‘CIRCoRe Governance meeting, 4 September 2023
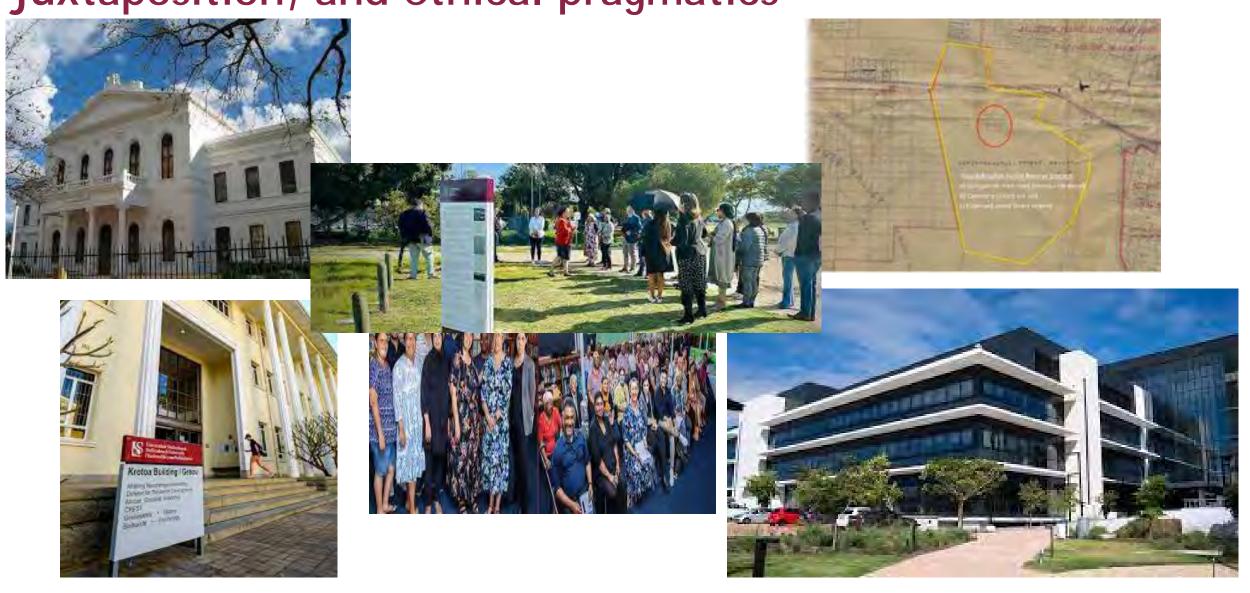
Report, Aslam Fataar

Transformation and the dialectic of ambiguity, juxtaposition, and ethical pragmatics

The genealogy of the CIRCoRe process

- Historicising Stellenbosch University since the 1800s , periodisation, 1870s – 1918; 1918 to 1977, 1977 to 1994.

- The SU Transformation trajectory - 1990s to 2023 (See the books, *'Visual Redress at SU'* (2021) and *SU 100: 1918-2018* (2018) and the impending book ' *The pathways and experiences of Black students at SU* (Oct 2023)

- 2022 = urination incident(s), dance incident - Khampepe Commission - 'Final Report: Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Racism at Stellenbosch University' (Oct 2022)

- CIRCoRE Terms Reference (April 2023)

- CIRCoRe framings: constitutionalism as the foundation for an 'all-included' approach to addressing and eradicating racism and discrimination on campus

- CIRCoRe – two-year process – stakeholder consultation, workstreams, scholarly deliberaations/research/data/, dialogue and consultation, proposal generation, implementation

- The CIRCoRe transformation task is based on an intersectionality approach that includes, class, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, geography, etc.

- First CIRCoRe Governance and oversight meeting: **20 April 2023**

CIRCoRe and Workstreams – Launched 13 May 2023

- TORs (and PoAs) – July 2023

- Co-opt workstream members –

    - Co-opted workstream members - Need to increase student membership

    - Induction workshop for new members done

    -A general report – back session for CIRCoRe and workstream members – 13 September, 4pm, MS Teams

    - Monthly meetings – F2F and MS Teams, recording and/ or written minutes

- Workstreams coverage of remits

- What research and information are required?

- CIRCoRe and workstream inclusive functionings? Are all voices/ opinions heard?

- Regular CIRCoRe report-backs to stakeholders and CIRCoRe presentations to seminars, symposia and workshops

- The role of the central CIRCoRe office in identifying and spanning gaps, aligning conversations?

An emerging CIRCoRe theory of institutional change

A comments on the recent DHET / HSRC project on the state of transformation in SA Higher Education based on self-reported transformation reports(led by Prof Keet et al.):

Transformation types: 'equity within an improvement culture', 'equity within a compliance culture', 'relevance within an improvement culture', 'relevance within a compliance culture',

A 'Marketisation as change' discourse dominates

Transformation approach = 'culture of compliance, and 'change without change'

The lack of a theory of change is palpable

CIRCoRe provides a platform for the Reframing, Repurposing, Reculturing, and Restructuring campus-life in all its social domains – dialectic across all dimensions

- CIRCoRe emerging change approaches to 'make the familiar strange' (13 May)
    - 1.Generating critique and transformation ideas and concrete proposals
    - 2.Mobilising energies, people, structures, policies, practices
    - 3.CIRCoRe models epistemic and demographic inclusivity – self-awareness is crucial
    - 4.Struggling over norms, design approaches/implementation processes
    - 5. Developing new rules, institutional cultures and practices
    - 6. Implementation, consolidation

CIRCoRe and Workstream METHODOLOGY

1. Provide conceptual tools and use postpositivist research and data methodologies ......

2. to generate critique, understanding and proposals

3. Convince and persuade – rational public deliberation

4. Develop change discourses through multilingual and translanguaging transformational communications

5. Leverage and lobby for systematic and systemwide change

6. Develop change indicators and monitor change

7. Propose change and ensure institutional take-up

Some emerging challenges for insertion in CIRCoRe and Workstream processes: where ethics, principle and strategy

- Employment equity (recruitment, appointments, retention) to change demographic profiles across the university

- MEETS deep institutional culture change: definitions of institutional culture as the operational platform to establish an **at-home** environment in all spaces differentially, or an **in-your-elementness** that unleashes our academic and non-academic staff's productive professional agency

- This is a key challenge for all sectors of employees, but the following question focuses the mind: **How do we recognise and affirm C3 staff?**

- The inclusive justice epistemology/knowledge question in SU's **institutional curriculum** (T and L, Research, and Social Impact and in the academic support sectors) – Is it a question of being trapped by language or have we not succeeded in centering scholarly debate about the knowledge question in the **university's institutional curriculum**?

Examples of targeted Research:

- The use of the category of 'race' on campus

- The state of the critical citizenship in the SU curriculum

- A study of critical citizenship curriculum across campus and at other universities nationally and internationally

- A literature-based document on recent and relevant research on race and higher education

- A 'SU students' living, commuting and learning ecologies' project that aims to provide an SU student experience typology.

- A survey on all transformation – related policies, regulations, structures – Purpose to unblock Transformation flows

- The state of Transformation Charter developments at SU

Some emerging short-term proposals

- A Practice Note for greater efficiency, justice and joined-up coherence to inform the university's agile and rapid response to incidents of discrimination and human rights violations,

- An induction programme for new staff based on a critical humanity curriculum orientation,

- Specific interventions to enhance dignity and privacy in the student living spaces,

- Staff workshops on research ethics and human categorisation,

- A proposal to infuse all ongoing policy development processes with the normative ethos and strategic alignment approaches generated in the CIRCoRe processes.

Mechanisms to build the inclusive transformed university

- Participative Dialogue Facilitation across campus – all voices included and the centring of marginal voices - all staff sectors, all student sectors, community partners – Sharman Wickham to report

- Centring the Transformation Charter proposal as organic to CIRCoRe processes, Khairoonisa Foflonker to hold the Charter process

- Centering a Scholarship of Transformation (Academic Discourse, Research, Debate)

- Developing transformational frames and discourse – via multilingualism and translanguaging communications to reach the widest span of campus publics

CIRCoRe's exposure to the student experience

- A day-long 'Walk through Student Life' arranged by CIRCoRe's workstream on student lives/communities and SU Division of Student Affairs (DSAf) is set for October 2023.

- This exercise is intended to expose the CIRCoRe committee and workstream members to the depth, complexity, prospects, problems, and challenges of the overall student experience at SU.

- It would provide insight into SU staff's complex work environment and their ongoing attempts to make the student experience welcoming, inclusive, and educationally meaningful.

- These learnings will be fed into the overall CIRCoRe and workstream processes.

Examples of seminars/symposia/conferences to be staged by CIRCoRe

- Two seminars on curriculum for critical citizenship (end September, mid-November 2023)

- 'Troubling Cisheteronormativity in South African Higher Education', Speaker - Prof Dennis Francis (Dept of Sociology) and respondents- 17 October 2023

- The state of institutional transformation charters at the University, Speaker – Ms Khairoonisa Foflonker and colleagues - 11 October 2023

- *The pathways and experiences of black students at Stellenbosch University -* a book launch related event (November 2023)

- Race, Categorisation and Ethics conference, January-March 2024

- International conference: Race, Categorisation and Science, send half of 2024

Workstreams HEADs Reports

- Student Lives/Communities - **Prof Ronelle Carolissen**

- Curriculum – **Prof Lis Lange**

- Institutional Culture - **Prof Kopano Ratele**

- Race, Human Categorisation and Science - **Prof Dion Forster**

- Strategic alignment with Transformation - **Dr Leslie van Rooi**

Thank you
Enkosi
Dankie

Photo by Stefan Els

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