## 7.6 Administrative staff (Appendix E)

Inclusion of the administrative staff in this study was important in the sense that there are significant differences between the work environments of administrative and academic staff members. Administrative staff are described as working in a more business-like environment, depending upon their status and role, while academics function in a so-called professional environment (Thoreson and Hosokawa, 1984: 94).

7.6.1 Age (question 1.1)

Histogram 6: Age of administrative staff
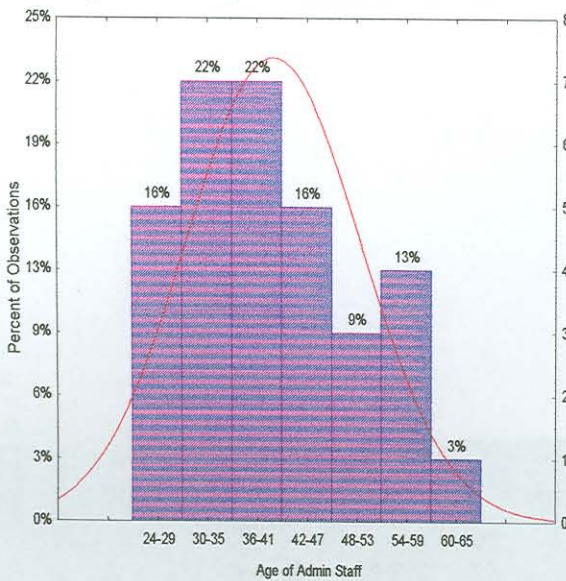
The bulk of the administrative (44%) staff were between 30 and 41 years of age while there were only a few (3%) people in the age group 58-63.

A similar finding was obtained among the academic staff. Most people in this age group would be at the stage of (early) retirement.

7.6.2   Gender (question 1.2)

More females (78%) than males (22%) participated in the study. In terms of the staff composition of the University there are more females than males (see pp 78-80). This finding contradicts that obtained among the academic staff (see page 118); heads of departments (see page 163) and deans (see page 199).

The implication of this is that administrative section employs more females than any unit on campus. This finding may also suggest that there is an abundance of potential EAP services consumers on campus in that "more women than men utilize EAP services" (Berman et al, 1991: 24; Grosch et al 1996:49; Minelli et al 1998:27).

7.6.3   Rank (question 1.3)

### Histogram 7: Rank of administrative staff

268
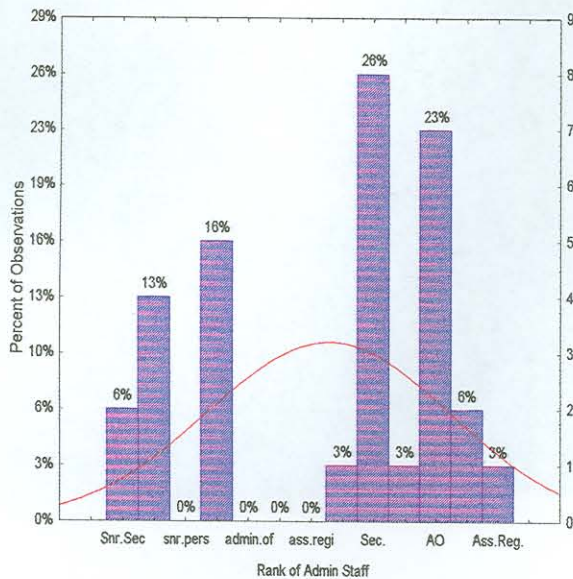
The majority of the respondents (25%) were in secretarial positions, followed by administrative officers (21%) and principal administration officers (15%) .

7.6.4 Experience (question 1.4)

The persons who have been in the employment of the University for 3 years constituted 3% of the sample while those who served the University for four (4) years constituted 15% of the sample. Other respondents (18%) had been in the service of the University between 5 and 6 years. The bulk of the respondents (66%) were employed by the University for more than seven years (7) and less than 32 years.

7.6.5 Marital status (question 1.5)

Pie-chart 5: Marital status of administrative staff

Divorced, 3%

Single, 26%
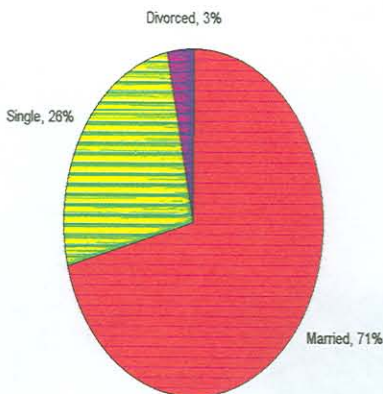
Married, 71%

Marital Status of Admin Staff

The majority of the members of the administrative staff (69%) were married whilst a quarter (25%) were single. An equal number of the respondents (6%) were single while the other 6% did not respond to the question.

7.7.6 Number of children (question 1.6)

Table 21:Number of children of administrative staff

Value	Count	Percent
0	2	6.25
1	8	25
2	7	21.8
3	6	18.7
4	5	15.6
5	2	6.3
6	1	3
7	1	3

The majority of the staff in the administrative section had more than two children. This is unlike in the findings which were obtained from the previous samples. This finding prompts the researcher to conclude that the more educated people have fewer children than they are likely to have.

7.6.7 Qualifications (question 1.7)

Pie-chart 6: Qualifications of administrative staff

Qualifications of Admin Staff
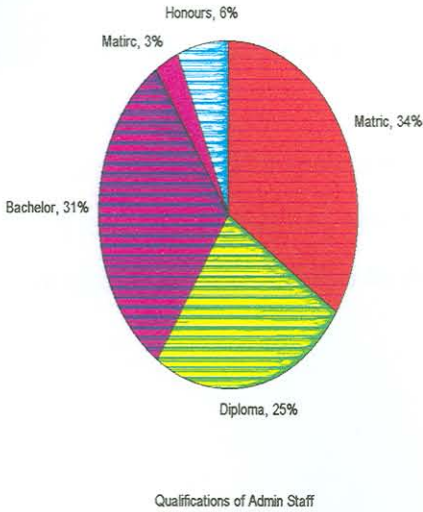
There were administrative staff (31%)who had a bachelors degree and some (6%) had an honours degree though the majority (37%) had matric as their highest qualification. About 26% of the participants had a diploma as the highest qualification.

The reason why some members of the administrative staff possess degrees is that the University has a staff development degree programme tailor-made for the administrative staff. This ensures that the University has skilled human resources to deal with a variety of administrative problems.

7.6.8 Population group (question 1.8)

Most members of the administrative staff were black (90%) while 10% were white. Table3 and 4 confirm that there were more blacks than whites in administration positions .

7.6.9 Changes in higher education (question 2.1)

Most staff members in the administration (81%) viewed change in a positive light whereas 19% were not positive about changes taking place in higher education. From a human resources perspective, the 19% that were not positive about change would benefit from an EAP in that it will help in reducing uncertainty and boost morale (Balgopal, and Stollak, 1992:113).

The changes in higher education are driven both by political transformation and by changes in the international educational arena (Sunday Times, 2001:23).

7.6.10 Modularisation (question 2.2.1)

Most administrative staff members reported that they were in favour of changes taking place in higher education. It is therefore not surprising that the majority (56%) reported that they were comfortable with the modularisation of curricula. Only 25% were not comfortable with modularisation. The other 6% did not respond to the question.

It is encouraging to note that the administration is keeping track with the developments in the academic environment even when they are not directly involved.

7.6.11 The Higher Education Act No.1 of 1997 (question 2.2.2)

Half of the respondents (50%) reported that they were comfortable with the Higher Education Act while a minority (28%) were not comfortable with it and less than a quarter of the sample (22%) did not respond to the question.

If most respondents were comfortable with the Higher Education Act, it simply follows that they were also comfortable with the provisions of the Higher Education Act No.1 of 1997.

7.6.12 Council on Higher Education (question 2.2.3)

Most staff members in the administration (50%) reported that they were comfortable with the role and function of the Council on Higher Education whereas 28% were uncomfortable with the functions of the Council. Only a minority (3%) felt uncomfortable with the Council while 22% of the respondents avoided the question.

The Council on Higher Education is a legal body established in terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997. The findings in this study already confirmed that most respondents were comfortable with the Act. It is therefore not surprising that the majority were in favour of the functions and role of the Council on Higher Education as spelled out in the Higher Education Act of 1997.

7.6.13 Accreditation (question 2.2.4)

Further evidence of the respondents' positive view of changes in higher education was vindicated by the fact that most (66%) were in favour of the accreditation of curricula. Sixteen percent (16%) were not comfortable with accreditation and eighteen percent (18%) did not respond to the question.

7.6.14 Quality Promotion (question 2.2.5)

Among the responsibilities of the Council on Higher Education is to promote the quality of the learning programmes. Most respondents (63%) reported that they were in favour

of the quality promotion function of the Council on Higher Education while 19% reported that they were uncomfortable with this role and 18% did not respond to the question.

The Sunday Times (2001:23) reported that "students have a right to expect a learning environment that is stable and progressive and where learning environment should be subjected to a continuous process of quality assurance that meets the most stringent international standards".

7.6.15 CHE Task team report on the shape and size of higher education (question 2.2.6)

The task team report on the shape and size of higher education has far reaching implications in the education landscape. About half of the respondents (50%) reported that they were comfortable with this report while 28% were not comfortable with this report. Less than a quarter (22%) of the sample reserved their opinion.

7.6.16   National Qualifications Framework (question 2.2.7)

The National Qualifications framework envisages a uniform qualifications structure for higher education in South Africa. Fifty percent of the respondents (50%) were in favour of what the National Qualifications Framework stands while 25% were not comfortable with the National Qualification Framework. A quarter (25%) of the respondents did not respond to the question.

7.6.17 Conditions of service (question 2.2.8)

The Higher Education Act No.1 of 1997 also addresses conditions of employment for employees in the higher education sector. It is interesting that the majority (57%) of the respondents reported that they were comfortable with the conditions of employment for

employees in the higher education sector while 22% reported that they were not . Twenty one percent (21%) did not, however, air their views on this bread and butter issue.

7.6.18 Employment Equity Act (question 2.2.9)

The Employment Equity Act deals with promoting employment of historically disadvantaged groups such as blacks, women and the disabled. It is also a requirement of this Act that companies and organisations should submit equity plans to the government wherein they indicate how they intend redressing historical imbalances within their organisations. Since this Act favours black people who were in majority in this sample, it did not come as a surprise when most (60%) reported that they were comfortable with the provisions of this Act and only 22% were not. The 18% that did not respond had perhaps not read the Act.

7.6.19   University's strategy
7.6.19.1   Mission of the University (question 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.

Most of the respondents (56%) reported that they were comfortable with the University mission while 44% were not clear about the vision of the University which is "to achieve distinction in scholarship, professionalism and community renewal".

Most respondents reported that they were familiar and comfortable with the mission of the University because the entire University community was involved in the strategic planning exercise. When people are comfortable with the mission of an organisation that they identify with its ethos, which is good for that organisation.

7.6.19.2 Vision of the University (question 3.1.2)

The vision of the institution reads as follows: "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.". Half of the respondents (50%) reported that they were comfortable with this mission whereas the same number of people (50%) said they were not. The latter group again did not know the vision of the institution or had joined the University after the strategic planning exercise had been completed.

This division within the sample may suggests a lack of unity of purpose within the administration of the University and this is not healthy for the organisation.

7.6.19.3 Goals of the University (question 3.1.3)

There is a strong link between the goals, vision and mission of an organisation in that the goals emanate from the vision and mission of the institution. So people who are positively inclined to the vision and mission of the organisation will be in favour of its organisational goals as well.

It is therefore not surprising that half of the respondents (50%) reported that they were clear with the goals of the institution while 50% were unclear about the goals of the University.

7.6.19.4 Promotion criteria (question 3.1.4)

Most members of the administrative staff (84%) were unclear about promotion criteria on campus while a minority (16%) were not. The mere fact that most staff members were unclear about criteria for promotion means that there is resentment with this aspect which does not augur well for employee productivity and achievement of organisational goals.

7.6.19.5 Conditions of employment (question 3.1.5)

The employment conditions of the University are contained in the Personnel Policies and Practices of the University. Every staff member is supposed to know these by heart. A large percentage of the staff (70%), however, were unclear about the conditions of employment because the University policy as contained in the Personnel Policies and Practices book was thrown in controversy since its inception. It had also been a subject of litigation and different vice-chancellors had applied it differently.

At some stage it was regarded as policy whereas on other occasions it was disregarded. The remaining 30% said they were clear about the conditions of service.

These findings indicate that the total number of people that are unclear is high, so something needs to be done about this.

7.6.19.6   Performance appraisal (question 3.2.1)

Most members of the administrative staff (84%) indicated that there was no performance appraisal within the administrative staff while 6% said it did take place and 10% did not respond to the question.

Since it seems that performance of staff is never measured nor appraised which means that one can never begin to talk about productivity when this area evades measurement. There is probably no vertical mobility for administrative staff because staff is never appraised and the majority do not know the promotion criteria.

7.6.19.7   Supervision (question 3.2.2)

Most members of the administration staff (50%) indicated that supervision did take place within the administrative section of the University. A significant number (47%) of respondents reported that supervision never took place. A small group of people (3%) withheld their opinions by not responding to the question.

One may assume that one of the goals of supervision is to increase worker growth which needs to be measured occasionally. One way of measuring employee development is by appraising performance. But in the case of these findings, the two processes are divergent.

7.6.19.8   **Mentoring (question 3.2.3)**

Almost all members of the administrative staff (97%) said mentoring did take place and 3% did not respond to the question. Supervision goes hand in hand with mentoring while supervision without mentoring equals policing.

7.6.19.9   **Coaching (question 3.2.4)**

Most of the administrative staff members (97%) said coaching did take place while only a smaller number (3%) did not respond to the question. Coaching, just like supervision is meant for the personal and professional growth of staff members.

7.6.20   **Bringing change on campus   (question 3.3)**

The majority of the administrative staff members (56%) reported that bringing change on campus was tough whilst 44% said it was not difficult. This finding has been consistent throughout the sample. All samples are thus in agreement that bringing about change on campus is difficult (see pages 123, 176 and 211).

7.6.21   **Trade union membership   (question 3.3.1)**

The sample was equally divided between those who belonged to a union (50%) and those who did not (50%). It has been suggested that union involvement in the establishment of an EAP results in greater acceptance of the programme since employees feel an increased sense of ownership, and the perception of the EAP as being rehabilitative rather than punitive (McDonald and Dooley 1990:97-105).

7.6.22   **Names of trade unions**

The majority (53%) of the staff members did not identify their trade union whilst 44% belonged to Nehawu and a minority (3%) reported that they belong to the Administration and Technical Services Union.

7.6.23   **Communication patterns between administrative and academic staff (question 4.1.1)**

Most of the administrative staff members (91%) reported that they always communicated with academic staff themselves, 6% were unsure and 3% said they never communicated with academic staff. Academic staff are central to the business of the University, that is why almost every sector of the workforce communicates with them on a more frequent basis.

7.6.24   **Communication patterns among administrative staff (question 4.1.2)**

Most of the administrative staff members (97%) reported that they always communicated among themselves whilst 3% mentioned that they were uncertain. It is quite logical that people who work together should communicate this frequently. The communication patterns by members of the administrative staff are favourable for the establishment of an EAP.

7.6.25 Communication between administrative and support services staff (question 4.1.3)

Most of the administrative staff members (72%) also mentioned that they always communicated with members of the support services staff while 25% reported that they were uncertain about their communication and 3% said they never communicated with support services staff. These findings, together with the two previous ones prompt the researcher to conclude that communication patterns are more frequent on a hierarchical basis between administrative staff and, academic staff as well as support services.

7.6.26   **Frequency of communication: Observations by administrative staff**

Table 22: Frequency of communication: Observations by administration staff

ACADEMIC						ADMINISTRATION					SUPPORT				
Kind of commu nication	Always	Some times	Never	No respons e	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No respons e	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No respo nse	Total
face to face	75%	13%	6%	6%	100%	82%	9%	6%	3%	100%	57%	19%	21%	3%	100%
telepho ne	84%	10%	6%	-	100%	82%	9%	6%	3%	100%	46%	19%	32%	3%	100%
memo	56%	22%	12%	-	100%	44%	25%	28%	3%	100%	29%	15%	41%	15%	100%
circular	37%	20%	37%	-	100%	28%	22%	44%	6%	100%	15%	9%	61%	15%	100%
fax	12%	22%	53%	13%	100%	16%	16%	63%	5%	100%	9%	14%	68%	9%	100%
e-mail	18%	22%	47%	13%	100%	15%	15%	70%	-	100%	6%	13%	75%	6%	100
meeting s	48%	9%	40%	9%	100%	44%	28%	25%	3%	100%	19%	22%	56%	3%	100%

Most respondents from the administrative section of the University communicated on a face-to -face basis with academic staff. The same finding was obtained in the previous samples where members of the academic staff, heads of departments and deans reported that they always communicated on a person to person basis with members of the administrative staff.

Most staff members in administration also mentioned that there is more frequent telephone communication between academic staff The good thing about this finding is that telephone communication does not replace face to face communication. Instead, the two modes of communication complement each other.

A memo is a popular means of communication from administration staff to academic staff. Most respondents in the administration reported that they always communicated by memo with administration staff

This is an interesting finding in that the majority of academic staff, heads of departments and deans indicated that they never used a memo to communicate with administration staff. This finding therefore signifies that communication by memo is one-sided, always from the administration staff to other sections of the University community. What is interesting again is that at the University of the North, more people communicate on a personal level than by memos. An e-mail was also found to be less popular in use on campus. The reason why most people on campus never use an e-mail may be as a result of their offices not being equipped with computer facilities. The other reason could be that the existing computer facilities do not have Internet facilities or that the Internet facility on campus is virtually always down.

7.6.29   **Behavioural problems of employees (question 5.1.1-5.3.8)**

Table 23: Employee Behaviour and Problems - Observations by administrative staff.

ACADEMIC						ADMINISTRATION					SUPPORT				
Problem behaviour	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total
stress	31%	25%	25%	19%	100	25%	34%	29%	12%	100 %	12%	34%	35%	19%	100%
financial	22%	31%	25%	22%	100	28%	34%	28%	10%	100 %	34%	22%	22%	22%	100%
alcohol	-	-	-	-	100 %	9%	16%	69%	6%	100 %	19%	19%	40%	22%	100%
drugs	3%	19%	56%	22%	100 %	-	16%	78%	6%	100 %	3%	22%	57%	18%	100%
marital	6%	28%	44%	22%	100 %	9%	28%	60%	-	100 %	6%	34%	41%	19%	100%
health	6%	34%	41%	19%	100 %	15%	34%	51%	-	100 %	19%	30%	32%	-	100
absenteeism	15%	25%	41%	19%	100	19%	31%	47%	3%	100	22%	28%	31%	19%	100
tardiness	16%	31%	34%	19%	100 %	13%	28%	53%	6%	100 %	22%	19%	41%	18%	100%

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The United Nations' International Labour Organization calls work stress "the disease of the modern workplace".

A quarter (25%) of the administrative staff observed that academic staff never experienced stress while 31% said academic staff always experienced stress. Another quarter (25%) of the respondents could not make a judgement on this aspect while 19% simply avoided it by not responding to the question. In a study on EAP service utilization among University academics and administrative staff, Sullivan and Poverny (1992: 7) found that more administrative staff reported that they sometimes worried about work when they were at home.

The important thing about this finding is not the number of people who have observed that academics experience stress but rather the reality that stress is part and parcel of academic life as Fisher (1994:68) observed. However, Universities are adopting EAPs with the hope of reducing stress, countering dwindling resources and retaining useful employees (Balgopal and Stollak, 1996:114). The EAP is one of the mediating structures for addressing workplace stress (Grosch et al, 1996:2) and increasing productivity (Balgopal and Stollak, 1992:112). In a needs assessment for an EAP, notations about financial concerns, family problems and fears were recorded (Berman et al, 1991:29)

It is encouraging to note, that despite being under severe stress, most participants mentioned that academic staff never experienced drug related problems.

The problem with drugs that was mentioned by respondents included smoking and drinking. In a study of factors associated with EAP usage, Grosch et al (1996:53) found that 18.9% of EAP cases in higher education were for alcohol related problems while 7,9% were for other types of drugs. In a study conducted by Baxter (1979:44-49) on the utilization of EAPs, the findings revealed that 22% of the respondents identified alcohol and drugs as their primary problem.

The majority of the respondents indicated that academic staff never experienced marital problems. The significance of this finding is not in the number of people who do or do not experience marital problems.

The essence of this finding lies in the fact that there are colleagues that experience some kind of marital discord and assistance is thus needed. Brunson (1988:23-30) found that 23% of the problems reported by clients were related to drugs and alcohol, while 19% were related to marriage and family.

The fact that academic staff work flexible hours means that it may be difficult to discern the rate of absenteeism amongst them. That is why a considerable number of respondents (34%) did not express an opinion on this matter either by saying that they were uncertain or by not responding at all. Academic staff work in an environment characterised by freedom from time demands (Thoreson, 1984:123; Sullivan and Poverny, 1992:3; Grosch et al, 1996:44).

Whether academic staff is slow may be a difficult decision to make because academic staff's performance is never appraised in the University of the North. Even if this performance had been measured, promptness would surely be one of the attributes to come under the microscope. Thoreson (1984:123; Sullivan and Poverny, 1992:3) agrees that academics work in an environment of low visibility of performance with vaguely defined and non-enforced standards of performance, a veritable Mecca for scholarship.

7.6.30   Employee services

7.6.30.1   On-off facility (mandatory referral) (question

More staff members (56%) would prefer to refer their colleagues to an on-site facility as opposed to those (38%) that prefer an off-site facility whilst a small number of only (6%) did not respond to the question. Grosch et al (1996:44) argues that EAPs in higher education should place greater emphasis on self and peer referrals as opposed to the more traditional supervising referral.

In a needs assessment for a city municipality EAP, Berman et al (1991:30) found that two thirds of the employees surveyed indicated that they might use the EAP service for a variety of different problems.

7.6.30.2   **On-off facility (self referral)**

Most of the respondents (59%) reported that they would prefer to use an on-site facility to deal with their personal problems rather than an off-site facility (34%) while a small number (7%) of employees did not respond to the question.

7.6.31   **Can staff in your section benefit from the following information? (question**

7.6.30.1   **Managing personal problems (question**

Three-quarters (75%) of the sample as opposed to 22% reported that staff members in their department would benefit from more information on how to manage personal problems. An insignificant number (3%) did not respond to the question. This finding suggests that the administrative staff may be one of the significant groups to support and benefit from an EAP. In a comparative analysis and evaluation of a University Employee Assistance Programme, Yamatani, Santangelo, Maue and Heath (1999:111) found that the utilization rate was 1,5% for academic staff and 5,4% among administrative staff, which therefore confirms that administrative staff would be the highest consumers of EAP services.

7.6.30.2   **Marital problems**

Another majority (72%) reported that their staff members would benefit from more information on how to handle marital problems while 25% said they would not benefit. Three percent (3%) did not respond to the question. Grosch et al (1996:51) in their study reported that a greater percentage of clients sought assistance for psychological problems, family/ marriage problems, and career related problems.

7.6.30.3 Retirement

An overwhelming majority of administrative staff (84%) reported that staff members in their section would benefit from more information on retirement whilst 13% said they would not. Three (3%) percent did not answer the question.

7.6.30.4` Downsizing

Downsizing yielded the same response rate as retirement with a majority (84%) of the administrative staff responded by saying that staff members in their section would benefit from downsizing and 13% reporting that they will not benefit from such information. Three percent of the respondents did not respond to the question. Downsizing yields a mixed reaction of feelings from employees which can tend to harden towards the organization if left unattended. The other dimension to consider on downsizing is that as Universities rationalize services and programmes, it can be challenging to justify scarce funds to Employee Assistance Programmes (Yamatani, Santangelo, Maue and Heath, 1999:108).

7.6.31 Can you benefit from the following information? (question
7.6.31.1 Management of personal problems (question

The highest number of respondents (91%) reported that they would benefit from more information on how to manage personal problems as compared with 3% that said they would not. Six percent (6%) of the respondents did not respond to the question.

This finding is in contrast to that obtained from members of the executive management who (50%) maintained that they would not benefit from information on management of personal problems and the reason for this position according to Yamatani et al (1999:108) is that "highly educated

professors and researchers tend to deny that they need personal assistance, even when coping with serious personal problems".

7.6.31.2   Marital problems

Another high number of respondents (72%) claimed that they would personally benefit from more information on how to handle marital problems, 22% said such information will not be useful to them and six percent (6%)of the respondents did not respond to the question. Yamatani et al (1999:109) indicated that EAP services at Universities target the following problems:

- alcohol and substance abuse/ dependency;
- work related problems (stress, harassment and conflict);
- family problems (marital problems, child rearing and caring for aging parents);
- emotional/psychiatric problems; and
- physical health problems.

7.6.31.3   Retirement

Most of the staff members in the administrative section of the University of the North (85%) reported that they thought they would personally benefit from more information on retirement whilst 9% reported that they would not. Only six percent (6%) of the respondents did not respond to the question.

7.6.31.4   Downsizing

Most of the respondents (81%) reported that they would benefit from information on downsizing and 13% said they would not benefit from such information while (6%)did not respond to the question.

7.7 Executive management (E)

7.7.1 Age (question 1.1)

The ages of members of the executive management's ranged from 42-65. It is also important to note that most (50%)of the executive managers were in the age range 42-47; while 33% were in the age-range 48-53 and 17% in the group 60-65.

These findings suggest that members of the executive management were between the mid-life transition and late adulthood (Thoreson, 1984:129). The researcher is of the view that such a blend of energy and wisdom from executive management augurs well for the institution.

7.7.2 Gender (question 1.2)

In the current executive management structure there were males only. This structure of management need to be exemplary in terms of gender equity. It also has to comply with the stipulations of the Employment Equity Act. The researcher also finds solace from the fact that this structure may be temporary and that in the permanent one gender equity will be observed.

The Shape and Size Task Team Report (2000:19) mentions the following about lack of equity among Universities and Technikons: "All institutions have academic staff and senior administrative bodies that are dominated by males".

7.7.3 Population group (question 1.3)

The people who participated in the research were white (67%) and black (33%). This is a surprising finding seeing that the University is historically black but is managed by white people. This may also not be an anomaly since the South African government has as one of its primary missions to build a colour blind society. Equity in terms of gender and race is still a requirement in the executive management of the University.

The Shape and Size of Higher Education Task Team Report (2000:19) alludes to the fact that academic and administrative staff of universities display poor patterns of race and gender representation and distribution.

7.7.4 Marital status (question 1.4)

Majority of the executive management (83%) were married whilst 17% were divorced. In their study, Grosch et al (1996:51) reported that a greater percentage of clients sought assistance for psychological problems, family and marriage problems. This therefore means this group could benefit from employee assistance services since it provides counselling to individuals with marriage as well as psychological problems.

7.7.5 Number of children (question 1.5)

Most members (50%) of the executive have two (2) children; 33% have 3 children and 17% have six (6) children. An almost similar finding was obtained among the academic staff, heads of departments and deans. The researcher is tempted to insinuate that employees of the University of the North with the exception of administrative staff and unskilled workers are inclined to have smaller families.

7.7.6 Qualifications (questions 1.6)

Members of the executive management possessed a variety of qualifications. The following qualifications were noted in descending order: doctorates (32%); masters (17%); LLB (17%); bachelors (17%) and diplomas (17%). Baldridge (1984:56) noted that the first characteristic of Universities is that they are highly professionalized client-serving systems.

The findings indicate a heavy presence of persons with higher qualifications in the management of the University. A fair representation of persons with a legal background is also available and the latter will assist the University with legal matters concerning downsizing as well as the establishment of an EAP of course.

7.7.7   Duration of employment for members of the executive management (question 1.7)

Table 24: Duration of employment for members of the executive management

Number of years	Count	Percent
4	1	17.6
10	1	17.6
30	1	17.6
33	1	17.6
3 months	1	17.6
2 months	1	17.6
Total	**6**	**100**

There was thus a variety of experience at the University of the North with about 34% of the respondents having been employed for less than a year. One can also read that members of the executive management were not stable in their positions. Such a situation would be difficult for plans to establish an EAP at the University in that the advocate must educate a large number people who are themselves very unstable.

7.7.8   Changes in higher education

7.7.8.1   Familiarity with modularisation (question 2.1)

Most members of the executive management (83%) of the University were familiar with the modularisation of programmes and curricula. There were however some members of the executive management (17%) who were not familiar with these developments.

7.7.8.2   **Feelings about modularisation (question 2.2)**

The majority of members of the executive management (50%) felt neutral about the modularisation of curricula; 33% were positive and 17% were somewhat positive.

One can therefore conclude that the management of the University was divided on their feelings about the modularisation process. Half were in favour while the rest were not in favour. This is a discordant finding in that one expects management to have unity of purpose as far as transformation is concerned. If management is divided on this how then do they expect to motivate academic staff to move the process of modularisation forward.

7.7.8.3   **Familiarity with the Higher Education Act No.1 of 1997 (question 2.3)**

Most members of the executive management (83%) reported that they were comfortable with the Act. It is, however surprising to note that there were members (17%) of this high body on campus who were not comfortable with the Act that provides guidelines for the transformation of higher education in this country.

The reason why the majority of the respondents with the Higher Education Act is that the latter ushers in a new dispensation that nullifies discrimination in higher education.

7.7.8.4   **The task team report on shape and size of higher education (question 2.3.1.1)**

The task team report presents a scenario of higher education marked by dissent, corruption and generally low morale among academic staff (Sunday Times 2001:23). Most members of the executive management (33%) did not respond to the question or they (33%) were comfortable with this report while the rest (17%) had mixed feelings about the report and some (17%) were uncomfortable with the report.

The task team report generated the same kind of reactions from academic staff, heads of departments, deans as well as administrative staff. The researcher also noted from discussions with colleagues from other institutions that the reactions were pretty much the same from other campuses as well.

7.7.8.5   **Quality function of the Council on Higher Education (question 2.3.1.2)**

Most members of the executive management (50%) were comfortable with the quality promotion function of the Council on Higher Education and 17% were not comfortable. The other 33% did not respond to the question. The latter group consisted of people who did not read the Higher Education Act No 1 of 1997.

7.7.8.6   **Accreditation body for universities (question 2.3.1.3)**

Most members (67%) of the executive management were comfortable with the body that would be established to accredit universities. The other group (33%) who did not probably read the Higher Education Act did not respond to the question.

SAQA has created the Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) to ensure that learners who are awarded a registered NQF qualification or standard are able to demonstrate the learning outcomes of the qualification or standard in accordance with the described criteria and standards (The National Qualifications Framework Overview:13)

7.7.8.7   **National Qualifications Framework (question 2.3.1.4)**

Most respondents (50%) expressed satisfaction and comfort about the National Qualifications Framework whilst some (17%) did not and the other 33% did not respond to the question probably because they did not read the Higher Education Act No.1 of 1997 or rather they were not familiar with the National Qualifications Framework which is a set of guidelines by which records of a learner achievement are registered to enable national recognition of

acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages life-long learning (The National Qualifications Framework Overview: 3).

7.7.8.8   **Conditions of service for employees of the Universities (question 2.3.1.5)**

The majority of respondents (50%) were comfortable with conditions of service of employees of the University while 17% were not comfortable. The conditions of service for University employees are contained in the Higher Education Act and those (33%) who had not read the Act could not respond.

7.7.8.9   **Employment Equity Act (question 2.3.1.6)**

Most of the members of the executive management (67%) indicated that they were comfortable with the provisions of the Employment Equity Act. Some respondents (33%), however, did not respond probably because they too did not read the Employment Equity Act.

The Employment Equity Act seeks redress in the workplace in terms of the employment of the historically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society such as women, disabled and black people. Institutions and organisations have to submit their equity plans to the Department of Labour. This function is supposed to be common knowledge to every one in the executive management of the University.

7.7.8.10   **Funding formulae for universities (question 2.3.1.7)**

Thirty- three percent (33%) of the executive management did not respond to the question. The other (33%) of the executive management were not comfortable with the funding formulae prescribed by the department of education whereas 17% were comfortable. The other 17% were uncertain about this.

It is important to note that at the time this study was undertaken funding was based on the Full time equivalents (FTEs) and at the time of writing this report the funding of the Universities was done in terms of the National Plan for Education.

Yamatani et al (1999:108) also warn that in this era of corporate downsizing and severe higher education resource constraints, University EAPs have become vulnerable to reduction and sometimes termination. They maintain that since 1996 only about 15% of Universities in the United States have EAPs that offer direct assistance to staff members.

7.7.9 University of the North as an employer
7.7.9.1 Mission (question 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.

Most members (67%) of the executive management of the University reported that they were comfortable with the mission of the University which reads: "To achieve distinction in scholarship, professionalism and community renewal". Some respondents (33%) however expressed mixed feelings about this mission.

7.7.9.2 Goals of the University (question 3.1.2)

While half of the members of the executive management (50%) were uncomfortable about the goals of the University and the other half (50%) were comfortable about the goals of the University of the North. The reason why management were divided about the goals of the University has to do with goal diffuseness as observed by Baldridge (1984:55) that "administrators have a hard time identifying what it is they are doing".

Baldridge (1984:55) goes on to say managing a large institution is tough enough when you know what you are doing, but when goals are unclear, the level of difficulty increases a hundred fold.

7.7.9.3   **Objectives of the University (question 3.1.3)**

Most members of the respondents (42%) said they were not clear about the objectives of the University and some (25%) said they were clear about these. Thirty- three percent (33%) of the respondents said they were uncertain about the objectives of the University.

This is a surprising finding in that it reveals that most members (58%) in the executive management of the University were not clear about the objectives of the University. In this sense one is tempted to ask the question where would these people lead the University to, if they do not know its specific goals. The finding lends itself to another interpretation, namely that since this is a transitory management who were not in favour of the University's former objectives, are they there fore as a new management going to formulate new ones.

7.7.9.4   **Priorities of the University (question 3.1.4)**

The majority of the members of the executive management (57%) reported that they were not clear about the priorities of the University while the other thirty- three (33%) were uncertain about the priorities of the University. Only 10% of the respondents indicated that they were clear about the priorities of the University.

In essence the findings here suggest that the majority of members of the executive management were not clear about the priorities of the University of the North.

7.7.9.5   **Promotion criteria (question 3.1.5)**

The majority of members of the executive (50%) of the respondents reported that they were not clear about criteria for promotion at the University and 33% said they were clear. Seventeen percent (17%) noted that they were uncertain about criteria for promotion.

This finding suggests that the majority of management (67%) were not clear about criteria for promotion. This may be interpreted in two ways, namely that management is new and therefore does not know the criteria for promotion or that they do not know promotion criteria just like the findings obtained in other samples such as among the academic staff, heads of departments and deans.. Only one sector, within the academic sector, namely deans reported that they were familiar with promotion criteria on campus.

Members of the executive management together with council have to develop a policy for the University and one expects them to be familiar with criteria for promotion of their employees.

7.7.9.6   **Description of promotion criteria (question 3.3)**

The majority of respondents (50%) were uncertain about the criteria for promotion while 33% said the criteria were easy and 17% did not answer the question. This finding confirms the previous finding that the majority of the respondents across did not know the promotion criteria and could therefore not express an opinion on these.

7.7.9.7   **Conditions of employment (question 3.1.6)**

Half of the members of the executive management (50%) reported that they were clear about conditions of employment at the University and 33% said they were not clear while 17% said they were uncertain.

The conditions of employment for the University of the North staff is contained in the Personnel Policy and Practices book and the researcher's impression is that the University policy is the most sensible one.

7.7.10.   **Bringing about change on campus (question 3.2)**

All members of the executive management (100%) agreed that bringing change on campus would be difficult. The same finding was obtained from the academic staff, heads of departments, deans and administrative staff.

Baldridge (1984:51-64) identified the following factors that make bringing change on campuses difficult:

-       an enormous resource crunch;
-       management is politicalised;
-       a strong attack on the human service arms of colleges and Universities and
-       centralisation of authority;
-       goal diffuseness; and
-        vulnerability to outside pressure.

Schooling (1984:95) warns that the establishment of an Employee Assistance Programme is subject to the same initiatory and survival constraints as any other programme with perhaps a few other hurdles thrown in for good measure.

7.7.11   **Professional association membership (question 3.4)**

The majority of the respondents (67%) belonged to professional associations and 33% did not. This finding suggests the existence of dual allegiance as with the academic staff. It is not known what the effect of this is on management since it does not appear in literature. The effect of dual allegiance on University staff and vulnerability of the institution to external pressure combine to make universities to have unclear goals. This is the reason why members of the executive management did not know the goals and priorities of the University of the North.

7.7.12   **Trade union membership (question 3.5)**

The majority of members of the executive management (87%) reported that they did not belong to any union while 13% did. Since trade unions have a different ideological position from management the relationship between management and unions may be adversarial. It is interesting to note that within management there are people who belong to unions. This looks like another pattern of conflict of interests.

In a study by Grosch et al (1996:52) it was found that EAPs that had some degree of union involvement reported a slightly higher percentage of peer referrals (9.3% as opposed to 6,5% and slightly higher penetration rate (9,6% as opposed to 6,6%) than EAPs that were solely management sponsored, although neither of these differences were statistically significant.