad hoc (fragmented) types of programmes.

The programmes which were instituted to deal with the educational deprivation of disadvantaged students were formulated on impromptu basis in response to the diverse demands and pressures coming, mainly, from of ASP stakeholders (students, ASP and faculty staff, and ASP donors). All these claims of a stake in the work of ASP made by ASP constituencies resulted in haphazard arrangements, without properly planned and sufficiently researched implementation strategies, for the installation of programmes. The present investigation into the possible reasons for the limited success of the programmes has produced criteria, which, as shown in detail in Chapter 4, are focusing on various aspects of ASP activities. As the whole thrust of these criteria represents scientific measures to respond to the complex ASP issues and multi-faceted problems hindering the overall success of the programmes, their dynamism and growth to maturity lies in identifying critical areas of weakness in the programmes.

5.2 Analysis of data according to Criteria developed in Chapter 4

CRITERION 1

Replacement of an ad hoc approach, which is a hindrance, with a thoroughly researched Academic Support Programme

In Chapter 2 it was explained that the limitations of the American experience of ASP resulted from the lack of funding and sufficient expertise to implement ASP programmes. But as soon as Congress began passing legislation in favour of compensatory education in schools and academic support programmes at universities, a dramatic change became noticeable in terms of the quantity and quality of compensatory and support programmes that were produced.

In the South African experience of ASP the situation is basically different from the American experience, as Pearce, et al. (1983:19-20) explains:

"The vital and fundamental difference, however, is that American affirmative action programmes emanated from a legal and constitutional background that promotes and backs such programmes whereas South African affirmative action is limited and, in some ways discouraged by the law."

The lack of recognition by the state results in the preparation and implementation of ad hoc programmes, which are hurriedly put together to satisfy the needs of corporate funders, who expect immediate outcomes from ASP intervention and sometimes set rigid time frames for improvement in the academic performance of disadvantaged students. ASP staff often find themselves in a predicament. Available funds do not allow sufficient time to formulate well researched programmes. On the other hand, ASP staff remain ignorant about reasons for the limited success of various ASP interventions. A similar dilemma was experienced by American ASPs until the Federal Government intervened. Similarly, in South Africa state intervention is most desirable in favour recognising the tremendous significance of ASP programmes to improve academic performance of disadvantaged students.

The impulsive reaction for an institution may be to engage, without delay, in the finding of a solution for student educational deprivation primarily in order to satisfy demands from various sectors of the ASP constituency, who are students, faculty staff and the community it serves. The primary objective of the corporate sector is to find sufficient numbers of trained people in priority fields of study, such as science, commerce and engineering. But not all universities have engaged in precipitous action, for example, Rhodes University mostly for geographical and socio-historical reasons, has not come under the same

pressures as Universities of Natal, Cape Town and Witwatersrand, which are situated in densely Black populated cities (for more details consult Chapter 3, under Section 3.2.3.1 entitled "Historical Background.")

A huge number of respondents, approximately twenty four interviewees, indicated recognition of the importance of replacing an ad hoc approach with properly researched ASP programmes. The general opinion was that researched programmes could contribute greatly towards the creation of successful programmes. The existing ad hoc nature of ASP interventions was considered as an impediment to the realisation of ASP goals and objectives. It is, mainly, the views that were expressed by respondents in respective universities, which made it necessary to formulate this criterion.

CRITERION 2

Establishing a clearly identifiable reason that justifies the formulation of an ASP programme should precede the initiative.

ASP programmes represent an attempt to select certain ideals, values, and skills that are deemed of sufficiently great importance not be left to chance, and must deliberately and intentionally be conveyed to the mainstream of academic activities. However, there are vast differences with regard to the way ASP programmes are formulated and the knowledge and skills, which are transmitted through those programmes. There is an urgent need for establishing justifiable reasons to formulate programmes that represent the aims and objectives of ASP initiatives. Thus, the overall basis for establishing ASP programmes at historically White universities arises from the concern regarding the increasing failure and drop-out rates of Black students at these universities.

Another reason for establishing ASP programmes, perhaps a more basic one, is that severe disparities between historically White and historically Black universities have existed for a very long time. In the case of the latter it has been shown that since their inception, they have proved to be inadequately prepared, in terms of financial resources and infrastructure, to deal with the educational disadvantages of Black students as Hendry and Bunting (1993:54) describe this scenario:

"An examination of the 1988 to 1990 figures shows that the difficulties that the 6 historically black universities experienced in raising funds of a competitive nature persisted. However, these universities were faced with additional problems in that their growth in FTE (full time equivalent) student enrolments tended to be considerably above the average for the residential universities as a whole. Only 3 of these universities experienced rates of increase in total government appropriations above the average for the residential universities (Zululand, Vista and North) had to face large drops in the proportions of total fund income per weighted FTE student which they derived from government appropriations. As a result, the total fund income per weighted FTE enrolled student at 5 of the 6 historically black universities was in 1990 considerably below the average for the other residential universities. The government very clearly failed to fund the rapid growth which these universities experienced in FTE student enrolments between 1987 and 1990."

The lack of essential resources at these universities forced some African students to seek enrollment at historically White universities. The fact that the latter was accustomed to advantaged White students made possible the early detection of academic disadvantages suffered by Black students. A similar concern is raised by Milne (1993:8) with regard to disparities in educational attainment caused

by the resurgence of racial segregation in schools and tertiary institutions in the United States:

"In what has been described as an "historic reversal", America is lapsing back into a deeper form of racial segregation in schools and colleges than existed before the bitter civil rights battles of the 1960s ... Civil liberties organisations including the NAACP, have filed lawsuits against individual states and school districts, basing their claims on the belief that disparities in wealth between already segregated black and white suburbs and neighbourhoods are the cause of separate and unequal schools, condemning most black students to inferior schools and colleges for life."

Fortunately, the United States situation is different from South Africa in that academic assistance for minority students enjoys legal enforcement and institutions found in transgression of legal provisions can be prosecuted. ASP initiatives currently include mentoring programmes in academia and reduction of attrition rates. Despite all these attempts, Elam (1989:33-34) has discovered that:

"the dropout behavior for white students was found to be related to academic variables, while the dropout behavior among blacks was due to feelings of "social estrangement" as well as to academic factors ... Faculty-student relationship may be especially significant for minority students especially blacks because most faculty in predominantly white institutions are white and come from class backgrounds different from those of many black students."

The same can be said of South African Black students, especially Africans, who often find it difficult to comprehend the information that is transmitted through the value system of the Whites. It is inevitable that the life-worlds Blacks and Whites do influence their outlooks and perceptions. It is, therefore, important to recognise

that ASP programmes that ASP programmes represent an attempt to break academic barriers during the communication of information. It is often assumed that when historically White universities resolved to admit Black students they were also accepting the responsibility for ensuring their academic success.

It is against this background that reasons for the formulation of ASP programmes should be established. During this investigation, both faculty staff and students have consistently maintained that, since the educational backgrounds of students are an important variables in determining students' academic success, various forms of bridging programmes should be introduced to remove the gap (usually created by cognitive impediments) between academics, the majority of whom are often White and Black students.

From the interviewees' point of view, the creation of any ASP initiative should be preceded by rational processes that provide justification for its installation. On this matter almost twenty-two interviewees expressed positive viewpoints and advocated the adoption of ASP implementation policies that recognised the need for empirical reasons for the formulation of a programme.

Apart from transmitting the basic academic skills, teaching/learning patterns and educational values, ASP units have the concomitant function of research and generation of new ideas; curriculum innovation, and inventions of alternative teaching and learning techniques. In this way high academic standards can be maintained. On this basis ASP can contribute positively to the advancement of knowledge. In order for this function to be fulfilled, the formulation of an ASP programme should be preceded by valid reasons justifying the existence of the programme.

However, many of ASP programmes and initiatives are introduced without well established reasons for doing so. It is important to find out, from various ASP stakeholders, if the need exists for introducing a particular programme. Sometimes, after a programme is established, ASP staff discover that poor attendance makes it impossible to justify its continuation. This is caused by lack wide consultations with primary ASP stakeholders for needs assessment.

For some ASP staff this has been a bewildering experience and for others even traumatic when confronted by the ignorant but often authoritarian supervisor. When looking at all of these functions, there seems to be little time left, if any at all, for research and evaluation of the activities. In some instances, the progress reports whenever these became available were so sketchy and unsubstantiated that the funders often found them lacking substantive information. The reason for these inadequacies could, in most cases, be traced to the difficulties related to the nature of work for the staff concerned, most importantly stringent time constraints within which they have to operate.

Another aspect of the type of pressures encountered by ASP staff relates to the increasing need, especially in recent years resulting from government subsidy cuts and other punitive measures which have forced ASP staff to improvise, to compensate for the lack of institutional funding. It is importance to reiterate this point since it is pivotal to the successful implementation of the programmes. Such ASP initiatives, by "rebel" universities, have increasingly relied upon external financial support for which fierce competition has ensured in an increasingly competitive field.

The related constraint on the activities of staff is that newly established programmes have to produce results by ensuring that disadvantaged students who have registered for

these are able to pass their courses: this is what outside funders expect. Frequently further funding is made conditional upon successful intervention as shown by pass rates and graduation rates. Under these circumstances, it is inconceivable that ASP resources can be allowed to be depleted through involvement in projects operating outside the university context.

In this discourse it has become more apparent that on-campus ASP operations must receive priority over all considerations. The realities of the situation demand that any project that is focused on off-campus issues. The general tendency has been that programmes which originate from staff initiatives have become isolated from each other with the individual staff member assuming 'sole' responsibility for the initiative. Some of the reasons for this tendency include lack of managerial skills. In most cases the directors of ASP have been appointed purely on basis of availability, that is, a 'trusted' staff member often semi-retired would be selected for the post by senior university administrators at vice-principal level. The selection process would concentrate more on academic profiles of the candidates and much less on management skills. Thus, in the past, senior ASP administrators have tended to be insufficiently prepared for these positions. Consequently, they embarked on the recruitment of staff they could not supervise satisfactorily since it has never been a requirement to possess even rudimentary managerial ability.

One of the contradictions is that the appointment to these senior positions is the responsibility of university officials who provide, in certain instances, less than one-third of the resources required for the programmes. The external donors, who expect that programmes will be administered efficiently and that proper accounting procedures will be followed in explaining the use of funds, foot the huge portion of the bill for ASP activities. Common ground should be found in establishing selection criteria

for the appointment of ASP staff so that both university officials and corporate funders are satisfied that ASP resources are entrusted to competent administrators.

Another reason for the lack of accountability, in addition to weak ASP managers, arises from the constant pressures to which ASP staff are exposed. The 'weak' managers simply recruited staff whose responsibilities they almost completely did not understand. As a result they sometimes expected them to do the impossible, such as raising funds for programmes, planning and designing them as well as implementing them. In general terms, it is the experience of some universities that ASP activities should be properly co-ordinated to avoid the inefficiency in the management of the programmes that makes them less effective than would be the case otherwise. A distinction can be made between the inappropriate use of ASP resources on external projects such as spending ASP money and skills on upgrading science education in a high school and on internal expenditure that results in the ineffectiveness of ASP. Examples of the latter include the use of money for establishing programmes in the purchasing of staff room furnishings and personal computers.

Appropriate measures such as setting up a viable accounting system to audit financial transactions of ASP units have been given serious consideration by a number of universities. The University of Cape Town is one such institution where an elaborate system of accounting for the ASP funds received each year as well as detailed expenditures are itemised in such a way that it is clearly distinguishable what amounts of funding have been received from what sources and how this income has been used by whom and for what purpose. The UCT annual report, for instance, shows funds allocated by the University for academic support and costs incurred on which they were spent, for example payment of staff salaries for establishment posts such as those of director, deputy director senior secretary and

other central unit staff. Funds coming from external donors are, largely, designated for faculty-specific programmes and related staff posts either permanent or temporary as well as for research.

Nonetheless, it has been the case that, during the initial phase of ASP, programmes were allowed to proliferate in a haphazard way without centralised planning and control. From the lack of co-ordination and proper checks for duplication of initiatives a sense of accountability for the initiatives is lost. A number of unfortunate consequences stemmed from this lack of accountability through centralised planning and control.

Initiatives in particular, it must be equally recognised that not all people who request admission to tertiary level of education possesses the necessary qualifications for admission. Rigorous screening and selection procedures have to remain intact and implemented firmly but fairly to ensure that academic excellence through high but realistic standards are achieved. In this way the embarrassment of admitting students who cannot even benefit from ASP initiatives can be avoided.

The situation at Rhodes University, where some skills tutoring classes have become abandoned by students suggests that a needs assessment should include a survey of students' perceived requirements, as Jefferay (1992:10) puts it, "ASP continues to operate in a crisis management mode and there is little opportunity for ongoing research, evaluation of the programmes or experimentation." At the University of Natal a similar situation existed before the reorganisation of ASP, which started in 1992, as Duminy et al. (1990:3) mention "the haphazard way in which they (ASP initiatives) had developed without centralised planning and control. Not only had different initiatives sprung up, having obtained outside funding, these in common with those of the central Students Support Services, had not been evaluated."

To a certain extent, universities today still find themselves compelled to adopt temporary solutions to what really amounts to a massive problem, when they realise that the corporate sector reacts with a great deal of anxiety to extra-ordinarily high failure rates, and begin to put pressure on tertiary institutions to produce more numbers of adequately trained African personnel and leaders.

CRITERION 3

Avoidance of instances of duplication of ASP initiatives, which in some reported cases have resulted in the inefficient use of resources.

In the course of time universities in particular have realised that, in spite of the "band aid" type of impromptu arrangements to prepare disadvantaged students to cope with curricula, numerous students are still failing their courses or dropping out. In some instances deteriorating conditions have been reported, for instance, at the University of the Witwatersrand, where African students in the Commerce Faculty have experienced the worse failure rate in recent years, especially, in Business Economics only 26,67% passed in 1989, a drop in the pass rate from 55,26% in 1988; in Economics only 3,45% of the 29 African students passed. A similar pattern in the poor performance of African students is reported in courses like Commercial Law and Accounting (Agar, 1992:7-8).

The scene in our South African universities bears testimony to the way in which a number of ASP programmes were established.

In some instances, the crisis situation in which ASP operates, has been aggravated by duplication of ASP programmes as Duminy, et al. (1990:5) observe with regard to ASP activities at the University of Natal, "The educational development activities on the Durban campus are at present

in a state of confusion. Overlapping activities, rivalry for funding and lack of contact have resulted in suspicion and mistrust between those who are active in in different programmes."

A University's Principle of Acceptable Academic Performance should always be the Main Objective of Academic Support Programmes.

It is quite possible that a lot of initiatives, established on behalf of academic support, becomes deflected by peripheral matters that have no direct bearing on academic support issues. For example, extensive focus on schools or community outreach programmes, (that is attempting to solve problems of school pupils and community development), at the expense of the needs of current university students, who expect ASP resources to assist them with their academic programmes. ASP evaluations, in most of the programmes that are offered, indicate that they are insufficient for the needs of all underprepared students. Some universities, like the University of the Witwatersrand, although offering programmes that do not specifically target a particular race group, reserve the bulk of resources for severely disadvantaged students considered to be at highest risk to fail. A high degree of prudence in allocation of ASP resources is required in view of the drastic reduction in subsidy formula, which has adverse implications for institutions with a high failure rate. Therefore, it makes for judicious use of resources to curtail large scale involvement in outside projects when the failure rate can be reduced by directing available resources to the short-term goals of increasing the success rate.

The bottom line of academic support programmes is to assist disadvantaged students to pass their courses and to graduate. In order to accomplish this mission, programmes should be formulated with the interests of both the students and the community which they will serve in mind. Programmes

should be designed to nurture the aspirations of students, on basis of ethical considerations such as commitment to acceptable career goals and involvement in community development projects and professional development. The primary objective of the programmes is to ensure a systematic reduction of the high failure and drop-out rates at predominantly White universities and others. Institutions which have established ASP recognise the importance of channelling massive resources into the programmes so that the greatest number of disadvantaged students can benefit from them. In order to achieve this objective these institutions have issued policy guidelines and statements of intent.

The University of the Witwatersrand in its Mission Statement, that was adopted in 1986 as embracing the formal aims of ASP, states that:

"The ASP should therefore be seen as part of a thrust in University policy concerned with the following developments: admission and support procedures encouraging the recruitment and retention of students from disadvantaged backgrounds; the evolution of teaching programmes which take cognizance of the heterogeneity of the student intake; curricular, research and outreach priorities more closely attuned than hitherto to the needs of national development; a substantial increase in the number of Blacks in teaching, decision-making and leadership roles in the institution;" (Hunter, 1992:5)

In contrast with the deliberated objectives enshrined in mission statements of studied universities, numerous instance of inconsistency with those mission statements were quoted during interviews. In different ways, interviewees showed that most ASP programmes concentrated on fewer aspects of academic development for disadvantaged students than those to which the university actually committed itself through resources mobilisation and deployment.

The Wits statement distinguishes between short and long term goals of ASP. In the short to medium term the focus is on the University's role, with ASP input, to develop the potential of the student which is essential for academic success.

In the long term the emphasis shifts to the crucial role of the University's graduates in their communities and the economy of the country. It is important to delineate these two aspects of ASP functions. Therefore, what the student has accomplished or failed to accomplish during the years of study is a reflection on it.

The statement of intent referred to seems to be corroborated by the latest statistics on the success rates of disadvantaged students who have taken part in ASP activities in one form or another (Agar, 1989:1-10). The results of participating students are showing a steady increase in the number of subjects passed on average by students in 1984. In that year there was also an increase in the graduation rate. But in Faculties of Architecture and Commerce, ASP students continue to encounter problems of inadequate academic assistance. This has resulted in many failures and drop-outs in the Faculties, especially, (ibid.:1-12).

But in many instances it appears as though the White students, who enter the Programme as a result of inadequate readiness for university study in specific subjects, benefit more from it than the Black students. Apparently the principle of relative deprivation is applicable in this situation. This suggests that the disparities in the education systems for African and White pupils at high school have a decisive influence on their respective potential to succeed at university. It shows the extent to which the schooling Africans go through is grossly insufficient in preparing them for tertiary education. When these students venture into university education the deprivations of their schooling background have

manifestations in poorer academic results compared to Whites, who are also underprepared. In other words, Black schooling remains the poorest in terms of educational opportunities it provides. It is poorer than in poorest schools in the White education system.

The manifestations of the relative deficiencies discussed above are shown in the following: in the Commerce Faculty White students participating in the Programme fared considerably better than their Black counterparts in subjects such as Business Economics, Economics, and Commercial Law. A similar pattern has been observed in the Science Faculty regarding courses ranging from Geography, Mathematics, Physics Geology. In fact, in some instances reported by the Programme evaluator, White academic support students fared better than African students also attending the Programme.

The report raised concern about this state of affairs and recommended that tutors be encouraged to pay close attention to directing their teaching towards the special needs of the original target group comprising Africans from the disadvantaged DET education system.

In recognition of the high failure rate in the Faculty showing no abatement despite all the attempts by the Faculty of Science and related disciplines, the College of Science has been established. As an innovative strategy, the "college" concept in this context embraces the comprehensive restructuring of ASP in the Faculty of Science so that all undergraduate First and Second year students benefit from an intensified form of ASP intervention. The idea of a college is at an experimental stage and has not had enough time to show alternative strategies that can prevent the attrition rates in this Faculty.

Although, primarily focusing on Biology, Mathematics and Science (Physics and Chemistry) academic support would in principle be available in all courses offered in these two

years of study. Successful students who are deemed capable of proceeding to senior years (Third or Fourth) of undergraduate study are given the opportunity to do so. But less capable students obtain a certificate or diploma, which enables them to either continue with studies at a technikon or seek employment.

It is hoped that the college model of providing academic support to disadvantaged students, as envisaged by Wits, can provide an alternative approach to ASP intervention in the science disciplines and ameliorate the otherwise perturbing situation. The conditions at the University of Cape Town are not entirely different from Wits in terms of the characteristics of student intake from disadvantaged education backgrounds and problems encountered in providing academic support.

At UCT the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is an example of what is referred to as a "comprehensive" programme in this study. It is offered in almost all faculties where there are students whose home language is not English. Beginning in 1989 the programme sustains a high pass rate which increased to more than 80% in 1991. Bridging courses, which include all concurrent tutorials, meaning skills support provided concurrently with course content though not based on it, that provide extra-curricular support in academic skills, lay emphasis on the acquisition of background knowledge and additional coverage of lectures to ensure that students get all the assistance they need to pass courses for which they receive tutoring. Concurrent tutorials, as they are often called at UCT, were in 1991 offered in eight faculties with very encouraging results as seen in the overall pass rate. Students participating in the tutorials achieved 89% in English; History I the pass rate reached 100%; Psychology 1 achieved 88% and Sociology I obtained a 78% pass rate.

The Foundation Programme has similarities with "concurrent" tutoring the only difference being that it is more focused and specialised than the latter. At UCT its aim is to provide students with a broad preparation for university in specific disciplines. It concentrates on the development of key concepts, academic skills and affective approaches to learning. In 1991 student results in various areas of the course reached a peak point of 100% pass rate in Foundation Chemistry; 52% percentage pass in Chemistry (half-credit); 81% in Special Mathematics; 81% in Integrated Science; 94% in Foundation Physics; 97% pass rate in Physics offered in one semester.

For ASP in the Faculty of Engineering, the average mark for a two-semester Mathematics in 1991 was slightly higher than that obtained by students who were not attending ASP. This is particularly significant considering that the Engineering Faculty has, in previous years, had one of the highest drop-out rates in the University.

As is the case with Wits ASP, students in the Commerce Faculty at UCT are experiencing remarkably high failure and drop-out rates. African students proceeding to the Second Year of study, before 1990, represented the smallest portion of the annual percentage number of participating students intake. The highest number of unsuccessful students had either been excluded from the University or transferred to other faculties or institutions.

Probably, the solution lies in continuing CASP at Second Year level on a selective basis by focusing on core courses or those in which students have encountered greatest difficulties. For example, the two most problematic subjects for Commerce ASP students are Accounting and Economics in other universities Economic History as well. It is essentially for these reasons that this Chapter gives prominence to the role of students in the formulation of ASP programmes as well as their evaluation so that they will

have input in decision-making regarding the nature and extent of academic support they need, as stipulated in CRITERIA number 9 and 10. Extreme caution has to be exercised, though, to ensure that students do not become absolutely dependent on academic support in the medium (at Second and subsequent Years of study) to long term.

CRITERION 4

An initiative should be introduced once adequate funding has been obtained in order to avoid disruptions when it has to be discontinued because of shortage of funds.

An examination of the trends in the funding of tertiary education reveals that, over a period of about five years, university funds have progressively decreased and become inadequate to meet the needs of special educational programmes, as illustrated by Hendry and Bunting (1993:55) thus:

"The average annual increase in total funds made available to the universities was 17,6% but the increase in total fund income per weighted FTE enrolled students was only 10,6% pa for the 1985 - 1990 period. During this period, the average annual increase in government appropriations per weighted FTE enrolled student was only 7,6%... This increase in total fund income was largely the result of rapid increases in fund income from tuition fees and from sources other than government appropriations at the residential universities."

Froomkin (1983:150) emphasises the importance of selective rationalisation for the justification of cost-cutting for maintaining the efficiency of academic programmes when he points out the dangers of random financial controls:

"Another problem is that proposed new programs are more vulnerable to budget cuts than those that have been established and that are supported by the expectations of

numerous people in the institution. It is more attractive politically to cut the budget by deferring or postponing proposed programs, even if such postponement will force the eventual cost even higher. Just as a corporation may defer new efficiency-improving equipment first when in financial trouble, colleges and universities will postpone new programs and curricular improvements when they are in deficit... This approach is understandable in human terms, but it frustrates organizational efficiency because the reductions that occur are located in arbitrary places in the organization."

Alternatives to the crisis mode of ASP operation, that will provide permanent solutions, have to be found, but again, because of the internal dynamics of universities, the process has been delayed while failure and drop-out rates among disadvantaged students increase. Programmes are heavily reliant on outside, mostly overseas, funding. In almost all universities surveyed, more than three-quarters of ASP budget is met by outside funding.

There was consensus among respondents that universities need to play a more active role in the provision of funds for ASP programmes. But, it seems that, as long as government appropriations remain below the current inflation rate, universities will continue to be unreliable sources of ASP funds. Both ASP staff and students indicated feelings of anxiety about the financial sustainability of ASP initiatives in the absence of stable sources of income.

During the sanctions era, international non-governmental organisations, such as the British Scholarship Programme, Kellogg Foundation, Ford Foundation and agencies like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) the human resources development agencies sponsored by embassies of German, Italian, French, and Canada provided the bulk of ASP funding. Since the motivation of these international donors for funding ASP programmes was, to a

large extent, based on affirmative action policies of their respective governments to render financial assistance to those who were regarded as victims of Apartheid policies, changes in the political sphere will definitely influence decisions for or against continued financial involvement. With the dismantling of Apartheid having reached an irreversible stage, some of these agencies, especially those affiliated to the European Economic Community (EEC) have now signalled the intention to reduce their financial involvement in ASP activities.

The withdrawal of international funding would, at this point in time, definitely leave ASP in a precarious position. Demands for trained personnel at high skills levels have not decreased. Instead, employers have, throughout the sanctions era, which has lasted about one and a half decade, remained resolute to continue developing local talent for leadership positions and high technical skills. Insufficient financial resources have thwarted significant progress in this direction. Failing to find suitable manpower in the country, the corporate sector has continued to recruit trained personnel from overseas.

Presently, the socio-political turbulences have resulted in the increase of foreign recruitment campaigns of professionals in industrial and commercial fields of training. The education sector has followed suite, especially with Universities of Cape Town, Natal, Transkei, and the North employing record. But this can only be a temporary measure designed to keep the economy on its wheels.

Actually because of the parlous state of the economy due to the low intensity civil war, there is very little recruiting of, in fact need for, "trained personnel". However, the recently announced lifting of economic sanctions by the international community against South Africa instills hope that the current economic depression and downward trends in

economic growth will be reversed once the promises of investments become reality.

Already there are indications that the economic is gradually taking an upward turn and employers are increasingly requesting the Department of Manpower to supply them with trained personnel, especially at lowest to medium skills levels, for example, chefs, for the catering industry, security guards, bricklayers, mechanics, certificated maintenance workers and other areas of skills requirements.

At universities the situation has not changed much from what it was more than a decade ago, when ASP programmes were introduced on a wide scale. ASP students, continue to fail and large numbers drop out, especially in the priority fields of study for the corporate sector. Some manage to cope as best they can by simply requesting transfers to faculties offering either courses seen as less demanding or courses for which they are better equipped by their schooling. These tend to be in the humanities and not in science, engineering, commerce or mathematics.

Unfortunately, for some even transfers to faculties such as arts, law, and social science does not prevent final exclusion. Not only is this a time and money wasting process to the university and ultimately to the country but educated manpower needs remain unmet.

Although little has been said about the effects of failure on student's future career prospects, the fact remains that unsuccessful students tend to be psychologically damaged and embittered by their failure. In order to rectify the inadequacies of current programmes, clearly more meaningful steps have to be taken. One of these is the preparation of programmes based upon research into the input programmes can have upon the individual's academic development.

To a greater or lesser extent, the Universities of Natal, Cape Town and Witwatersrand follow this path. In the case of the University of Natal, the last ten years a number of

programmes based upon research have been established. The University of the Witwatersrand has long embarked on a similar approach by actually employing a full-time research evaluator of ASP in 1987. The University of Cape Town has moved a long way towards the same position as Wits. In all these institutions well-researched and properly structured programmes have replaced the early ad hoc "band aid" approaches.

As far as funding among different institutions is concerned, there are variations. In fact even within universities themselves, differences in terms of funding have been reported. The type of funding referred to involves the money made available by ASP donors for the continuation of the programme. For example, at the University of Natal a number of problems have been encountered in establishing a fully functioning ASP, especially at the Pietermaritzburg Centre as a result, among others, of inadequate financial support for the programmes, until a full-time ASP Head was appointed in 1988 to deal with this and other ASP problems. Unlike the Durban and Medical School units, it did not have a relatively stable network of sponsors for programmes. Consequently it did not come into existence for some time and even with the new 'head' ASP has been under-financed for a considerable period.

In the United States of America, up until 1964 when legislative measures were introduced allowing provision of substantial Federal funding for the disadvantaged Blacks and other racial minorities, countless instances were reported where compensatory education programmes and various types of bridging programmes were disrupted due to shortages of funds and properly trained personnel. Chapter 2 abounds with examples of failed educational interventions as a result of lacking funds. It is significant that, the scale of the financial crisis was of such immensity that United States Congress successfully agitated for immediate corrective action to be taken. The passing of the Economic Opportunity

Act of 1964 and other forms of legislation to make remedial education and ASP programmes accessible to disadvantaged Blacks and other racial minorities, marked the beginning of a new era in the educational dispensation for these racial groups.

CRITERION 5

Application of a faculty-integrated model, based on decentralisation from Central Unit structures.

The majority of responses, (86%), reflected a common concern about the need for co-operation between ASP Units and faculties. It was felt that establishing closer working relationship could benefit all parties involved. In the first place, faculties would have greater access to the specialised knowledge and skills of ASP staff. Their experience in dealing with disadvantaged students, whose educational backgrounds require academic assistance in many forms in order to succeed, can be a useful resource for faculty staff members, who may not have had the opportunity to develop such knowledge and skills. Secondly, the academic performance of disadvantaged students can only be positively influenced by increased co-operation towards fully faculty-integrated ASP programmes. Thirdly, ASP Units have a lot to benefit from integration with faculties in the sense that resources can be shared. In this way, many logistical and other problems currently being experienced, through the isolation of ASP from mainstream academic departments, can be resolved.

Interviews with all groupings and their responses to questionnaires have shown that ASP programmes from Units, separate from faculties and departments, for which they are intended, have proved to be unsatisfactory. Suggestions were made that whenever possible faculty-based Units should be used, since they have been shown to be the most suitable option for effective ASP results. Reference was made to

several instances in each university suggesting that improvements in academic performance of disadvantaged students could be directly linked to co-operative efforts by both ASP and faculty staff. ASP directors' annual reports mentioned, with appreciation, any initiatives taken in this direction. It is however, important to differentiate between Central Units, which will be dealt with later, that largely perform administrative functions, and Units responsible for particular programmes, for example, an English for Academic Purposes or Bridging Unit. A faculty-integrated programme has a better chance of being accepted and recognised by faculty staff, than a central unit based programme.

Universities are experiencing problems with faculty-integrated ASP in varying degrees. At the University of the Witwatersrand, generally faculty staff resist participation in ASP programmes on grounds that they:

" feel that they do not have the necessary skills; there are no financial, promotional tenure or prestige rewards for this type of work; researching and publishing are the only activities that are rewarded; they do not have time because of heavy lecture loads and the pressure to research and publish and their departments are not supportive of initiatives in this area. That is, there are no incentives for staff to be involved in support work and there are a number of disincentives"
(Agar, 1992:98).

These findings are the results of a survey of staff opinions with regard to faculty-integrated ASP programmes and the role of faculty staff in the process of integrating ASP programmes into faculty programmes. Though, somehow changes are taking place in attitudes of faculty staff towards involvement in ASP activities, on the whole negative sentiments are still common. These feelings have contributed to some of the failures of ASP programmes in some Faculties. At the University of Cape Town the situation

is quite different, as Scott (1992:2-3) emphasises the importance of decentralised ASP programmes:

"Furthermore, an emphasis on faculty-based co-ordination reflects the belief that academic support cannot be decontextualised and that ASP work is most effective when it is fully integrated with the mainstream academic programmes and is expressed in the form of mutually reinforcing components of appropriately designed curricula... The ASP has in recent years focused much of its work on the design and implementation in association with the relevant faculties and departments, of first-year level courses and curricula that are geared to the the needs of disadvantaged students and are offered as alternatives to the traditional first-year courses."

This description indicates that a positive framework for full-scale faculty-integration of ASP programmes already exists at UCT. To sustain these developments, regular evaluation of the integration process may form basis for future prospects of these endeavours.

A Separate ASP Unit may not be the Most Suitable for Effective Results. An Alternative such as Faculty-Based Units should be Considered.

In view of the enormous work that is expected of the programmes, it would not be realistic to assume that the ASP units, especially the central unit which is responsible for the supervision, co-ordination, and funding of main ASP services, can accomplish all academic support tasks on its own. In fact, the ideal situation for the future of the programmes lies in their integration into faculty departments. ASP possesses the potential to initiate the change from centrally-based programmes to faculty or department based programmes. But as initiator for change it must ensure that faculties are involved throughout the whole process of negotiation for change and actually implementing it. Mennin and Kaufman in Frame and Seneque (1991) suggest

ways for introducing change and overcoming barriers to change by:

"the building of a broad base of ownership for the change... Therefore, in order for change to occur, initiators must work quickly at building consensus and ownership among a cross-section of Faculty staff... innovators need to demonstrate an ability to compromise, i.e. to modify methods without sacrificing core values and goals of the innovation."

While the strategy of integration with faculties will facilitate the effectiveness of the programmes on the one hand, it will, on the other, serve as a stimulus for institutional change in terms of commitment to the objectives of the programmes in a more visible manner. That is, once the programmes become the property of faculties institutions will be expected to demonstrate direct responsibility for them especially in terms of staffing and funding.

Various report from surveyed universities suggest that institutional change is a definite prerequisite and an important indicator that programmes have a chance to be successfully implemented. Sustained growth and development of the field cannot be expected to materialise without visible institutional commitment to the activities of the programmes. Till now ASP initiatives have been criticised as a strategy that enables universities to avoid undertaking fundamental changes in the way they operate (Moulder, 1988). In the present there are positive signs that faculties and ASP have begun to find common on a number of issues relating to academic support. Should the trend continue to some significant extent many of the barriers to the successful implementation of the programmes will be much less insurmountable if not totally removed.

Reporting on events at the University of the Witwatersrand the Evaluator of ASP stresses that the credibility of ASP is dependent on the relationship between a particular programme

and a specific departmental course of the degree itself. There is a variety of ways in which this relationship is expressed. One of its elements is the increase in the credibility of the programme among ASP students provided it clearly indicates "explicit links between course content and support content" Agar 1992, South African. Journal of Education 12 (2)p.98. Another element which has a similar impact on student perceptions is the relationship between the ASP lecturer and the faculty lecturer/s teaching the course in the department. The credibility of the former among ASP students is dependent on the extent to which he is integrated into the department.

This depiction of opposing attitudes represents the outcome of the peripheral status of the programmes which has been in existence for many years. Continuing with the account of possible dangers for lack of integration with faculties/departments, the Evaluator highlights the experience of the programme that a seemingly minor occurrence such as the appearance of an ASP course/programme on the time-table as part of the course or curriculum or features as an addition to the course or curriculum influences the perceptions students have of it, as for example:

"... in the department of Chemistry support tutorials are a time-tabled part of the four-year curriculum, are subject specific and are taught by tutors who are integrated into the First-Year chemistry teaching team. Very few students express any resistance to these tutorials, attendance at tutorials is regular, begins at the start of the year and staff feel effective and do not feel marginalised. In other subjects where tutorials are not integrated into the course and where tutors are not integrated into the department, student attendance is far less regular and staff feel marginalised and less effective" (Ibid.)

The University of the Witwatersrand has also, through a survey of academic staff opinions regarding their role in ASP, revealed that faculty staff are on the whole resistant

towards getting involved in ASP type of work. As noted earlier in this discourse, the main reason cited is that faculty staff feel that they do not have the necessary skills to do the work. But in addition their reluctance results from the realisation that there are no financial, promotional, tenure or prestige rewards for this type of work. For them researching and publishing are the only activities that have worthwhile incentives and are rewarding. Therefore, they do not have time because of heavy lecture loads and the pressures to research and publish. Furthermore, it is alleged by academic staff that their departments are not supportive of ASP initiatives. But, generally the absence of incentives in this area of academic activity makes it not to be so attractive to most of them.

On the positive side an increasing number of faculty staff at Wits, most especially in departments that have large numbers of disadvantaged students, understand that these students need academic support which they contribute in formulating. Another positive aspect about Wits is that ASP has for some time chosen the route of decentralisation of its programmes. Its central unit comprises of the core programme staff, that is the director, two assistant directors, and evaluator as detailed in Chapter 3 under staffing. In the faculties there are programme co-ordinators and tutors placed in different departments.

At the University of Cape Town a similar organisational structure exists. There also the central unit has a director, deputy director, co-ordinator for the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme and the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP) staff as well as administrative staff. The core programme staff is responsible for the overall co-ordination of ASP activities and functions across the campus and for the inter-faculty EAP programme. All other staff are seconded to faculties and departments, but some tutors or co-ordinators are appointed directly by faculties or departments concerned. Such staff

have dual accountability in that they are responsible to either the Dean or Head of department as well as to the central unit.

It is alleged that this structure enjoys preference over other forms of organisation charts since it reflects the conviction that while it is important for ASP staff to maintain close co-operation and contact in the interests of mutual edification and learning from one another and to develop common principles, it is equally important that ASP and its staff are, wherever possible, integrated into faculties and their structures. At UCT the ASP is, thus, seeking to keep its staff structure decentralised so that it can remain organised according to the faculty-based model for effective implementation of its programmes. To illustrate the extent of faculty integration already taking place, there are co-ordinators in all the following Faculties: Commerce, Engineering, Medicine, and Science. From 1992 the Faculties of Social Science and Humanities will have co-ordinators and a similar pattern in staffing structure.

The University of Natal has core central units for both Durban and Pietermaritzburg campuses. On the Pietermaritzburg campus the central unit comprises the director, with the title University Educational Development Officer, responsible for the co-ordination of all programmes and services discharged by the Centre for University Educational Development (CUED). Also housed in the central unit are the co-ordinators of various programmes and administrative staff. The following functions are co-ordinated by the central unit: ASP evaluation, student development, research, internship, data-base and information, science selection and the vacant post of staff development co-ordinator. There faculty co-ordinator as follows: Arts and Social Science, Agriculture, Commerce, Science and Maths/Applied Science.

The Durban campus has the same staffing structure and, in addition has decentralised into faculties such as Arts and Social Science, Commerce, Engineering, Architecture and Education. The central unit comprises the University Educational Development Officer, co-ordinators of the two functions namely the internship programme and research/database as well as administrative staff. Faculty co-ordinators known as Faculty Education Development Officers (FEDOs) have dual accountability as in other university campuses.

At Rhodes University attempts being made to decentralise Academic Skills Programme (ASP) staff into selected faculties. But there is no definite plan to do this. As of now the central unit comprises the director and four-co-ordinators of Arts, Social Science and Divinity; Science and Pharmacy; Commerce, Education and Law; Projects. These co-ordinators are assisted by more than twenty-five tutors who teach academic skills related to designated subjects e.g. English, History, Accounting etc.

CRITERION 6

Programmes require sufficient planning and design before they are implemented.

A substantial number of respondents, representing 98% of the sample, identified the need for the planning and designing of programmes as crucial during their preparation. Interviewees and those who completed questionnaires unanimously favoured a thoroughly planned implementation process in order to assess, more accurately, the probability of successful implementation. It was alluded that, in many instances, the rate of failed programmes was exacerbated by inadequate planning. Reference was made to specific cases where programmes were not designed according to any particular set of standards and specifications.

In future, the informants insisted, once reasons for formulating a programme had been established, a plan of action, according to which the programme would be implemented, has to be devised. All the necessary inputs and processes have to be clearly identified, such as the type of expertise required and the resources needed.

With regard to its design, structural components must be described in sufficient detail to avoid any ambiguity concerning the final form of its structure. For example, the role of all actors during the implementation process must be explained such as the manner in which student activities will be carried out, what learning objectives can be accomplish by when and how students will be involved in measuring the extent of what has been learnt. Similarly, the part to be played by faculty staff and the role of ASP tutors need to be clearly identified. The designing process also includes outlining structures of knowledge that will be imparted to facilitate the assimilation of course content by disadvantaged students. But most important of all is the fact that the success of the planning and designing processes can be guaranteed through collaborative efforts between ASP/ faculty staff and students concerned.

Without close liaison with departments and faculties, it is inconceivable that any realistic planning can occur. The situation in which ASP units have find themselves prevents meaningful sharing of information with Central Units and faculty staff, resulting in designing programmes that do not have the desired impact on students. At the initial phase of formulating a programme, information about the nature and objectives of programmes is almost exclusively circulated only within specific groups in ASP Units, meaning that faculty staff, who are responsible for those courses for which ASP intervention is, specifically, being planned, are excluded from the planning process. In this thesis, any formulation of ASP programmes, which excludes any of the major ASP stakeholders (students, ASP and faculty staff, and

donors where practicable) is considered inappropriate and unrepresentative of the entire ASP constituency comprising major stakeholders, unless sufficient justification, for such exclusion, is provided.

Since the long-term future of ASP programmes depends, to a large extent, on active participation by faculty staff throughout, it is absolutely necessary that the importance of their role is acknowledged by including their input during planning and designing of programmes as well as in other phases of developing programmes. Instances in which vigorous discussions, albeit a rarity during the initial phase of ASP between 1980 and 1985, have taken place around issues relating to programme planning and design, in the form of workshops include the Universities of Natal, Cape Town and Witwatersrand.

But, in spite of these discussions, there is no sufficient evidence to suggest that the input of faculty staff significantly helped in shaping the content of ASP programmes, since no joint planning/designing followed the discussions. If consultations should result in meaningful plans of action, there is need to formalise such interaction in order that programmes can benefit from the expertise of faculty personnel. The informal contacts already taking place indicate that co-operation is possible and desirable for both faculty and ASP staff. The collective wisdom gained from engaging all staff concerned can strengthen explorations into more efficient approaches for dealing with academic difficulties of disadvantaged students.

The Universities of Natal and Rhodes have, to a significant degree, not successfully involved faculty staff in planning and designing ASP. Jefferay (ibid.:10) commenting of Rhodes ASP, reiterates the concern of one tutor, who has stressed that "the contact with departments should be formalised beyond the friendly interaction and the department and the

ASP tutor should strategise ASP's role together and that ASP should have input in planning".

At the University of Natal It is expected that the participation of Faculty staff will, in future, be intensified in those aspects of the programme where their expertise is most required, for example, the planning and presentation of substantial components of the course, such as Accounting and Economics in the Economics and Management Unit (EMU). But there are still obstacles, which Hemson (1991:13-14) describes as the lack of co-operation between ASP staff and faculty staff in planning and designing programmes as an impediment to faculty-integrated programmes, since:

"separation of many initiatives from the mainstream teaching of the University may have been inevitable... However, it has also created a major problem of integration of these (useful ASP) learnings into the mainstream. The danger is that initiatives continue to be seen as supplementary and additional to the central processes of the University."

The reorganisation of ASP at Natal has raised high expectations that appropriate action will be taken to encourage greater co-operation between ASP and respective faculties, where faculty-integration stands a better chance of becoming reality, for example, in the Faculties of Humanities, Arts and Social Science (Pmb Centre) as well as the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science (Dbn Centre).

CRITERION 7

Instructional methods and techniques should be based on on-going research.

For most informants, in total 89% of the whole sample, one of the major obstacles to successful implementation of ASP programmes has been insufficient research base for introducing particular methods and techniques of instruction

relevant to the needs of disadvantaged students. In this sphere, Froomkin (1983:35) scrutinizes the philosophical basis for selecting certain instructional methods and techniques on grounds of the following objective criteria:

"The most important and yet neglected issue for leading research universities today is the changing function of their academic programs. Because these programs are being put to new use uses, they need to be reshaped as soon as possible. The undergraduate programs need the most urgent attention. In the 1950s and 1960s (1970s, 1980s and 1990s alike, italics mine) these programs were redesigned so that entering students would be encouraged to specialize in certain disciplines and prepare for graduate studies. Now that an increasing proportion of the most gifted undergraduates go on to professional schools, a new orientation of the undergraduate program is required if the undergraduate curriculum is to remain viable. The goal of undergraduate education should be to provide a solid grounding in the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences for all students - regardless of their majors. Most institutions with ambitious programs prepare their students to seek connections between the practical and the speculative, both in the sciences and the humanities."

It is vital that the expertise and knowledge of both ASP and faculty staff should be based on current methods of instruction in the field of compensatory education. ASP and faculty staff should realise that academic problems for disadvantaged students arise as a result of failure to adjust to learning skills and study methods of university education. The academic disadvantages of African students seem to be more severe than any other racial group because of the most inferior quality of secondary schooling. But in educational terms adjustment is a two-way process, as Hartshorne (1991:37) insists that:

"Universities must also adapt to the needs of their students... 'University readiness' is not just a matter of the student being

capable of coping with the institution, but also of the institution being capable of coping with the student. Perhaps, most of all, universities have to consider what it means to be of and in Africa... It will have to do things that perhaps it does not regard as the proper concern of the university. There will continue to be major gaps in the knowledge, ability to study and learn, and attitudes to work, of many students with innate promise."

At the University of Cape Town there is a growing awareness that "it is necessary for Universities mainstream teaching structures to develop more effective means of meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse and 'non-traditional' students body." (Scott, 1992:6). The University of the Witwatersrand is becoming more concerned about teaching methods that have not changed to meet the needs of disadvantaged students as Agar (1992:98) states:

"Departments where numbers of EL2 (English Second Language) students are large have been forced, however, to acknowledge the issue of a changing student body and are much more open to changing teaching techniques and curricula."

It would appear that, at this stage, the two Universities although assisting to make teaching staff aware of the problems relating to the necessity for changes in teaching approaches, no concrete action plans have been formalised.

CRITERION 8

A learner-centred approach, which takes account of the special characteristics of the individual learner should be introduced.

Such an approach, when introduced, can make ASP more responsive to the academic needs of disadvantaged students and enforceable through compulsory attendance to ensure successful implementation of programmes.

An increasing number of ASPs have begun gathering information on the learning requirements of disadvantaged students. In order to succeed in using this data to assist these students extensive research is required to more accurately identify the learning difficulties experienced by disadvantaged students. This process of inquiry should involve faculty staff, who are primarily entrusted with the responsibility to teach. Obviously, they also stand to benefit from it since from understanding the learning difficulties of such students they will more readily accept the reality that their teaching methods and strategies should be modified or changed altogether if found unsuitable to meet the needs of these students.

The learner-centred approach seeks to promote self-direction in the learning process, which implies that the lecturer has to establish how much knowledge, about a particular course or module the student has acquired and what more the student wishes to know and in what learning strategies the student thinks will be effective. It is on this basis that Graemmo and Abe (1985) in Millar and Boughey (1991:124) believe that:

"A student-centred approach is inoperable without an increase in the level of student responsibility for what is done and how it is done. This calls for a change in the role of the teacher from "the one who does things" to "the one who helps other people do them."

There is no clear indication, in universities surveyed, that a consistent approach has been adopted to implement learner-centred strategies in teaching/learning encounter. It is important that a common strategy is formulated by ASP and faculty staff, so that appropriate remedial measures can be taken to correct rote learning tendencies of secondary schooling.

In previous Chapters a consistent theme is that disadvantaged students are a reality that South African

universities have to deal with for a long time to come. Appropriate ways and means have to be found to most efficiently use the scarce resources available to ASP to the maximum benefit of all those concerned. Those benefitting directly from the programme are the students. But all staff associated with ASP including tutors and faculty lecturers should be part of the change process. As we have seen in the previous Chapter, the current infusion model of ASP, meaning that programmes must be taken to faculties and made their joint property with the ASP centres at least in the short to medium term, requires greater involvement of faculty staff in ASP initiatives. After all, the continuation of ASP, in the form of educational development which has been made a high priority in some institutions than others because of widespread failure rates across racial divisions, in the longer term depends on the commitment of faculty staff to make it succeed. If ASP does not take faculty staff with it, in terms of planning and designing courses, which will incorporate learner-centred approaches and also reaching consensus on the fundamental differences in the previous learning experiences between disadvantaged and not disadvantaged students, ASP's long term success is imperilled. Searle (1991:557) finds contradictions in what faculty lecturers intend to achieve, that is developing independent learners, and strategies they use to do so, as she points out the dilemmas of ASP staff on this issue:

"Support staff (meaning ASP staff) meanwhile have struggled with student learning problems, drawing on the learning theories of people like Piaget, Ausubel and Bruner or language experts like Krashen, Ellis, Cummins and Swain to develop a theory which emphasises students active engagement with their learning. It has become more and more evident that whilst lecturers insist that what they want, and what they are developing are independent critical thinkers, the teaching methods adopted fundamentally militate against such development."

It is against this background that the present efforts to set up bases for research into these questions need encouragement and support both within and outside the university. The type of research being undertaken focuses a great deal on restructuring programmes, especially, at Universities of the Witwatersrand, Natal and Cape Town, with a view to making them available to a more correctly defined target group and using more effective strategies. Therefore, planning and re-designing of ASP courses has come under the spotlight including the restructuring of curricula where possible and desirable. But learning/teaching strategies, on a learner-directed basis, should be included in the debate around curricular planning and design.

At this juncture ASP is experiencing concerted pressures to change and, cannot contemplate any significant changes without taking into account the interests of its partners, namely the students and faculty staff. An area where notable changes are taking place is approaches to learning styles that differ with the levels of ability of the students and teaching styles which should be compatible with the former. A learner-centred approach is, thus, more appropriate for disadvantaged students though others can also benefit from it. Visagie (1988:127) shows concern about pertinent issues in stressing that universities operate when a given context. For him contemporary universities depend on taking the various cultural forces that surround it for survival. When learning culture and approaches have changed in the surrounding environment of the university it cannot avoid being affected by it.

CRITERION 9

Students should be encouraged to actively participate in the formulation of ASP programmes. It is considered that up to now their advice and wishes have been largely ignored.

In relation to the previous Criterion, which stresses the importance of a student-centred approach to teaching, it is equally important to introduce a learner-directed approach in the formulation of ASP programmes. In inviting student input in the formulation process should enhance the relevance of programmes, to the extent that students regard them as helping resolve their academic problems.

This approach seeks to exhaust all avenues of consultation among major ASP stakeholders, one of whom are the students. It has no connotations with management of the process for the formulation of programmes. Undoubtedly, ASP in conjunction with faculty staff remain responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the formulated programmes. In other words, ASP and faculty staff are, jointly, accountable for the outcome of the formulation process, but would like to be guided also by the input of students, who are the recipients of ASP Programmes, and at a later stage will be expected to participate in evaluating them, (refer to Criterion 10 below for details on students' participation in ASP evaluation.

When ASP programmes are formulated, there is no adequate scope for the involvement of ASP students. The measure against which the success of ASP will be judged depends upon the extent to which ASP students have become partners with ASP and faculty staff in the formulation and implementation of ASP programmes. Since ASP success is judged on pass rates, student involvement in planning and formulation of ASP programmes may increase their acceptability and, perhaps, ensure that they do meet students' needs. Collins, (1990:37) maintains that teaching and learning experiences operate within inadequate structures. These structures, he argues, must be transformed into being completely oriented towards the improvement of students' academic results. The inclusion of students' input in formulating ASP programmes constitutes a significant move in that direction.

In an exposition full of insight about the current dilemmas Searle (1991:557-558) bemoans the marginal status of ASP as casually linked with much of the lowly perceptions with which ASP courses are conceived as second rate to faculty courses. She outlines the main issues in this regard, specifically pertaining to Natal resulting from the perpetuation of rote learning by faculty staff in that all they require is the transfer of massive information as teaching is still predominantly based on content, but:

"ASP, however has been experimenting with a variety of methods to encourage students to engage actively with their disciplines, peer group teaching, small group tutoring, supplemental instruction, mentoring, computer based instruction, encouraging students to work at constructing their own meanings and knowledge actively rather than being receptive vessels."

Towards this objective students should have access to the various fora and university structures responsible for deliberations on the form and content of ASP programmes. But since ASP has overall control of staff development projects, it should have no difficulty organising curriculum development workshops. Probably staff and student development could merge into a forum in which issues affecting the development of either of the two could be addressed. It is the students who attend ASP courses and are better placed to give feedback on the quality of subject content and teaching they receive. Their evaluation of ASP courses would be less threatening and not inhibiting in any way since they would not be highly judgmental as colleagues might be. Similarly when they are involved in the formulation of ASP programmes they are more likely to evince a positive attitude and a high level of motivation since they know that a well constructed programme will benefit them in many ways.

Chaskalson (1991:460) believes that knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the programme is as important as writing

or presenting it. She outlines strategies used at Wits ASP course planning workshops in which students' learning experiences were simulated. The advantages of Wits methodology in course/programme development are found in the opportunity to assess the impact it is likely to have when implemented. These pre-test evaluations meaning that the programme is validated before its implementation and its positive and negative effects are ascertain and improvements made where necessary. She emphasises the role students can play thus:

"Much as the students can learn a lot from our feedback on their work, we can learn a lot from formal and informal student feedback on our attempts to teach. Course evaluations and tests devised to reveal specific data about gains in content, heuristic and epistemic are helpful."

Students should get every encouragement to be actively involved in validation tests to assess the appropriateness of programmes prior to implementation. Cognizance should also be taken of whatever critical views are expressed by participating students as these will assist in the drafting of content and final structure of the programme as well as in the consideration of methodological issues. It is necessary to establish mechanisms to ensure that future programmes incorporate the ideas and wishes of those they are intended to benefit.

CRITERION 10

Students should be involved in the evaluation of programmes.

The effectiveness of ASP programmes depends on the extent to which feedback from students, especially students enrolled in ASP courses, is sought with a view to improving the quality of programmes. Students should be able to state what programmes contribute to their academic success and what requires the attention of ASP to make programmes more efficiently implemented, so that they can be effective by

enabling them to complete studies and graduate. In other words, programmes are evaluated on basis of the quality and quantity of skills they provide for overcoming academic difficulties encountered by disadvantaged students.

Paradoxically, the success of ASP programmes depends, to a large extent, on the perceptions of those who are supposed to benefit from them in order to successfully exert a positive influence on students' academic outcomes. This means that ASP staff produce successful programmes by demonstrating the effectiveness of ASP programmes.

Student evaluations are a reflection of either limitations or successes of programmes, that is, what programmes are capable of achieving in terms of improving pass rates and increase the number of professionally qualified people from the disadvantaged sectors of society. For the purpose of measuring the effective of ASP, it is not sufficient to conduct evaluations of ASP courses individually. This does not give a complete picture of what is happening and such fragmentation of the evaluation process encourages treatment of deficiencies in isolation from deficiencies occurring in other programmes.

The tendency in many universities is to avoid the confrontation that may arise from comprehensive evaluations. It seems that the discovery of weaknesses in programmes, might be seen as an attack on the integrity of ASP as a whole and possibly jeopardise opportunities for continued funding. On the other hand, such confrontation, not between people but, with issues, is inevitable. If students do not perceive programmes as contributing positively to their study careers, an opportunity should be provided for them to express such perceptions through evaluation on a regular basis. It is through such regular evaluations that the programmes derive legitimacy and relevance which must be tested continually. Along these lines, a great deal of

consultation, with student representative bodies and other structures that represent them, is required.

Universities participating in this study have indicated a willingness to involve students in the evaluations of the programmes. A notable example is the comprehensive evaluation of all ASP programmes, which is conducted annually by the ASP Evaluator. In his recent study of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of ASP programmes, Agar (1992:94-95) shows that student evaluations of programmes brings a different dimension of constitutes critical issues for academic success, he when observes,

"the real extent of the impact of non-academic problems has been fully recognized by neither individual lecturers, nor by bursary donors, nor by the university. In other words, what has had limited recognition is the fact that educational disadvantage is as much a class issue as it is an educational one."

At the University of the Witwatersrand a lot of data has been gathered on the perceptions of what students like and do not like about the programmes. It is important for the university and ASP in particular to know what recipients (students) think of the way in which the programmes are formulated and the manner in which they are presented. At Wits the practice of evaluation seems to have aided ASP to respond promptly and effectively to the concerns raised by the students. In 1989 Wits ASP conducted a massive evaluation culminating in the Summary Report that was submitted to the ASP Steering Committee. That Report contained, among other things, view as major stumbling blocks in the way of the programmes. It is significant that the majority of ASP students regarded non-academic problems as having a decisive influence on their academic success - these include finance to pay fees and buy books, residence accommodation and transportation costs.

There are a number of instances where students have been requested to evaluate seminars, workshops and some aspects

of course materials as well as presenters of those events. The tendency in many of these events is the inconsistency in applying the practice of evaluation. Some programmes are evaluated while others are left without evaluation which the writer considers most essential to inform the implementation process. It is, to a large degree, during implementation that participants are able to assess the various aspects of the programme knowing how these relate to its entire form and content.

The University of Cape Town has also undertaken various evaluations aimed at assessing student attitudes towards the programmes. The way in which UCT has conducted its evaluations shows that the process is directed at strengthening the positive aspects of the programmes. This is demonstrated by the several changes which have been made to the construction of programmes. Rhodes ASP has also conducted evaluations of individual skills courses, in the same way as UCT ASP, without embarking on comprehensive evaluation of programmes, as Wits ASP has been doing for a number of years, to reveal the total impact of programmes on both short-term goals (improving pass rates) and long-term goals (improving graduation rates and career prospects) of ASP intervention.

The participation of students in evaluation of programmes is as much important as involving them in their formulation. For example, while some students value interaction in tutorial groups of small sizes, others may still prefer the closer contact and personal attention which the one-to-one tutorial system provides (Moodie, 1992).

CRITERION 11

Disadvantaged students require assistance with non-academic problems.

Students are not only academically but also financially. academic support staff should, perhaps, also assist to ensure that students are able to finance their studies adequately. Many students registering to attend academic support classes encounter numerous financial difficulties. The majority of them cannot afford to pay university fees. For those accommodated in university residence the costs are multiplied since they not only pay tuition fees, which have escalated tremendously in the last decade, but also residence fees that are colossal. Purchasing class materials including textbooks is yet another financial burden that few can afford.

From ASP Reports received during this study, there is wide consensus that a certain degree of correlation exists between academic and financial disadvantage. The United States experience has revealed that, through programmes such as Head Start that sought to redress educational as well as socio-economic imbalances, educational disadvantages tend to occur most frequently among impoverished families. Brijlal (1991) emphasises the importance of the interplay between core and peripheral roles of universities, thus:

" Certain socio-economic demands are really external to the essential vocation of the university, but they have to be accommodated in some way by the institution - at least for the foreseeable future... A sensitive response to the socio-economic background by the management will include a flexible policy for payment of student fees and devising ways of assisting financially disempowered students."

In the United States an attempt was made to solve the problem of poor Blacks by instituting various forms of compensatory education starting at pre-school levels. Such policy was brought into effect and supported by "affirmative action" programmes. Definitely South Africa is clearly in a different position in that a similarly holistic intervention which considers academic and financial issues simultaneously is not forthcoming. Whereas in the United States government

was in the forefront of many efforts towards social upliftment through education at all levels, the South African government is, in fact, apposed to any form of rendering assistance to disadvantaged students who have chosen to study at predominantly White institutions. Therefore, it is the responsibility of academic staff and other relevant departments within these institutions to extend empathy to the disadvantaged sectors of the student body even on matters non-academic such as finance and social adjustment problems.

In universities surveyed one of the most common characteristic of disadvantaged students is their apparent inability to deal with non-academic problems on their own. This is often caused by their inability to satisfactorily and clearly express themselves in English which is a Second Language for most ASP students and one in which they lack confidence using. Academic staff could play an important role in reducing fears of embarrassment and lack of proficiency in the language usage. In some instances, for example, the staff assist students by directing them to the correct and resourceful financial institutions such as bursary sponsors and agencies organising residence for students. It is also equally important to realise that financial deprivation is immensely intense in certain sectors of disadvantaged students to such an extent that to completely eradicate financial problems would require mobilisation of massive financial resources.

On the other hand, a simplistic approach, that regards the resolution of financial and other non-academic problems as panacea that guarantees academic success, is unacceptable. A more pragmatic approach is necessary, when dealing with such a complex issue as satisfaction of financial requirements, notions of which are often based purely on subjective criteria of the extent of deprivation. The Wits ASP's experience with attempts to resolving financial needs as precondition for successful academic support intervention

bears testimony. Students, who were considered as adequately funded to pursue academic study without financial worries, still complained that they did not have enough financial assistance, claiming that they expected bursaries to include 'pocket' money to spend on personal expenses. Therefore, the welfare approach on its own tends to be superficial in dealing with this serious matter.

It is a contentious issue to expect students, who are not proficient in the medium of an institution, to study successfully at that institution. While financial and other non-academic requirements receive attention, visible efforts should be made to address academic oriented issues such as attending language proficiency courses, so that satisfaction of both non-academic support and academic support can be complementary to one another.

At the University of the Witwatersrand the Evaluator's Report, (Agar, 1992:94) showed that, despite the increase in the number of bursaries awarded to disadvantaged students and more accommodation at their disposal, the number of students affected by these problems has not significantly diminished. About 70% of the students in University residence during 1990 were Africans who found it difficult to travel to and from the townships daily because of the long distance considering that most African townships are approximately twenty kilometres away from the University. For most students, staying in the townships has its own distinct disadvantages that are accompanied by many risks. Commuting students risk arriving late for classes due to lengthy distances to travel and leaving the township too early exposes them to physical dangers on the way especially in a city like Johannesburg with a high crime rate. They also risk suffering from exhaustion and fatigue and not able to concentrate during lectures.

Returning to the townships is problematic for a number of reasons. These include coming back early involves losing on

study time which is most convenient in university libraries and other study facilities. On the other hand returning late in the evening often results in difficulties to find transport to the townships, especially at this time of academic violence in areas surrounding Johannesburg. In many respects, as already discussed, living in the townships is not preferred by the students as an option since it does not provide conducive conditions for study. Overcrowding has been cited in many studies as the single most devastating factor to the success of students. Agar's Report (1991) stresses that African students accommodated in University residence represent nearly 40% of the total African student population at Wits. By inference approximately 60% of African students, in terms of the above description of township conditions where the vast majority of them reside, are without appropriate residence for purposes of effective study.

The Report mentions that ASP assists about three hundred mainly African students annually with finance and accommodation. This figure represents only 15% of the total African student population at Wits which leaves the overwhelming number of African students without adequate financial resources. Wits has established a sub-unit of ASP known as the environmental support section which is responsible for non-academic needs of disadvantaged students. Presently, there is a permanent establishment post at assistant director level which was filled a few years ago to oversee this function. The ASP Director's Report for the 1991 academic year portrays the brief of this post as, *inter alia*, giving advice and whatever support is available to students encountering problems ranging from financial, residence and transport to social adjustment problems, as summarised in this statement:

"... this activity is extremely valuable not only to the individual students but also for the insights it provides into all aspects of the problems facing Black students coming to the University" (Hunter, 1992:8).

At all of the universities surveyed catering to the non-academic needs of disadvantaged students has been recognised as an integral part of ASP responsibility. To this effect appropriate measures have been taken such as the establishment of a Financial Aid Office at the University of Natal. This initiative was taken in 1991 and involved the restructuring of the Bursaries' Office and creation of posts that have been filled by candidates considered to be more sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged students. The University of Cape Town has a similar arrangement. Rhodes University of Cape Town has a similar arrangement. Rhodes University incorporates the function of "environmental" support as one of the responsibilities of senior ASP personnel.

At all these universities a substantial number of financially disadvantaged students are being assisted by various donor organisations to pay fees and some of these offer them book and living allowances. It is noteworthy that some bursary sponsors, like the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), British Council Awards, and The Educational Opportunities Council (EOC) make the granting of bursaries conditional upon attending ASP courses. When bursary sponsorship is linked to participation in one or more ASP programmes, students become aware that part of the responsibility for success rests with them. They are made to realise that, if they do not make full use of the support system and subsequently fail in their courses, they risk having financial assistance withdrawn.

CRITERION 12

Faculty personnel should be involved in the construction of ASP programmes, sharing this responsibility with the staff of ASP Units.

It is important to elaborate briefly on the propositions which follow since they deal with crucial issues for the

future direction of ASP. The relationship between the student perceptions of programmes and the problems associated with ASP initiatives which are designed to meet their environmental needs i.e. non-academic support and other issues have far reaching implications for academic success. These issues are discussed in so far as they have a bearing on the role of faculty staff in the formulation of programmes.

It is almost a universal truth that some of what is taught is not necessary as proven by various studies on the subject of curriculum development (McManus, 1991:1519-1521). In his treatise the contention is that approximately 80% of factual knowledge that currently predominates curricular structures is not important for those who are expected to have it. Another related discovery is that the bulk of this massive knowledge is rapidly forgotten which is one of the indications that it is not needed by its recipients. Since faculty lecturers, to a large extent, determine what is taught it is also part of their responsibility to participate in discussions concerning the planning and designing of ASP programmes. These programmes are supposedly aimed at assisting them by making the burden of imparting knowledge much easier and more fruitful rather than a tormenting experience. They need to be represented in ASP forums for curriculum development because most of what is discussed there relates to faculty courses they teach and which ASP assists students to pass.

Perhaps through deliberations that are involved in formulating ASP programmes the existing gap between what students are expected to know and what they actually need to know can be narrowed. Another important issue to consider is that almost invariably, the decision about how students should be taught particular content is inextricably linked to a particular theory about how students learn (Wilkins, 1976:220). The involvement of faculty staff, therefore in devising better strategies for teaching as well as more

effective approaches to curriculum change, will enhance their appreciation of the differences between strategies used in teaching traditional students, that is, those who are not categorised as disadvantaged and those required in teaching disadvantaged students.

While university lecturers may welcome help in devising methodologies, which make it possible for disadvantaged students to learn with greater facility, but accusations of "unwarranted meddling" have often been made against ASP staff suggestions of what should be taught. Sometimes this is interpreted as an infringement of lecturers' academic freedom.

Concerning the relevance of what is taught to the student's entire curriculum Neame (1984:702) strongly criticises the way in which traditional curricula tend to emphasise the teaching of what students find to be irrelevant. When this happens, he contends students are inclined to adopt an attitude and mode of learning that is not adequate for the understanding of the content. This is particularly critical in relation to disadvantaged students who, during early years at university, lack adequate skills for acquiring knowledge. These students should not be burdened with huge volumes of knowledge that simply have no relevance for their study careers.

Firstly, the needs of African students who are Second Language speakers are wide ranging, complex and inter-related. It follows, thus, that academic support needs to take these factors into account when formulating programmes for them. In this regard the contribution of faculty lecturers is indispensable. Their role in curriculum development is intertwined with their responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards as well. They can offer invaluable advice in programme formulation based on their expertise and familiarity with curriculum innovation. It is unfortunate that surveyed universities are making

limited contact with faculty staff on curriculum development matters. Presumably this situation is not by design from either side, except that stringent time constraints within which both ASP and faculty lecturers presently operate make it near impossible to have participation of faculty lecturers in all curriculum development processes. But suitable arrangements are necessary to hold such joint meetings as frequently as possible.

Secondly, the academic problems encountered by underprepared students include such aspects as language, learning and study skills and processes as well as their limitations in specific subject content. This point should be seen in the context of various studies quoted above regarding the disproportionately vast gaps between what is taught and its importance, relevance and usefulness to the learner.

Thirdly, the learning styles of DET matriculated African students tend to be limited to techniques associated with rote learning and authoritarian teaching methods and text book dominated classroom experiences. Invariably these learning styles have limited effectiveness in a university environment. Faculty lecturers, once they have detected these tendencies, can discuss them with their colleagues from ASP in the suggested fora and devise strategies to combat their further use instead of nurturing these in one way or another.

In order to bridge the gap between these deficiencies in pre-university schooling and university education these poorly developed and even some ill-conceived techniques must be discouraged and where possible eradicated. It is either an overestimation of individual abilities that needs to be modified, for example students coming to university without the minimum preparation for university study in terms of learning skills, or the inflated expectations of their assignments, test and examination performance that require moderation.

Students who come from disadvantaged education backgrounds are, in a number of instances, inclined to be inhibited from expressing themselves about their own disadvantages that prevent them from coping with academic tasks. Faculty lecturers have an important part to play in exposing inadequate academic performance, so that immediate remedial steps can be taken. This responsibility belongs to them, since they come into contact with disadvantaged students almost on a daily basis. This would immensely facilitate early intervention and make it possible to deal effectively with the problem. An hypothesis can be advanced in this respect that most of the inadequacies of ASP programmes could be attributed to the delay of students in acknowledging their problems be they of an "environmental" nature, organisational, access to ASP, or curriculum-related. When this happens, invariably the delay in seeking the necessary assistance to succeed and pass courses in accordance with set academic standards occurs.

CRITERION 13

Participation in ASP should reduce attrition rates. In fact, ASP students should show relatively higher levels of academic persistence than non-participating, but equally disadvantaged, students.

The bottom line of ASP programmes is to help disadvantaged students to pass courses for which they are registered and graduate within the required time. In order to accomplish this objective, ASP staff should hold themselves accountable for efficient formulation and implementation of effective programmes. Programmes can be regarded as effective if they facilitate decrease in the failure and attrition rates among disadvantaged students.

If the failure rate has dropped, it shows that students are benefitting from programmes. It is also a sign that they will be able to complete their studies. Students, who make

progress in studies are motivated to persist with studies and complete degree programmes.

In this regard the Wits ASP has issued a statement of intent, which incorporated into its Mission Statement, that was adopted in 1986 as embracing the formal aims of ASP, states that:

"The immediate aim of ASP is to maximise academic academic performance in students disadvantaged by the inadequacy of previous educational opportunities. The concern is not only that these students pass their courses as well as possible, but that they become learners who are critical, independent, exploratory, creative and effective in processing, organising and communicating facts and ideas.

The long-term concerns of ASP staff are to increase the number of professionally qualified people from the disadvantaged sectors of our society; and to contribute its experience and insights to developments in University policy and practice that are directed towards the priorities of changing South African society" (Hunter, 1992:5).

The statement, as it stands, represents a commitment to ASP's fundamental goals of, not only increasing pass rates but also, contributing to the development of leadership skills for the benefit of underdeveloped communities. This ideal is cherished by all ASPs, although two factors determine its translation into reality. Firstly, the strategies employed to achieve objects as set out in the excerpt, largely influence the results ASP programmes. Secondly, the availability of sufficient resources for the realisation of ASP goals plays a vital role in the successful implementation of programmes. But, perhaps, even more important is the efficient and effective utilisation of available resources that guarantees the effectiveness of programmes.

At the University of the Witwatersrand, we discovered that ASP fails to serve the interests of disadvantaged students

in certain faculties, such as Architecture and Commerce, either as a result of inadequate resources or because of the lack clearer policy directives to decide how to use scarce ASP resources efficiently. In courses like Commercial Law and Accounting, disadvantaged students are experiencing one of the highest failure rates. The reason suggested in the Evaluator's Report is that available resources seem to be benefitting White students more than the primary ASP target comprising African students (Second Language speakers) as Agar (1992) observes:

"In many instances it appears as though the White students benefit more from ASP than the Black students... In fact in some instances White ASP students fared better than the mainstream course as a whole. In Business Economics, for example, the pass rate for EL1 (English First Language) speakers in ASP was 75,36%, for EL2 (English Second Language - African students) speakers 26,67% and for the course as a whole, 65,49%".

The Report also states that tutors may not have acquired adequate teaching skills to help these students. This means that proper training of tutors is essential, since they are one of ASP's most important resources for effective results of ASP intervention.

At the University of Natal the effectiveness of ASP resources was not comprehensively evaluated for the period under review (1980-1992). At the University of Cape Town and Rhodes University, evaluation had only been done on individual programmes, largely, on basis of skills tutorials, which makes it difficult to ascertain the impact of skills tutoring, without content, on pass rates. But UCT seems to have firmly embarked on faculty integrated programmes in most faculties, although the result of such form of ASP intervention have not been subjected to overall evaluation of ASP programmes concerned.

CRITERION 14

Academic Support Units should keep systematic records of academic progress made by disadvantaged students in their university careers, so that overall success rates of ASP students can be measured.

There is a clear indication that one of the great strengths of ASP at the University of the Witwatersrand is the vibrant research base on which the programme is established. Students registered on ASP are monitored on an on-going basis. Their academic records are constantly checked to assess academic progress and give feedback to the student concerned and faculty staff concerned. A database makes it possible to carry out performance appraisals and identify areas of strength and weakness in student's academic performance. It also makes it possible to engage the students in discussion of available and records results of performance, with a view to assisting the student to improve on the level of performance.

Evaluations, which are taking place on ongoing basis in departments should be co-ordinated by ASP Units. Where there is a systematic maintenance of academic records as is happening at the University of Cape Town, Rhodes University and the University of the Witwatersrand, this practice seems to be yielding valuable information. This information can be used both for purposes of policy making and/or development of ASP programmes for efficient and effective implementation. The research base at the Central Unit facilitates the compiling of annual reports on the entire spectrum of ASP activities. It also enables the unit to issue periodic reports, for example to inform the Council Steering Committee on ASP. A comprehensive account of the activities of the programmes in all faculties includes pass rates, drop-out rates and graduation rates on a comparative basis between ASP and non-ASP students but with equally

disadvantaged is being issued regularly by the Wits ASP Evaluator.

At the University of Cape Town it appears that the necessary infrastructure for monitoring ASP students' performance in their courses has been successfully installed. From 1987 annual reports are issued annually by the ASP Director. The information documented in these reports has both statistical data and qualitative descriptions of academic results. The main intention is to provide ASP stakeholders with important facts and figures in relation to academic progress of these students. Perhaps the appointment of a full-time evaluator of the programme will greatly strengthen these determined attempts to create a viable research base for the understanding of and responding to the needs of disadvantaged students in a more scientific and professional approach.

Rhodes and Natal universities have recently, starting in 1991 and 1992 respectively, appointed full-time researchers of ASP initiatives. It is expected that such appointments accompanied by restructuring of the entire ASP in these institutions will bring about opportunities for the successful implementation of the programmes. At Natal University the new ASP dispensation is making vigorous attempts to keep proper records of ASP activities at faculty and central unit levels.

CRITERION 15

Comprehensive rather than short programmes are more cost-effective and can be evaluated for efficiency easily.

As a result of considerable trial and error, ASP staff have learnt that, in order to be successful, they must design and implement programmes that facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills within a specific subject. The notion that programmes can be designed to teach general knowledge

and academic skills subject-free has been challenged since the Eighties. Students do not see the immediate relevance of, for example, general language skills or study skills outside the context of a particular subject, to which these skills can be related and applied. Yet ASP students desperately need language and study techniques of a comprehensive nature. While, in some instances, subject-specific skills are a prerequisite, the majority of ASP students require a combination of academic skills that will cover a wide range of courses. An example of a comprehensive programme is the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) offered at the Universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand. There is EAP providing a selection of critical thinking and language proficiency skills, that have been grouped into a package for academic 'survival' for various faculties in these universities, for example, Humanities, Engineering, Science and Medicine.

Thus both in terms of advancing educational benefits and student motivation to succeed, a subject-based approach is an important criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of the programmes. A similar initiative at the University of Cape Town involves extending ASP initiatives in such a way that they contribute more fully to educational success within departments. Some newly introduced programmes of a comprehensive nature have been clustered under different faculties, such as Medical-ASP (MEDASP) which is designed for non-traditional students in the Medical Faculty, referring to Africans who graduate from the DET.

In applying this programme to these disadvantaged students, the aim is to enable them to spread the regular three-year pre-clinical phase of the curriculum over four years, with intensive support and enrichment built into the early stages of the programme. A notable feature of this programme is that support and enrichment teaching is undertaken and co-ordinated by faculty course lecturers. This arrangement is expected to yield more fruitful learning opportunities

for both staff and students. The Medical programme also includes a special credit-bearing course called "Introduction to Medicine", which is designed to combine the teaching of relevant language and academic skills with course content.

The course outlined above can be described as comprehensive and bridging for specific students with special academic disadvantages. In 1991, the Faculty of Science also instituted a comprehensive restructuring of its Science Foundation Programme (SFP). The following are the features of its new format: new credit-bearing courses in Chemistry and Physics in the Second Semester and a half-credit course called "Integrated Science". The latter combines coverage of selected Science topics with the teaching of language and academic skills, related to the study of Science. In addition to the Introductory Course in Mathematics, which is offered by the ASP staff, these comprehensive courses are intended to enable students, who participate in the SFP, to gain up to two full course credits in their First Year.

The University of Natal following similar trends at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand has, since 1990, embarked on designing a comprehensive type of programme for its under-prepared students. The only difference lies in the scope and focus of the programmes. The University of Natal has chosen to concentrate on developing programmes in the Faculties of Commerce and Science. The credit-bearing arrangement in these Faculties makes it possible for students to gain a maximum of two full credits in their First Year of study. All academic support and enrichment components of the programme, such as teaching English as a Second Language and academic skills are the responsibility of ASP staff.

Students who are registered in either of these two programmes (EMU and SFP) reduce their curriculum load to accommodate the 'bridging' aspects of the programme. The

implication of this arrangement is that the degree programme is extended over four years instead of three years. As has already been indicated, in the first year intensive academic and language skills support is offered in expectation that students will be able to transfer and use these in their subsequent years of study for a B.Com. or B.Sc. degree.

CRITERION 16

Faculties should, perhaps, be encouraged to also keep records of their students participating in ASP for periodic assessment of variations in their academic performance. In this way individual academic progress can be recorded and academic persistence ascertained.

Although the ASP Central Unit deals with all faculties on matters related to academic support, it is not the only structure that is responsible for all ASP activities. Some departments also provide academic assistance on basis, sometimes of individual initiative. These departments often make provision from their own resources in order to execute academic support functions.

In universities surveyed, maintenance of records on academic support seems to be decentralised. The Central Unit keep mainly records of ASP programmes, which are offered by ASP staff and individual staff members of faculties keep their own departmental records.

At the University of the Witwatersrand, since the responsibility for the evaluation of all ASP programmes within the University rests with the Central unit, most records are kept there. Each faculty co-ordinator is then responsible for the co-ordination of record keeping systems. In 1991 funding was obtained for at least seven faculty co-ordinator posts at senior lecturer level. Until these posts are filled, and possibly even thereafter, tutors in these posts are envisaged as continuing to hold

responsibility for monitoring academic progress in respect of their students.

At the University of Cape Town records of ASP students are kept by both the departmental tutors and central unit personnel. Departmental tutors are expected to keep records of completed tasks and enter marks obtained by their students. Test scores include examination mark schedules in each academic record of an ASP student and are kept by tutors offering the course. However, there are various approaches to keeping students records, therefore, faculties and departments use the method that suit their needs.

At the University of Natal departments have tutors who are responsible for some form of record-keeping relating to completed assignments, test scores and examination results. Past experience at this University shows that there was a serious lack in the of co-ordination of ASP activities as a whole, which led to inadequate record-keeping systems. But the reorganisation of ASP services may result in a more efficient record-keeping system. The fact that now a recently a researcher has been appointed, indicates a change of approach in this respect.

At Rhodes University records for ASP students are kept at the Central Unit. Generally, these records are limited to ASP skills courses and given no indication of how students are doing in other courses particularly those on which they are expected to apply acquired skills. Therefore, the ASP success rates cannot be measured using the existing record-keeping systems. As attempts are still underway for the implementation of the faculty integrated model, the decentralisation of records maintenance is envisaged with the attainment of this objective.

CRITERION 17

ASP staff and faculty staff should regularly hold joint meetings with ASP students in attendance, to review academic performance of students, evaluate progress in their studies and plan new strategies to overcome difficulties, which are encountered.

As the numbers of underprepared students increase both Black and White, it is inevitable that these groups are going to present substantial problems that will have to be resolved through consultations with all interested parties, including students also from faculty lecturers and students as well. It is postulated in this discourse that the increase in African students at these institutions may arise from the fast spreading notion that some predominantly Black tertiary institutions, especially universities, are relatively not sufficiently endowed with financial resources to be able to provide student loans and enough bursaries for most socio-economically disadvantaged African students, while:

"The resources that HWUs (predominantly White universities) have accumulated are quite impressive as well, largely through preferential funding from the state as well as the private sector. However, for the majority of universities, primarily the HBUs (predominantly Black universities), funding has been maintained at a low level compared to the HWUs. To illustrate, during 1989, in the Western Cape region, UWC's (University of the Western Cape's) enrollment was 88% of UCT's (University of Cape Town's) and 86% of Stellenbosch's but its funds were only 36% of UCT's and 37% of Stellenbosch's. This disparity between HWUs and HBUs is consistent for the rest of the country as well" (Baijnath, 1992:3).

On the institutional front both ASP and faculty staff have to come to terms with the reality that African students whose schooling background has deteriorated sharply in the last decade are increasing in numbers and may be in the

majority within the next decade. Therefore contingency plans, must be made to more effectively deal with the deficiencies already mentioned through coherent strategies. One of these is to form joint "task forces" comprising ASP staff, faculty staff, and the students concerned. Ideally, faculty relevant faculty staff (responsible for teaching a particular course to be discussed at the meeting) relevant ASP staff responsible for tutoring in a particular course to be reviewed) and ASP students participating in the course to be reviewed should attend such a meeting) and. For example, records of proceedings should be kept in terms of attendance, issues discussed and resolutions reached and possible follow-up action agreed upon.

CRITERION 18

Encouraging much closer co-operation between ASP Units and Counselling Centres would, perhaps, resolve problems of inappropriate curriculum choice and unnecessary drop-out as a consequence of inadequate curriculum as well as career counselling.

There are varying degrees of institutional commitment to linkage between ASP units and counselling and other support units. It appears that what co-operation exists is confined to the expectation that ASP staff should refer all curriculum and career counselling issues to the Student Counselling centre. This is the function which Student Counselling Centres (SCCs) have performed and for which they have been established for a long time in almost all universities.

These centres do not seem to experience major problems dealing with students whose educational backgrounds have not been disadvantaged by inadequate schooling. Appropriate training in the skills needed to reach and assist disadvantaged students is necessary. It is the writer's belief that acquisition of knowledge about disadvantaged

students and developing sensitivity to their special problems on the part of SCC staff can contribute significantly to solving a number of these problems. For example, social adjustment problems have been identified, in the course of this study, as one of the negative factors causing the delay in students acknowledging the need for academic support. The role of student counselling centres involves assisting students with their social adjustment difficulties so that they can overcome these and be able to concentrate on their studies.

Surveyed universities have revealed that SCCs have minimum contact with ASP students and other support or non-academic divisions. It is possible that the relative isolation of ASP units has contributed to the lack of sufficient liaison with such centres and divisions. Obviously ASP, because of its marginal status within the university community, lacks the infrastructure and resources to initiate contact in order to be in a position to inform students where to go for what services.

This issue requires much closer co-operation between ASP and other units and the SCC in particular so that disadvantaged students visiting them for assistance can be accommodated. This does not suggest that these students should be given preferential treatment over others, but merely indicates dangers of ignoring the importance of lacing for greater co-operation between ASP and other centres. For this purpose mere referrals are not adequate as a means to assist the students. Just as models have been deliberated for ASP/faculty staff co-operation it is through a similar process that long and lasting liaison will be established with other centres. It is the responsibility of individual ASP units to devise models for this purpose.

None of the universities surveyed reported on this aspect of ASP work in relation to student development. All universities are urged to consider, identifying areas of

need for ASP students and formulating action plans to meet the needs of students.

CRITERION 19

Pastoral guidance for ASP students by selected staff in a faculty may be of advantage to ASP students.

In the early Eighties there was an extremely high staff turnover in ASPs. This occurrence prevented any meaningful progress in the work of ASP. Among the projects that were most severely affected by the lack of sufficient personnel to engage in ASP projects was pastoral guidance.

It is extremely difficult for ASP to operate under the present constraints of insufficient human resources as portrayed in this analysis.

CRITERION 20

Mandatory training and preparation of high standards is long overdue for all ASP staff, through a well formulated and properly structured diploma course.

Formal training for ASP staff has been ignored for a very long at the high risk of inefficiency in the functioning of ASP. This unavoidably has resulted in ineffectiveness of ASP programmes. When assessing staff performance in her annual Report, Jefferay (1990:8) tells how one tutor was dismayed by the lack of appropriate training for ASP work, thus:

"we are not trained in the skills areas in which students require assistance. Part time posts do not allow time for research and development. Without specialist input and training ASP cannot be expected to do the work the funders believe we are doing."

At Rhodes that is how serious the situation has become and there is not much that is happening to give hope to tutors, whose frustrations are exacerbated by the fact that those,

who are supposed to conduct staff development workshops have no sufficient knowledge of the task, as the tutor explains:

"Our trainers', however, need on-going training themselves. The materials need to be rewritten or adapted and the teaching methodology researched" (ibid.:8).

Regarding the situation at the University of the Witwatersrand, Hunter emphasises that ASP staffing problems cannot be satisfactorily resolved without establishment funding for some posts:

"There continues to be the problem, noted in the proceeding of our 1984 conference, of an insufficient number of permanent established posts for ASP. As was stated last year, 'the success of any distinct professional work requires that a substantial proportion of its workers (even if a minority) regard it as their main long-term professional concern. Without this, the work in question will come to suffer from a lack of accumulation and articulation of experience, insight and skill, a lack of leadership, and the danger of perpetual amateurism. This implies that each ASP team include a substantial number of permanent posts and that some of the posts be at a senior rank.' Project funding based on short-term external donations is an understandable way of getting a new venture started, but the prolonged insecurity entailed for staff positions is destructive to the work of the programme. In the end the programme will be able to operate appropriately only when most of the posts are on the university establishment"
(Hunter, 1986).

The above statement underscores the concern that, training temporarily appointed staff would be a waste of resources in view of the high turnover among such a category of ASP staff. Hence Hunter urges the increase of staff appointments on university establishment posts. Both the contractual nature of ASP posts and the lack of appropriate incentives and benefits of permanent posts have been cited, in the course of this study, as major reasons for occurrence of

rapid staff turnover. Other staffing problems encountered include inadequate experience for the job and lack of the necessary skills to cope with the ever increasing work pressures.

In attempting to depict the broad context within which the need for formal training of ASP staff occurs, Agar and Murray (1991:433) stress the importance of staff development through distance education:

"This development is based on the belief that academics need some form of teacher training, but that it is not feasible to provide this in every university. A solution is for selected universities to develop expertise in this field and to teach through the distance mode. Examples of this are Lewis Elton's course at the University of Surrey and Lee Anderson's at the University of New South Wales... While academic development entails the development of both staff and students, it also entails a greater emphasis on staff development than has been the case in the past."

Universities participating in this study spent most of the time allocated to staff development in research projects on selected areas of special interest to the programme. Regularly workshops are organised, in which both ASP staff and faculty staff participate. But these workshops seldom go beyond issues relating to the immediate work environment. Chapter 4 provides details of ways in which an ASP staff training programme could be structured for all levels of staff, that is, tutors, co-ordinators and top management.

CRITERION 21

Sponsors of ASP programmes and potential employers should be brought in to advise on relevance of programmes for employment prospects of ASP graduates.

It is not possible for ASP staff to ascertain all the skills and types of knowledge required by employers and sponsors.

Therefore, it is necessary to organise consultative sessions, in which the wishes of employers' agencies and funders can be discussed in term of their expectations of expertise from students. Some ASP initiatives are sponsored by private companies and bog corporations which award bursaries on the basis of what they regard as priority fields of study. In this sense bursary sponsors, have vested interests in the success of their bursary holders. In some fields of study such as engineering and science the granting of bursaries is made conditional on terms of service contract, which means that the bursary holder signs a contract agreeing to work for a duration equivalent to the period holding the bursary. Most public sector scholarships have a service contract attached. Students generally find these service-linked scholarships particularly attractive since they provide employment immediately on completion of studies.

Most universities surveyed have reported participation of ASP staff in the administration of bursaries, which are awarded on condition that the students is registered for a certain number of ASP courses. These bursaries often specify priority fields of study for which funding is made available, such as Engineering, Commerce, Science, Public Administration and Labour Relations. There is a growing awareness in ASP circles that outside groups should be recognised as partners in the interests of the programme and future careers of the students.

From ASP reports it appears that the corporate sector got involved in the selection process for bursary candidates in which the sponsor pre-determined degree programmes for which bursaries could be granted and some arrangements are made for internships and/or vacation employment. The selection process encompasses a wide range of screening procedures to find suitable candidates for bursaries. At the University of Natal it is the corporate sector that provides funding for the Bridging Year Programme in the Faculties of Science,

Engineering and Commerce. Bursary sponsors normally participate in the selection process for ASP students. ASP in all universities surveyed (University of Natal, Rhodes University, University of the Witwatersrand, and University of Cape Town) jointly organised selection procedures and usually was represented during interviews.

In recognition of the important role of the corporate sector in nurturing ASP students through sponsorship, and possible future involvement as potential employers bursary sponsors are indeed partners with other important stakeholders in ASP. As originally stated ASP programmes were, in the first place conceived by the corporate sector in an effort to address the skilled manpower needs of the country which could not be satisfied only by the White sector of the population.

CRITERION 22

The establishment of programmes that are not specifically aimed at a particular race group.

The ASP enterprise encounters an enormous challenge from perceptions of its reality. Within the context of a racially divided student body, any attempt by a university to institute a programme that singles out a particular race group as its target is likely to be perceived in a negative light. Perceptions are extremely powerful in determining the legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of programmes.

ASP students at all universities surveyed have shown, in varying degrees, resentment towards programmes that target only African or Black students. The ASP Evaluator at the University of the Witwatersrand has been researching perceptions of Black and, particularly African students towards programmes, that appeared to be exclusively designed for them. Their attitudes are negative, in the sense that

respondents consistently opposed such programmes (Agar, 1992:97).

On the other hand, it becomes a difficult task for ASP staff to prescribe procedure for remediation of academic disadvantages if students are inclined to construe such action as discriminatory practice. While the aim of ASP programmes is to help students to attain academic qualifications, in some instances, when a student(s) belonging to the African race group, for example, are advised to attend ASP courses ASP staff are accused of paternalism. A racially homogeneous class does not necessarily suggest racism or a condescending attitude on the part of programmes staff. On the contrary, a staff invites a student to an ASP course because of concern for academic excellence and shows special interest in a successful academic career of the student concerned.

While racially heterogeneous classes provide a healthy learning environment, especially, for people, who have lived in a racially divided society for a long time, it is understandable that it is not always possible for ASP staff or anyone else, for that matter, to change the racial composition of classes as they wish, especially, at university. To suggest otherwise would be like refusing medical help, because one is singled out for it. Medical help is administered not because someone belongs to a particular race group, but to cure the illness. Similarly, if students protest against participating in intensive ASP courses insisting on attending a general academic skills programmes, which is not suited for a specific disadvantage(s).

At the predominantly White universities in South Africa, the decision-makers require ASP to reconcile the demand to raise the numbers of Black students on university campuses and the importance of maintaining the highest possible academic standards. Up until recent years the under-prepared students

were mainly Black comprising African, Indian and Coloured race groups. Thus partly for this reason and also to increase numbers of trained manpower Black people and specifically African students were identified as the primary target group for academic support activity. At both predominantly Black and predominantly White universities decision-makers have tended to be dependent on ASP initiatives to identify staff and student requirements to cope with the problem of under-preparedness for university study. In attempting to redress the backlog in higher education for the Africans, massive efforts have been concentrated on assisting African students to succeed at University to the extent that, at times, the educational needs of other race groups were totally disregarded. Academics and decision-makers at universities believed that the unequal distribution of educational resources for the various racial groups and the separate education systems in South Africa did not, generally, prepare these students for study at tertiary institutions and that, therefore, some form of rationalisation of ASP resources was necessary for maximum benefit to be derived from the programmes.

The present position, however, suggests that others coming out of more privileged education systems that is White and the majority of Indian students should be considered for participation in ASP on basis of merit and peculiarities of their educational background. At the University of the Witwatersrand the racially heterogeneous grouping of students in academic support classes is now official ASP policy. Although Africans have always been a dominant group in these classes, most ASP intakes comprise of racially mixed groupings as explained in the recently published article, "the ideal level of mix of these groups of students in one tutorial needed both educational and political consideration" (ibid.:97).

The University of the Witwatersrand, although initially gave priority to students who graduated from the DET since it

regarded that group as the most educationally and socio-economically disadvantaged and at high-risk category to fail and be excluded from the university, students from other ethnic groups (Coloured and Indians) who volunteered for tutorials were considered as potential ASP students if they had not satisfactorily completed a particular subject at school level for which they had to be registered at the University.

The ASP at this University inevitably finds racially integrated tutorials ideal as a result of ethnic breadth of its clientele. Nonetheless, there are instances in which either tutorials consist entirely of African students or predominantly White English-speaking students.

CRITERION 23

It is essential to guard against the lowering of entry levels far below realistic university entrance requirements.

Lowering university entry requirements could seriously jeopardize the successful implementation of programmes and possibly set a precedent for lowering exit standards which would negatively affect the credibility of universities and tertiary institutions concerned. Thus, it is absolutely important to Guard against lowering Entrance Requirements by Whatever Means, to such an Extent that Students who cannot Benefit from ASP, in whatever Form and Content, are Admitted.

In view of the rapid socio-political changes in the macro-environment of education, the tertiary education sector still has to contend with more formidable challenges from students in search of post-secondary educational opportunities. In July 1991 the Department of National Education announced its Education Renewal Strategy, which is a document aimed at, among other things, providing for the useful utilisation of the talent and potential of

matriculants. It suggests that many school leavers, from the separate education systems for the different race groups, are inclined to enter the tertiary sector of education, regardless of their academic status. The Document also warns that, unless concerted efforts are made to render academic support to these school leavers who are not adequately prepared for tertiary education, academic standards could be in jeopardy.

As the numbers of under-prepared students entering institutions of higher education increase, the more difficult will be the task of determining criteria to guide academic standards. The major difficulties for ASP in particular have already manifested themselves and these are most likely to continue into the future. The recognition of these difficulties is based on several assumptions. One of them is that, the increasing numbers of students requiring access to predominantly White universities and other tertiary institutions and the increase in under-prepared students, will persist for some time or even intensify. The educational disadvantages of students are compounded by the fact that most of them have to study through a language medium, which is a Second or Third Language for them. Present ASP programmes provide strategies for overcoming this problem, but it is still too early, in some instances, to determine the success rate of the interventions. One thing is certain, though, namely, that the academic progress of ASP students is still, to a large extent, hindered by the lack of adequate skills in the use of the English language.

Another obstacle arises from ever increasing pressures exerted on already meagre ASP infra-structural and financial resources. The Government has been under-funding institutions with ASP centres for a prolonged period which has left some of the programmes in a parlous state. Although predominantly White universities with ASP units have continued to operate despite the hostile government subsidy formula as revised in 1986. The hostile attitude of the

State (Race Relations Survey, Part 2, 1986:463) has made it impossible to provide adequate ASP facilities on a scale large enough to make a significant impact on student learning on the short term.

Undoubtedly, some departments and academics at predominantly White universities, in particular, are striving for the improvement and maintenance of high academic standards. Many of these have developed sound international reputations in the field of research. These universities have attracted a number of renowned scholars and researchers from abroad and locally. As part of their tradition, these universities, including those surveyed for this study, have maintained stringent selection procedures in an attempt to select the best school leavers to preserve high academic standards. In doing so universities have aligned themselves with elitist conceptions of standards (Baijnath, 1992:3) and, to some degree with more or less reference to some than others, overlooked the fact that they are accountable to society at large. Since they are sustained by public funds it is incumbent on them to serve the interests of the public and not just a select few.

It has been stressed, throughout the previous chapters, that expanding the pool of well educated people is a primary concern. Every effort should be utilised to ensure that ASP graduates people do become productive citizens in order to prevent the perpetuation of existing inequalities. There is little doubt that the overwhelming majority of South African universities have realised that equity of access, rather than stringent selection procedures to maintain standards of excellence should be a dominant influence on admission policies, especially at predominantly White universities. It can be argued quite strongly that a conceptualization of academic standards based on equity of access does not necessarily mean abandonment of the values associated with academic excellence and high academic standards.

In the United States arguments have been raised whether it is possible to maintain academic excellence, while providing for equity of access. This argument is based, unfortunately on two fallacious assumptions, namely that the historically disadvantaged groups in the United States of America are mainly of Afro-American extraction and belong to the under-privileged socio-economic sector of society. Secondly, the assumption has been that, in the American context, the concepts of high academic standards and excellence and equity of access, are mutually exclusive. The fact of the matter is that the great majority of students who are considered to be poorly endowed with academic potential, cannot be indefinitely neglected forever. Those with the necessary potential to succeed at any tertiary institution should enjoy their inalienable right to contest a place in any tertiary institution. Perhaps with relevance for the South African situation, N. Surdarkasa depicts the deteriorating situation in the overall educational performance of under-prepared students when he says:

"Our failure to perceive this inescapable link between excellence and equity has led to us to adopt ineffective strategies for dealing with the national problem of declining educational performance. Most strategies for improving educational outcomes have focused on developing effective "weeding out" processes: some that would weed out students who presumably cannot learn; others that would weed out teachers who presumably cannot teach"
(Sudarkasa, 1988:25).

The underlying message of this extract is that entry requirements, that discriminate against the majority of the people, distance the institution from majority struggles and, by implication, can be regarded as tantamount to perpetuating existing inequalities. At the University of Natal an initiative was launched in 1988, through a student selection programme known as Teach-Test-Teach (TTT) with the aim of establishing

"a dynamic assessment procedure as an alternative to the current system of admissions based on matriculation results" (Philpott, 1989:6).

TTT represents an attempt to identify academic potential in students who, otherwise, would have been prevented from admission to the University on the basis of inadequate "points score". In this sense TTT intends to assist students in possession of a Matriculation Exemption, such as aggregate-E symbol from DET, to gain admission to a university. This alternative selection procedure is based on the assumption that students, who have attained University Exemption with any symbol, qualify for university entrance, without approved through the "points system" as determined by faculties, as a selection technique. However, those who are involved in co-ordinating the TTT Programme have cautioned that, although it serves as "a vehicle for selection with the students who performed best at the time of testing being selected, it was primarily an educational intervention whose end was not testing but teaching". (ibid). In its existing form the Programme seems to pursue its objectives consistently and has the potential to focus the attention of university selection processes away from the discredited DET Matriculation symbols, which have been proved to bear little or no relevance, whatsoever, to potential or talent for university study.

The University of Cape Town has a similar alternative admissions programme, which was initiated by the Academic Planning Committee in 1988. It is known as the Alternative Admissions Research Project (AARP). Its responsibility is to devise and implement a selection testing procedure, which is designed to identify disadvantaged Black students who, otherwise, cannot be admitted to the University of Cape Town. In 1990, AARP was fully incorporated into the organisational structure of ASP and, as such, is in the position to advance the goals to which equity of access is dedicated. The intention of the programme is

"to give DET matriculants an opportunity, outside the controversial DET examination system, to demonstrate their potential and improve their chances of admission at the University of Cape Town" (Scott, 1991:11).

Although in principle, equity of access requires unconditional endorsement by tertiary institutions and ASP must be considered, identified and funded as a separate initiative with its own existence. It will be possible, then, to set up accounting systems to cater for these on independent basis. For it is unethical to raise funds under the pretext of assisting disadvantaged students to pass and graduate within the minimum time required and divert these, once they are obtained, for other purposes.

At Rhodes University there is extensive involvement of the Academic Skills Programme in the IKhonco (Chain) and other community outreach projects which have no direct relation to the short to medium term goals of ASP. Nevertheless, in terms of aims and objectives these projects can make a vital contribution to the educational upliftment of the neighbouring disadvantaged Black communities. Its aim is to assist Standard Nine and Ten pupils in nearby schools to cope with their Matriculation subjects and so pass their final examinations. Other projects similar to the aim of IKhonco include the Grahamstown Tertiary Education Bridging Project (GRATEP), which focuses on improving Matric symbols of part-time students. The big challenge of these projects lies in their permanence and sustainability, meaning that enough resources should be mobilised to ensure that they do not have to rely on funds and ASP staff for their continued existence.

There can be no doubt that these projects have arisen out of necessity and would require all the nurturing needed to develop them so that they accomplish their intended goals.

CRITERION 24

Equalizing competitive abilities of students by always ensuring that ASP programmes assist them to cope in fulfilling requirements for university study (increasing disadvantaged students' pass rates and graduation rates) through the faculty integration model which seeks to transform curricular structures, teaching approaches and methods at micro-level, and institutional policies at a macro-level. In this way, through research and regular evaluation, ASP will remain flexible and amenable to change as the context of ASP programmes alters.

Even in the most positive political and economic scenario, the enormous backlog in education and socio-economic inequalities, caused by apartheid, would take some time to disappear. Therefore, it is argued in this dissertation that a clear distinction cannot be drawn between the resolution of politically-oriented problems and the attainment of desirable educational goals, based on acceptable academic standards. In other words, a new political dispensation for the country will not necessarily eradicate all the ills and deficiencies of our society. Within this framework is the recognition that, perhaps, with the liberalisation of the political process in the Country and greater articulation of the political system with individual rights, more people will make increasing demands on the system of higher education. In such circumstances, universities and other tertiary institutions require unsurpassed tenacity and capacity for absorption of increased numbers of underprepared students from different educational backgrounds and bringing with them varied levels of preparation for tertiary education.

This is the reason for respondents saying in questionnaires and during interviews that ASP programmes would be needed for a considerable time to come, perhaps, even more intensely than ever before, in view of the further

deterioration of standards in secondary schooling. The disparities, as identified in education, are perceived as likely to continue for many years. Some respondents have stressed the point that it will take at least twelve more years, after the installation of a democratic government, to eliminate the backlog under the present dispensation. It seems to be the fact that, in the long term, it will be the teaching fraternity that will have to bear responsibility for the equalisation of educational standards for all. Saunders (1992) maintains that many institutions in South Africa, especially predominantly White English-medium universities would claim to subscribe to the two characteristics of standards: one in terms of selection, a high standard of expectation from the student upon entry. This standard is determined by a requirement to demonstrate talent or ability and rigorous demands during the course of study. The other characteristic is based on the high standard of education in terms of the provision of resources by the institution, which are determined by the quality of the teaching and learning context. Obviously these characteristics should not be regarded as mutually exclusive.

While the equalisation of standards for students irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed is indispensable to real educational achievement, it must be acknowledged that it would take longer than twelve years to completely upgrade the quality of the teaching force, specifically with reference to the first characterization of academic standards. This realization has immense implications for ASP. It primarily means that programmes will constantly be faced with challenges arising from changing circumstances in the macro-environment surrounding education.

It is partly for this reason that programmes have to be constantly monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure that they continuously and vigorously address the current imbalances of competitive abilities. On the other hand such

evaluation would provide a mechanism for bringing within focus any changes that occur within their context and may have impact on the manner in which they are constituted and operated. For example, the faculty-integrated model apparently is the most favoured by the universities and more likely to show the way forward for ASP practice. As an alternative route to the extra-curricular model, it is relatively untested and has not been sufficiently researched to assess the kind of effect it has on the efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes. However, surveyed institutions remain confident that it has an important role in the re-formulation and restructuring of programmes. In these institutions efforts are already undertaken to measure the medium to long term significance of this model for the improvement of ASP performance to attainment of short-term and long-term goals of ASP intervention.

Universities surveyed have not reported on this aspect of ASP function. ASPs, at the present moment are making sterling efforts to increase pass rates and Programme staff have not so far concerned themselves with ways of determining how ASP can undergo fundamental transformation in terms of withdrawal or integration into faculties completely.

Summary

In this Chapter the data analysis has revealed several important aspects for the successful implementation of ASP. In this regard Hofmeyer (1988) believes that institutions are "in a state of equilibrium" while they can keep a balance between forces for change and forces for maintaining the status quo. In the last decade education has gone through one of the most devastating turmoils its history in South Africa. Foresight on the part of some tertiary institutions, particularly predominantly White universities, enabled them to identify and evaluate the various forces, that is, those advocating change and those resisting it. The

inauguration of ASP in these universities, more than ten years ago, represented a pro-active approach to change as Hofmeyer (ibid.) explains: "The pro-active view of change is that one can manage change and move the organisation or institution in a particular direction in response to an assessment of what is needed."

What happened during this inaugural phase of ASP was the recognition of the fact that the presence of significant numbers of African students whose failure and drop-out rates were extraordinarily high had become a serious problem and something had to be done urgently. ASP was considered the solution but how to implement it was still to be decided. Apparently faculty staff were not well equipped for the situation they faced. Therefore ASP had to employ staff who could devise a framework for providing academic support. The appropriate approach according to the model proposed by Entwistle (1981) for the teaching/learning process is embodied in the recognition that there are interrelated features that interact in a myriad of variables which make it a complex process indeed.

Although Entwistle's model is by no means capable to always provide neat solutions, it offers reasonable suggestions to begin into any depth the interrelated features of the teaching/learning process. Instead of concentrating on both the learner and the teacher ASP staff short-circuited the procedure by focusing solely on the deficiencies of the student since the intention was to provide academic support for the students with educational deficiencies. Once needs analysis was completed cognitive processes were explored so that strategies and skills necessary to equip the students could be identified. Consequently, all other dynamics that have a potential influence in the Teaching/learning process were ignored through such over-simplification of the framework. This resulted in the predominance of one set of features, namely, those disadvantages found in the student. Thus, the problem was firmly located with the student. It is

vital to re-assess this aspect of the ASP context, since it is the most contributing factor to the marginalisation of ASP because this framework allowed a significant number of assumptions to emerge. For example, it resulted in the withdrawal of faculty staff from playing a central role in ASP and made it easy to locate academic support outside faculties.

Arising from the inappropriate ASP framework, which has country-wide application to this day, there is an overabundance of inappropriate models for providing ASP. In this thesis the main thrust of the debate focuses finding and developing an alternative framework. Most probably, with the implementation of the criteria elicited from the survey of selected predominantly White universities, the reversal of the ominous trend originating from the deficit model based upon the old framework will be achieved. Until recently, in some institutions beginning in the last Eighties and in others in the early Nineties, the deficit model (emphasising student deficiencies exclusively) has been on the ascendancy. ASP initiatives have been and in certain cases continue to be invaded by it to repletion. This situation can be corrected.

All the criteria used in the data analysis deal with this problem in one way or another. For example, regarding the issue of a "learner-centred" approach Brumfit (1984) refers to what he calls "principled intervention" in the learning process as a way to encourage "self-direction" so that students become capable and independent learners. Self-direction is merely a strategy based on the student-centred approach in the teaching/learning process. It requires starting from the position of the students in terms of their perceptions of what they would like to know, how they think they learn and what they think they already know.

Torbert, (1978:109-135) mentions "liberating structures" which are instrumental in facilitating the learning process based on self-direction. He defines these as "the characteristics of the organisation of educational settings which enhance student self-direction." However a student-centred approach cannot be operated without increasing the level of the responsibility of students for what they learn. In this connection Gremmo and Abe (1985:246) refer to the change in the role of the teacher from "the one who does things" to "the one who helps other people do them". These insights have enormous implications for the "infusion" model meaning a faculty-based model of academic support. Since this model is based on the new ASP framework which Hunter (1984:5) aptly describes as involving more than the successful adjustment of students to the university, but rather: implies an adjustment not simply by the students to the University, but of the University to the students", it has plentiful ramifications for the ASP system.

If the faculty-integration model is the future ASP route, it means that joint strategies should be devised for planning, designing and implementation of the programmes including their evaluation. In this regard Criterion twenty-two extends the confines of ASP decision-making to include regular consultation with outside employment agencies and the corporate sector through all the levels of ASP intervention. In their survey of students' perceptions of ASP at the University of the Witwatersrand Agar and Mashishi stress that: "ASP's credibility is increased when it is integrated into particular departments, particularly where departmental members are directly involved in ASP." As revealed in the analysis ASPs in the surveyed universities are still experiencing inadequacies to be transformed.

The change from the old ASP framework involves a change in perspective, in the first place. In other words, it is individuals who need to accept that it is necessary to move

to the other framework which emphasises faculty as well as ASP responsibility for faculty integration to take place. It must be hastened to stress that the twenty-two criteria remain inoperable without the transformation process from the old framework with its inefficient model because it relies on the resources that cannot be sufficiently obtained such as enough tutors for increasing numbers of underprepared students.

Rogers (1969:162) reminds us that the available human resources in the faculties have the capacity to deal with the academic support needs of the students if a different perspective as suggested by Gremmo and Abe above is adopted. The increasing numbers of students requiring academic support should not be threatening to either ASP lecturers or faculty lecturers. Through what Rogers refers to as "responsible participation in the learning process students participate as equals with a voice to be heard and opinions to be sought and respected. The teachers role becomes one creating a "safe, non-threatening environment" in which they may operate.

In the next Chapter a synoptic view of the already developed criteria further illuminates their tremendous significance for the practical implementation of the programmes. This involves the transformation of ASPs from being viewed as high risk area of investment by the funders, which is a view some donor agencies have, and as ineffective and irrelevant by the students into a viable enterprise worth all their investment in order to succeed. The organisational development approach is entrenched in the following Chapter. This means that the main focus of the discussion concentrates on efficient and effective use of resources in pursuit of ASP goals and accomplishing its mission.

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CHAPTER 6

Strategies for evaluation of ASP as a system and the future role of academic development intervention

6.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter an analysis of data collected from the universities participating in the Study has been presented. A total number of twenty-four Criteria that were formulated in Chapter 4, have been further developed and applied to data collected from these universities. The relevance of the Criteria for the evaluation of ASP programmes has been demonstrated by not only using the validation process in which they have been applied on the information collected from surveyed universities, that is, the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Natal, Rhodes University, and the University of Cape Town, but also by indicating how the Criteria can assist in resolving ASP problems in the future. The faculty-integration model, which is intended to facilitate resolution of ASP problems requires an appropriate strategy for its practical application in the work situation. The systems approach provides the most suitable framework for analysis of the perception, prevailing among ASP stakeholders, that ASP success depends, to a large extent, on co-operation and order in its delivery mode and system.

6.2 Systems theoretical approach

The contention of this dissertation is that the faculty-integration model cannot be achieved without viewing ASP as a system whose main participants are ASP and faculty staff with their organisational hierarchies, students, and sponsors. This tripartite structure suggests that the achievement of ASP goals can be optimised by the on-going consultation process between these main actors in the system within its proper context. The systems

theoretical framework permits understanding of ASP enterprise as an abstraction that is embedded in a particular context. In this sense, analysis of the ASP phenomenon can be pursued systematically, logically and rationally when it takes into account the tripartite relationship of the parties involved.

The application of the systems approach proceeds from similar terms as its conceptualisation by Dunlop (1958:5) for the purposes of theoretical analysis of employment relationships. This approach maintains that the effectiveness and efficiency of the system can be ensured by proper co-ordination of the various components of the ASP system. These include participants (actors) in the system, the context of ASP, rules and processes for the regulation of the interaction between the participants including agreement on methods and procedures of evaluation, and the ideology of ASP meaning a set of values which is shared by the various actors, and which thus results in the integration of the ASP system. However, this does not mean a utopian situation in which disagreement is non-existent. On the contrary, the three main participants may not necessarily agree on everything, implying that each party has its own ideology and interests and that these may be widely divergent. In this regard, Dunlop (ibid:17) cautions that the important prerequisite for an integrated system is that:

"... these ideologies be sufficiently compatible and consistent to permit a common set of ideas which recognise an acceptable role for each actor"

6.3 Future possibilities for ASP in South Africa

Throughout the evaluation process, standards for the measurement of the successful formulation and implementation of ASP programmes have, through the validation procedure,

remained focused on efficiency and effectiveness of delivery and service.

But, as indicated earlier, the future possibilities for ASP development have to be viewed against the background of some of the limitations of the scope of this Study. For example, it is not possible at this stage to draw general inferences that these Criteria can be applied universally outside the parameters of this dissertation. But it can be stated that, when applied in the evaluation of the performance of ASP programmes in a tertiary institution, in which the following characteristics prevailed in similar proportions: existence of institutional factors responsible for disadvantages in the academic environment, socio-economic conditions of disadvantaged students, appropriate infrastructure and/or deficiencies in ASP resources, the outcome of evaluation would not be significantly different from the findings emerging from the South African context, which is evaluated in Chapter 5.

Another limitation of the Study suggests that it cannot be claimed that these Criteria enjoy equal legitimacy in all universities hosting ASP programmes in South Africa. Each ASP context has its unique characteristics and requirements. As a consequence, Criteria can be confidently applied, once an in-depth analysis of the dynamics and processes within which academic development programmes and activities occur, has been completed.

The outlined Criteria were primarily developed as investigative instruments to understand more clearly the way in which present ASP programmes are formulated and implemented in universities surveyed. They are also intended to provide the ground-plan for the construction and successful implementation of existing as well as future academic development programmes. The remaining task is to provide a framework within which future academic development programmes can be launched and successfully implemented

against the background of existing possibilities and inadequacies of the present ASP dispensation in universities hosting ASP programmes.

In this Chapter, different scenarios are depicted in which a given set or group of Criteria severally or individually, have relevance for a particular purpose. For example, assessing the effectiveness of extra-tutorials in improving the pass rates and graduation rates of disadvantaged students and evaluation of procedures for the implementation of ASP programmes have different sets of Criteria. Each scenario represents an essential variable in both the implementation process and duration of the programme. For example, staff development has its own constituency with specific requirements arising from its peculiar needs, covering a wide range of issues, such as selection and preparation of tutors for placement in suitable positions. Taking these factors into consideration when appointments are made plays a crucial role in ensuring maximum effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes in the actual work situation.

What also requires special attention is avoiding application of Criteria in isolation from each other. In applying a Criterion, the requirements of other related Criteria and significant variables determining the nature of dynamics incorporated in their formulation must be duly considered. This facilitates the process of achieving desired objectives for applying each Criterion. In the final analysis, the Criteria already discussed will have succeeded if they enable the teaching/learning process to satisfy the goals of education as outlined by Perkins (1990) including: "retention of knowledge, understanding of knowledge, active use of knowledge".

The appropriate strategies for the successful implementation of the evaluation Criteria form the basis of the argument for a holistic approach to issues affecting the

effectiveness and efficiency of ASP intervention. Further clarification of reasons justifying the grouping of Criteria into, apparently, discrete sets is provided in order to avoid the possibility of confusion that might result in their distorted application. Flowing from the preceding analysis, the entire context has been set in which the whole thrust of the ensuing discussion can commence and establish the firm basis for answers to questions such as: How do we get people to implement these Criteria in the most effective and efficient manner? How do we optimally use the options created by the proposed ASP system for implementing the faculty-integration model in a more structured and, at the same time, user-friendly manner? What opportunities exist for the implementation of the proposed dispensation, based on the developed Criteria, in a faculty or central unit without reverting to the discredited deficit theoretical framework which this Thesis seeks to discard?

The present Study has discovered that, with appropriate strategic planning or plan of action in respect of each Criterion, deficiencies existing in universities surveyed could be identified, analysed and assessed for the remediation purposes. However, an insignificant number of Criteria could not be fully met on basis of the current formulation and structuring of ASPs. In other words the manner in which these ASP programmes are presently constituted represents an impediment to the reconstruction and organisation of ASP resources. As such, the validation process found insufficient justification for the deployment of the Criteria concerned to situations as they stand in the affected universities. As a result, reference to the relevance of certain Criteria to some institutions has been omitted altogether. At universities possessing the necessary infrastructure and relatively adequate resources at their disposal to pursue declared ASP aims and objectives, relating to elicited Criteria, an evaluation of the ASP activities and programmes has been conducted in accordance with the principles of the Criteria.

Ideally, these Criteria should, perhaps, be exposed to scrutiny and correct assessment for practical relevance, before application in order to determine their usefulness either individually or in set, for particular purposes and contexts. In their present form, the Criteria are intended for ASP evaluation and assessment for the relevance of its current programmes for the existing disadvantaged student population in tertiary institutions in South Africa and elsewhere. These Criteria require the necessary adaptation and modification for purposes of implementation in human resource and educational contexts for which they were not originally intended. ASP administrators, lecturers, faculty lecturers, staff and other professionals have now the opportunity to use these results for the mutual benefit of their programmes, staff, students and other end-users for whom they are intended.

It is within this context that an invitation is extended to all ASP stakeholders to put into practical use the findings of this research. However, this needs to be done on basis of a particular value-system which includes the consideration that consensus should, wherever necessary and possible be sought and attained before embarking on any ASP project of institutional magnitude that has implications for the institutional and ASP profiles. This has much significance on basis of the recognition that ASP itself is a much contested terrain of intellectual activity, especially between ASP and faculty staff. Consequently, in order for a reasonable state of equilibrium to prevail in the ASP system as outlined under 6.2 above, which requires co-determination of academic outputs between ASP and faculty structures, personnel, and functions, as well as the satisfaction of all role-players to become a reality in the ASP systems, the proposed consensus approach requires serious exploration and strategic consideration.

Everyone with a stake in the success of ASP has a contribution to make as proposed in the sets of Criteria,

which are demonstrated by the rendition of student-oriented, staff-oriented and administration or organisation-oriented Criteria in Chapter 5. For instance, ASP administrators can focus mainly on those issues that are relevant to their work, such as fund-raising, obviously, without ignoring those ASP aspects pertaining to other spheres of ASP intervention and involvement in academic development, such as formulation of competitive and thoroughly researched ASP personnel policies. Such a perspective seeks to maintain close compatibility between the holistic nature of the type of approach advocated in this Thesis and ASP practice. It is, nevertheless, more advisable to familiarise oneself with all the elicited Criteria for purposes of establishing a comprehensive framework for their application. But more especially, before delving into those that are of special interest to one's occupational or career interests as well as environmental and professional requirements, it is advisable to be acquainted with the whole range related Criteria.

6.4 The significance of the developed Criteria for ASPs in South Africa

At South African universities, when evaluating ASP, it has become common practice to gather information as a form of feedback for the benefit of the programmes, without much consideration for the requirements of other stakeholders who might also benefit from findings of evaluation. In many instances, such information is supplied ASP hierarchies to facilitate decision-making resulting in "further preparation and correction" of the programmes concerned, (Stake 1986:246).

While evaluation remains an essential ASP function, the process should be expanded to accommodate the interests of other stakeholders in the scope and type of information collected and the manner in which it is presented. In other words, while ASP evaluation primarily serves the needs of

programme staff, who require the information arising from the evaluation process to be used as basis for 'internal' decision-making, the interests of stakeholder, outside ASP hierarchy, also need to be considered. For this reason, it is becoming equally important that the wider audience, including students, ASP and faculty staff, and the donor community, who have a stake in the ASP enterprise be appropriately informed, since they are the main participants in the ASP system. This should, ideally, happen on a regular basis, to familiarise them with relevant developments in the ASP field as a whole. For specific purposes, more details could be provided regarding matters such as the success rate of those participating in the programmes and what improvements and strategies are being considered for those who require additional and more intensive ASP assistance.

Invariably, employees of ASP centres respond sympathetically to the requirements of their students and subordinates through provision of specialist tutoring and staff training. This has been shown on a number of occasions. In liaising with surveyed universities, during data collection, to conduct interviews with ASP staff and others whose work and experience is related to ASP, the writer observed tremendous enthusiasm, which pervaded ASP activities such as tutorial sessions and staff seminars. In-depth discussions, regular observations, and encounters with ASP personnel in the work-place and the reality of their work situation revealed other dimensions regarding the nature of tasks they are required to perform, the wide range of skills demanded by the nature of their work and the expectation for dexterous handling of work. The degree of expertise and specialised skills necessary suggested that further training and well-structured staff development courses would in future be indispensable for the advancement of proficiency levels in their respective disciplines and spheres of occupation.

The biggest challenge confronting ASP policy-makers, decision-makers, including administrators, co-ordinators of various support programmes centres around strategic planning. In the light of the results now available, the kind of planning envisaged most probably requires guidelines. These can ensure the attainment of ASP goals through effective and efficient use of available resources in order that the needs for human resources development that have been identified in the previous paragraph can be adequately addressed.

The appropriate strategies can be distinguished by the quality of decisions reached towards transforming ASP programmes and initiatives into operations that are more explicitly stimulated by stakeholders' priorities, interests and value-system. In other words, the whole philosophy of ASP delivery has to change through well planned adaptation to the requirements of its clients rather than expecting continued manipulation of stakeholders' interests by the often deficient ASP delivery system and its sometimes incompetent social structure. Indeed, the effort to place the interests of stakeholders above bureaucratic interests of ASP administrators and organisational expediency, could culminate into a transformation process capable of strengthening accountability in ASP practice. In this way, the legitimacy of ASP intervention and the credibility of programmes would, most likely, be less questionable.

In this regard, the findings of this Study have far reaching implications for the way in which future ASP should, perhaps, be constituted and sustained. However, the present circumstances of ASP personnel and end-users of ASP services suggest that what is desperately required amounts to more than just rhetoric about the need for transforming modes for delivery. This has been shown in the preceding Chapters, by depicting various precarious scenarios revealing that, in many instances there was lack of sustainability for some

programmes, while others were facing the inevitable prospect of certain discontinuation.

The proposed Criteria represent a tangible offer of an alternative approach to the malaise that has characterised ASP intervention in South Africa for more than a decade. Presumably, the implementation process of the Criteria would facilitate alleviation of the situation. By providing a framework for their application, individually or in sets, the intention is to show, in concrete terms, what functions are performed by different combinations of the Criteria.

Now that the criteria for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of ASP have been elicited and developed, they can be used to set up effectively viable central units and faculty integrated programmes. To this end, a brief review of their significance is necessary to assess possible outcomes. This is particularly essential, considering the variety of interpretations that are likely to emerge, when they are applied in different contexts involving widely divergent spectra of opinions regarding relevance of a criterion or set of criteria for a particular situation.

Levine (1986) illustrates the practical aspects of evaluation when he cautions against implementation of evaluation strategies without ensuring their relevance. As an example, he refers to the lack of consensus concerning the correct approach to instructional strategies. According to him many strategies, currently being proposed and used, have not shown to be effective and states that these require empirical validation. Research evidence suggests that, at this stage, it is not possible to categorically state which instructional strategy works with all students in all situations. Therefore, it is advisable for ASP and faculties to co-operate on academic support matters, especially with regard to practical issues such as teaching/learning.

The importance of the developed criteria for ASPs, in South Africa particularly, depends on successful implementation of faculty-integrated programmes in so far as the teaching and curriculum development aspects of ASP intervention are concerned. Regarding the effect of ASP programmes on students' academic results, the evidence obtained through this study indicates that there is a limited impact. Nevertheless, the importance of increasing the amount and quality of their impact should not be overlooked when devising strategies to improve effectiveness and efficiency of ASP as a whole.

At the same time, on a micro-level involving specific programmes, it is important to focus on the limiting factors, for example inadequate resources such as insufficient finance for successful completion of the programme, institutional setting in which support for the programmes is non-existent or is characterised by an outright hostile environment towards the programmes. It is obvious that such an adverse environment would, in one way or another, have a disruptive influence on ASP intervention and in which case the positive impact ASP programmes might be compromised.

In addition to these organisational impediments to effective ASP intervention, the attitudinal dimension of the problem should be seen in its perspective. The complexity of student and staff perceptions of ASP has, to a large extent, equally retarded the development and success of ASP. In particular, the voluntary basis for participation in ASP courses has resulted in the belief, among students, that these courses are dispensable, since they do not form part of the curriculum. This issue is now being addressed by, among other things, offering credit-bearing ASP courses.

Despite the above limitations, ASP programmes have forged ahead and maintained, more or less, common characteristics in different universities and across a wide spectrum of

models and divergent perspectives. Although programmes are formulated within a common framework (focusing on student problems and learning deficiencies) each institution has developed ASP programmes that have unique features, designed to meet the special needs of students as identified within their particular educational environment. Moreover, certain elements of the programmes are dynamic and versatile, that is, they are amenable to change each year according to, inter alia, size and quality of student intake, change in staffing structures, changes within departmental and faculty degree requirements and policies.

Undoubtedly, the uniqueness of ASP programmes and their dynamism makes their evaluation a complex task, as Agar (1992:93) observes. Monitoring what takes place within the programmes implies monitoring both overt practice and covert perceptions and the interaction between ASP practice and the perceptions of ASP stakeholders. In this process, it clearly shows that differences of orientations and perspectives towards ASP issues arise. Thus, a way has to be found of accommodating the different perspectives and views that characterise ASP stakeholders. Hence, the systems theoretical framework, as described under 6.2 above, is considered as the most appropriate approach for the analysis of common interest - in the continued existence of effective ASP programmes - while acknowledging the diversity of perspectives and even ideologies about, inter alia, the nature of ASP intervention.

It is largely for this reason that the eclectic approach, as an instrument for the study of ASP phenomena has special appeal for this investigation in the way Chapters 2, 3 and 5 describe the dynamism involved in the interactive processes between various ASP stakeholders, although this approach is, ironically, "committed to the view that it is inappropriate for one to have commitments" (Sanderson, 1988:13). This means that it is preferable to acknowledge usefulness of all theoretical approaches to research rather than committing

oneself to any one approach, more especially when dealing with diverse constituencies as in the ASP profession, where eclecticism should, perhaps, be more widely used in the evaluation of ASPs.

The work done at the University of the Witwatersrand by the evaluator as shown in the Report (Agar, 1990:220), represents a multi-faceted strategy that is successfully applied to elicit different perspectives on ASP intervention and activities. The distinct advantage of this strategy is that it uses as wide a variety of both quantitative and qualitative sources of data as possible. As a methodological framework, the multi-faceted strategy depends on the continual use of a wide range of sources of information which include quantification of data through gathering statistical data on student academic records for the monitoring their progress. This strategy also relies on more qualitative data by using techniques like interviews and qualitative questionnaires on the attitudes and perceptions of staff and students relating to ASP initiatives and programmes as well as the university as a teaching and learning environment.

6.4.1 Programme development

There are strong indications that mistaken, but common, beliefs exist about the role of ASP at predominantly White universities. These beliefs are often presented in various forms of convincing but misguided arguments. Firstly, for a long time already, a spurious argument has persistently contended that these programmes are superfluous in the sense that universities should not, in the first place, admit underprepared students and in any case, since they already exist in these universities, adequate resources are being provided to meet all the needs of disadvantaged students, without the necessity for ASP programmes in addition. A related fallacy postulates that the faculty curricula have no reason to be amended to suit the needs of disadvantaged

students. Instead, change should happen the other way round, in that, the deficiencies of underprepared students should be dealt with by ASP units through a team of "specialists" in the field of special or remedial education before these students join "regular" classes and follow ordinary faculty curricula.

The latter view is supported by the theoretical framework of ASP that concentrates only on assisting the student to fit into the "unchanged" curriculum and the same traditional teaching/learning approach. The ASP model arising from this framework is referred to as the deficit model as alluded to earlier. In other words the deficit model condones the deficiency premise which finds fault with the underprepared students rather than in the underprepared institution which is not capable to remedy the deficiencies through its ordinary faculty resources, that is, untrained staff and unmodified curricula. A corollary of this view maintains that once the underprepared students have been through the remedial process, they will be able to cope and fit into traditional teaching content and strategies. As Grumet reminds those who have supported the education system that ignores the student perspective:

"It is we who have raised our hands before speaking, who have learned to hear only one voice at a time and to look past the backs of the heads of our peers to the eyes of the adults in authority. It is we who have learned to offer answers rather than questions, not to make people feel uncomfortable, to tailor enquiry to bells and buzzers" (Grumet, 1981:122).

Although much of Grumet's writing refers to teaching practices at school level, it has relevance for tertiary teaching as well, since some university academics still use much of the inappropriate techniques and strategies, as Searle (1991:557) explains how lecturers have a tendency of using rote learning:

"Students are expected to move from being rote learners to active, self directed, critical

learners and yet nothing in the learning environment encourages this. Teaching is still predominantly done through lectures with heavy emphasis on reading to supplement the information thus gathered. It is obvious that the curriculum is heavily content orientated and that transferring masses of information is the main function. Students respond by engaging in their familiar rote learning strategies".

This extract, which is full of insight on what is currently happening in lectures, reveals issues that have vast implications for the various aspects of restructuring in the tertiary education sector. For example, it is required that the university education system must be subjected to research to find out what must be modified or changed to make university education full of enquiry and more stimulating to young minds, in particular.

Finally, these mistaken beliefs, which tend to exonerate the status quo in the university system, further undermine the potential for efficacious ASP intervention without replicating programmes. They suggest that ASP programmes still had a long way to go before completely eradicating deficiencies of disadvantaged students. In other words, as the numbers of disadvantaged students increase more remedial work will have to be done by ASP units. This ostensibly deficit model seeks to marginalise the intervention process by the isolation of ASP role from participation in academic activities of mainstream faculties. In this way programmes can be kept in the periphery of the main academic activities happening in faculties.

As manifested in the exposition on the deficit-oriented approach, on which these fallacies are based, the model it suggests is premised on unsubstantiated assumptions, which are contrary to the position adopted in this thesis namely that ASPs in their present form have a transitory status. By suggesting that ASP services need to be replicated to cope with the increased demand for them, this model accords permanent status to ASP programmes, which is an erroneous

notion of the role of ASP as well as a misconception of ASP reality and its dynamics. In Chapter 2, ASP scenarios occurring in the United States of America, in particular, revealed interesting developments that compelled tertiary institutions to adopt policies of incorporating ASP work into mainstream faculty programmes, instead of regarding it as some peripheral activity that does not concern faculty staff. On the contrary, the present thesis maintains that ASPs cannot continue indefinitely operating as they do since the forces of change will eventually prevail over the forces of resistance against the faculty-integration of programmes.

The practical dimension of the issues raised in the foregoing paragraphs suggests that, similarly to overseas experiences with university authorities, South African administrators in tertiary institutions are, apparently, incapable of providing mechanisms for change as Van Vught (1989) concludes:

"A final characteristic, typical of European higher education institutions, is the way authority is distributed with them. Traditionally authority has been located at the lower levels of the organisation, with the academic professionals. The administration has little authority and institutional administrators have a very limited capacity to steer 'their' organisations."

From what van Vught says, although basing his comments on Euro-centric issues, these have relevance for the South African scene as well. It is clear that drastic changes are long overdue, considering recent events, lasting more than one decade, whereby the tertiary sector of education finds itself inundated with the placement of a large proportion of disadvantaged entrants. It should be expected that, this development will, in the near future, be followed by increasing pressures for change in the South African university education system and its administration. In order for universities to cope with disadvantaged students, they must be prepared to undergo the necessary changes.

Nevertheless, the prominence and relative centrality of ASP activities, in academic programmes of almost all predominantly White and most predominantly Black universities provides reason for optimism. Among the signs that change is imminent are the growing indications that the need for some form of academic support has now gained recognition immensely, compared with the position and visibility of ASP in institutions of higher learning ten years ago.

The dominance of ASP-related concerns in the current debate about institutional adaptation to the broadening context of tertiary education, from its previous racial and ethnic-based boundaries, has reached unprecedented levels. The pattern of establishing ASP as a familiar feature in higher education and other tertiary institutions is likely to be intensified as increasing numbers of disadvantaged students are admitted. This trend appears to have started at a growing number of universities as demonstrated by the use of more contemporary intervention strategies, which represent a departure from the traditional mould of skills tutoring outside content.

At surveyed universities, the writer discovered overwhelming support for the principle of the integration of academic support services into faculties. In many cases, appropriate strategies had been formulated and concrete plans of action devised to effect the implementation of this approach, sometimes called the "infusion" model, meaning the process whereby the course content is infused with academic skills. This model permits the inclusion of remedial programmes in the disciplines in which academic support is given. In other words, the tutorial component is incorporated into the course content, in order that tutoring in various academic skills no longer becomes a separate activity.

Indeed, it is a remarkable achievement for ASP programmes to cross the dividing line between skills tutoring and content

teaching so that the two processes can be merged into one activity. The restructuring of ASP entailed in this process presupposes adaptation of tertiary institutions to the requirements of disadvantaged students. In this regard, the notion of joint responsibility between university and ASP for resolving disadvantages of students as espoused by Professor du Plessis (1978), former Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, is vindicated. Much early in the initial phase of ASP, he put forward a strong case for the view that any attempt to respond systematically to the problems experienced by underprepared students would entail adaptation not only on the part of these students but also on the part of the universities.

The faculty integration model, which is enunciated in this Study, is based on the viewpoint that effective provision of academic assistance to underprepared students depends on the efficient delivery system, which incorporates tutoring into content teaching. In this sense, to institute ASP programmes, including supplementary instruction and various forms of enrichment, that is courses intended to bridge the gap between high school and university study, and credit-bearing courses can promote institutional change in many important ways. In other words, the extra-curricular approach to academic support is regarded as delaying the "real" ASP intervention, which involves curriculum development in terms of changing existing course structures and teaching/learning strategies.

This perspective, incorporates ASP concepts that have a measure of validity and can assist decision-makers to focus attention on more substantive ASP issues that merit further consideration for the advancement of ASP goals. For example, it encompasses consideration of the fact that intervention initiatives must focus a great deal of attention on innovative curricular structures and developing appropriate educational strategies for teaching and learning at

university level. This constitutes a fundamental concern for the attainment of long term ASP objectives.

While the validity of this theoretical position is indisputable, it is untenable to suggest that during the initial phase of academic support curricular adaptations should have been made instantly, since there were comparatively fewer numbers of underprepared students and these were relatively less underprepared than the current university intake, meaning students admitted for university study each year. Consequently, the original ASP clients could succeed in their studies with minimal academic support in the form of extra-curricular tutoring, meaning skills tutoring without content. Under these circumstances available ASP resources could be deployed with relative success than would be possible with the existing student intake.

In other words, the original ASP clients could readily cope with curricular requirements of university education, but merely required assistance with conceptual and analytical skills for studying, note-taking, reading and listening, etc. It is inconceivable that ASP could have embarked on any curriculum restructuring programme so early, since various other more urgent projects had to be undertaken so that students could pass the prescribed range of subjects within reasonable limits of the minimum time required. Moreover, adjustment of curricular structures for purposes of consolidating academic skills with course content was not the immediate concern of those involved. High priority was given to attainment of short-term ASP goals, which included enabling affected students to succeed in their courses and complete their academic programmes within the shortest possible time, while leaving curricular structures intact. The most typical form of ASP intervention involved needs identification and analysis which were considered as essential to initiating the process of remedial action.

Besides, adverse legislation militated against allowing universities a substantial proportion of disadvantaged student intake. The Government ensured that punitive measures were instituted against offenders through the revised subsidy formula, which was introduced in 1986 (Race Relations Survey 1986:463). Any transgression of this policy by universities meant facing the consequences of reduction in subsidies. In the Mid-Eighties as many predominantly White universities continued admitting increasing numbers of disadvantaged students without corresponding changes in the deficit-based ASP model for delivery of academic support, a sudden increase, than ever before, in the failure rate of these students was noticeable.

Following the deterioration in the educational quality of disadvantaged student intake, more pressures have been exerted on universities to intensify ASP intervention so that the increasing failure rate among such students could be reduced. The greatest need for academic support was required, especially, in subjects which the private sector regarded as critical to the economy, such as Commerce, Engineering and Science. Such intensification of academic support has had to be done through subject-specific tutoring, which covers course content as well as academic skills. However, these measures are grossly inadequate for the long term future of ASP intervention. In the medium to long term, measures should be introduced to allow faculty integration of ASP courses and those initiatives that are crucial for the transformation of curricular structures to take place. As a further increase in numbers of disadvantaged students occurs, most probably with greater severity of academic disadvantages, the need for properly formulated curricular structures, through curriculum development, would be more pronounced.

The formidable challenge for institutional change is imminent and requires both enlightened vision, which is informed by continuous research on these matters and

excellence in pursuance of traditionally high academic standards, for which most South African universities, including those surveyed, are renowned. Intake forecasts suggest that such students will in future form a greater part of the students body, in accordance with demographic realities of South Africa. The first few decades of the twenty-first century will probably witness this scenario to a greater or lesser extent.

A logical consequence of such change in the demographic patterns of the country and composition of the student body is, therefore, bound to be a comprehensive review of faculty curricular structures and teaching/learning strategies. As such a situation develops, the influence of traditional approaches to the acquisition of knowledge will be diminished.

Research evidence strongly suggests that, since the process of constructing meaning entails linking information being acquired to established knowledge, which Entwistle (1988:271) refers to as "existing cognitive structure," a new framework of knowledge arises. In many respects, disadvantaged students would be transformed into effective learners by reconstruction of the learning process as and when found necessary. The distinguishing feature, which is the strength of this approach, is the dynamic involvement of the learner in the teaching/learning process. In their study, of 1987, Jones et al. emphasise that meaningful learning does not necessarily have to be "discovery" learning, but it does, however, have to be "constructed" or "generated", the latter being Wittrock's (1983) interpretation of the idea of reconstituting knowledge to facilitate access to its structure of meaning or content.

In the process of connecting different structures of meaning a new information base is created and added to the current framework of knowledge. In this way continuity in the education process is maintained. What these studies have

revealed has direct relevance for ASP intervention. To a certain extent academic support currently makes appreciable attempts to facilitate reconstruction of cognitive structures so that the newly acquired information can be processed meaningfully. These initial steps need to be strengthened in order to achieve the overall purpose of rendering more accessible than ever before to those who have not acquired skills for processing knowledge in its original form, without any reorganisation.

In terms of the findings of this Study, a recognition of this logical basis for preparing ASPs and universities for their future role has just emerged, as shown in the following:

"We envisage South African universities of the future which would have developed the will and the competence to provide, within mainstream curricular structures more flexible than at present, varieties of intra-departmental teaching arrangements responsive to the educational heterogeneity of the university intake. Under such a dispensation there would be no need for academic support programmes in their present structure, though there would be a continuing (and growing) need for consultancy and evaluation services in this area as well as for specialised advisory services until this function, too, could effectively be absorbed into mainstream provision"
(Hunter and Scott, 1990:138).

However, in some quarters this recognition that our basic knowledge structures need to be transformed has not occurred. Some universities are still operating within the boundaries of the deficit model, which confines them to skills academic support without content. We have seen that this framework originates from the tendency to apportion substantial blame to the disadvantaged student for academic disadvantages and the treatment of these is conducted through extra-curricular skills tutoring. This is not different from the treatment of only the symptoms and ignoring the causes of student educational deficiencies.

According to the criteria elicited in this research, a radical review of curricular structures is absolutely important indispensable for the effectiveness of ASP in the medium to the long term. Already in most universities surveyed, for example, the Universities of Cape Town, Natal and Witwatersrand where extended curriculum programmes in the Faculties of Commerce, Engineering and Science have been introduced, programmes are structured in the manner that makes it possible to split their curricula in order to cope with the workload and, at the same time, make satisfactory progress towards completion of their degree studies.

It has been discovered that, across the universities participating in the study, there is acceptance of the necessity of the transition process that would replace academic support with changes in faculty curricula. This process is often referred to as the infusion approach to academic support. It has its own limitations, though, one of them being that it occurs at a much slower pace than expected. The main reason given for this fact is the degree of hesitation with which the concept is received by faculty staff. While this is likely to delay the change process much longer, it would be as inappropriate to do it in such a haste that little benefit would be derived from it as are the causes for stalling it.

When put together, the criteria offered in this study provide an alternative route for introducing the change-over from ASP unit-based programmes to faculty-based programmes. These criteria represent an elaborate mechanism for a clear conceptual transition and practical steps to follow when implementing the transition process. If the phase of practical implementation is guided, step by step, by these criteria the results will be phenomenal, since each criterion is extracted from the ASP experience in South African universities and as such would have practical relevance for similar experiences in a similar context.

Just as the writer has cherished for years the feeling that something needs to be done urgently to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ASPs, universities are also equally concerned at the slow pace of progress to reduce the failure and drop-out rates among disadvantaged students. There is a stronger belief, though, than ever before that ASP initiatives possess the potential to be the final measurement of what predominantly White universities and even their counterparts in predominantly Black universities are capable of achieving towards addressing the educational needs of these students.

In all institutions surveyed, ASPs have begun increasingly displaying many characteristics of being innovative projects. This move needs to be commended, since it is indicative that ASPs have now been launched into an experience of an era full of challenges and exciting developments. Such occurrence is common to any growing organisation, which implies that it responds pro-actively to the requirements of its micro-environment as well as its macro-environment. In the case of ASPs, it suggests that redesigning programmes, restructuring curricula, and reconstructing knowledge imparted through these programmes represents ASP responsiveness to its micro-environmental needs. At another level ASP demonstrates concern about macro-environmental needs of the economy. These include leadership requirements of business, commerce and industry by constantly searching for ways to expedite the supply of trained human resources in appropriate skills at all levels, particularly management hierarchies of organisations. In this sense, ASP intervention becomes crucial in maximising the effectiveness of ASP programmes to optimise institutional efficiency in meeting labour market demands at both high and middle levels of employment.

However, the success of ASP depends, to a large extent, on translating theory into practice and substituting involvement for rhetoric in implementing policy-decisions.

To the degree that the direction taken by the majority of ASPs is followed consistently and emulated by others, there is reason for optimism that ASPs can finally deliver on important expectations of ASP clients. In several cases, the potential for meaningful results is being shown by the deployment of programmes whose main thrust is introducing a new perspective on the problem being tackled. The educational innovation, which creative perspectives might bring into the field of ASP, has a tremendously vital role in sustaining the growth of these projects, which are geared to induce significant institutional change.

In delineating structural conditions within which the transformation of ASPs would be possible, Webster (1991:7) distinguishes between three types of models for the structural organisation of universities and their implications for organisational change. These models include collegial, bureaucratic, and pluralistic approaches. They can be applied usefully in the analysis of administrative constraints that prevent the effective implementation of ASP programmes. In this regard conclusions drawn by Brijlal (1991:442) as to which model is most suitable for purposes of improving the effectiveness of the programmes, provide a useful framework. According to him, the collegial and bureaucratic models of university management have neither theory nor mechanism for confronting change, and he asserts emphatically:

"If we wish to successfully deal with the challenges of change then we need to move away from the collegial and bureaucratic models of management towards the pluralistic model."

As has already been demonstrated in the analysis of the institutional context, within which ASP is currently operating, any growth area of these projects has its own requirements, which must be met in order to achieve successful implementation of the programmes. Administrative impediments continue to retard progress in resolving

academic problems in relation to the integration of programmes into faculty disciplines. The success of such ventures depends, to some extent, on the way in which ASP is perceived by faculty, most especially at senior levels in departments. It was pointed out earlier, that during the initial phase of ASP, most faculty staff in universities surveyed displayed strong sceptic attitudes towards ASP functions and its role in ameliorating failure and drop-out rates. Others felt their positions threatened in the event of departments being invaded by ASP.

With reference to the early phase of ASP, under such conditions of mistrust and suspicion, survival strategies, on the part of both faculty members and ASP staff, became the most important source of concern than helping disadvantaged students. The necessary measure of common ground for co-operation was almost non-existent in some institutions. There is an abundance of descriptions about instances in which many ways attempts were made to treat ASP as a peripheral activity, as Searle (1991:556) explains:

"It has therefore been important to academics that such activities as ASP impinge minimally on mainstream activities, thus whilst academic staff have welcomed ASP for their students, they have guarded their departmental and discipline autonomy closely thereby ensuring ASP's marginalisation... ASP was competing for scarce University resources in a time of cut-backs and this engendered a resentment amongst academics over losing posts to this area, and a suspicion of their motives. This antipathy to ASP has made it difficult to embody innovations and insights into learning and teaching that have arisen through support work into mainstream teaching."

It is in view of these issues that a pluralistic model of management is essential on the part of institutional policy-makers and ASP personnel to enhance opportunities for closer co-operation to ensure mutual understanding and equitable distribution of resources. One of these is sustainability which is a measure of resources available to take the project to its conclusion. In order to be

sustainable ASP projects require formal recognition and permanent status in their host institutions. These two conditions have far-reaching implications for their funding for which scarce resources exist.

At this stage of their development, these projects are still plagued, among other things, by financial insecurity, under-staffing, problems of legitimacy and marginal status within these universities. In order to deal effectively with the inadequacies of the support system especially those relating to main problem areas as identified elsewhere in the study, the developed and elicited criteria represent a most scientifically researched resource base for purposes of the implementation of such projects. These criteria also offer solutions to the hindrances that have been encountered in the course of developing programmes.

6.4.2 Student development

While in practice recruitment and selection of students are interrelated and inseparable activities, these concepts can be analysed separately to gain a better understanding of how they affect admission of disadvantaged students into tertiary institutions, particularly, predominantly white universities. Treating these procedural measures in distinct terms shows different stages and streams of academic activity in which students are admitted. A distinction must be drawn between procedures for recruiting and selecting students into the university and those that are used for selecting students into academic support programmes.

The system of admissions is still governed by the Universities Act of 1959. The historical imbalances in terms of numbers actually admitted cannot be addressed through the present system, hence the need to develop an alternative system using selection criteria that are specific to the requirements of the institution. As discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3, universities, in the last two to three

decades, were and still are affected tremendously by the low percentages in students' pre-university academic scores and poor preparation of Black, particularly African students and the pressure created by the SAPSE (South African Post Secondary Education) formula to mount ASP programmes. The latest national average in such scores is estimated at 57%, including all population groups.

In the case of recruitment and selection for university entry, procedures varied from one institution to another, particularly with reference to universities surveyed, and in accordance with the type of ASP programmes in which applicants wish to participate. However, in most instances screening procedures between selection for university entry and selection for participation in ASP are co-ordinated. In this way the system allows students to register with ASP during or after the selection process for university entrance. Nonetheless, on the whole, students are selected first for university admission and only some time after registration for academic support which is commonly offered on a falter-first basis, meaning identification of need for academic support after failing, individually or all of the following performance evaluation techniques, an assignment, test or examination in a particular departmental course or courses. This means that students are identified as potential ASP participants once they have faltered in one or more of the courses as indicated by their test or examination results.

Concerning the overall impression gained during this Study a Matriculation Exemption based on the Senior Certificate Examination results still constitutes a basic requirement for selection into the university. A conditional selection device known as mature age exemption is also used where applicants request admission to university without possession of a Matric Exemption qualification but purely on the basis of age (normally twenty-three years of age and above) and successful Standard Eight pass and related

academic experience, for example, a few years or more in teaching, nursing or any post junior secondary study.

Over and above this each tertiary institution, faculty and department have their own selection requirements. The majority of the requirements are based on a rationally (objectively) decided cut-off point. At this stage the aggregate symbol and grades (higher or standard) obtained. In addition, the numbers of applicants seeking admission plays a determining role in deciding numbers to admit and how far down the scale of the point system the university is prepared to lower admission standards almost on basis of the principle of market forces, relating to supply and demand.

In the previous Chapter a wide range of selection and admission procedures was discussed with reference to participation in ASP programmes. In instances where attending ASP is compulsory as a precondition for admission into a faculty or department as at the Universities of Cape Town, Natal and Witwatersrand, procedures for recruitment and selection were found to be different, not only between institutions but also between faculties and departments within the same institution. At the University of the Witwatersrand, for example, students who enrol for the Four Year curriculum are those who have not gained automatic entry into the faculties to which they applied mainly because, although they have a Matriculation Exemption, their points ratings are below automatic entry levels. They are thus required to undergo a series of diagnostic tests in mathematics and English, as well as complete a Biographical Questionnaire.

In some cases, such students have to be interviewed and it is on the basis of the information thus obtained (using relevant techniques) that they are offered places in the Four Year curriculum, according to the ASP Report compiled by the Evaluator, (Agar, 1989:1). A similar arrangement and procedure is followed by the Science Foundation Programme at

the University of Natal at both Durban and Pietermaritzburg campuses. Students who have been accepted, through such specially designed procedures, are considered and treated as mandatory ASP participants. It then means that tutorial assistance is compulsory and becomes, in fact, part of their curriculum which is the main reason for the extension of their degree programme.

At the University of the Witwatersrand the situation is slightly different from the University of Natal in the sense that in the former compulsory tutorial assistance is only applicable to chemistry students, otherwise students, enrolled for other Pure and Life Science courses, have the option of voluntary attendance in the form of extra tutorial programmes. At both institutions, however, students are encouraged to attend through wide advertising of the tutorial programmes as well as through recommendations from their faculty lecturers, tutors and demonstrators, and through involvement of ASP tutors in lectures and practicals.

Evidently in both instances academic support is stipulated by the faculty prior to registration in the faculty. At the same time some academic assistance is available on a voluntary basis and is given in addition to compulsory ASP courses. However, in the case of Wits voluntary tutorial assistance is made available even to students who are registered for a Three Year curriculum.

At Wits alternative admission procedures are also used for the extended Four Year study based on decisions taken by faculty staff, similar to the one discussed above, for Engineering students but distinguish it from a foundation year programme for Engineering Faculty students. The difference is that the Engineering students are recruited and selected through the pre-university bursary scheme that is sponsored by the Anglo-American Corporation. In this way the "foundation year" is a compulsory component of their

degree curriculum. The only distinguishing characteristic is that compulsion to attend ASP courses originates with the bursary donor and not the faculty. Therefore, students are simply encouraged to attend extra tutorial classes in their First Year of study in the faculty.

On the other hand, the Extended Year curriculum presents a somewhat different proposition to the one just discussed in which students register for the Engineering degree, like any other student in the faculty. But after the first general tests (held at the end of the First Term and written or taken by all students in the Faculty) those who have not performed satisfactorily (comprising largely Africans) are offered places in the Extended Year curriculum while others proceed with the usual duration of the curriculum (lasting not more than three years). The main provision under this arrangement is that once a student volunteers for the Extended Year curriculum as an option, it becomes compulsory to attend the prescribed ASP courses.

As has already been indicated, at the University of Natal the strategy for dealing with student needs for development, tends to merge both the Extended Curriculum Scheme with characteristics of the Foundation Year components in that it provides extra tutorial assistance. In other words, the distinction between the Extended Curriculum and Foundation Year programmes seems to be blurred by the fact that tutorial schedules and tutorial content are inseparable. For example, when students have completed a day's attendance of regular departmental courses, which are offered on a reduced curriculum basis (limited to a maximum of only two faculty courses during First Year) students are expected to attend support tutorials, which elaborate on the course content dealt with during scheduled faculty class sessions. In the Faculties of Science, Engineering, and Commerce, this arrangement is followed. For successful implementation, the Extended Year programme requires extensive consultation and co-operation between faculty staff and ASP staff.

At the University of Natal the Alternative Admissions Programme is one of several ASP projects, that have been established to promote the principle of "open" access. It appears to be progressing well and gaining its own identity as a Teach-Test-Teach (TTT) programme. According to recent reports, indications are that this project has earned establishment posts for itself and has gained University wide recognition. The staff responsible for this project is the TTT inter-disciplinary team that now teaches TTT courses and conducts research in the area of open access to university education, with reference to University of Natal requirements, as described in more detail in Chapter 3. At Wits there is no such specialised team of Alternative Admissions researchers. According to the TTT requirements students who have a matriculation exemption but have not succeeded in obtaining entry into a faculty of their choice, as a result of lower than the minimum score on the points system as determined by the Faculty of Arts and Social Science can be recruited by TTT staff through their schools and community organisations.

Once they have been invited to participate in the Programme they are required to take part in all the prescribed courses for selection. The important requirement is successful performance in tests, which are conducted after the duration of classes lasting one calendar month. As a matter of fact, the first phase of teaching and testing takes place in December each year. Those who pass the prescribed tests receive notification to that effect. In this sense they have achieved candidacy status for study at the University of Natal, without prescribed entry points. The candidacy status attained entitles prospective students to register at the University of Natal, unless other universities indicate their intention to recognise results of the TTT selection procedure. Now these candidates can register for regular degree courses on basis of a reduced curriculum load, which means that it takes four years to complete a degree programme instead of three years.

Their opportunity of being offered places by the Faculty depends entirely on their performance in the tests. For successful candidates to be considered for admission, attendance of tutorial classes becomes an important prerequisite, especially during the first few years depending on the pace of the reducing level of need for such assistance. Such academic assistance is accompanied by close monitoring of their attendance at tutorial sessions and related seminars or discussions to supplement instruction. All these forms of intervention are aimed at effecting improvement in their overall academic performance.

In universities surveyed, erratic attendance of tutorial sessions has been cited as increasingly becoming more widespread and causatively linked to persistently high failure drop-out rates in certain courses, in which academic support is offered. For this reason, therefore, students themselves have the final responsibility of ensuring successful performance in ASP tutored faculty courses.

In terms of the findings of this Study, there exists a high probability of successful ASP intervention if the role of ASP students in the teaching/learning process is clearly explained to them. The following extract illustrates this point more precisely:

"That departments be encouraged to analyse what it is they require of students and to ensure that these requirements are essential to competence in their respective disciplines; and to make these explicit wherever possible" (Agar, 1992:11).

In the final analysis, whatever difference is made through ASP intervention hinges, to a vast extent, on two basic factors. These are, firstly, the nature and quality of the programmes offered and, secondly, the characteristics and quality of students admitted to tertiary institutions. At this juncture only a brief comment is necessary in respect of the role these variables play to influence the effectiveness of the programmes.

The first section of this Chapter has dealt with issues relating to the development of ASP programmes. In as far as identification of candidates for academic support is concerned, entry levels have been discussed and clarity has been reached regarding the importance of unswerving adherence to nationally acceptable and internationally comparable academic standards as stipulated in CRITERION 24. In implementing alternative admission programmes it is essential to avoid lowering entrance requirements to the extent of compromising exit standards, which could result in the depreciation of the value of academic degrees awarded by the university. This does not only affect the principle of excellence on which academic standards are based, but can also result in the institution losing its reputation and accreditation.

In the universities surveyed compromises on entrance requirements have resulted in the increase in numbers of disadvantaged students gaining entry into these institutions. It is important to stress that, while arguments for strengthening the principle of open access, through alternative admissions programmes, are based on rationally sound moral grounds, the goals of academic excellence cannot be sacrificed at the alter of moral expediency. This requires universities to compliment their concern for open admissions with equal concern about academic standards and competitive academic performance on the part of disadvantaged students.

Predominantly White universities have, for a long time, commissioned huge resources to maintain inadequate academic support intervention. The main reason has been the lack of clearer strategies for the intervention process. Fortunately, the current shift of emphasis from tutoring without content to content-based tutoring represent respite almost certain exclusion for the students, who have been besieged by the persistent threat of failure and drop-out. It is significant to note that, in recent years,

predominantly Black universities also have experienced an unprecedented increase of demands for academic support possibly as a result of the deteriorating quality of enrolled students. In recognition of this ominous trend, the majority of these universities have instituted different kinds of academic support. Generally, the form of intervention used in these institutions has the usual characteristics and tends to follow almost a similar pattern as in their White counterparts. To a large extent, the programmes have been in response to specific requirements of the students which do not seem to differ remarkably from those identified in predominantly White universities.

Apparently, the increase in the number of disadvantaged students results in the greater need for academic support. This trend is accompanied by the deteriorating quality of secondary schooling. Research evidence suggests that there has been no significant change in the general characteristics of students entering universities in the period covering the last decade or more. On the contrary, the intakes of students are characterised by the preponderance of those who have had severely limited opportunities of access to adequate educational resources at pre-university level than ever before.

In the interests of student development effective strategies should be devised that will ensure successful academic performance, inspite of the current deterioration of standards at the pre-university level of education. Alternative strategies are required to resolve some problems arising from dysfunctional policies and practices in ASP units. In some instances, the scope of ASP is ill-defined resulting in the inefficient use of resources, for example through duplication of services, inappropriate allocation of funds and lack of discernment and clear vision of the legitimate role of ASP. In these circumstances the operation of ASP programmes is not always cost-effective. In fact, the diverse aspects of ASP dealt with in the course of this

analysis have revealed what can be achieved through holistic (comprehensive and multi-faceted) rather than ad hoc and deficit-oriented programmes. Now there is a rational basis for the planning and designing of programmes so that the greatest number of students can benefit without inordinate escalation of costs.

In the absence of guidelines contained in the criteria programmes tend to be ineffective primarily as a result of insufficient planning and poor designing arising from inadequate communication strategies and systems between the various stakeholders of the enterprise. Constant contact and consultation between the primary sector of ASP stakeholders is a prerequisite for success. The timing of the implementation is also an important factor. Studies at Wits indicate that students are increasingly beginning to feel that the programmes will remain ineffectual and under-utilised, since they are perceived as starting too late and ending too early. The overwhelming number of ASP programmes begin and end in the student's first academic year at university. Students who have participated in ASP have, in evaluating the effectiveness of the programmes, expressed the feeling that they would have benefited more meaningfully if the assistance offered continued into other years of study following their First Year at the University (Agar, 1992:96).

ASP and faculty staff must accept that participation as equals is required if staff and students are to engage in joint decision-making and shared responsibility for the teaching/learning process. The failure of ASP to meet the expectations of students is, to a great extent, caused by the lack of consultation with them even on matters such as the duration of support programmes - whether to extend them to subsequent years of study and on other more substantive issues. In other words, students are still, largely, perceived by ASP staff and faculty members merely as recipients of the programmes, who are expected to passively

acquiesce in the vagaries of decisions made without their input, where this is necessary for the desired output of the programmes. ASP students need to be integrated into a common ASP value-system with which they can identify and seek to promote through their co-operation and conformity with the rules of ASP organisation. Student behaviour can be inclined to promote the goals of a system that values their participation and recognises their contributions. In this congenial atmosphere student development can take place. A situation characterised by mutual acceptance and understanding encourages students to accept responsibility for the way they learn in the context of open consultation not just on selective participation in decision-making - they have to be part of the whole decision making process as Millar and Boughey (1991:124) observe:

"Accepting responsibility for how you learn requires teachers to help students raise their self-awareness, through active reflection. As we have already said, this process of self-regulation is called metacognition."

Whenever students' views are accepted in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes, the emphasis on the role of ASP staff and faculty members shifts towards advising, motivating and encouraging critical assessment of various opinions including their own. For example, students may be inclined to think that academic support should continue for a long time whereas this has potential to encourage excessive dependency on the programmes in a way that cripples their development into independent, capable, critical and confident learners.

6.4.3 Staff development

The categories into which ASP staff position can be classified include: junior staff, subject specialists, and senior staff. At the junior staff category is included senior students who are mostly involved in peer tutoring, the marking of assignments and so forth. Some of these

students are registered for senior degrees, such as Honours, and Masters, while others are senior undergraduates. Depending on their level of study the following represents the range of duties they are usually employed to perform: teaching a variety of study skills, subject tutoring, mentoring, peer group tutoring, and including functions of group leaders during new-intake student orientation programmes at the beginning of the academic year.

Other junior staff members who are not students are employed as subject tutors, general language and study skills tutors, staff development organisers and group or seminar facilitators and assistant researchers. At the junior staff level incumbents are ranked either as demonstrators, technical assistants, assistant lecturers or junior lecturers. Some of their conditions of employment are based on contractual terms as most of them have temporary appointments to those positions without any fringe benefits or service perks. But the most demotivating factor for this category of staff is the conspicuous lack of job security, which is often cited as the important reason for the high staff turnover.

In the subject specialist category are staff members, who preferably are in possession of a bachelor's degree and in certain cases also a teaching diploma. Some have either embarked upon or completed their higher degrees like honours, and masters in specific subject areas of interest to them. Others have obtained or are still pursuing post-graduate diplomas or degrees in such fields as the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL).

Up until now we have discussed only formal qualifications as requirements for recruitment and selection of ASP staff. What is also important to remember is that the qualifications mentioned are invariably required when staff are recruited to fill created or vacant positions. People in possession of these are seldom available, for instance, at

the Masters and Ph.D. level there was none who specialised in ASP as a field of study. Perhaps, it was such an awareness that prompted the then outgoing president of SAAAD, at the 1992 SAAAD conference, to make an impassioned appeal to SAAAD members and conference delegates to start making ASP a career choice for research or academic study at higher degrees level (Mehl, 1992:4)

It is also necessary to consider informal qualifications, which candidates for ASP positions are expected to possess. Teaching experience at either secondary or tertiary level or both, as well as a teaching experience in a special education environment is a definite added advantage. But much emphasis is on the ESL teaching background since the majority of ASP students are Africans and, therefore, Second Language speakers. It is often recommended that ASP incumbents should have experience in a non-formal education sector or non-governmental organisations involved with tertiary or adult education projects. The type of qualification and experience required depends, to a large extent, on the demands and responsibilities of a particular position for which the candidate is being considered.

Although not often explicitly stated, a recommendation is that an ASP incumbent subscribes to the principles of a democratic society. This necessitates a general political awareness that has oriented the incumbent towards the transformation from a repressive society into a non-racial democratic and post-apartheid society in South Africa. A further requirement is having appropriate personality traits for dealing with individuals whose socio-economic backgrounds are severely disadvantaged and their education devastated by deprivation, and, unable to express themselves eloquently. Indeed, the most common characteristic of disadvantaged students is the lack of communication skills and incompetence to speak fluently in the medium of instruction at almost all South African universities, that is, English.

The above qualifications are applicable to potential staff members irrespective of whether they are recruited for a junior lecturer, lecturer, or senior lecturer post level. As indicated before, the term junior lecturer refers to incumbents in auxiliary posts, lecturer includes all specialist posts such as subject tutors that are co-ordinated by senior ranking posts such as co-ordinator mostly at senior lecturer level. Although now rarely found, some subject specialists are employed on part-time basis. These employees occupy short-term contract posts which tend to attract young and relatively inexperienced incumbents. But some of them have developed careers in what appears to be unattractive service conditions. Quite a number of subject specialists are occupying permanent establishment posts. Those subject specialists who are in university establishment posts on a full-time basis tend to be better qualified in terms of formal training and teaching experience.

The last category comprises of senior staff members who tend to be both the most highly qualified in terms of holding higher degrees and being extensively experienced in this field at tertiary level. Theirs are tenured posts at either associate professor or professorial level. In some instances terms of service include a teaching component which means that the incumbent is expected to do limited hours of teaching in a particular speciality area. In this sense ASP director posts, as they are officially designated, which fall within this category, should not be viewed as entirely administrative positions, since the responsibilities attached to these, ideally, incorporate a teaching component.

A general comment with regard to these post categories, more especially with reference to the first two (junior/assistant lecturer and lecturer posts) must be made in terms of requirements for staff development. Firstly, for the majority of incumbents ASP work is their first experience of

teaching at tertiary institution level (Agar, 1992:99). The fact that many of them do not possess competitive qualifications for ASP posts and have not had prior experience in ASP work makes them vulnerable to exploitation. The many responsibilities assigned to them have, more or less, deprived them the opportunities for personal development in the sense of engaging in serious study to improve their qualifications. Nonetheless, some of them have enrolled for further academic study towards honours, equivalent degrees or even higher degrees in subjects such as linguistics or the teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) to improve their knowledge and understanding of teaching disadvantaged students.

While the formal qualifications of ASP staff, of necessity meet the general qualification requirements of other staff members at tertiary institutions, there are several factors that distinguish them from their faculty counterparts. These include their youth, limited experience in university teaching - participation in ASP work, particularly ASP structures and its ethos - their non-tenured track posts, which acts as a disincentive for many, and their uniformly high level of socio-political involvement and perspectives. The above characteristics, indeed set them apart from the majority of faculty academic staff, who they regard as their counterparts and with whom they often compare themselves, especially in relation to parity in salaries and equity in conditions of service. Another important difference between faculty staff and ASP staff can be related to the large number of non-permanent positions held by the latter as well as their peculiar conditions of employment, as shown above.

The most limiting factor, though, and the one that is often cited as being responsible for this state of affairs is something of a vicious circle. It occurs when they are allocated teaching as their prime responsibility which prevents them from concentrating sufficiently on research activities and be able to publish. As far as universities

are concerned, research and publication in SAPSE recognised journals remain a high priority, following teaching activities. Therefore, ASP staff often find themselves in a dilemma in attempting to establish their careers in this profession. They also experience difficulties in search of promotional paths for similar reasons, in these sense that their heavy teaching workload is a hindrance to sufficient publication for purposes of promotion to high post levels.

An important disincentive for those intending to develop their careers in the ASP-related disciplines could be the marginal status of ASP within the university community and the lack of commitment on the part of universities to fund ASP posts. In the following passage, Searle (1991:556) expresses some frustrations, which make it difficult to retain high calibre staff in the field:

"Another factor which has increased resistance and allowed the academic community largely to disregard ASP has been the tenuousness of ASP posts, frequently outside-funded posts which disappear as the funding sources dry up, and the resulting erratic nature of ASP interventions. With this way of staffing ASP there has been a decided lack of continuity, and a resultant loss of expertise and consequently academics have not wished to invest much time and effort into these activities. For those who have remained there is little chance to build any academic credibility for themselves, these positions do not for instance allow for sabbaticals to enable research and with no academic base to work from this has culminated in frustration and a lack of motivation for many staff. It is extremely difficult to attract highly qualified academics into the field, or to keep many competent people for any length of time.

It is therefore crucial that two issues are resolved as a matter of grave concern in the medium to long-term development needs of ASP staff. These issues are the negotiation of the terms and conditions of service in such a manner that they are afforded equal opportunities, with faculty staff for doing their share of ASP-teaching

responsibilities, according to the faculty-integration model, eschews any form of ASP isolation from faculties, and engaging in relevant research activities. Secondly, the university system has to adopt an equitable approach, one that is justified for all staff, on staff development matters, conditions of service and promotional prospects, for these staff categories. The problem of staff development in this regard should preferably be tackled using a two-pronged strategy. Firstly, embracing ASP posts on permanent university establishment. Secondly, formulating properly structured courses at diploma and degree levels to improve formal qualifications of ASP staff is another definite possibility.

The present ad hoc approach to staff development, which involves seminars and workshops is totally inadequate for purposes of career advancement for ASP staff. It can either be used selectively as part of work-orientation, or restructured on a more formal basis as part of an in-house personnel development scheme. But, in its present form, this approach is not suitable for the long term needs of staff development. It is fragmented and lacks direction for career interests and aspirations in life, especially for those who have just started their working lives and want to pursue satisfying career paths in a manner that meets their needs for career growth with clearly visible signs of promotional prospects and job security.

On the other hand ASP staff have to attend ad hoc staff orientation workshops, seminars and so forth without a structured course relating to the work, to which some would like to dedicate all their working lives. They are often 'thrown into the deep end to either swim or sink' as one of them put it at a recent symposium organised by SAAAD. In spite of the long cherished expectations of a better staff development arrangement, there is still no systematic approach in sight for ASP practitioners. An increasing awareness that drastic action has to be taken is occurring

among them and increasing demands for a more systematic and career oriented training are emerging and can no longer be "safely" ignored by policy-makers.

ASP staff, as part of the academic community of any institution, should be treated as academics in the full sense of the word. As such they deserve urgent attention to their pleas, which may soon turn into demands as was shown during interviews for this Study, for a properly planned formal course. Such a course could be offered either internally or through distance education as happens in other countries world-wide:

"This development is based on the belief that academics need some form of teacher training, but that it is not feasible to provide this in every university. A solution is for selected universities to develop expertise in this field and to teach through the distance mode. Examples of this are Lewis Elton's course at the University of Surrey and Lee Anderson's at the University of New South Wales" (Agar and Murray, 1991:433).

In his keynote address at a SAAAD conference in December 1991, John Turner reminds us that there are three ways by which university income is received: teaching, research and community services. In Britain courses are offered in the form of skills training to the professions such as involvement in continuing education projects. It is for this reason, he maintains, that universities should not tolerate poor performance in any of these areas of academic activity (Turner, 1991:28). ASP, it is the writer's contention has to inculcate in its staff, these academic values if their performance is to be evaluated and judged on basis of universally acceptable values and norms. If they are to be appraised on the same criteria as faculty staff, it is imperative that the professional status of ASP staff is made worth the mettle despite the existing obstacles to career development, as Turner points out in relation to both ASP and faculty academics:

"A number of different modes of appraisal are now being introduced. The first of these is the appraisal of individual members of staff. This is intended to be constructive and to help individual members of the teaching staff to improve their performance. No university can any longer afford to tolerate bad teaching" (Turner, 1991:32).

ASP units currently committing a substantial portion of resources to curriculum development. But staff employed in this type of work do not receive commensurate remuneration, nor any form of recognition given for such contribution by ASP staff to the advancement of knowledge in the institution and the discipline as a whole. The criteria drawn from this Study show that a satisfactory resolution of these and other problems experienced by ASP staff can be reached through faculty integration of the programmes. Once programmes are integrated into faculty disciplines, ASP will be relatively less vulnerable to being marginalised financially and in terms of staff benefits, to which Searle earnestly referred earlier.

6.4.4 Organisation development

In their definition of the term 'organisation development', French and Bell (1978) recognise that it encompasses a wide range of strategies for the overall improvement of the organisational performance. But for them it also specifically refers to:

"a long-range effort to improve an organisation's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organisation culture - with special emphasis on the culture of formal work teams - with the assistance of a change agents, or catalyst, and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research." (French and Bell, 1978:14)

In terms of the developed criteria the issue of organisational development, meaning restructuring the organisation and streamlining its functions for maximum effectiveness and efficiency towards achieving its goals, has several meanings. In the discussion about the need for holistic programmes in order to minimise costs and integrate ASP programmes into faculty course-structures, a deliberate attempt has been made to stress the significance of the effects these would have on the successful implementation of the programmes.

Organisational development has manifestations at both the institutional level and the structural level of the way ASP functions are organised into a coherent structure. However, it is not enough to put together activities and functions of the organisation while allowing them to operate in isolation of each other. An organisation is more than just a collection of functions performed by individuals. There is always the need for co-ordination and control of the various activities so that they are carried out harmoniously and without disruption of programmes pursued through such activities.

ASP, for the most part, depends on the prevailing atmosphere in the environment and conducive conditions in order to successfully implement the programmes. Therefore, the entire institution constitutes the macro-environment together with outside funding agencies and the corporate sector. By macro-environment is meant the broader context within which ASP operates. The successful mobilisation of the necessary resources, both in the macro-environment, to a large extent, determines the degree to which ASP, as an organisation, can achieve its goals. On the other hand, a micro-environment refers to the factors existing in the organisation that have an influence on successful implementation of the programmes. ASP programmes, in any given institution, cannot be assured of success if they are in isolation from each other and do not strive together to achieve corporate goals which should

be distinguished from the aims and objectives of any one programme considered individually.

At the macro-level, the institution and its policies determine, to a large extent, the sphere of operation for the programme as well as the nature of academic activities in which it should be involved and also defines ways in which those activities must be carried out. Thus, in many important ways, the decisions taken by university officials have decisive implications for the programmes. For effective involvement in the future prospects of the programmes tertiary institutions require to critically examine their mode of interaction with ASP decision-makers. If the interaction between ASP and the institutional framework, meaning decision-makers and significant structures in the university, is based on constructive co-existence, that is, in a way that essentially eliminates inhibitory factors towards attainment of goals, there is much more that can be achieved. Moreover, the success of the programmes can, to a significant degree, be guaranteed.

But first, there must be common agreement about ASP mission in a particular institution, in view of its unique needs. In the needs assessment process the primary focus needs to be directed at assisting students to be capable, concerned, confident, and independent learners. The ultimate aim of organisation development is the total elimination of all obstacles in the process of accomplishing the stated mission of the organisation. Constituting the ASP organisation would be a corporate effort, which would demand both ASP and faculty involvement in rendering academic support in accordance with this consensus model for ASP intervention.

How can ASP units manage to do this in co-operation with their institutions? It is fact that, on their own, ASP units cannot expect to fulfill their mission. However, in this regard the matter of institutional orientation remains a point of crucial importance. To this end sufficient

clarity on the definition of roles, as a basis for understanding what needs to be done in the interactive process and about the relationship itself, is necessary. Obviously it would be most difficult for universities to train adequate professionals for jobs in all technologically advanced industries and be able to meet the human resources requirements in all positions requiring leadership skills in the South African economy without the intervention of ASP. As has already been pointed out, universities in predominantly White campuses have never been able to satisfactorily meet the needs for the economic development of our society. Therefore, the important role of ASP intervention has to be recognised, through co-operation in the intervention process between the university and ASP.

The economic needs of our society are such that universities have realised that they cannot contemplate continuing to be solely reliant, indefinitely, on either the supply of skilled personnel from the White community alone or from the importation of skills from overseas. Therefore, predominantly White universities as predominantly Black universities have welcomed the establishment of ASP units to facilitate the development of human resources potential among African students to be able to cope with the demands of university study and successfully complete their academic programmes.

In a number of instances, ASP units have become accepted mainly by faculty academics as part of the academic community in the university. ASP academics are no longer experiencing as intense hostility now as used to happen during the early beginnings of ASP. It could be that, part of the change of attitude arises from the realisation that the two - faculty academics and ASP academics - have complementary roles to play in the interests of student development. Therefore, no rivalries should be entertained between faculty members and ASP staff. The role of ASP has, over recent years been defined in such a way that its staff

can no longer be justifiably viewed with suspicion or as threats either to their faculty colleagues or the establishment itself.

Such legitimation, this Study has discovered, has gone a long way to make it possible to implement the elicited criteria. It is also likely to facilitate the integration of these units at all levels of faculty and university structures. Perhaps, as no surprise, it is not only a matter of congenial perceptions of the important work that needs to be done, but also the holistic theoretical framework, on which there is growing consensus, that says problems found with students should be considered together with problems experienced by students in the teaching approaches and methods used by faculty members as well as the problems presented by curricular structures. It is no use any longer to simply find fault with the student and ignore the existence of interrelated aspects of the whole problem that reside in the system and the nature of academic activities as defined by faculties.

This theoretical framework, although, justifying the existence of ASP units in their own right, also stresses the importance of collaborative engagement on matters, especially, of direct relevance to student development. In some cases this framework has, to a certain degree, been translated into practical action plans in terms of faculties offering physical space to accommodate ASP staff and providing logistics and the necessary facilities for them to do the work.

The over-arching paradigm for the institutions, that have accepted the principle of faculty-integrated ASP, is to interpret the deficiencies of educationally deprived students as problems confronting the whole institution and, as such, requiring corporate solutions. In this way the inefficiency, deficiencies and obsolescence of the skills of the learners can be seen as integral parts of challenges

confronting the university and within its responsibility and jurisdiction to solve. These deficiencies require a specific approach and appropriate strategies in order to be successfully eradicated. The basic assumption of this framework is to be found in the assertion that if the student, who is underprepared for university education presents a problem to the institution, equally so the underprepared university that is not able to meet the reasonable academic needs of the student becomes problematic to the student, who has satisfied the stipulated entrance requirement, even though on affirmative action grounds, such as alternative admissions programmes.

Undoubtedly, this theoretical approach gives us a model response to questions about the most suitable paradigm for effective implementation of ASP programmes. It is the most suitably adapted approach to involve the student in the activities of the programme throughout, that is, in its inception, implementation and evaluation. It also allows the student to be considered as one of the problem-solvers instead of always being viewed in the negative light, as the cause of the problem, as some tenets of the deficit paradigm suggest (Eraut, 1985).

While rejecting the deficit model as inadequate to resolve especially the issue of accountability and as being also inefficient for purposes of successful implementation of the programmes, the holistic model aligns itself with problem-solving oriented notions such as self-evaluation, critical reflection, and action research. In this Study, universities that can be described as moving in the right direction are those that meet the requirements of the criteria. These criteria are designed to facilitate effective implementation of the programmes. Universities that have established functional ASP units, which are capable to guarantee institutional change in a variety of ways, now have the opportunity to translate their plans into concrete action.

For the holistic paradigm the central issue then becomes the learning process which, in organisational development terms, can be fostered through collaborative efforts involving the pooling together of resources. Organisational development is a vital element in the shaping and mediation of the learning process. It ensures that this is done with the utmost efficient use of resources. It also facilitates the individual's growth towards self-actualisation, meaning removal of impediments to full access to opportunities for realising individual potential.

The holistic approach cannot achieve meaningful success without the organisation development policy which determines how the organisation is to operate, in our case the successful integration of ASP units into faculties. Organisation development acts as a guide that steers the organisation to the attainment of its goals. As such, one of the main thrusts of organisational development policy is to initiate strategic planning whose main aim is to ensure that obstacles to the attainment of ASP and educational objectives, which are enshrined in its mission statement, can be overcome. ASP programmes that are situated in this paradigm can more readily influence changes such as the renewal of curricular structures and modifications of teaching approaches and techniques. It allows organisation development efforts to use notions of excellence and self-actualisation of students in the learning process by establishing an appropriate context for these conceptions to co-exist. For example, the search for excellence by an institution should not necessarily preclude the concept of self-actualisation whereby students engage in metacognitive activities (Weinstein, 1989), which enable them to be aware of their own mental processes and to recognise and manage the learning situation.

It is in this context that the university, through ASP initiatives, succeeds in creating conditions for the programmes to focus on macro-environmental issues, while not

neglecting micro-environmental factors and their potential influence on the outcome of the ASP intervention process. Once organisation development policies of ASP units have successfully redeemed the micro-environment between students and ASP and between ASP units and faculties and made it academically 'safe' for the students to explore and gain new knowledge in more innovative ways and a dynamic educational environment, ASP can expand its horizons of organisation development policy. It can turn to the macro-environment and examine its relationship with the wider society in terms of fulfilling role expectations.

On the one hand, the ASP programme is expected to facilitate the educational advancement of students, who are not sufficiently prepared to undertake university study. And the model suggested in this Study emphasises that the entire educational environment in a particular institution requires ASP attention and not just the problems identified in students. On the other hand, ASP is expected to liaise effectively with the surrounding community which includes donors of funds, the corporate sector and community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In this sense ASP has to ensure that sufficient resources are mobilised for the attainment of the goal of satisfying the expectations of these ASP stakeholders. This can be done by meeting objectives, which include improving pass rates and graduation rates of students.

As can be seen, the achievement of organisational development objectives, according to the holistic paradigm, has a number of prerequisites. These include the co-determination of policy decisions by ASP and faculty staff members, the community which includes donor agencies, and students participating in the programmes as well as all those people with vested interests in the success and continued existence of ASP programmes. While other organisation development models, such as the decision-making one may be useful, it is the more inclusive approach of the

holistic model that makes it particularly attractive for purposes of this Study. It is also distinguishable from others by allowing joint decision-making by constituent principals to the undertaking.

The holistic model makes possible the participation of all concerned with student development in whatever manner. As such organisation development policies based on it will have all the elements and ideas necessary to take effective decisions through a more thorough consultation process. In a more striking manner, it is the participation by all that seems to guarantee lasting solutions to the problems encountered and enhances the chances of success for the programmes, since parties to the decision-making process will feel bound by the decisions taken through such a democratic process. Organisation development policy, that uses this model, possesses the necessary ingredients for transforming established ASP programmes into effective and efficient projects which can attract funders and investment from the corporate sector. In addition, through such a model maximal opportunities for successful implementation of the programme can be assured and secured.

This paradigm for organisation development also provides the ground plan which enables the elicited criteria to take ASP programmes to new vistas of what they are capable of achieving. Programmes that will be introduced in the future now have the criteria which will, if properly implemented, be of tremendous assistance, not just for ASP evaluation purposes, but also for rational considerations based on the cost-effectiveness of their implementation strategy.

6.5 Conclusion

The choice for the ASP of the future in South Africa depends on adopting a comprehensive approach based on the faculty-integration model and immediately abandoning the ad hoc approach in order to achieve ASP goals efficiently and

effectively. The benefits of pursuing such a model are numerous to exhaust in this discussion. But its highlights include: content-based tutoring, which overcomes problems encountered with transference of skills presented by the "skills without content" model. The faculty integrated model is essentially developmental, meaning that it entails the combination of teaching skills with immediate reference to course content to which those skills are applicable. Thus the interactive process between skills acquisition and skills transference is brought much closer. In this way students apply skills while developing understanding of themes or subject matter for course or study. It eliminates the dichotomy created by the separation of skills from content.

By implementing faculty integrated programmes, ASP will be in a position to contribute significantly to the evolution of academic support systems that are embodied in the holistic framework of providing support to disadvantaged students. This framework encompasses notions related to providing for both academic, non-academic and welfare needs of disadvantaged students in order to enhance opportunities for successful ASP intervention, as Agar's (1992:95) remarks confirm that "... in general being in residence is positively related to academic success only if students have little or no financial worries." Therefore, by all indications, the influence of non-academic factors on academic performance cannot be ignored. Future ASP, therefore, following the American example as shown in strategies of the TRIO scheme, to alleviate disadvantaged students' academic and socio-economic problems, should consider using the holistic framework in devising an ASP system.

Alternatively ASP, when adhering to the discredited bias of the deficit model, will remain in the periphery of tertiary education, particularly at university level. For this and other reasons, the extra-curricular approach, which is based

on the skills without content model should be abandoned, since it is inefficient and has, largely, contributed to the failure of ASP programmes in many faculties of the universities surveyed. Rhodes University has finally seen its ASP making determined efforts to relinquish extra-curricular tutorials, to a large extent, in response to students' resistance against tutorials offered on skills without content. Both ASP staff and students at Rhodes have discovered that it the Programme would be unable to perform effectively in terms of successfully implementing its ASP course. It would also be incapable of contributing in any significant manner to the transformation of curricular structures, university teaching and methodological issues.

Throughout this Chapter, it has been argued that the concept of holism can be approached only through carefully selected strategies for educational intervention as demonstrated in the grouping of four sets of criteria (dealing with programme, student, staff, and organisation development). The elicited criteria provide an ideal opportunity for the transformation process to commence. Such a process will ensure that ASP is not simply designed to equip students with skills to adapt to traditional university teaching strategies and content. But, as du Plessis, J.D. while Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand once stressed in 1978:

"that any attempt to respond systematically to the problems experienced by underprepared students would entail adaptation not only on the part of these students but also on the part of the universities" (In: Hunter, P. 1991 South African Journal of Higher Education (SAJHE) Vol.5 (2):5).

ASP is faced with the challenge of facilitating institutional change efficaciously. But ASP has limited time and resources to do that as substantiated in the following paragraphs. Partly, for this reason, ASP must be continually adapted to the requirements of the different circumstances

within which it operates. The contention of the present investigation is that ASP has had to go through distinct phases in its past existence, similarly in advancing to the future will demand some restructuring and reconstruction of its functions and services, with most of these taken over by faculties. In this sense ASP cannot be indefinitely expected to be part of the academic landscape without undergoing some transformation itself. Like all forms of intervention it has a limited life-span in which to exert strategic influence on institutional policy for change to occur in tertiary curricula and approaches to teaching.

At the inception of ASP in surveyed universities the numbers of the underprepared intake justified notions of academic support that embraced the deficit model, which is manifest in piecemeal approaches and ad hoc programmes in the intervention process. But the current demography of the student body, at various campuses, suggests that these underprepared students now form a substantial proportion of the student-intake. Consequently the original strategies which concentrate exclusively on student deficiencies have become irrelevant and outmoded by events and accumulated knowledge in the ASP field. The prevailing circumstances dictate the urgency for a comprehensive review of curricular structures and strategies.

In some instances the amount of review will require that, in almost all First Year courses, language and other academic skills be interwoven into course content on discipline-specific basis. This necessitates more vigorous participation by faculty lecturers in the designing, implementation and evaluation of the revised course content. The implications for the financing of tertiary education and curriculum development, resulting in the extended duration of studies, are enormous. If any negative alteration in exit academic standards has to be pre-empted, the elicited criteria represent the most appropriate measures for the purpose of maintaining the quality of educational standards.

Tertiary institutions have no reason to accept that ASP, necessarily, entails the lowering of standards of academic achievement in final degree examinations. However, these institutions must allow changes in strategic thinking in order to bring about dynamic developments in their functions, systems and services. Initially ASP will have the important task of influencing the formulation of institutional policy so that organisation development criteria are implemented and entrenched. To a large extent the often unique characteristics of ASP's macro-environment will determine the most suitable procedures for either simultaneous or gradual implementation of the Criteria. Faculty staff, it is envisaged, will benefit immediately from the assistance of ASP staff in developing academic support skills for imparting knowledge to students and gaining techniques on how to use such skills effectively.

Summary

In their present formulation, content, and organisation structures, ASP programmes will continue failing to make a significant impact on tertiary institutions. ASP requires a fundamental transformation of its framework of operation, which has major limitations arising from the disjointed organisation of ASP functions. The fragmentation of ASP services has resulted in the lack of a comprehensive strategy and perspective to deal with the problems confronting disadvantaged students. Consequently, an incoherent strategy has emerged. It has become abundantly clear that this strategy has dismally failed to deal with the many problems in the ASP field, some of them an academic nature and others arising from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The end result has been the inefficient use of resources, which has significantly reduced the impact of ASP programmes on both short term (increasing pass rates) and long term (reduction of drop-out rates accompanied by increased graduation rates).

The achievement of these objectives remains ASP's main task, which has defied a number of strategies and eluded numerous initiatives. This would be a prerequisite for any future development of ASP initiatives. Enormous work has been done to lay the foundations on which to establish an efficiency model that will render ASP capable of full entry and assimilation into mainstream activities of the tertiary sector of education, particularly targeted faculties in universities.

Fortunately, for South African ASP, much can be achieved in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness through appropriate use of lessons from past mistakes of local and international ASPs. In South Africa, there is no need to pursue less cost-effective strategies such as busing students to achieve racial integration, since the failures of most United States strategies for dealing with inadequate schooling resulting in under-preparedness for tertiary education, have been exposed in Chapter 2 and elsewhere in this dissertation.

The pre-condition for the success of ASP programmes in South Africa lies in being adequately staffed with properly trained teachers and personnel, who can competently embrace the faculty integration approach, on comprehensive basis of ASP intervention, within the holistic framework. It is, to a great extent, on this basis that the future of ASP would not be as bleak as it now appears. Accompanying these measures towards efficient implementation of programmes is the requirement for regular evaluation to assess the impact programmes are making to reduce failure rates while increasing graduation rates.

On these points ASP has failed to fulfill its promise to the employment sector of providing sufficient numbers of adequately trained personnel for leadership and skilled positions. It has been suggested several times, in this dissertation, that comprehensively structured programmes,

according to the principles described in the Criteria for faculty integrated ASP programmes, have a better opportunity for successful implementation, since integration of ASP programmes into faculties has legitimacy with the majority of ASP stakeholders. Some of the reasons for such legitimacy are further explored in the following paragraphs.

It is necessary for ASP to progress "from being a purely peripheral activity to one which is attempting to affect the very nature of universities" (Beard, 1989:73). The criteria offered by this Study can greatly assist in the creation of ASP structures that can bring about more efficiency within the organisation to ensure successful implementation of the programmes. The main thrust of the Criteria is to build the capacity of ASP in order to contribute significantly in the transformation of institutions hosting the programmes.

Undoubtedly, ASP possesses the potential to play a meaningful role in the process of transforming predominantly White universities. These institutions have endeavoured, for more than a decade, to become accessible to all peoples of South Africa irrespective of race or colour. They have for some time already avoided catering solely for the needs of White students' privileged socio-economic status and advantaged educational backgrounds. They now seek to become institutions of excellence through taking into consideration broadly based interests of South African society without practising any form of discrimination.

However, the extent to which these universities can be regarded as fully equal opportunity institutions, depends on the impact they are making in creating conditions that allow disadvantaged students to enjoy equal opportunities, with White students, towards realising success in their studies. It has been shown that ASP represents a vital force for such an opportunity to emerge. An important way for that to happen is by pervading the institutional framework with ASP ideals, values, and educational ethos. But before ASP can

influence an institution as a whole, it must ensure its own internal efficiency and effectiveness. Once that is achieved, ASP contributions could be immense on various aspects of academic development. Included are the shaping of curricular structures and restructuring the content of academic disciplines to accommodate academic support interests. In this way, ASP would bring closer the possibility of an educational development dispensation for all students irrespective of ethnicity, socio-economic status and most importantly educational background.

Such a tertiary educational dispensation will have been transformed, organisationally and academically so that accusations based on perceptions of racially homogeneous ASP classes and ASP paternalism will be a thing of the past. At Wits, for example, the Linguistics Department offers credit courses in English as a Second Language as a result of ASP contribution in curriculum development. The University of Natal's Teach-Test-Teach programme provides university access to disadvantaged students. The University of Cape Town has a similar alternative selection and admissions procedure as well as a credit-bearing English course originated by ASP on a basis of the faculty integration model. Such efforts should be encouraged so that institutions of higher learning are made accessible to everyone who needs higher education through programmes such as TTT in Natal, AARP at UCT, and others currently being formulated.

Tertiary institutions, particularly universities have become increasingly aware of the need for change. Beard (*ibid.*:73) in subtle terms, cryptically remarks: "Not only do we have disadvantaged students, but also disadvantaged universities". ASP has gradually gained recognition as an important agent for change, more specifically concerning staff development in ways that can contribute to the improvement of faculty staff approaches and methods to teaching. The tertiary sector requires more such

intervention. While broadening the scale of intervention, an appropriate framework with relevant strategies to facilitate and increase the benefits of the change process can now be implemented as outlined in the Criteria.

A number of obstacles to realising the full potential of ASP can be found in the over-arching framework that narrowly focuses on locating the problem with the student and ignoring the blemishes of the institution. In the case of universities surveyed, concerted efforts are required to eradicate institutional deficiencies. It is commonly acknowledged now South Africa that tertiary institutions, more particularly predominantly White universities are underprepared for disadvantaged students.

A suitable ASP framework for analysis of major problems hindering efforts to implement faculty integration is provided throughout the discussion of Criteria for evaluation of ASPs. The elicited Criteria form the basis of a ground-plan for a comprehensive framework to guide the formulation or reformulation, implementation, and evaluation of the programmes. This comprehensive strategy is embedded in the understanding that existing deficiencies in universities must be identified and properly assessed so that ways and means can be devised, following the outline of the Criteria, to eradicate them. It is not enough that students have to admit their disadvantages before ASP commences with remedial programmes. The initiative could come from the institution by acknowledging, for example, that some university academics have deficiencies in their teaching methods and strategies and that the faculty course-content requires to be changed. As a consequence of such preliminary admission that certain deficiencies exist within the university itself, further systemic deficiencies such as antiquated curricular structures and university administrative procedures.

The Criteria stipulate that deficiencies in the institution should not be viewed in isolation from other sources of impediments to the success of ASP. Therefore, the recurrence of the mistakes arising from the current partisan framework, should not be permitted. The solution with potential to last longer is found in the holistic view of the situation. Scott (1989:13) enumerates instances that have contributed to the unsuccessful implementation of ASP programmes at the University of Cape Town. He argues that early misconceptions of the problem were a limiting factor to gaining the whole spectrum of the issues involved, consequently despite:

"some extra tutorials, some friendly help from academics, face-to-face consultations... Alienation of the students continued, performance did not improve a great deal, and there were no results at all from some of the early methods... In our experience that has not worked. Nor indeed have decontextualised or contentless programmes designed to teach students to think: logic development courses. There is no evidence that these courses have made any significant difference to student performance at all... So we have moved gradually into fully-structured full-year programmes of various kinds" (Scott, 1989:13)

This quotation, which reflects the impressions the ASP Director at UCT had, has summed up almost the entire scenario that has prevailed for more than a decade of ASP intervention, not just at UCT but at most institutions, and most definitely at the surveyed universities in varying degrees. Unfortunately, at the majority of universities there still are no visible signs of improvement and the search for the success of ASP remains an elusive objective.

The direction to which Scott is alluding involves faculty-integrated programmes of a credit-bearing type. In this connection, the main contention of the thesis is that integration of programmes into faculty curricular structures requires the expansion of common ground between ASP academics and faculty academics. This would create academic space to accommodate the academic values and interests

regarding the success of the programmes. The Criteria most definitely provide a viable basis for such interactive co-operation to occur.

On their own ASP programmes most certainly do not possess the capacity to resolve all academic problems encountered by disadvantaged students (Scott, *ibid.*:12) correctly contends that "ASP is not universally agreed to be the solution. It has been said that ASP is an ad hoc response, that it doesn't do anything to change the surrounding conditions either in the schools below or in the universities above."

The main thrust of the Criteria developed for implementation of ASP programmes and building the capacity of ASP to influence institutional policies relies on co-operative interaction between ASP and faculty staff. On numerous aspects ASP cannot succeed alone, without taking faculty staff along for effective educational intervention. On the other hand, faculties have limited capacity to effectively eradicate students' academic disadvantages on their own, since they require the skills for doing so, which at present are, largely, possessed by ASP staff . Therefore, the two groupings need each other to achieve sustainable and lasting educational intervention. Neither direction, independently, is a viable option for ASP since it would be heading for unmitigated failure unless areas of common interest are identified upon which mutual co-operation and shared responsibility with other academics can be built.

Basic principles, which represent the minimum requirements for the enforcement of such co-operation are contained in the Criteria. These encompass the total spectrum of ASP competence and involvement and have been grouped into discreet categories such as, student-oriented, programme-oriented, staff-oriented and organisation-oriented Criteria. The categorisation of Criteria into clusters serves to elucidate their peculiar characteristics and clearly define their individual focus in relation to others

within a given cluster for easy reference. In addition such a layout affords maximum consolidation of the conceptual framework in terms of the holistic paradigm espoused in this dissertation and the one on which the Criteria are anchored.

Within this context the criteria should, perhaps, be given the opportunity to inculcate the system of values, which ASP represents. The success of evaluation Criteria depends on the understanding that they have been developed solely as a vehicle for bringing to fruition the goals for which programmes have been established and the realisation of the aspirations of ASP staff, who are always anxious to minimise hindrances to successful ASP intervention. The availability of such an opportunity will provide conditions in which ASP initiatives can be nurtured. Indeed, when used in an appropriate academic environment and meticulously monitored through periodic evaluation according to inherently established procedures in developed Criteria, ASP can become an invaluable asset to institutional development in a variety of ways.

Doubtlessly, these Criteria represent a dynamic innovation in the value system which is embodied in ASP programmes and require, of necessity, changes within ASP as an organisation striving towards inculcating a unique ethos to the staff and eventually the broader academic community of the institution. In this sense, essentially, will change be possible at different institutional levels as Hunter P and Scott I portray the vast benefits potentially accrued at each level:

"The micro-level. The provision of supplementary and enriched teaching in small groups for individual students with special needs, where this is not (yet) provided by mainstream departments. The meso-level. Contributing to the development of mainstream teaching strategies and curricular structures more appropriate than at present to the educational heterogeneity of the intake. The macro-level. Contributing to the overall development of university policy and practice in respect of such matters as the policies,

curricula, research priorities, educational outreach, community relationships, staff recruitment priorities, Black participation in decision-making, and relationships with nation-wide political developments" (Hunter and Scott 1990:138).

The essence of the previous discussion is captured in these words, which clearly show that the leadership in ASP circles is far sighted and have envisioned the direction in which ASP should be steered. All developed Criteria could be important milestones, in measuring progress towards attainment of ideals to which the two authors, who hold ASP positions of directorship, have alluded, (Wits ASP Director and UCT ASP Director respectively).

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Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal

QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF AT SELECTED UNIVERSITIES (WITS, UCT, RHODES, NATAL) WHICH INITIATED ASP PROGRAMMES

Dear Colleague

In the early 1980s academic support programmes were introduced at predominantly White universities in South Africa to address the high failure rate among African disadvantaged students. Since the inauguration of ASP programmes, as they have become known, there has been no significant attempt to assess their impact and evaluate the contribution they might have made to reduce the high failure and drop-out rates of these students. Your assistance in answering this questionnaire is required in order to identify factors that might have contributed to ASP achievements and failures.

Although it is recognised that your responses will be based on experience that is limited to your work situation and job environment, when considered severally, they will nevertheless give ASP stakeholders the opportunity of sharing information, based on a wider scope of experiences and viewpoints, on practical aspects of ASP work. This information will, presumably, provide a useful starting point of dealing with the inadequacies or impediments, if any, that continue hindering the attainment of ASP goals.

Kindly, complete the questionnaire below for ASP evaluation. It consists of four sections, ranging from A to D. The information requested relates to: A. Organisation of ASP, B. Staffing issues, C. Student matters, and D. Programme considerations.

Thank you very much for your co-operation and willingness to complete this questionnaire.

L E MHLANE

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A. ORGANISATION

1. When and how did the ASP begin in your University?
.....
.....
.....

2. Has your University a mission statement? If so what is it?
.....
.....
.....
3. What are the main objectives of your ASP?
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.....
.....
4. In your University is ASP centralised or faculty-based?
.....
.....
.....
5. What is the structure of your ASP central unit in relation to faculty-based academic support interventions?
.....
.....
.....
6. How is your ASP funded?
.....
.....
.....
7. Would you say that current funds are adequate to finance the various ASP programmes?
.....
.....
.....
8. Have you any other academic support initiative(s) in your University? If so, how do these relate to ASP?
.....
.....
.....
9. Do you think that the ASP, as you know it, is the ideal route towards education development in the South Africa university context?
.....
.....
.....

B. STAFFING

10. What characteristics do most of your clients for ASP have in common?
.....
.....
.....

11. How are the ASP clients identified (e.g. whether on registration for university study, by lecturing staff, presenting themselves to ASP on individual initiative, or through referrals)?

.....
.....
.....

12. How are your clients for ASP programmes selected?

.....
.....
.....

13. What selection procedures or criteria do different faculties use for participation in ASP programmes?

.....
.....
.....

14. What should be the ASP's response to the expectations of lecturing staff?

.....
.....
.....

15. (a) How have lecturing staff reacted to the establishment of ASP programmes?

.....
.....
.....

(b) What are their expectations of these programmes?

.....
.....
.....

16. Has your ASP been allocated any establishment posts? (Yes/No)..... How many and at what levels?

.....
.....
.....

17. Has your ASP outside-funded posts? (Yes/No).... How many and at what levels?

.....
.....
.....

18. At what rate is the percentage of disadvantaged students growing in your University?

.....
.....
.....

19. What provisions are being made to meet the needs of increasing numbers of disadvantaged students in your University?
.....
.....
.....

C. STUDENTS

20. Have thinking skills improved, on the part of ASP students? Please substantiate by giving reasons for your.
.....
.....
.....

21. In what ways has concept development taken place?
.....
.....
.....

22. Have living and studying conditions had any negative effects on ASP students' academic performance?
.....
.....
.....

23. Would you explain how financial difficulties associated with getting bursaries have an effect on academic success?
.....
.....
.....

24. To what extent do ASP students living in residence away from adverse socio-political conditions and violence in the townships perform better at their studies?
.....
.....
.....

25. How should we deal with the problem of students living in adverse home conditions?
.....
.....
.....

D. PROGRAMMES

26. To whom are your ASP programmes directed?
.....
.....
.....
27. What types of programmes are offered by the central unit and in each faculty?
- (a) c e n t r a l u n i t - b a s e d p r o g r a m m e s
.....
.....
.....
- (b) faculty-based programmes
.....
.....
.....
28. What are the teaching objectives in each programme?
.....
.....
.....
29. What is the University policy on voluntary and compulsory participation by students in ASP programmes?
.....
.....
.....
30. What is the average duration of most programmes?
.....
.....
.....
31. Could your ASP programmes be described as having both short-term and long-term objectives or either? If yes, then what success have you had with:
- (a) short-term programmes, e.g. reading, note-taking, analytical-reasoning, and writing skills courses?
.....
.....
.....

(b) long-term programmes, e.g. supplementary, concurrent, and credit-bearing courses?

.....
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.....

32. What are the practical implications of the principle of the extended curriculum?

.....
.....
.....

33. What have been the perceived benefits of the application of the extended curriculum principle? Describe real hindrances, e.g. student resistance, financial implications such as fees for additional year of study, and likely changes in it.

.....
.....
.....

34. In what manner has the reduced curriculum workload helped ASP students to pass their First Year, first time? If so, to what extent have ASP initiatives been successful beyond First Year levels to reduce drop-out rates and increase graduation rates?

.....
.....
.....

35. What do you think are the strengths of your ASP programmes?

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.....
.....

36. If there are short-comings, (a) what do you think they are?

.....
.....
.....

(b) why do they occur?

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.....
.....

37. What would be the rate of success in passing ASP courses?

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.....
.....

38. Is regular evaluation part of each ASP programme?
.....
.....
.....

39. Would it be possible to improve or change the programmes in order to achieve their objectives? (Yes or No).... Please give reasons for your answer.
.....
.....
.....

40. What would be the rate of success in terms of improvement in numbers of those graduating as a result of participation in ASP?
.....
.....
.....

41. In what areas would you say your ASP has achieved overall success, and what have been the contributing factors?
.....
.....
.....

42. What is the future of ASP in your University in terms of expansion of operations, consolidation of existing programmes, or scaling down of its activities?

(a) future prospects, generally
.....
.....

(b) expansion of programmes, including creating new ones
.....
.....

(c) consolidation of existing programmes for greater impact
.....
.....

(d) down-scaling, including rationalisation for cost benefits
.....
.....
.....

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Could you identify a particular individual whose original idea is associated with the beginning of ASP locally or nationally?
2. What early models of ASP do you recall?
3. How was the launch of ASP financed?
4. Was resistance, in any form, experienced during the initial phase of ASP (first five years in existence of the programmes)?
5. What was the ASP staff establishment during the first five-year phase?
6. Can you elaborate on the types of programmes that were offered when ASP was launched?
7. In what important ways would you say that the previous types of programmes substantially differ from those that are currently offered?
8. What have been the highlights of ASP in approximately the ten year period of its existence at this campus or nationally?
9. Over almost a decade of ASP experience, has the University noticed any significant changes in the way pass rates and the retention of academically disadvantaged students have improved?
10. Would you say that the programmes are reaching the intended target population?
11. What factors significantly undermine the success of ASP locally and nationally?
12. Has any particular model emerged, for example the infusion or faculty integration model, as the most appropriate approach in response to the needs of disadvantaged students?
13. Can the success rate of the selected ASP model be measured as more effective compared to other models?
14. Could you mention briefly what difficulties have been confronted in the implementation of ASP?
15. How can the remaining problems be resolved?

16. Has there been any change in the characteristics of ASP clients in the last decade?

17. What contingency plans or strategies is the University considering to deal with the inadequately prepared number of students registering each year?

18. Would you say that ASP has a long-term future in your University or nationally in its present form and structure?

19. Has the individual or comprehensive evaluation of programmes indicated what ASP policy must be formulated towards the desired direction of the programmes?

20. What would be the ideal alternative route to the widespread ASP dispensation?

Thank you for your assistance.

The above discussion points provide basis for obtaining vital information from key individuals in university administration, ASP units including ASP students, and faculties at surveyed Universities (Rhodes, UCT, Natal, and Wits). These, largely, unstructured interviews would be supplemented by long-distance telephone conversations with ASP Directors particularly at Rhodes University, University of Cape Town, and University of the Witwatersrand.

LIZWI MHLANE

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
AARP	Alternative Admissions Research Project
AD	Academic Development
AEA	Adult Education Act
ALP	Adult Literacy Programme
ASAC	Academic Skills Advisory Committee
ASAC	Academic Support Advisory Committee
ASP	Academic Support Programme
ASPECT	ASP in Engineering at Cape Town
ASS	Academic Support Services
ASSCOM	Academic Support Services Committee
BTG	Bridging-the-Gap
CASP	Commerce Academic Support Programme
CAE	Centre for Adult Education
CRA	Civil Rights Act (United States of America - USA)
CUED	Centre for University Education Development
DEC-HoD	Department of Education and Culture - Indians
DEC-HoR	Department of Education and Culture - Coloureds
DET	Department of Education and Training - Africans
DBN	University of Natal Durban Campus
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ELDS	English Language Development Scheme
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMBU	Economics Management Bridging Unit
EMU	Economics Management Unit
EOA	Economic Opportunity Act (USA)
EOC	Equal Opportunity Act (USA)
EOC	Economic Opportunity Commission (USA)
EOC	Educational Opportunities Council
ESAA	Emergency Schooling Assistance Act (USA)
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (USA)
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	Educational Support Programmes
GRATEP	Grahamstown Tertiary Education Project
FEDO	Faculty Education Development Officer
HDE	Higher Diploma in Education
HEA	Higher Education Act (USA)

IQ Intelligence Quotient
 LLL/3L Language, Learning and Logic
 L&RC Language and Reading Centre
 MEDASP Medical Academic Support Programme
 NAACP National Association for the Advancement of Coloured
 People (USA)
 PFU Preparation for University
 PMB University of Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus
 SAAAD South African Association for Academic Development
 SAARDHE South African Association for Research Development in
 Higher Education
 SAIRR South African Institute of Race Relations
 SCC Student Counselling Centre
 SFP Science Foundation Programme
 SI Supplemented/Supplementary Instruction
 SLC Southern Leadership Conference (USA)
 SSS Student Support Services
 TC Teacher Corps (USA)
 TTT Teach-Test-Teach
 TUP Teacher Upgrading Programme
 UEDP University Education Development Programme
 UCT University of Cape Town
 UK United Kingdom
 UND University of Natal - Durban
 UNP University of Natal - Pietermaritzburg
 UNIP University of Natal Internship Programme
 TRIO Group of three federally-funded ASP programmes for
 specialised services to disadvantaged students in the USA
 VEA Vocational Education Act
 VISTA Volunteers in Service to America (USA)
 WISPE Wits Integrated Study Programme for Engineers
 Wits University of the Witwatersrand



Addendum 4
ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAMME
RHODES UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140 South Africa
Telephone (0461) 22023 Ext. 171 Fax (0461) 25049

14 November, 1990

Mr Lizwi Mhlane
Financial Aid Office
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
DURBAN
4001

Dear Lizwi

Received your letter of 2 November. I've enclosed a copy of a brochure from the programme I directed in Wisconsin. Unfortunately I do not have anything with me on the Oregon program which dates back to 1963. What I wanted to do here is provide a few references which you might find helpful.

Bryon, S., and Bardo, H., "Special Educational Opportunity Programmes: A Perspective on Critical Issues," Journal of Non-white Concerns in Personnel and Guidance (7) 1979, pp 50-58.

Gordon, E.W. "Opportunity Programs for Disadvantaged in Higher Education," ERIC, Higher Education Research Report. (6) American Association of Higher Education, 1975.

Hampton, Peter J. "Problems Encountered in Developmental Education Course Offerings" Journal of Instructional Psychology (6) 1979 pp 12-17.

Klingelhofer, E.L., and Longacre, B.J. "A Case in Point: Educational Opportunity Programs," The Research Reporter 7 No. 3 1972, pp 5-8. The Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California.

Stikes, C. Scully, "Insights into the Practices and the Organization of Special Programs," Journal of the Society of Ethnic and Special Studies 3 No. 1, 1979, pp 13-18.

Kulik, C.C. and J.A. Kulik and B.J. Shwalb, "College Programs for High Risk and Disadvantaged Students: A Meta analysis of Findings," Review of Educational Research, 1983 Vol. 53 No. 3, pp 397-414.

I would suggest you review the volumes of ASPECTS which are the proceedings from the old ASP Conferences. I vaguely remember an article in one of them which looked at the American scene.

You asked me to comment on the present status of academic support in

the United States. Keep in mind that I've been living out of the USA over eight years, but I've made visits back during that time so I know for example that many of the things I started in Wisconsin are still going on. In general, my impression is that the ASP units that have survived and flourished in the United States are those that have integrated into mainstream departments. The central ASP unit contains specialists in areas like reading - testing - essay writing and serve in a consultative basis for departments, and they run outreach programs into the secondary schools. These are the ones that have survived.

I hope the references are helpful. Keep up your work on the project.

Yours sincerely

George E. Carter
GEORGE E CARTER PhD
PROFESSOR/DIRECTOR



Academic Support Programme

Leslie Social Sciences Building · 12 University Avenue
Postal Address · Private Bag Rondebosch 7700
Telephone 650-2251/2
Fax No: (021) 650-3726

21 January 1991

Lizwi Mhlane
Financial Aid Office
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
DURBAN
4001

Dear Lizwe

Further to your letter of 2 November 1990, and your request for further information on the ASP, we have nothing to send you at present, but will send you a copy of the 1990 ASP Annual Report when its ready (approx. mid-March 1991).

Yours sincerely

Mrs S A Wiles
SECRETARY





UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

1 Jan Smuts Avenue, Johannesburg

✉ P O WITS
2050, SOUTH AFRICA
☎ 'Uniwits'
✉ 4/27125 SA
Fax: (011) 403-1926
☎ (011) 716-1111

Mr Lizwi Mhalne
Student Support Services
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban
4001

Reference: WC\LMS\LM

Enquiries: Ext: 4220



Date: 30 July 1991

Dear Lizwi

As promised I enclose herewith background literature on the College of Science. If you require any further information over and above this and in addition to that provided at our meeting to-day, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendy".

Wendy Coetzee
Co-Ordinator
College of Science

Addendum 4

Student Support Services
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban, 4001
28 August 1991

Ms Sue Starfield, Assistant Director
Academic Support Programme
University of the Witwatersrand
P.O. Wits
2050

Dear Ms Starfield

It is now four weeks since I came for my research meeting. I apologise for writing after a long time due to work pressures. I must say it was a very fruitful meeting for me, especially in that we could cover many areas of ASP within a short time including future prospects for the Programme.

I am particularly grateful for making available the following documents:

- a. Science and language: a new look at some old issues SAJHE vol.4 No.2, 1990
- b. Staff Development Workshops for ASP Tutors in 1990 - Proceedings; and
- c. Contextualising Language and Study Skills SAJHE vol.4 No.2, 1990.

Please send me other materials on programmes that have been used and those currently being implemented in different Faculties. Course and programme outlines will suffice for our present purposes. Main course/programme features e.g. objectives, duration, any significant evaluation outcomes, etc.

One more thanks for your co-operation and assistance with the gathering of information during the visit. Whenever necessary, I'll keep you informed of developments in so far as the functioning of ASPs and its documentation process is concerned. I wish you and your family all the best for the remainder of the year and many to come.

Sincerely


Lizwi E. Mhlane.

P/S I believe that preparations for the forthcoming SAAAD conference are still underway. After discussions with Professor Hunter, I have been encouraged to present a paper on 'Guidelines for Evaluating SA ASPs' and further details about the Conference will be appreciated. Thank you in advance, Sue.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-_____

APR 18 1991

Mr. Lizwi Mhlane
University of Natal
Financial Aid Office
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001, South Africa

Dear Mr. Mhlane:

Your letter requesting information on the role of the federal government in providing academic support to students at colleges and universities was referred to the Division of Student Services.

It might interest you to know that the U.S. Department of Education, Division of Student Services administers six programs; Upward Bound, Student Support Services, Talent Search, Educational Opportunity Centers, Ronald R. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement and School, College, and University Partnerships programs. Four of the six programs are designed to provide academic support services to students at the postsecondary level. For your information, a booklet which describes each of these programs is enclosed.

Also enclosed is the latest edition of the Guide to Programs Administered by the Office of Higher Education (OHEP). This publication contains a brief overview for each program supported by the Department of Education that provides academic support to students at the postsecondary level. At the conclusion of each program entry you will find the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the Division to contact should you desire additional information.

I hope you find the enclosed information useful and wish you much success in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Jowava M. Leggett
Jowava M. Leggett
Director
Division of Student Services

cc: Marcella Haynes

Enclosures

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

JUN 11 1990



Dear Colleague,

The Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) is pleased to provide you with the 1990 edition of the Guide to Programs Administered by the Office of Higher Education Programs (OHEP) and the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

The publication contains a brief overview for each OHEP and FIPSE program and Fiscal Year 1989 funding data. At the conclusion of each program entry you will find the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the Division to contact should you desire additional information.

I hope that this year's edition of the Guide will answer the questions that you may have regarding OHEP and FIPSE programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John B. Childers".

John B. Childers
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Higher Education Programs



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Addendum 4

Office of the Secretary

Office for Civil Rights
Washington, D.C. 20201

MAR 7 1991

Mr. Lizwi Mhlane
University of Natal
Financial Aid Office
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001 South Africa

Dear Mr. Mhlane:

Your letter requesting information on academic support programs for colleges and universities, and the roles of the NAACP and Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was referred to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) for reply.

The primary mission of OCR is "to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to ensure equal opportunities for the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of Federal financial assistance provided by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)." The recipients of the financial assistance are mainly hospitals, nursing homes and social service agencies. For your information, we have enclosed a Fact Sheet entitled *Know Your Civil Rights*, which discusses our jurisdiction and gives an overview of our office.

Regrettably, most of your request is outside our jurisdiction. However, we have enclosed information on the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Initiative which you may find useful. We are referring your letter to the U. S. Department of Education because they are the lead Federal agency in matters concerning schools. The address is:

Public Affairs Office
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20202-4134

You should hear from that Department soon. Below are addresses of the NAACP and Southern Christian Leadership Conference national offices. These organizations should be able to provide you with information on their roles, and suggest other civil rights organizations you could contact.

National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People (NAACP)
4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, Maryland 21215-3297

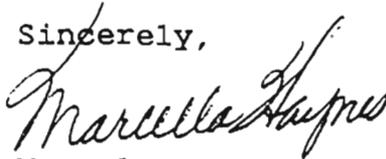
Mr. Lizwi Mhlane

-2-

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)
National Headquarters
334 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Thank you for writing to us. We wish you much success in your endeavors.

Sincerely,



Marcella Haynes
Director
Policy and Special Projects Staff
Office for Civil Rights

Enclosures

cc: Ms. Etta S. Fielek, DoE

November 2, 1990



University of Natal

Financial Aid Office

King George V Avenue Durban 4001 South Africa
Telephone (031) 8162231 Fax (031) 8162214
Telegrams University Telex 621231SA

Dr. Abigail Lipson
Bureau of Study Counsel
Harvard University
5 Linden Street
Cambridge
Massachusetts
02138

Dear Dr. Lipson

Thank you so much for the materials you sent me on the 4th October, 1990. Please convey my gratitude to Prof. Perkins as well for bringing us into contact. Indeed he is an amazing man for passing my request onto you so efficiently. All these materials have proved to be of great assistance in the process of compiling information on academic support services in the United States. I hope that, in due course, I will be in a position to give you formal feedback on how exactly this information has helped in my project.

In South Africa we are in an unfortunate position because of the international boycott of our universities as a result of apartheid practices in this country. We tend to be isolated from what is going on in the rest of the world and would very much welcome any form of assistance in the way you have done.

May I make a further request for more general information on the status of academic support programmes in other universities in the United States. I am aware that the needs of universities for such support vary with the characteristics of academic disadvantage being experienced by students. Your institution, in particular, does not seem to attract a large proportion of academically disadvantaged black students, and this happens to be the focus of interest for purposes of the present assignment. Please let me have as much information as possible on current trends in academic support all over the United States, and if at all possible, include an annotated commentary on historical background, funding, functioning, staffing implications, successes and failures of each programmes and contexts thereof.

I hope to hear from you soon. Once more thank you very much for the generous assistance you have given me in this regard.

Sincerely


Lizwi Mhlane

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
BUREAU OF STUDY COUNSEL
5 LINDEN STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138
495-2581

October 4, 1990

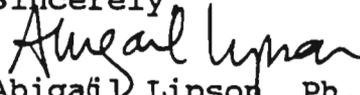
Lizwi Mhlane
University of Natal
King George Avenue
Durban 4001
South Africa

Dear Mr. Mhlane:

Our mutual colleague, David Perkins, mentioned to me that you are compiling information about various academic support services, and would be interested in receiving some materials about my office here at Harvard.

I hope the enclosed literature will give you some idea of the activities of the Bureau of Study Counsel. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can answer any questions or if I can provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,



Abigail Lipson, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist

**United States
Information
Service**

Regional English Teaching Officer

Embassy of the United States of America
Southern Life Building (Fourth Floor)
239 Pretorius Street
Pretoria 0002

Telephone: (012) 28-5100
Telex: 3-20717 SA



27/9/90

September 25, 1990

Mr. Lizwi Mhlane
Student Support Office
University of Natal
King George V Avenue
Durban
4001

Dear Mr. Mhlane:

The other day after you spoke to me about information on Academic Support Programs in the United States, I found the perfect person to help you: Dr. George Carter, Academic Support Project, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 6140.

Dr. Carter is an American working in South Africa. He has extensive background in Academic Support Programs in both the U.S. and here in South Africa. I think he will be able to help you a great deal. Good luck!

Sincerely,

George K. Wilcox

George K. Wilcox
Regional English Teaching
Officer

Addendum 4



ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
RHODES UNIVERSITY

P.O. box 94, Grahamstown, 6140 South Africa
Telephone 0461 - 31 8171/31 8173/31 8318 Fax 0461 - 2 5049

F A X T R A N S M I S S I O N

To : Mr Mhlane
University of Zululand

Fax No : (0351) 93420/93735

From : Nadine Cloete
Secretary: Academic Development Programme
Rhodes University

Fax No : (0461) 25049

Date : 09 December 1993

No Pages : 1

Re : National Report

The Academic Support Programme at Rhodes University was established in the early 1980's in response to problems experienced by disadvantaged and English second language students.

By 1983 the ASP had a staff complement of 7 full and part-time staff. Besides administrative staff there were tutors for groups of departments who supported students in the following areas: study skills, language -, reading and writing skills; and subject knowledge. In addition to support a Preessional Intensive Course was offered.

Funding: Budget +/- R80 000 in 1983; Majority of funds raised externally.

Staffing 1993: 23 Full- and Part-time staff

MEMORANDUM

To: L Mhlane
F A A
UND

From: C Damerell
S S S
UND

20 May 1991

REQUEST FOR 1981 - 1990 ANNUAL REPORTS etc

In response to your memorandum of 6 May 1991, I enclose annual reports for the years, 1988 - 1990. There were two reports produced for each of these years (except, as far as I know, 1990, because of restructuring) a report from the entire SSS to the SSS/SD Advisory Committee in about March - May, and a report from the director to the same committee, in about September/October).

Prior to this the production of reports seems a little haphazard: basically, reports were produced for the Academic Support Services Committee (ASSCOM) which was the steering committee before the creation of the SSS/SD Advisory Committee in 1986/7.

There are two or three files in SSS which contain these reports. What I suggest is that you come in and have a look at them and then photocopy those parts that are of interest to you. I am not keen for these files to go out of the office as they are the only record we have of what has gone on over the last ten years. We have also been referring to them quite frequently with all the changes and restructuring that is taking place.

I think you will find in these reports and files the information you need to answer a) ASP historical background, and b) current functioning. This last is, of course, the most difficult to ascertain because of current restructuring.

With regard to c) in your memorandum - pass rates and graduation rates - I do not have these records and do not believe that they exist in the form that you want them. This would be the subject of a research exercise, which as far as I know, has not yet been undertaken. Of course if you undertake it, we would appreciate having a copy of your findings.

C. Damerell



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-_____

MAY 23 1991

Mr. Lizwi Mhlane
University of Natal
Financial Aid Office
King George V Avenue
Durban 4001, South Africa

Dear Mr. Mhlane:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has forwarded your letter of November 22, 1990, to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for reply. The OCR is charged with enforcing the statutes that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, and age in educational institutions that receive Federal financial assistance provided by ED.

You requested information on academic support programs for colleges and universities, and on the roles of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in establishing such programs. The DHHS has provided you the addresses of the NAACP and the SCLC, so that you may contact those organizations directly.

You specifically requested materials on the historical background, the operation and organizational structure, and the effectiveness of academic support programs at institutions of postsecondary education. Your particular interest is in academic support services established for economically disadvantaged (primarily black) students. OCR does not have the type of materials or records you requested. The administration, structure, and content of those programs are determined by the individual institutions, and may be different at each institution, and at the various academic components within the institutions.

Postsecondary institutions across this country provide supplementary instruction designed to assist any student who may need academic support; some academic support programs have been specifically developed for students from low socio-economic backgrounds, who frequently are black. Also, between 1969 and 1981, this office found that, to some extent, the vestiges of prior segregation remained in 18 states that previously operated de jure segregated systems of public higher education. These 18 states (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia) were required to correct prior discriminatory practices. Public higher education institutions in these states developed new or expanded existing academic support services to address the particular needs of black students (and in Texas, also of Hispanic students) as well as of white students.

Page 2 - Mr. Lizwi Mhlane

Because of the academic and administrative autonomy of public higher education institutions, the materials you are seeking are probably available only from individual institutions. I hope this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Frederick T. Cioffi".

Frederick T. Cioffi
Acting Director
Policy and Enforcement Service
Office for Civil Rights