

How mergers shape the institutional curriculum

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MAKING THE ARGUMENT

What happens to the resultant curriculum when two institutions, each with its own curricula, decide to merge? While studies of mergers abound (Harman & Meek 2002; Eastman & Lang 2001; Martin, Samels & Associates 1994; Goedegebuure 1992), there are few (if any) systematic studies on the curriculum effects of merging two or more higher education institutions. The curriculum is often treated as secondary to the larger financial and organisational alterations resulting from mergers. Put differently, few institutions merge (or are required to merge) to resolve a curriculum problem. And yet the curriculum stands at the heart of the teaching and learning transaction in higher education institutions. This article reports on one component of systematic inquiry into the curriculum effects of mergers in five different 'case studies' that unfolded in South Africa (see Jansen 2002).

REHEARSING THE CONTEXT

In July 1999 the second post-apartheid Minister of Education was appointed and, within months, he issued a *Call to action* announcing that: 'The shape and size of the higher education system cannot be left to chance if we are to realise the vision of a rational, seamless higher education system . . . The institutional landscape of higher education will be reviewed as a matter of urgency in collaboration with the Council on Higher Education (CHE). This landscape was largely dictated by the geo-political imagination of apartheid planners' (Department of Education 1999).

The CHE, a statutory body that advises the Minister of Education, was duly approached to provide advice on the reconfiguration of the higher education system. In December 1999 the CHE responded with a memorandum to the minister entitled *Towards a framework and strategy for reconfiguring the higher education system in South Africa* and in which a task team was proposed to deliver on this 'reconfiguration' exercise (CHE 1999). In January 2000 the minister spelt out the brief of the task team, directly and bluntly, 'a set of concrete proposals on the shape and size of the higher education system and not a set of general principles which serve as guidelines for restructuring. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of

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this point. Until and unless we reach finality on institutional restructuring, we cannot take action and put in place the steps necessary to ensure the long-term affordability and sustainability of the higher education system.’

In July 2000 the CHE task team presented its report, *Towards a new higher education landscape: meeting the equity, quality and social development imperatives of South Africa in the 21st century* (CHE 2000). In the fourth and final Chapter on ‘National Steering and Planning’, the task team ‘advances a number of recommendations on the size of the system in relation to the number of institutions, closures, combinations and funding [and] provides examples of possible combinations that could create a more rational and coherent higher education landscape’ (CHE 2000:51).

The task team then took the bold step – in the same document – of listing ‘examples of possible combinations’ (CHE 2000:60), warning that ‘[t]hese examples are not meant to be exhaustive. They must also not preclude the Minister identifying other possible combinations’ (CHE 2000:63) that could achieve the national goals for higher education.

On 5 March 2001, and in response to the CHE report, the minister released a *National plan for higher education* that essentially agreed with the task team recommendations (Ministry of Education 2001). In this response, the minister hinted at yet another investigation, this time ‘to investigate the feasibility of reducing the number of institutions and establishing new institutional and organisational forms through a more rational arrangement for consolidating the provision of higher education on a regional basis. It is important to emphasise that the focus of the investigation would not be on whether the number of institutions can or should be reduced, but how they can be reduced and the form that restructured institutions should take’ (Ministry of Education 2001:89).

Later in March 2001 the minister appointed a national working group (NWG) consisting of 11 people from business, labour, higher education and government ‘to advise on the appropriate arrangements for restructuring the provision of higher education including institutional mergers’ (Department of Education 2001:4). In December 2001, the NWG released its report, *The restructuring of the higher education system in South Africa*, and recommended the reduction of higher education institutions from 36 to 21 through the specific mechanism of mergers, listing the specific institutions in various provinces to be targeted for merging.

The critical question emerges as to why these mergers were contemplated in the first place? Here the CHE task team, the Ministry’s National Plan and the NWG hold forth the same basic motivation. It is captured and repeated in the national plan as ‘the basis for assessing combinations of institutions’ (Ministry of Education 2001:89). Put directly, a merger can be deemed as successful if, among other things, it

- enhances access and equity goals for both staff and students
- enables economies of scale through the creation of larger multi-purpose institutions with more efficient uses of buildings, facilities and human resources
- overcomes the threat to institutional viability in terms of student numbers, income and expenditure patterns, and management capacities
- creates new institutions with new identities and cultures that transcend their past racial and ethnic institutional histories and contribute to their deracialisation.

The institutional curriculum was clearly not a direct focus of the mergers; but as stated earlier, the *educational transaction* that follows the physical reorganisation is, essentially, conducted through the resultant curriculum. Moreover, the envisaged establishment of new institutional cultures and identities, the resolution of racially divided histories, and the achievement of programme efficiencies depend in large part on the curriculum emergent from the merger process. This is the constituent interest of this inquiry about the merged curriculum.

THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

This study was conducted over a period of two years by a team of five doctoral students (at the time), with this author as team leader, each investigating one of five merger or incorporation case studies. The research strategy involved an extensive collection and analysis of institutional documents, including curriculum planning documents which reflected both the ‘before-’ and ‘after-merger’ curricula of each combining institution. The curriculum documents formed the basis for designing the interview protocol which, in turn, guided the extensive interviews conducted with lecturers, students and administrators from the different institutions; the interview protocol, and indeed the data generated, commission both critical concerns as well as positive expectations about the merits of the merged curriculum. The fact that this inquiry started as institutions were in the process of merging, meant that much of the tensions, strains and stresses of curriculum collaboration were ‘caught’ in the data collection process, and this is reflected in the vignettes on three of the merger studies. The research team created several dialogue forums in which we moved between the formal curriculum statements and the curriculum interview data in order to make sense of the meanings and trajectories of curriculum combinations in each of the merger cases. These interpretations are presented in the narrative that follows.

INTRODUCING THE MERGER PARTNERS

The narrative on curriculum mergers is extracted from a larger national study of five merger cases in South African higher education (Jansen 2002).¹ In legal terms, the combinations studied include both ‘mergers’ (university or technikons merging, in whole or in part) and ‘incorporations’ (teacher education colleges

absorbed into either universities or technikons). In this study, the word merger is used to refer to both kinds of institutional combinations. This study of the curriculum effects of the mergers is limited to three institutions in which discernible results are already evident with respect to the institutional curriculum:

The merger partners	Rationale for selection
The South African College for Teacher Education (SACTE) incorporated into the University of South Africa (UNISA), located in Gauteng Province	This combination was selected because it represents the only merger of distance education institutions in the study; one distinguishing feature being that students are not visible components of the stakeholder politics that shape the course and destiny of the incorporation
The Johannesburg College of Education (JCE) into the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) University, in Gauteng Province	This combination was selected because it presented a very strong college of education and a relatively weaker Department of Education within a large faculty at Wits University; it is also an urban, residential college-into-university incorporation of two historically white institutions with a relatively stable financial base
The Faculty of Veterinary Sciences at the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) into the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences at the University of Pretoria (UP), both in Gauteng Province	This combination is the only ‘sub-unit’ merger within two larger institutions, one historically white and financially advantaged; the other historically black and financially disadvantaged. This sub-unit merger has several unique features that showed up in the course of researching this case study.

CASE I: THE INCORPORATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE OF TEACHER EDUCATION INTO UNISA

The South African College for Teacher Education (SACTE) was earmarked by government for incorporation into the University of South Africa (UNISA). The incorporating unit at UNISA would be its Faculty of Education, which shared with SACTE the task of teacher development through distance education programmes. The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), an independent organisation, provided a consultant to facilitate the curriculum integration that accompanied the physical incorporation of the college into the university (Soobrayan 2002).

But the curriculum integration did not happen, except in the very limited case

of a new national initiative, the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE), designed by government for the upgrading of under-qualified teachers. In this case, the SACTE programmes were mapped onto the existing programmes of UNISA and academic pathways were developed to facilitate the move of college students into the university.²

However, even in the case of the NPDE, the UNISA staff offered little help in the development of the programme.³ It was mainly the SACTE staff members who developed the diploma. According to the curriculum facilitator (i.e., the SAIDE consultant), 'it was absolutely impossible to get UNISA staff, except in a supervisory capacity, to take interest in the college material (12 February 2002). I find it extraordinary myself. [My] impression was that they believed the material was not very good' (12 February 2002).

If there was some degree of mutual interest in the NPDE programme, the UNISA staff showed little interest in the integration of certificates and diplomas in teacher education from SACTE and UNISA – even though UNISA would gain both the students and the curriculum, leading to significantly increased revenue through the state subsidy. In the process, the SACTE curriculum as well as the SACTE professional expertise was lost as the UNISA curriculum was maintained. The curriculum materials of SACTE were made available by its staff, but there was no serious interest on the part of the university in integrating these materials – developed over many years – into the existing institutional curriculum. As a result of the efforts of the SACTE staff, the UNISA curriculum was modified to include a few college modules but there was very little participation by UNISA in this process.

According to one of the UNISA lecturers, they were not really told about the material available and that towards the end of 2001 there was an announcement in the staff room at teatime that SACTE had curriculum material available and anyone who was interested should have a look at it. It does not seem that anyone was really inspired to take up the offer.

According to the SAIDE consultant, 'My own goal was to try and preserve the quality that existed at the colleges and to incorporate that. But I failed. Some of the modules will be there but the staff will probably not come over' (12 February 2002).

According to Professor Ben Parker, who had been involved in the early planning of the college incorporation and who led the national plan for teacher education on behalf of government: '[I]t was really really important to preserve the expertise that existed in distance education Unisa was stuck in the past . . . The only two places where we really had a reservoir of capacity in distance education were SACTE and SACOL on the whole SACTE's product was much better than UNISA's' (30 January 2002).

His conclusion was that the SACTE/UNISA incorporation process had not managed to preserve any expertise at all. He described this incorporation as one in

which ‘the wheels had come off . . . to me its quite clearly the blatant failure of the twenty-seven incorporations’.⁴

The only curriculum material from SACTE that was incorporated into UNISA in the long term was those programmes that had been included in the NPDE and the new UNISA HDE (Upgrading). The certificate courses offered by SACTE would simply come to an end at the end of 2002. SAIDE had recommended specifically that the SACTE certificate courses in Entrepreneurship, Human Rights and Healthy Lifestyles, Travel and Tourism, Reception Year and Computyping be incorporated into UNISA’s Education Centre for Training and Development. This did not materialise.

A further complication at the level of curriculum improvements, according to Welch, was the reluctance on the part of UNISA lecturers to merge pedagogic imperatives with content requirements of particularly the elective courses in the NPDE and the UNISA Further Diploma in Education. For example, the History Department would teach a subject like History and there would be no co-operation between the Faculty of Education and its need for students to learn how to teach history and the content focus of the History Department. She argues that since there was no agreement to achieve such merging the quality imperatives of the incorporation were compromised.

In the SACTE/UNISA incorporation a series of formal arrangements had been put in place to effect the potential merging of the curriculum of the two institutions. An external consultant had been employed to make the best use of the curriculum of the incorporating institution, curriculum committees had been set up and a great deal of work had gone into mapping the curriculum of the two institutions onto each other. Despite these formal arrangements, the objective of curriculum development though the incorporation did not materialise.

How can this pattern of minimal curriculum integration be explained? First, the SACTE staff members were clearly positioning themselves for employment in the university; strong participation in curriculum matters would enhance their bargaining power for selection onto the university establishment. This was unattractive to Unisa, since the Faculty of Education had itself experienced a sharp decline in distance education students, leading to retrenchments in recent years (Soobrayan 2002). Accepting the SACTE curriculum would mean accepting members of the SACTE staff. This was clearly not an attractive option to the Unisa staff members.

Second, the UNISA staff held strong views that the college curriculum was inferior to that of the university. This strong sense – not at all unique to UNISA – that colleges were inferior institutions working with a slightly enhanced high school curriculum, clearly sustained the distance between college and university with respect to curriculum development and collaboration.

Third, UNISA had been under some pressure from external bodies because its own curriculum was less than adequate for serving teacher education under a new government and a new education vision. UNISA felt threatened and potentially

exposed by the very idea of incorporating material from a college of education into its own curriculum. Such an action would have been a tacit acknowledgement that UNISA material had space for improvement and development. Given the historical arrangement of UNISA accrediting the programmes of the college, and thereby assuming some level of academic authority in relation to SACTE, it would have been difficult for UNISA to relinquish any of its imagined authority. In the words of a senior member of the UNISA faculty,

[W]hen we had to put together the NPDE we had to collect materials for that curriculum from all the institutions – SACOL, SACTE as well as UNISA. And we went through a process where we accessed and evaluated all the materials and people felt extremely threatened by that process. I think it is a good process . . . I don't know why people are willing to submit an article for review, but they are not willing to submit their tuition material for review . . . Because we are sitting with extremely poor materials. Don't get me wrong – there are excellent materials here at SACTE, SACOL and UNISA. But there [is] also poor material.

Researcher: 'How do people express their feelings of insecurity?'

Unisa Professor: 'At UNISA – refusal to participate' (1 August 2001).

The important lesson learnt in this case study is that curriculum integration is dependent on perceived hierarchies of status and authority between the merged institutions; the staffing implications of curriculum integration and the extent to which either institution has confidence in defending its own curriculum in the process of merger deliberations. It is clear that the political and institutional conditions for curriculum integration were not met in a highly unequal process involving the university and the college. In the end, no staff were 'taken onto' the university establishment, the physical plant of the college was lost to the university, and only the substantial reserves and student subsidy income were literally transferred to the university. But aside from minor modifications to the university curriculum, there was no integration given the power differences between the two institutions.

CASE II: THE INCORPORATION OF JCE INTO WITS UNIVERSITY

The Johannesburg College of Education (JCE) enjoyed a long history of curriculum collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). However, the announcement of incorporation of JCE (as the College of Education) into Wits University (alongside its School of Education) created an unexpected degree of curriculum dissonance between the two entities.

In order to explain curriculum dissonance in the JCE–Wits incorporation, it is important to understand the superior position of this college in the deliberations with the university. As demonstrated in great detail elsewhere (Schoole 2002), this

college came into the incorporation process with an exceptionally strong leadership, a reputation for high quality teacher preparation, an impressive physical infrastructure and substantial college reserves. These factors enabled the college – unlike its counterparts – to negotiate very favourable conditions for incorporation, one of which included the relative autonomy for the pre-service teacher education curriculum for which it was historically the main provider.

In the case of JCE, therefore, the pre-service curriculum was buttressed in a strong college–school structure and culture that simply continued the status quo, with historical contributions from university academics still received as inputs into the college-driven curriculum. Where curriculum collaboration was forged, clear roles were assigned to the two partners.

In this case of the new Bachelor of Primary Education (the BPrim. Ed.), for example, the Wits University staff taught the education theory components and JCE staff the subject methodology components. Despite efforts ‘to allow theory to be informed by practice and practice by theory’ (Carrim, Postma & Christie 2002:215), the Wits–JCE teams found curriculum integration to be very difficult: ‘Wits staff, however, still maintain control of the conceptual and theoretical directions of education theory taught [and] Wits staff do not collaborate with JCE staff teaching specialist methodologies’ (Carrim, Postma & Christie 2002:215).

One of the factors frustrating such curriculum integration has been the familiar argument about teaching being a practical, professional activity as opposed to a theoretical and academic qualification (Carrim, Postma & Christie 2002:215).

The following views of college students and staff underline the pride of the college community about its curriculum position:

[O]ur people here [at JCE], train people for primary school which I believe they don’t do there [at Wits University], and I couldn’t see them being able to do these remarkable jobs that people here do. It is very specialised and I’ve been into some of the students teaching in primary schools, although I’ve never been a primary school teacher, and I can see that the training is of a very high standard. Those students not only benefit the children here, but lots of them go overseas and are snatched up quickly. As regards to the high school ones, the benefits here are that we have been in schools ourselves teaching most of us, and we can give a lot of tips on how to do things. By contrast I’m not sure which of the people down at Wits University have had that experience.’⁵

This comment by a JCE lecturer highlights some of the paradigmatic differences in the approaches toward teacher training between the two institutions. A student representative also saw comparative advantages in the college curriculum: ‘I think that one of the nice things about JCE is that from the first year already you are exposed to school experience, whereas in the universities you are not. Only at the end in your final year you’re exposed to that, so who knows if all these years

you're wasting your time or not. So that was primarily the main concern that we would lose out on stuff like the school experience and the methodology of teaching.'⁶

This lack of curriculum integration between the two schools extended to the in-service programmes that both institutions offer. Both schools operate teacher upgrading projects: the university through its Further Diploma in Education, and the college through a separate contractual agreement with the provincial Department of Education. It would make sense – in academic and financial terms – if these services were to be synchronised, drawing on the strengths of both institutions.

While the college staff claim some monopoly of expertise with regard to the training of teachers, this has been criticised by some members of the School of Education who argued that that expertise was only relevant to the taught syllabus that was formerly prescribed by the provincial Department of Education. In the university context, college lecturers would be expected to develop their own taught curriculum and no longer rely on a prescribed syllabus.⁷

The introduction of the generic undergraduate BEd degree seems to have brought about some dichotomy among staff and further highlights the paradigmatic differences among staff with regard to the training of teachers. There are those who see the prescribed outcomes of this programme as being more technicist, as college lecturers have been used to, than contributing towards the generation of new knowledge – as traditional academic work is supposed to accomplish. This has left some staff members demoralised and beginning to question the status of education as an academic discipline. One School of Education staff member commented that:

I'm increasingly beginning to wonder to what extent is education in fact an academic discipline. All other disciplines can show you what their knowledge base is. What can education show? A sociologist can show you sociology. So can a historian. What can an educator show you? In other words, what I'm feeling very strongly and I think the changeover in the new qualifications and that was brought very forcefully to the fore in my mind is this conflict between the education of teachers, on the one hand, and the academic pursuit of knowledge, on the other. I find that there is increasingly a disjuncture between the two. The training of teachers increasingly for me takes on a kind of a technicist aspect as opposed to the free pursuit of knowledge that an academic does. My role as an academic within teacher education has been questioned within this whole merger thing. People over there [at the college] would say: 'What is it that you do that really contributes to teacher training'. In other words, 'Show us how does your academic knowledge of genetic epistemology, [which is my field], how does that knowledge help a teacher walk into a classroom and teach?'⁸

The unusual authority of the college going into this incorporation, and strong ideological divides between college and university academics, have limited the

nature and degree of curriculum integration between the two institutions. Unlike the SACTE case, the university was not able to impose its institutional will on the curriculum. But like the SACTE–Unisa case, the conflict over curriculum was resolved in favour of the stronger institutional partner – in this case, the former college of education.

CASE III: THE CASE OF THE MERGER OF VETERINARY FACULTIES

The merger of the Faculties of Veterinary Science of two different universities created a unique set of challenges for curriculum integration. The former white University of Pretoria (UP) had a well-established Faculty of Veterinary Science (FOVS) with world-class facilities, while the black Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) had a small and poorly resourced faculty by the same name doing the same work, namely, the training of veterinary scientists or ‘vets’ (Lethoko 2002). Other than the logic (*sic*) of apartheid, there was no compelling reason for operating two expensive veterinary facilities, both heavily subsidised by the national government, within a 40 kilometre range from each other.

The problem was that the curriculum was perceived as serving two completely different communities – one training white veterinarians and the other training black ‘vets’. In addition, there was a perception that MEDUNSA catered for production animals such as cows, sheep, goats and poultry, while UP was understood to cater only for companion animals or pets.

In reality, there was probably more commonality than difference in the formal curriculum of the two Faculties of Veterinary Science, as the following three examples illustrate. First, there has always been an overlap in the courses that were offered in both faculties; for instance, during the second year, courses such as Histology were taught in both institutions, Veterinary Public Health during the fourth year, and Pathology during the sixth year. Second, similar courses were offered in different academic years in the two faculties; for example, Veterinary Public Health was offered in the fifth and sixth years at MEDUNSA, while UP offered Public Health from the fourth to fifth years. Third, some courses, dealing with the same course content, had different names such as Veterinary Physiology at MEDUNSA and Applied Physiology and Pathology and Physiology at UP; Herd Health at UP is specified in terms of animal types such as cattle, pigs and small stock, whilst MEDUNSA refers to the same course as Herd Health I and II, Poultry Science and Medicine at MEDUNSA (year V), and Poultry Diseases at UP (year IV).

Nevertheless, as a result of biting curriculum criticism, the designers of the ‘merged’ curriculum took great care to ensure that both types of animal services were well accommodated. According to the dean of the merged faculty, their commitment was to ensure that the curriculum produced a graduate who could deliver both companion animal practice as well as production animal practice.

Efforts were made to ensure that the new curriculum was completely integrated to reflect the single, merged institution.

Indeed, it is evident from a close analysis of the described academic programme that the new curriculum contains courses and modules from both MEDUNSA and UP syllabi, balancing the needs of veterinary science within different communities, and to make the qualification a versatile one in which all kinds of animals are catered for. For some courses, the names have been changed. In some cases the content of the course stayed the same depending on the importance of such a course, while in other cases the content was added or decreased. From the third to fifth years of study, students start with six periods of 40 minutes each per week of 'junior clinics' in the Veterinary Academic Hospital. This is part of their practical work.

The merged institution has clearly made commendable progress with its curriculum integration. But how do students experience the curriculum of the merged institution? Both MEDUNSA staff and students interviewed experience the curriculum as alien to their own academic and linguistic backgrounds; in their view, the curriculum privileges students from well-endowed former white schools – both the majority white as well as some of the black students who attended former white schools. One of the main reasons for these experiences of curriculum alienation among black students is the language problem. Previously, the MEDUNSA curriculum offered first-year students a course in the English language which assisted black students from rural areas and poor schools to cope with the language demands of the veterinary programme. Such a facility no longer exists.

To illustrate the challenge of language, a former MEDUNSA lecturer, originally from the United States of America, pointed out that when he first taught at MEDUNSA, he was surprised by the way the students were slow to compose notes as he taught; they also took their time in responding to his questions. So he decided to check the notes of some of these students, and found that: 'Some students were actually writing notes in Zulu or whatever African language, not in English. In the same way, when he asked a question, some students would translate the question into their mother tongue and formulate the answer likewise, then translate their answer into English' (Interview records 18 March 2002).

Related to this experience, one of the main concerns for MEDUNSA students and lecturers has been the apparent lack of understanding from the new faculty that black students are not from advantaged schools or advantaged families that use English on a daily basis. For this reason, black students continue to feel alienated and disadvantaged within the new curriculum, as one student put it: 'If we had the same type and level of primary and secondary education as the white children, we would be able to compete or to be compared. But for now, there is no competition nor a comparison between us because this place is so foreign in many ways to us – in technology, language (some Afrikaans-speaking lecturers still use Afrikaans) and the method of teaching' (Interview records March 2002).

THEORISING CURRICULUM MERGERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Does the bringing together of two institutions mean a rationalisation of the curriculum or, at the very least, a use of the combined expertise and materials of the two entities to create a single curriculum? In some cases, the answer is simply 'no'. In the case of the colleges, SACTE being the most obvious, the college curriculum simply dissipated under the politics of neglect and indifference on the part of UNISA. In the case of JCE, however, the curriculum was buttressed in a strong school structure and culture that simply continued under the status quo, with historical contributions from university academics still received as inputs into the college-driven curriculum. In the case of the veterinary faculties, the large institution's curriculum dominated completely, with only marginal accommodation of the smaller faculty's curriculum.

How does one move the interpretation along beyond the seemingly isolated and divergent 'facts' about each merger case towards a broader interpretation of the meaning and trends signaled in the coming together of the institutional curriculum? Our theoretical lens used in the broader study from which this one was extracted, argued that merger outcomes could be interpreted as a product of the interaction between governmental macro politics (what government does) and institutional micro politics (how institutions respond) within specific institutional contexts (Jansen 2002). This means that one cannot predict the outcomes of mergers based on the existence of a common merger planning script, but that outcomes could be quite divergent depending on the kinds of politics resident in particular merger contexts (Jansen 2002). To what extent is this theoretical framework useful in explaining a subset of the merger process, namely the merging of institutional curricula?

The major difference in the application of this theoretical framework is the relative absence of any *macro political* factors in shaping the merger of curricula. This is in part to be expected, since the higher education curriculum is, to a large extent, a subject of institutional autonomy. However, what was crucial in the contestations over curriculum, and therefore the degree of curriculum integration, was *micro political* struggles over whose content matters. In the case of the veterinary faculties, the issue of elite science (parakeets) versus subsistence science (pigs) constituted a major fault line in the debates over curriculum. In a public outburst by a senior MEDUNSA academic on this point, he remonstrated that 'they [Pretoria] provide for parakeets, we provide for pigs'. In the detailed case narrative on the colleges, a persistent theme in the struggles over curriculum authority was the claim by college lecturers that they had better expertise and experience for the training of teachers as professionals. Universities were too academic and theoretical; they had little knowledge of the world of professional practice. In some cases, this argument 'won' (as in the case of JCE); in others, the college was simply ignored as an organisation, including its curriculum as in another case studied – the incorporation of the Giyani College of Education into the University of Venda for Science and Technology (Bandi 2002). What seemed to matter more

concretely in these cases was the disciplinary context as well as the institutional context within which curriculum integration was pursued; the veterinary science curriculum reflects a struggle over content and focus that is deeply embedded in the different institutional missions and location quite unique to faculties of veterinary science.

NOTES

- 1 The SACTE–Unisa incorporation was investigated by Venitha Soobrayan; the JCE–Wits incorporation by Chika Schoole; and the merger of the veterinary science faculties by Mankolo Lethoko.
- 2 In August 2000, SAIDE produced a lengthy (96 pages) report that mapped the programmes offered by the university and SACTE and SACOL and suggested how the programmes of all three institutions could best be used.
- 3 Interview with Mary Ann (pseudonym), UNISA, 21 January 2002.
- 4 Interview with Ben Parker, 30 January 2002.
- 5 Interview with college lecturer, 19 October 2001.
- 6 Focus group interview with the student representative council members, 9 October 2001.
- 7 Interview with lecturer in the School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, November 2001.
- 8 Ibid.

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