

7.4.10 Employee Services

7.4.10.1 On/off referral by colleague (question 6.1)

Most of the respondents (54%) indicated that they would be prepared to refer their colleagues to an on-site facility whereas 43% would prefer an off-site facility and 3% did not respond to the question.

7.4.10.2 On/off self-referral (question 6.2)

The majority of the respondents (54%) maintained that they would prefer an off-site facility in case they experienced personal problems while 43% would prefer an on-site facility and 3% did not respond.

The pros and cons of internal versus external EAPs have been discussed in literature (Roman, 1990:45) and research indicates that these two approaches produce different referral patterns. Blum and Roman (1989:259-312) reported in a study of over 400 private firms that external EAPs led to a higher percentage of self-referrals for alcohol related problems than internal problems.

7.4.11 Can colleagues benefit from information on the following?

7.4.11.1 Management of personal problems (question 6.3.1)

A large majority of the heads of departments (77%) reported that they believed that members of staff in their departments would benefit more from information on how to manage personal problems and 23% said they would never. Harlacher and Goodman (1991:32) stress that EAPs address all kinds of personal problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, as well as mental health disorders.

7.4.11.2 Management of marital problems (question 6.3.2)

Most of the heads of departments (63%) reported that most staff members in their departments would benefit from more information on how to manage marital problems, while 37% said they did not think staff members in their departments would benefit from such information. Thoreson (1984:129-130) as well as Gross (1977:752-755) express the opinion that most academics in the mid-life stage experience marital problems.

The researcher is of the opinion that most marital problems are interpersonal in nature and the EAP has as its core technology the reduction of interpersonal conflict (Remington, 1996:22-25).

7.4.11.3 Retirement (question 6.3.3)

An overwhelming majority (89%) of the heads of departments reported that they thought most staff members in their department would benefit from more information on retirement but 11% said they did not think so. In a needs assessment study of college educators conducted by Ryan and Jevne, (1993:80) the findings revealed that developmental and personal needs were top priority with most educators.

7.4.11.4 Downsizing (question 6.3.4)

As may be expected the majority of the heads of departments (83%) said staff members in their departments would benefit from more information on downsizing while only 17% said they did not think so.

At the time of the study, the university was facing a threat of downsizing. The heads of the departments would face a barrage of questions from their subordinates as to what would be the final outcome of this restructuring. These questions are often accompanied by strong negative feelings which most of the heads of departments have not been trained to deal with. It therefore follows logically that the heads of departments would suggest that their colleagues would benefit from more information on downsizing.

7.4.12 Can heads of departments benefit from more information on the following?

7.4.12.1 Management of personal problems (question 6.4.1)

The majority of the heads of departments (66%) reported that they personally believed that they could benefit from more information on how to manage personal problems and 34% said they did not think that they needed this information. The heads of departments should be responsible for monitoring job performance deterioration particularly if it is not directly linked to some factor in the work situation (Roman, 1984:13) because personal problems may underlie deteriorating job performance.

7.4.15.2 Management of marital problems (question 6.4.2)

Most of the heads of departments (54%) reported that they would benefit from more information on how to manage marital problems and 46% said they do not think they could benefit from such information.

In a University based needs assessment, Roberts-DeGennaro (1989:15) established that managers (100%) and supervisors (91%) are most likely to identifying those employees that need help.

7.4.15.3 Retirement (question 6.4.3)

A high number of the heads of departments (83%) agreed that they thought they could benefit from information on retirement while 17% said they could not. Because the transition to a non-work status may be stressful for some older workers, it is important to offer pre-retirement planning programmes in the workplace, preferably early enough in the careers of workers that they have time to plan. Assessing the adequacy of the worker's projected retirement income is an important early endeavour and one that needs to be done with awareness of legislation, particularly regarding pension coverage (Stuen and Worden, 1997:270).

7.4.15.4 Downsizing (question 6.4.4)

Most of the heads of departments (74%) said they thought they would benefit from more information on downsizing while a minority (26%) said they did not think they would benefit. All Universities, particularly historically disadvantaged institutions, are facing threats of downsizing in the name of rationalisation due to factors such as reduced student numbers, a lack of funding, the declining infrastructure, and staff attrition (Court, 1991: 337; Bunting, 1993:17 and Amuwo, 2001:11). The changes in society, growth in the numbers of high risk students and severe cuts in state subsidies and the impoverishment of universities in terms of teaching and research make downsizing a reality (Strydom, 1993:83) it is only logical that employees at the University of the North should feel vulnerable and stressed about downsizing.

7.4.16 Facility for addressing employee problems (question 6.5)

The response to the question on how does the university address employee problems yielded many and varied responses. The answers ranged from those

who did not know to those who said such employees should be given leave. Some responses indicated that employees with personal problems are referred to the head of department for counseling. The question, however, was whether heads of departments were able to deal with personal problems of employees. Since responses indicated that personal problems of employees were either neglected or ignored.

Notwithstanding the multitude and diversity of the responses, a fact that clearly surfaced is that there was no mechanism on campus to deal with the personal problems of employees. It follows logically that the time is opportune to think seriously about employee well-ness. This assumption can be based on the fact that in a needs assessment for a university based EAP, Roberts-DeGennaro (1988:16) found that 80% of the respondents suggested that the university did not have adequate policies or procedures to reach and help employees whose personal problems were severe enough to interfere with their work.

7.5 Deans (Appendix D)

7.5.1 Biographical information (section 1)

7.5.1.1 Rank (question 1.1)

The question on rank was not properly understood in that the majority of the respondents mentioned deanship as a rank, when in actual fact the researcher wanted to know the incumbent's rank in terms of the academic ranking such as professor or senior lecturer. This constituted one of the limitations of the instrument.

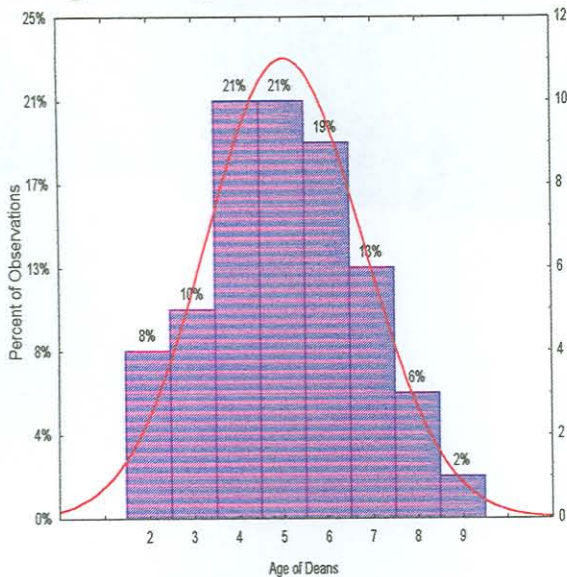
However, from the findings it has emerged that 50% of the respondents were in the position of vice-deanship while the other half were full deans.

7.5.1.2 Number of years in the position (Question 1.2)

The majority of the deans and vice-deans (50%) had been in these positions for two years while 20% had been deans for one (1) year. Some of the deans had served in these positions for three (3) years (10%), five (5) years(10%), and six(6) years (10%). It should be noted that deanship has been an area of instability within the University management structure. However, as the position of deanship at the University of the North has been an elected position tenable for two years, the majority of deans have served in these positions for two years only.

7.5.1.3 Age (question 1.3)

Histogram 4: Age of deans



The majority of deans (42%) were in the age group 35-45, 18 % were in the age group 24-39, 19% in the age group 46-51, 18% in the age group 52-57, 6% in the age group 58-63 and 2% in the age group 64 and above.

According to Gould (1972:129) and Levinson (1978:15) deans are usually somewhere between the stages of:

- becoming one's own man- usually occurring between the ages of 35 and 39; and
- middle adulthood occurring around 45-60.

According to Thoreson (1984:129), the majority of academic staff are now in the mid-life transition where the disengagement process in male development occurs and risk to alcoholism increases. Since existing literature seems to be focusing on the problems of academics at this stage very little could be found about managers of academic institutions.

7.5.1.4 Gender (question 1.4)

Ninety percent (90%) of the deans were male and 10% female. This means that the University had not fully implemented the requirements of the Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997 which is to redress past discrimination and ensure representivity and equal access (see pages 78 and 79).

7.5.1.5 Population group (question 1.5)

Eighty percent of persons in deanship positions were black. The racial composition of the deans as middle managers thus seem to conform to the national demographic character of the country. But another area that still needs improvement is to have more women and people with disabilities in positions of authority.

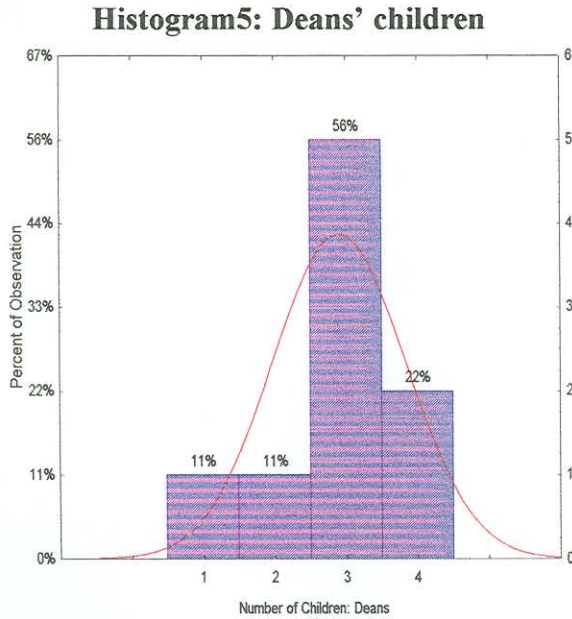
7.5.1.6

Marital status (question 1.6)

The majority of deans (80%) in the study were married. This may indicate that society seems to expect people in leadership positions to have the tied the knot so that they can be exemplary.

7.5.1.7

Number of dependents (question 1.7)



The majority of the deans had three children.. This finding correlates with the information that was obtained in the academic staff sample (see page 122) as far as the number of dependent children was concerned.

7.5.1.8

Qualifications (question 1.8)

The majority of the deans (60%) had a doctoral degree which of course is a requirement for positions such as these. A lesser percentage (40%) had a masters degree as the highest qualification which is a cause for concern since deanship is tantamount to academic leadership and as a result the highest possible academic and perhaps management qualification are essential for this position.

7.5.2 Changes in higher education

7.5.2.1 Familiarity with the Higher Education Act 101/1997 (question 2.1)

Most of the deans (90%) were familiar with the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 while only a minority (10%) was in the dark with regard to changes in higher education. The reason for this could have been that the Act maps out the whole governance scenario and policy for higher education in that it seeks to achieve the following:

- establish a single co-ordinated higher education system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based higher education;
- restructure and transform programmes and institutions to respond better to the human resource, economic and development needs of the Republic;
- redress past discrimination and ensure representivity and equal access;
- provide optimal opportunities for learning and the creation of knowledge;
- promote the values which underlie an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom;
- respect freedom of religion, belief and opinion;
- respect and encourage democracy, academic freedom, freedom of speech and expression, creativity, scholarship and research;
- pursue excellence, promote the full realisation of the potential of every student and employee, tolerance of ideas and appreciation of diversity;

- respond to the needs of the Republic and of the communities served by the institutions;
- contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, in keeping with international standards of academic quality;
- and for higher education institutions to enjoy freedom and autonomy in their relationship with the state within the context of public accountability and the national need for advanced skills and scientific knowledge.

One would therefore expect people in positions of deanship to be familiar with this Act

7.5.2.2 Modularisation (question 2.2.1)

It was also encouraging to note that a high number of the deans (90%) were aware of and comfortable with the modularisation processes at the University whilst only 10% were not. One expects deans to be comfortable with these processes because they have to provide the requisite academic leadership to ensure that these processes are finalized.

Modularisation is one of the requirements of the Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997 and the National Qualifications Framework, to ensure that institutions of higher learning provide programme based curricula, portable skills and that prior learning should be recognised in higher education.

7.5.2.3 South African Qualifications Authority (question 2.2.2)

As expected, the majority of the deans (60%) and deputy deans were familiar with the changes envisaged by the establishment of South African Qualifications Authority.

The other 40% of the respondents were nevertheless uncomfortable with the modularisation process and were thus subjected to stress for having to lead a process of which they did not have the necessary knowledge. This may cause stress and make these incumbents suitable candidates for an Employee Assistance Programme.

The SAQA Bulletin (1997:5) outlined the following key functions of the body:

- to oversee the development of the NQF;
- it must formulate and publish policies and criteria both for registration of bodies responsible for establishing educational and training standards; and
- for the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements.

7.5.2.4 Council on Higher Education (question 2.2.3)

A large percentage of the deans and vice-deans (70%) were comfortable with the establishment of the Council on Higher Education as contemplated in the Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997 while only a lesser number of respondents (30%) were uncomfortable about the Council on Higher Education. Discomfort about certain aspects of one's work environment may lead to a decreased level of productivity, especially since people in management positions within academic institutions need to be familiar and comfortable with drastic changes in the Higher Education landscape.

7.5.2.5 Accreditation of programmes in higher education (question 2.2.4)

The majority of the deans (70%) also agreed that academic programmes and curricula have to be accredited to ensure the portability of skills and articulation. Articulation (mobility) within the tertiary education sector is urgent (AUT 1992:

NASOP 02 - 316). Although only thirty percent (30%) of this group were not comfortable with the accreditation of programmes, it is a cause for concern as well.

Articulation must enable the horizontal and vertical mobility of students between institutions with different missions and mandates. It must also enable staff mobility for the purposes of teaching and research (Shape and Size of Higher Education Task Team Report, 2000:46). In addition accreditation is a process whereby the comparability and recognition of educational standards are promoted and is used to raise norms and standards of educational activities to a level that will ensure quality education. Finally, accreditation serves the purpose of confirming whether a discipline has achieved its goals as claimed (Strydom, 1993: 85).

7.5.2.6 Quality promotion in higher education (2.2.5)

It is a positive development to note that 60% of middle managers/leaders (60%) of the academic faculties at the University of the North are comfortable with and positive about quality assurance while only (40%) of the respondents are not certain about their feelings with regard to the quality assurance function of the Council on Higher Education.

Quality assurance and evaluation or appraisal go hand in hand and, over the past two decades, University systems in the western world have been subject to particularly intense appraisal, both from within and from without (Collins and Parry-Jones, 2000:772; Bitzer, 1993: 28).

In South Africa, institutional self-evaluation (ISE) is becoming part and parcel of post-secondary education because these institutions' future autonomy will increasingly depend on their own capacity for self-renewal and the readiness to deal with the problem of efficiency and effectiveness (Kells, 1998:15; Nichols, 1989:23 and Van Vught, 1991:17).

7.5.2.7 Size and shape in higher education (question 2.2.6)

Interestingly, half the number of deans (50%) were uncomfortable with the task team report on higher education while the other 50% were comfortable with the report. It may thus be concluded that the task team report on shape and size of higher education does not draw a positive response from the deanship. This may be as a result of the fears that this report raised about especially the historically disadvantaged and black institutions.

7.5.2.8 The National Qualifications Framework (question 2.2.7)

In this instance seventy percent (70%) of the respondents were not clear about the National Qualifications Framework while thirty percent (30%) were comfortable with the National Qualifications Framework.

The researcher is of the opinion that the division tends to reflect confusion regarding how this framework is going to be put in place, rather than dissatisfaction with it. The confusion may perhaps be caused by the following paragraph from the Shape and Size Task Team Report (2000:46)

“While differentiation and diversity must be a principal feature of a reconfigured higher education system, articulation mechanisms must exist to ensure that the system is also highly integrated.

Indeed, the success of a differentiated and diverse system is dependent on structural integration”

7.5.2.9 Conditions of service for employees in higher education (question 2.2.8)

The same pattern of findings that was recorded for questions on the NQF obtain about the conditions of service of employees in higher education.

There was a division among the academic leadership as regards the conditions of service of University employees. This finding seems to suggest and actually negate an earlier finding that deans were comfortable with the vision, mission and goals of the institution. It would seem that the deanship who responded to the question regarded the vision, mission and goals of the institution as good but were unhappy about the conditions of service. Perhaps more research needs to be conducted in this area to determine what deans are unhappy with as far as their conditions of employment are concerned.

Harrison Brown as cited by Uehling (1984: 102) remarks that one third of all American workers were dissatisfied with their jobs. About 17% felt that they were treated unfairly in their work situation in spite of the fact that the pay was deemed to be satisfactory.

Uehling (1984:104) maintains that an EAP is especially appropriate for the mid-life professor who has arrived at a cynical or depressed point in his career. This person may be a bit jaded, a little tired, having been on a fast track and doing a significant amount of work but is no longer deriving the same kind of satisfaction from his work.

An EAP gives such people the opportunity to examine other things that may be beneficial to give them renewed satisfaction, such as different emphasis on research, a different kind of teaching, or some other effort which is professionally related. Additionally, an Employee Assistance Programme may provide the faculty member with other avenues for satisfaction, perhaps a renewed interest in jogging, or photography, or family counseling directed toward revitalizing one's marriage (Uehling, 1984:104).

7.5.2.10 Employment Equity Act (question 2.2.10)

The majority of the respondents (70%) were comfortable with the provisions of the Employment Equity Act while a smaller number, namely, (30%) were not comfortable with the Act. It would be interesting to find out who the people were who were not in favour of the Employment Equity Act and why?

7.5.3 University processes

7.5.3.1 Mission of the university (3.1.1)

The mission of the University is to achieve distinction in scholarship, professionalism, and community renewal amongst its staff and students in order to improve the quality of life of the community it serves (see page 74).

An overwhelming majority of the deans and vice-deans (80%) were clear about the mission of the University. The remaining twenty percent (20%) were not clear about the mission of the university as one would expect middle management to be clear about the mission of the institution that they lead.

It is disturbing to note that there were people in leadership positions who did not know what had to be done on a day to day basis in order to realise the vision of the University.

7.5.3.2 Vision (question 3.1.2)

The majority of the deans and vice-deans (90%) were clear about the vision of the University which is: “The University of the North strives to be a quality institution of higher learning and critical reflection, which is innovative, responsive to change, is rooted in the issues of the society it serves, and is recognised world-wide as the centre for relevant theory and practice of people centred development” (see page 74). The remaining 10% were uncertain about the mission of the University.

7.5.3.3 Goals of the University (question 3.1.3)

Most of the of the respondents (70%) were clear about the goals of the university while only 30% being unclear about the goals of the University. This is again a cause for concern as people in leadership positions need to be driven by the goals of the institution they serve to achieve more success.

The fact that more deans are clear about mission, vision and goals of the institution may mean that they are satisfied with their jobs. Uehling (1984:102) remarks that “Dissatisfaction with the job and feelings of unfair treatment, in spite of sufficient pay, suggest that the average employee is thinking much more about the meaning and purpose of his or her life than ever before.

7.5.3.4 Promotion criteria (question 3.1.4)

Sixty (60%) of the respondents were familiar with the promotion criteria at the University of the North while the remaining 40% were unclear about the promotion criteria on campus. This is another sore point in the management of human resources at the University of the North, particularly academic staff.

The promotion of academic staff seems to be done on a hit or miss basis as deans are unaware of the criteria for promotion.

7.5.3.5 **Conditions of employment (question 3.1.5)**

The majority of deans and vice-deans (60%) were comfortable with the conditions of employment of academic staff and the other 40% were unclear about them. This finding differs from the deans and vice-deans position regarding conditions of service of employees of higher education.

The researcher is aware of the attractive perks offered to deans and vice-deans at the University of the North in that they qualify for a car allowance, entertainment budget, and at the end of their term of office they qualify for a sabbatical for a period of three months. The gripe, however, may be in the conditions of employment of university employees as envisaged by the Higher Education Act.

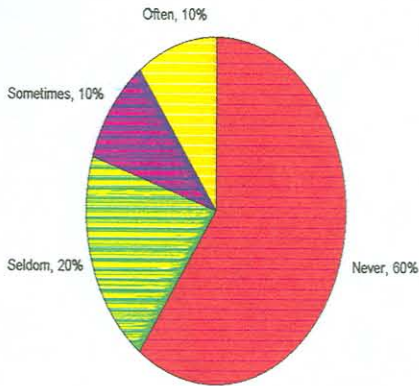
7.5.4

Staff development processes

7.5.4.1

Performance appraisal (question 3.2.1)

Pie-chart 3: Frequency of performance appraisal as observed by deans and vice-deans



Frequency of Performance Appraisal

The majority of the deans and vice-deans (80%) maintained that performance appraisal of academic staff never took place in their faculties. This constitutes a serious deficiency as for instance, Thoreson (1984:131) regards lack of performance appraisal as “the extension of the principle of academic freedom to the area of performance standards”. The effect of this is that job performance which bears no discernible relationship to academic freedom is “wrapped in its mantle, sacrosanct and beyond evaluation”. The elusive definition of job performance itself creates a serious barrier.

There is a disinclination, verging on a point of honour among managers of academics, to specify in operational terms what is expected of an academic (Thoreson, 1984:131; Roman, 1980:135-149; Balgopal and Stollak, 1992:114).

7.5.4.2 Supervision (question 3.2.2)

Most of the deans and vice-deans (70%) mentioned that they did not carry out supervision. However, the remaining 30% of the respondents claimed that they always carried out supervision. This lack of proper supervision of their immediate staff may probably be ascribed to the fact that this task does not fall within the job description of deans. Another reason could be that academics themselves “work in an environment of low supervision, low visibility of performance, freedom from time demands, and vaguely defined and non-enforced standards of performance” (Harlacher and Goodman, 1991:31 Thoreson, 1984:123-124; Baldrige, 1984:55) combined with a limited distance between academic staff and their supervisors (Roman, 1980:135-149).

Trice (1984:148) regards speaking of “supervisors” within a faculty as, to a substantial degree, a misnomer. “After thirty years in academia I have never had a supervisor. Deans I have always had, but literally months and months have often gone by without the two of us even seeing one another, much less seriously interacting in any way”.

A lack of supervision and performance standards are serious limitations within the academic work environment that render the use of supervisor confrontation totally inappropriate. It should be borne in mind that confrontation is highly useful in other settings for identifying employees with personal problems and their subsequent referral for EAP intervention.

7.5.4.3 Mentoring (question 3.2.3)

Mentoring was carried out by only twenty percent (20%) of the respondents while (80%) did not. The figures show that the majority view indicated that mentoring never took place in their faculties- another serious deficiency at the University of the North.

7.5.4.4 Coaching (question 3.2.4)

The majority of the deans (70%) indicated that coaching did not take place within their faculties. Thirty percent (30%), however, indicated that coaching always took place within their faculties. These findings thus also reinforce the lack of proper management of academic staff members at the University of the North.

Probably coaching does not take place that often because of the “myths about the academic as a Renaissance scholar, unfettered by performance demands, inscrutable and undaunted by the problems of mere mortals” (Thoreson,1984:130). This situation arises as well because “colleges and Universities represent a type of professional bureaucracy in which employees are given considerable autonomy and control over their work” (Grosch, Duffy and Hessink, 1996:44).

7.5.4.5 Bringing change on campus (question 3.3)

While the majority of the deans and vice-deans (80%) maintained that it was very difficult to bring about change on campus, a minority of them (20%) were uncertain whether it was difficult or easy to bring about change on campus. This finding is consistent with Baldrige’s (1984:51-62) observation that Universities

are “organised anarchies”. Within organised anarchies the decision-making process looks like a political system because of competing groups and the high degree of conflict, so that the decision-making process can be finally captured by using the term decision flowing instead of decision making.

This finding about the difficulties experienced by change agents mean that services such as Employee Assistance Programme can be sabotaged by the politics of the campus and ultimately thrown out before they come to fruition.

Regardless of that, literature (Dorn,1994:18-47; Franz, 1991:24-27;Thoreson,1984:58-62; Schooling 1984:93-100) provides a range of strategies to deal with the obstacles of innovative change on campuses, particularly in setting up an Employee Assistance Programmes.

Some of these strategies are as follows:

- concentrate your efforts;
- know when to fight;
- learn the history of the institution;
- build a coalition;
- join external institutions; and
- use committees effectively.

7.5.4.6 Dual allegiance (question 3.4)

The investigation established that the majority of deans and vice-deans (70%) belonged to professional associations. This means that they were also experiencing the problem of dual allegiance which is characterised by conflict between professional versus institutional identification.

This bifurcation in role has led to a major commitment by academics to off campus activities and constituencies that consume considerable time and energy (Thoreson,1984:126). As already mentioned, this phenomenon may aggravate the stressful situation academics, and especially more senior members of the academics, face and even lead to drinking problems which would necessitate professional help through an EAP.

7.5.4.7 Trade union membership (question 3.5)

As may be expected the majority of the deans and vice-deans (80%) did not belong to trade unions. It is interesting to note that 20% of the deans are members of a trade union. As the University of the North trade unions" character is anti management and a dean or vice-dean becoming a member of the trade union is like joining a body that is hell bent on opposing your own work and personal interests, an unwise position indeed.

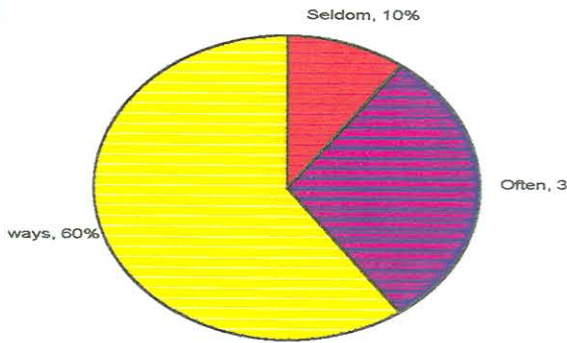
On the other hand, Franz (1991: 32) is of the opinion that EAPs present an approach both labour and management can agree on.

Management benefits because for every rand invested in an EAP, they avoid at least R5 in loss due to absenteeism, demands on health benefit plans and accidents while labour benefits in two ways. It can preserve the job and the person in the job (Compare Yamatani, 1988:129-149; Yamatani, 1993:65-82).

7.5.5 Communication Patterns

**7.5.5.1 Frequency of communication with academic staff
(question 4.1.1)**

**Pie-chart 4: Frequency of communication
between academic staff and deans**



Pie-chart 4 indicates that deans communicated in general very frequently with academic staff. This finding is valid since the dean is the link between academic staff and executive management of the University. The deans is a leader of faculties which are structures made up mainly by academic staff.

7.5.5.2 Communication with administration staff (question 4.1.2)

Majority of deans (90%) always communicated with the administration staff. A lesser number (10%) did not communicate with administration staff. Deans do not communicate as frequently with administration staff as they do with academic staff. The reason may be that although the position of deanship may be administrative, it is a position that oversees the academic staff. So one would therefore expect frequent communication with academic staff.

7.5.5.3

Communication with support service staff (question 4.1.3)

Forty percent (40%) of the respondents are uncertain about the frequency of their communication with support services staff. The other 40% always communicate with the support services staff and the remaining 20% never communicates with support services staff.

7.5.6 Communication with academic staff

7.5.6.1 Face to face communication (question 4.2.1)

Table 19: Weekly communication patterns- Deans' observations

ACADEMIC						ADMINISTRATION					SUPPORT				
Kind of communication	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total
face to face	90%	10%	-	-	100%	80%	10%	10%	-	100%	60%	10%	30%	-	100%
telephone	90%	10%	-	-	100%	90%	-	10%	-	100%	40%	-	60%	-	100%
memo	70%	30%	-	-	100%	50%	40%	10%	-	100%	10%	-	70%	20%	100%
circular	60%	10%	30%	-	100%	40%	20%	40%	-	100%	10%	10%	80%	-	100%
fax	60%	20%	20%	-	100%	30%	20%	50%	-	100%	-	-	100%	-	100%
e-mail	30%	40%	30%	-	100%	80%	10%	-	10%	100%	-	-	100%	-	100%
meeting	90%	10%	-	-	100%	30%	50%	20%	-	100%	-	20%	80%	-	100%

From table 19 one discerns a striking similarity of responses about the frequency of communication among academics as far as face to face and telephone communication is concerned. This kind of frequency of communication suggests that peer referral to EAP service would be most likely among academics because of their frequent interactions.

Deans always communicate frequently with academic staff on a face to face basis. Meaning that academic staff are not living in an environment of low visibility as Thoreson (1984:130) surmised. The academics at the University of the North, one may conclude, are characterised by a quasi-indentured employment status in an environment which provides maximum security and minimum opportunities for advancement for both academic and non academic employees.

Every dean is allocated a secretary, and the latter falls within the administrative arm of the personnel. It is therefore not surprising to note that deans communicate frequently with this staff and they are comfortable with the face to face communication. Face to face communication seems to be the most preferred by deans in communicating with academic staff, administrative as well as support services staff.

Meetings were popular means of communication among academic staff.. The University has scheduled faculty meetings and these are used frequently by deans to communicate University policy. The findings indicate that deans are in favour or rather comfortable with meetings.

7.5.7 Employee Behaviour (5)

Table 20: Employee Behaviour and Problems -Deans observations

ACADEMIC	ADMINISTRATION	SUPPORT
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Problem behaviour	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total
stress	50%	40%	10%	-	100	30%	40%	30%	-	100%	10%	50%	40%	-	100%
financial	60%	30%	10%	-	100	30%	60%	10%	-	100%	30%	50%	20%	-	100%
alcohol	-	20%	80%	-	100%	-	40%	60%	-	100%	-	30%	70%	-	100%
drugs	-	10%	90%	-	100%	-	10%	90%	-	100%	-	30%	70%	-	100%
marital	-	30%	70%	-	100%	10%	50%	40%	-	100%	10%	50%	40%	-	100%
health	40%	20%	40%	-	100%	40%	30%	30%	-	100%	20%	60%	20%	-	100
absenteeism	20%	20%	60%	-	100	10%	10%	80%	-	100	10%	80%	10%	-	100
tardines	20%	40%	40%	-	100%	20%	30%	50%	-	100%	40%	40%	20%	-	100%

The United Nations' International Labour Organization calls work stress "the disease of the modern workplace" and estimates that the problem costs the US \$200 billion annually in lower productivity, higher absenteeism and higher health care and costs (Semenuk, 1996:20). Stress can be defined as a mentally or emotionally disruptive influence (Miller, Jones and Miller, 1992:26) or as the "response to an inappropriate level of pressure (Collins and Parry-Jones, 2000:770) while Arroba and James (1987:21) regard it is a response to pressure and not the pressure itself.

Stressful life events can be negative in the sense that they are usually socially undesirable and may include frequent job reassignments, unexpected expectations of supervisors, or promotional practices perceived as unfair by the worker. Miller, Jones and Miller (1992:26) maintain that 80% of employees experience some degree of stress in their lives and wish to do something about it. Resultantly, Employee Assistance Programmes have become critical components to addressing quality of life issues, including the issue of stress in the workplace.

In this survey the majority of deans and vice-deans have indicated that they always come across academic staff who are experiencing financial problems. This confirms Thoreson's (1984:126) as well as Collins and Parry-Jones' (2000:772) assertion that low salaries and consequent economic pressures had always been salient issues for the academic.

Gaff (1972:1) further documents the frustrations of academic staff as coming from:

- the tightest job market in decades;
- the difficulty older academic staff face in job mobility and the younger faculty in obtaining tenure; and
- a series of drastic budget cuts that have adversely affected departmental programmes and faculty morale.

Interestingly, the majority of deans had not observed traces of alcoholism among the academic staff. Collins and Parry-Jones (2000:772) report on a recent survey of 465 academic staff members in the UK which revealed that 38% of academic staff reported suffering from depression, 26% from anxiety, and 9% from alcohol dependency.

The latter may be ascribed to the fact that “the academic community holds a positive view of drinking as a part of gracious living”(Madsen, 1984:151 & Thoreson, 1984:131) while Roman (1980:135-149) mentions the following barriers to recognizing alcohol problems among academic staff:

- a paucity of success in the measurement of academic performance;
- a guild-like protection of faculty;
- a limited distance between faculty and their supervisors; and
- a minimal agreement on what constitutes good performance.
-

Thoreson (1984:131) mentions that other characteristics of the academic environment that make it difficult to identify problems of alcohol include “the difficulty to distinguish between the natural tailing off of performance of the ageing academic from significant job deterioration. Also, the freedom from close supervision and time demands offers the opportunity for significant abuse by mediocre faculty”. McMillen (1985:27) provides the following guidelines to help managers of academic institutions to deal with academic staff who show symptoms of alcoholism:

- put the problems in writing;
- be supportive and express concern;
- do not diagnose the staff member’s problem as alcoholism;
- suggest that the staff member seek help;
- outline a plan of improvement;
- set a date for another review and keep your expectations realistic.

Thirty percent (30%) of the deans maintained that administrative staff did not experience health problems, another 30% said they sometimes experienced health problems whilst the majority (40%) maintain that administrative staff always experienced health problems.

It is interesting to note that as far as health aspects of administrative staff were concerned, the response was split into three nearly equal thirds. What is significant, however, is that health problems were detected amongst administrative staff.

About 5-10% of employees in any corporation or institution of higher education have problems with substance abuse and another 5-19% have problems around relationships, finances and health (Collins and Parry-Jones, 2000: 777; Roberts-DeGennaro, 1989:11). This is indeed a serious problem as employees' health and well-being affect an organization's productivity (Ketchum, 1988:43; Harlacher and Goodman, 1991:30;).

The majority of the respondents maintained that administrative staff never experienced problems of absenteeism.. Sullivan (1992:20), however cautions that when the manager of a work group is alcoholic, employees of his work group may experience tardiness, absenteeism, poor communication, poor productivity and increased health care problems.

The fact that some deans observed marital problems among the administrative staff is cause for concern because the relationship between work and family is reciprocal. High risk areas for family stress in the workplace include role overload and interference issues related to dual career conflicts, time management problems, and parenting stressors. When the demands of one or more roles are too much for the individual to handle, that is called overload (Krusor and Blaker, 1992:30).

Employee Assistance Programmes may assist with problems ranging from alcohol and drug abuse to family discord, along with adaptation to physical illness, child rearing and career mobility, sexual harassment, occupational stress and financial worries (Sullivan and Poverny, 1992:3).

7.5.8 Employee services

7.5.8.1 On/off facility: Referral of a colleague (question 6.1)

The findings from the study indicated that 60% of the deans would refer a colleague to an on-site facility whereas the other 40% reported that they would not refer a colleague to an on-site facility. Both positions are catered for within the models of an Employee Assistance Programme. Three types of EAPs can be found among institutions of higher education:

- internal EAPs, in which University employees provide services on or near campus;
- external EAPs, in which services are contracted with an outside vendor; and
- blended EAPs, a combination of both internal and external programmes (Minelli et al, 1998:27).

The researcher maintains that in reality a genuine EAP is either internal or external, since the third one is a mixture of the two. The pros and cons of internal versus external EAPs indicates that these two approaches produce different referral patterns (Grosch et al, 1996:45). The majority of the deans in this study would prefer their colleagues to use an off- campus facility whenever they experienced personal problems.

7.5.8.2 On/off: self-referral (question 6.2)

The majority of the deans (60%) preferred an off-site facility for their own personal problems while the other 40% reported that they would not use an off-site facility.

In a study of over 400 private firms conducted by Blum and Roman (1989:259-312) it was reported that external EAPs led to a higher percentage of self-referrals for alcohol-related problems than internal programmes, which in turn had a higher percentage of supervisory referrals. Internal programmes also reported a slightly higher percentage of employees with alcohol-related problems who returned to adequate job performance within 12-month period.

It is thus needless to say the findings in this study negate the findings obtained by Blum and Roman (1989:259-312). However, a shortcoming in this study is that the respondents were not asked as to the reasons that make them choose an internal programme for self-referral above the external one.

7.5.9 More Information for colleagues on:

7.5.9.1 Management of personal problems (question 6.3.1)

All the respondents (100%) reported in the affirmative with regard to whether academic staff in their faculty would benefit from information on how to handle personal problems. This finding suggests that there is a need for an Employee Assistance Programme. at the University of the North.

In addition, the majority of the deans (90%) said that staff in their faculties would benefit from more information on marital problems while a small minority of 10% did not think they could benefit from more information on how to handle marital problems.

7.5.9.2 Retirement (question 6.3.3)

All the respondents (100%) reported that staff in their faculties would benefit from more information on how to prepare for retirement. This positive response may mean that deans would support the setting up of an EAP service on campus because the latter offers within its wide range of services, retirement planning programmes which cover “financial planning, life-style considerations, interpersonal relationships, role changes, living arrangements and health education (Stuen and Worden, 1997:270).

7.5.9.3 Downsizing (question 6.3.4)

All the deans (100%) believed that staff in their faculties would benefit from more information on downsizing. The deans’ responses were appropriate given the fact that the University was on the verge of the downsizing process at the time of this study. Foster and Schore (1990:83) cautioned thus: “When a mass lay-off is likely, EAP staff should consider two important factors beyond offering services to individuals:

- viewing the downsizing organization as a client; and
- getting involved in helping the organization make long term plans.

Foster and Schore (1990:84) also maintain that it may be less obvious, but nevertheless equally true that employees' reactions to organizational change have far reaching adverse effects for companies as well. Ketchum (1988:43) says that if employees' feelings are not addressed, emotional reaction may escalate into anger and ultimately harden into long term negative attitudes towards the company.

7.5.10 More information for self on the following:

**7.5.10.1 Management of personal problems
(question 6.4.1)**

All the deans maintained that they would personally benefit from more information on how to manage personal problems. In a study of EAPs in higher education, Minelli et al (1998:28) found that more employees turned to the EAP for personal or mental health reasons than for problems related to substance abuse, reflecting the broad brush nature of EAPs. In contrast, Schooling (1984:95); Wyers and Kaulukukui (1984:170) maintain that there is no widely perceived need for an EAP since it is assumed that counseling regarding personal problems is not the responsibility of the institution. The researcher is of the opinion that the latter opinion is indeed old, the former position, espoused by Minelli et al, is the most contemporary one.

7.5.10.2 Marital problems (question 6.4.2)

The majority of the deans (70%) maintained that they could benefit from more information on how to manage marital problems while the other 30% indicated that they would not benefit from such information.

Minelli et al (1998:28) report that the following pattern of problems among University employees request for EAP services: family and marriage (25%), psychological (21%), alcohol (19%), career-job related (14%), drug abuse (non alcohol 8%), financial (4%), legal (3%) and other problems (7%).

7.5.10.3 Retirement (question 6.4.3)

All the deans that responded to this question indicated that they would benefit from more information on retirement. Retirement programmes can indeed be of invaluable service to terminating staff and services may be of three kinds according to Monk (1990:400-419):

- developmental tasks which involve selling the idea of pre-retirement preparation and ensuring ongoing offerings;
- educational tasks which entail helping the retiree adjust to retirement by providing useful information and links to community resources; and
- therapeutic assistance which is offered to retirees who may have a negative experience and or an unrealistic expectation with regard to retirement that may require counseling.

7.5.10.4 Downsizing (6.4.4)

All the deans (100%) that answered this question indicated that they would benefit from more information on downsizing

The findings above correspond with the observation by Grosch et al (1996:35) that: "Possessing a high-level corporate title or a doctorate does not vaccinate a person against life's challenges.

There is a prevalent myth that an advanced academic degree automatically confers upon the holder an ability to effectively manage all areas of his or her life. That myth, as it applies to academia, makes it difficult for persons in that field to open up and to share their vulnerabilities and problems. The myths bolster the denial system associated with many of societies problems". Besides, deans as managers are aware of serious threats faced by University employees, particularly academics because of reduced student numbers and declining infrastructure (Court, 1991:337; Bunting, 1993:117 Amuwo, 2001:11).

**7.5.19 How does the University deal with personal problems of employees ?
(question 7.5)**

The majority of the respondents (50%) reported that there was no facility for dealing with the personal problems of employees. Some deans (10%) simply stated that the University simply ignored employees who manifest personal problems.

However, a few of the respondents (7%) indicated that the University was sensitive to issues of bereavement and that the institution provided a bereavement leave and does assist financially if the concerned employee wanted to make a loan. Other deans (10%) reported that employees who manifested personal problems were referred to the head of the department while twenty three percent (23%) did not respond to the question.

These responses point to one thing, namely, that personal problems of employees are dealt with on a hit and miss basis and that something concrete and serious needs to be put in place for the employees of the University of the North.