MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION WITHIN STUDENT AFFAIRS AT HISTORICALLY WHITE UNIVERSITIES

by

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by

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I Raletsatsi Ezekiel Moraka, declare that the thesis which I am submitting to the University of Pretoria for the degree Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) has not been submitted by me to any other university. It is my own work and information from other sources have been acknowledged.

.....

R E Moraka

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This thesis has been language edited and alterations have been made where necessary. However, the ideas of the researcher remain.

Johann Muller
13 December 2000

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SUMMARY

Life is characterised by change, and most of the time there is some conflict. The two variables cannot be separated because there are different perceptions of change which bring about the emergence of different attitudes of people towards change. Some people will want change, some will not while others accept whatever comes their way. As a result, evolutionary and revolutionary types of change are experienced. Thus, as long as there is life, change and conflict will always be experienced.

Even in the non-democratic South Africa change was experienced through pain and suffering. Conflict which was characterised by hatred and violence became the order of the day. Finally, political change from a non-democratic to a democratic South Africa engulfed South Africa with the advent of justice and equality through the democratic, all-inclusive elections of 27 April 1994.

The process of break-and-make started. Change became intensified in all the spheres of life in order to redress the past. The transformation process affected all institutions.

Universities were no exceptions. They had to change. The first step in the direction of change was to open them to all races. Thus, the composition of student communities drastically changed. That implies that adjustments in cultures and traditions are unavoidable. New structures which are relevant to new student compositions have to be put in place. Students who own cultures and traditions at these universities and are still comfortable with them, will most likely resist change. On the other hand, those students whose cultures and traditions are not accommodated will push for revolutionary change. Consequently, the two opposing perceptions bring about conflict.

It is therefore essential to seek ways that could facilitate change and the effective management of conflict within student life. That becomes the challenge to the student affairs division since it has been established to create an environment conducive to learning despite transformational processes which often meet with vehement resistance.

This study is geared to outline in detail what change entails, changes that are experienced within student communities in universities, pitfalls experienced in change processes and how change can be effectively managed. Furthermore, since conflict can result from change processes, it will be addressed by way of establishing the causes thereof and detailing how it can be best managed.

OPSOMMING

Die lewe word gekenmerk deur verandering en meestal is daar 'n mate van konflik. Hierdie twee veranderlikes kan nie geskei word nie, want daar is verskillende persepsies oor verandering wat verskillende houdings daaroor by mense laat ontstaan. Sommige mense is ten gunste van verandering, ander nie en nog ander aanvaar enigiets waarmee hul gekonfronteer word. Die resultaat is dat evolusionêre en revolusionêre tipes verandering ervaar word. So lank as wat daar lewe is, so lank sal verandering en konflik dus ervaar word.

Selfs in die voor-demokratiese Suid-Afrika was verandering ervaar deur pyn en lyding. Konflik wat gekenmerk is deur haat en geweld het die norm geword. Uiteindelik is Suid-Afrika oorspoel deur politieke verandering van 'n ondemokratiese na 'n demokratiese bestel met die aanbreek van geregtigheid en gelykheid deur die demokratiese inklusiewe verkiesing op 27 April 1994.

Die proses van maak of breek het begin. Verandering is versnel op alle lewensterreine om die verlede reg te stel. Hierdie tranformasieproses het alle instellings geraak.

Universiteite was nie 'n uitsondering nie. Hulle moes verander. Die eerste stap in daardie rigting was om universiteite oop te stel vir alle rasse. Derhalwe het die samestelling van die studentegemeenskap drasties verander. Dit impliseer dat onvermydelike aanpassings in kultuur en tradisies gemaak moet word. Nuwe strukture wat relevant is met betrekking tot die nuwe studente samestelling met in plek gestel word. Studente wat kultuur en tradisies by sekere universiteite "besit", sal waarskynlik verandering teenstaan. Daarenteen sal studente wie se kultuur en tradisies nie geakkommodeer word nie druk toepas vir revolusionêre verandering. Gevolglik sal hierdie opponerende persepsies konflik teweegbring.

Dit is daarom essensieel om maniere te vind aan die hand waarvan verandering gefasiliteer en konflik effektief bestuur kan word binne die studentelewe. Dit is die uitdaging aan studentesake afdelings, want laasgenoemde is gestig om 'n omgewing te skep wat bevorderlik is vir studie ten spyte van transformasieprosese wat dikwels teenkanting ervaar.

Hierdie studie is gerig daarop om in detail te beskryf wat verandering behels, watter veranderings ervaar word deur uiniversiteitstudente, probleemareas wat ontstaan tydens veranderingsprosesse en hoe verandering effektief bestuur kan word. Omdat konflik kan ontstaan in veranderingsprosesse sal dit aangespreek word deur die oorsake daarvan vas te stel en deur te beskryf hoe dit ten beste bestuur kan word.

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