

1. BACKGROUND

The University of Malawi was established in October 1964, only three months after the country became independent from the British colonial rule, through the directive of the then Head of State and Government. Its main purpose was to produce the human resources required by the new nation for the development of the economy. The University of Malawi Bill of 1964 mandated the establishment of Chancellor College at the then Robert Armitage High School, now the home of Chichiri Secondary School, in Blantyre.

The first students enrolled in October, 1965. Some students were transferred from Mpemba Staff Training College when the latter was taken over by the University of Malawi and converted into a constituent college offering diplomas in administration and degrees in law. Between 1965 and 1970, Bunda College of Agriculture, the Malawi Polytechnic and Soche Hill College were added. In 1979, the Kamuzu College of Nursing was established to train nurses, initially up to diploma level. And in 1991, the College of Medicine was added to the list of constituent college of the University of Malawi.

The production of diploma graduates was aimed at providing the human resources at middle management, technical and non-graduate levels which Government and industry required at the time. In 1973, Chancellor College, Soche Hill College and Mpemba Institute of Administration amalgamated when then they moved to Zomba into a bigger Chancellor College at Chirunga Campus. Thus, the Chancellor College became the main and only college to offer degrees in Humanities, Science, Public Administration, Law, Social Science and Education.

Unlike some Universities in anglophone Africa, the University of Malawi started without any formal affiliation with any major Universities in the industrially developed countries. However, the University of Malawi has had strong links with sister universities in Africa, Europe, and North America. Both the academic and administrative structures were based on the British model. The administration structure comprise the Chancellor, Chairman of Council, Vice Chancellor, University Registrar and College Principals. Other senior officers include the University Librarian and the Finance Officer.

The academic structure comprise Senate, with its committees, Deans, Heads of Departments and all teaching staff.

Another group of staff, and no less important are the support staff which included the Clerical, Technical and others like cooks, security personnel and cleaners.

The University Council, appointed by the Chancellor (the State President), is the governing body and is responsible for the management and administration of its property and revenues. Nearly all decisions related to finance are sanctioned by Government directly or through the Council before implementation. Through its committees, namely: Finance Committee and Appointments Committee, the Council prepares the University budget and appoints academic and administrative staff.

The enabling legislation, the University Act of 1974, spells out the structure and the functions of the University. The Act provides for the objects of the University as:

- I. To advance knowledge and to promote wisdom and understanding by engaging in teaching and research and making provision for the dissemination, promotion and preservation of learning;
- II. To engage in such university education and research as is responsive to the needs of Malawi and Africa;
- III. To offer within the limits of limited resources, to persons suitably qualified academically and who, in the opinion of the University Council, are able and willing to benefit from facilities offered by the University, education of a high university standard.

According to the act the functions of the University are listed as follows:

- I. To encourage the advancement and dissemination of learning;
- II. To engage in such university education and research as is responsive to the needs of Malawi and Africa;
- III. To provide facilities for higher education, for research and for the advancement of knowledge in such branches of learning and study for such persons, whether members of the University or not, as the University Council may from time to time determine;

- IV. Subject to the Act and its statutes, to award and confer Degrees and Diplomas and other academic distinctions, including honorary Degrees and distinctions;
- V. As determined by the University Council, from time to time, the University may provide specialist training in such subjects as may be deemed desirable for the purposes of initial employment, or for the advancement, in the public services, local government services or services of statutory bodies.*(note the omission of private sector and other groups in civil society...**italics added**)*

The University Act of 1974, also outlines the membership of the University as comprising:

- (a) The Chancellor;
- (b) The Vice Chancellor;
- (c) The Registrar;
- (d) Members of the Council;
- (e) Members of Senate;
- (f) All graduates of the University (Degree, Master, or Doctorate holders);
- (g) All other graduates and diploma holders of the University;
- (h) All holders of honorary Degrees from the University;
- (i) All Principals of Constituent Colleges of the University;
- (j) All Professors, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers of the University;
- (k) All members of the administrative and academic staff of the University;
- (l) All persons for the time being registered as students of the University.

*(Note that by this definition administrative and other support staff are not, unless they graduated with diploma or superior qualifications from the University of Malawi, members of the University - in any case the responsibilities of a member are not specified ...**italics added**)*

The University internal organization is characterized by a federal structure composed of five constituent colleges consisting of:

- Chancellor College;
- The Malawi Polytechnic;
- Bunda College of Agriculture;

- Kamuzu College of Nursing; and
- The College of Medicine

Each college is headed by a Principal who is aided by a Vice Principal, Registrar, a Bursar, Deans and a Librarian. The college registrars, bursars, librarians are also representatives of the University Registrar, Finance Officer, and the University Librarian respectively. This arrangement creates dual loyalty as, operationally, these officers are accountable to their respective Principals but look up to the Central Administration (headquarters) for “policy guidance”, promotions/transfers and disciplinary actions.

The Central Administration (popularly known as the University Office) is located in Zomba and is headed by the Vice-Chancellor who is supported by the following members of staff:

- University Registrar (UR)
- University Librarian (UL)
- Finance Officer (FO)
- Estates Development Officer (EDO)
- University Research Coordinator (URC)

The five colleges, together with the Central Administration have now a contingent of support staff in excess of 2,000 and include clerical, technical and others in maintenance, catering and clinical functions. There are, in all, 11 faculties comprising some 400 established academic staff. These statistics compare with a total student enrollment of 3,600 in the 1996/97 academic year. The total enrollment distribution for the year is shown in Table 1–1 on page 1-4 below.

Table 1–1: Enrollment Distribution by College

College	Number of Students	Faculty
Chancellor College	1500	Education Science Social Science Humanities Law

Malawi Polytechnic	1240	Engineering Commerce Applied Studies
Bunda College of Agriculture	500	Agriculture
Kamuzu College of Nursing	283	Nursing
College of medicine	77	Medicine

With a student-employee ratio of 3:2, there are nearly as many employees of the University as there are its students. The ratio of academic staff to support staff stands at 1:5. The commonly accepted ratio is of the order 1:3. In absolute terms, thus, the University can be regarded to have nearly twice as many staff in “support” functions as it needs for the efficient discharge of its core functions. This is indicative that worker-productivity in the University is considerably lower than its desired level. However, the large size of support staff is, in part, a direct result of many interlocking factors including the expansion of support roles beyond the traditional functions (e.g. Student Living and Maintenance, etc.), common services administration, ambiguous hiring practices and an over-sized Central Administration. When the unconventional support functions are netted out, the number of staff directly supporting the teaching and research functions would certainly be more modest but owing to over-stretching of resources the average direct support-staff productivity would still remain considerably low. The growth in staff numbers, has also compromised the University’s ability to adequately reward its employees (more especially professional staff), as well as its capability to invest in new equipment and maintain existing ones. As a public funded institution, the University has not been watching its costs, as say a private entity would. These factors have operated in a variety of complex ways leading to low staff morale and overall inefficiency.

The academic staff-student crude ratio of 1:9 would seem to suggest that there is room for expanding student enrollment without compromising internal efficiency. However, this crude ratio masks a lot of variations across colleges and faculties. Academic staff are clearly over-represented in some faculties while in others the situation is the opposite, that is, student enrollment overwhelms the personnel resource. Additionally, unacceptably high proportion of instructors (20% in the case of Chancellor college) are currently Assistant Lecturers and Staff Associates implying that they do not hold the requisite qualification (Master’s or above) to provide an acceptable level of quality instruction. They are also unlikely to yield a reasonable level of respect from their students. Even more, a sizeable number of the “qualified” instructors admit that they

have never been reoriented toward the job of teaching before engaging themselves in the function - “they were simply thrown in the water to learn to swim”. Most lecturers have never attended any refresher courses to upgrade their skills and competences. The Consulting Team was unable to find evidence of a regular refresher program for lecturers. Given this situation, student-teacher ratios are, regrettably meaningless, that is, the ratios do not provide any meaningful indication of the quality of teaching. The total effect of the inefficiencies in both support and academic staff gives rise to a real risk of a growing internal efficiency crisis and ultimately raise considerable doubts about the quality of education being offered by the University.

The statistics analyzed are admittedly broad but suggest, nonetheless, symptoms of an institution that urgently needs to institute a process of renewal.

2. POLICY ON THE UNIVERSITY

2.1 UPSTREAM POLICY - NATIONAL LEVEL

Apart from the University of Malawi Act of 1974, there has been little substantive Government guidance on the development of the University of Malawi. The importance of the University has had only passing mention in official documents such as the Education Sector Policy, DEVPOL and the Policy Framework for Poverty Alleviation Program. The University's development, by and large, evolved in ad-hoc manner and mainly through the former President's personal ego and directives.

The need for a policy framework for the development of the University becomes obvious when one considers the factors we outline below:

Human resources constitute the most important element in the development equation for it is their transformation that constitutes development. For Malawi, this is, arguably, the single most important 'missing link'. The human resources that are developed in the University are an essential component of the overall human resources development. The major principal sponsor of the University, that is, the Government, has yet to develop a comprehensive policy framework for the University's development: in terms of defining/determining the demand for University's products and services, broad parameters e.g. sectors of priority focus, quantity and quality of the University's principal outputs (graduates and research) in line with the economy's requirements.

There is no denying that the country faces a crisis of human resources development. A case in point is the result of the civil service census that indicates that the proportion of civil servants possessing post-secondary qualifications was less than 2 per cent of the total number of 112,975 civil servants, 17 per cent had only primary level education and 19 per cent had no formal educational qualifications. There is no reason to suppose that status in the private and other sectors is any better - short-term private sector objectives to contain costs and other labor market imperfections would suggest the average educational level of the civil service is higher than that of the elsewhere workforce in the economy. Given such an overall low level of national educational attainment, it is apparent that the nation cannot expect dramatic productivity improvements. The key

role for the University to spearhead building the necessary cadre of professionals is self-evident but does not seem to be fully understood.

The structural adjustment programs, the country has been undergoing since the early '80, have clearly paid inadequate attention to the University's development. The University does not appear to have been regarded as a key and serious partner in the formulation of reform measures that the nation requires through research and/or through other forms of collaboration. The University, however, not ever seem to have been predisposed to play such a role. In this regard, it can be argued that University research efforts are insufficiently focused on the critical issues facing the nation.

To date, the University of Malawi has graduated over 15,000 individuals in a variety of disciplines and with various credentials ranging from certificates, diplomas, first degrees, as well as higher degrees, e.g. Masters and Ph.D. degrees. The major focus has been on undergraduate training comprising nearly 90 per cent of the graduates. If we assume that all the graduates generated by the University of Malawi were retained by the civil service, their proportion would still be less than 10 per cent of the present civil service establishment. The reality is that the graduates have been employed in all sectors of the economy while others have crossed borders for ideological and political reasons or in search for greener pastures. Thus, effectively, the graduate employment constitutes a somewhat insignificant proportion of the Malawian labor market - hardly the required critical mass of professionals to turn the economy from poverty to sustainable livelihoods and development. The gap between the desired quantity of trained professionals and their availability is widening. It is obvious that the University alone cannot produce all that is needed, but must certainly play a key role in the creation of such capacity and the economy can not possibly succeed without such an acknowledgment.

The foregoing discussion underscores the fact that the social internal rate of return (yield) of investment in university education is one of the highest in the country. Yet, it is, apparent that the nation has under-invested in the education sector overall, and more particularly, in tertiary education. The University of Malawi does not have sufficient capacity to satisfy the needs of a rapidly growing population of students thirsty for university education. By the standard of Sub-Saharan Africa, the growth in student

enrollment has been dismal - growing from an in-take of 90 in 1965 to 3600 in 1996/97 academic year. The pressure on university places is undoubtedly exponentially escalating with the introduction of free primary education and the expansion of secondary education. The decision to establish another public university appears attractive on the basis of the need to expand enrollment, but nonetheless, less than efficient and premature an approach especially given the crisis situation facing the existing public university - the University of Malawi. We note that the University has never been subject to an independent formal evaluation or technical audit¹. We also argue that the full potential of the University of Malawi's contribution has not been fully exploited.

Furthermore, liaison with industry and other key groups on the University's development has not been consciously pursued to provide needed strategic direction. While it may be acknowledged that the declining macro-economic fortunes are responsible for the poor state the public university finds itself in, lack of clear awareness, among key groups in society, of the potential contribution of the University to national development, is also a crucial factor.

The Government largely determines the reward system in the University. In this respect, there has been a marked tendency to under-price professional talent, and also to level out rewards and opportunities to individuals of varying competence. The implications of this tendency on staff morale and retention need not be overemphasized.

Additionally, the University does not appear (even after the advent of democracy) to be sufficiently insulated from political interference. The continued movement of accomplished academics/scholars from the University and their placement into administrative and political positions elsewhere by executive action is an aspect of concern vis-à-vis the maintenance of academic freedoms and stability within the University. The Chancellor of the University, the State President, is a politician and the members of the Council (appointed by the Chancellor) are evidently political appointees. The rationale for their appointments seems to be political expediency. It needs to be pointed out, however, that intellectuals need a benign and fertile climate to settle down and that climate is, in many respects, still wanting. Faced with this situation, an uncertain

¹ The University undertook, with assistance of USAID, a Tracer study.

vision, an inefficient utilization of allocated resources and a funding crisis, many experienced academics have moved (are moving) elsewhere in search of better working conditions, thus, eroding the critical skeleton required for research and teaching.

Despite the lack of upstream elaboration of policy on the University, there are some notable achievements of the University of Malawi.

Overall, the University has made some significant contributions to the country since independence. A substantial proportion of the local leadership positions in private and public sectors, including politics, has come through the University of Malawi. Although the full potential has never been fully exploited and realized academic staff have officially and unofficially directly contributed to national policy analyses and debates, technological and scientific, and socio-economic researches. The establishment of the Centre for Social Research (CSR), the Centre for Education Research and Training (CERT), the Agriculture Policy Research Unit (APRU), the Management Centre and the Centre for Language Studies (CLS) has added weight to the University's contribution. The contribution cannot possibly be quantified but it has, nonetheless, been invaluable.

Previously, the nation relied very heavily on expatriate medical doctors. Many Malawians sent overseas for medical training preferred to stay there or elsewhere after qualifying. With the localization of medical training within the University, some 90 (as of 1996) doctors have since been trained and nearly all of them are serving within the country. Not only has this reduced the cost for overseas training and of retaining expatriate doctors, but has also contributed directly in the improvement of the nation's health care, indicated by the reduction in the population/doctor ratio.

The University has, itself, matured to a degree in terms of reliance on national capacity. The chief executive position, the Vice-Chancellor's, and a considerable proportion of senior managerial and academic positions have since been filled by qualified Malawians.

Growth in women's role in the senior managerial and academic leadership as well as in female enrollments has not, admittedly, been particularly inspiring but it, nevertheless, represents an encouraging growing phenomenon.

The University of Malawi has also been an important source of employment as nearly 2,500 individuals are presently employed by it and there are a host of other beneficiaries

who, indirectly, derive their livelihood through the supply of commodities and other linkages with the University.

2.1.1 UNIVERSITY FINANCING

Virtually all the University's recurrent spending is underwritten by Government subventions. Prior to 1985, students did not contribute anything towards their education. Instead, they were paid allowances to purchase books and stationery as well as to cover their incidental expenses in addition to free board and lodging. The cost of maintaining the student, at the time, was approximately K6,000 and this was what was demanded as fees from foreign students.

In 1985, the Government introduced a cost-sharing scheme whereby each student was expected to contribute K200 per annum towards the cost of their education. In addition, the payment of student incidental allowances, amounting to K144 per student a year was withdrawn. Student who were unable to raise the financial contribution were given an opportunity to use a Student Loan Scheme that had been introduced concurrently. The contribution was subsequently increased to K360 and now stands at K1,500 per year.

Table 2-1: Summary of Income and Loss Accounts (K'000)

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
INCOME								
Subvention	11,700	13,800	17,960	19,385	23,400	41,601	55,425	86,500
Fees	475	627	922	1,180	1,561	1,522	1,853	2,079
Other	1,179	1,211	1,872	3,923	3,498	5,004	7,461	4,176
Total	13,354	15,638	20,754	24,488	28,459	48,127	64,739	92,755
EXPENDITURE								
Chancellor	4,502	5,070	6,250	7,200	8,018	11,747	16,673	23,885
Polytechnic	2,631	3,505	4,054	5,201	5,841	9,382	14,433	21,258
Bunda	1,964	2,284	2,960	3,446	3,998	5,519	7,721	11,141
Medicine	-	-	-	-	2,472	4,248	6,957	12,247
KCN	1,485	1,468	1,859	2,025	2,604	3,596	5,443	8,266
Central Admin.	760	861	932	1,087	1,271	2,307	2,955	4,515
Common Service	2,570	3,227	4,379	5,414	5,889	11,275	15,275	22,827
CSR	-	-	-	245	260	520	719	1,129
Total	13,912	16,415	20,434	24,618	30,353	48,594	70,176	105,268

Table 2-1 indicates that, in absolute terms, government funding for the University rose from K12 million in 1988 to over K86 million in 1995. The 1995 Government subvention constituted 93 per cent of University's recurrent spending - showing the University's growing reliance on the public purse - more so that each year's deficits are also fully underwritten by Treasury through budgetary revisions. The growth in the University's recourse to public finance, even in real terms, is clearly unsustainable especially when student enrollment has not grown proportionately over the same period. Student enrollment has on average grown by less than 2 per cent.

The introduction of cost-sharing system was important in principle rather than its practical level of contribution towards recurrent spending. The proceeds from this arrangement covered, on average, a mere 3 per cent of the recurrent expenditures in the last eight years. The Student Loan Scheme, which the University is running to support the student contribution, impose administrative costs and risks associated with loan repayments. Loan recoveries, have not been particularly outstanding. The University does not have the required infrastructure to productively engage in credit schemes. Their ability to collect is even more doubtful. Nonetheless, efforts for modest adjustment in the contributions have met with considerable resistance from Government, ostensibly owing to the incapacity of the average Malawian family to afford more market-related contribution levels. The present approved contribution of K1,500 per student per year would constitute just 2.6 per cent to the University's recurrent expenditure. Revenues from other income generating activities, such as consultancies and researches and hiring of facilities contribute a mere 6 per cent. The contribution from this source has been declining in recent years achieving only 5 per cent in 1995/96.

The private sector's contribution towards university education and research has not been outstanding. It has to be acknowledged that indigenous industries are embryonic and have yet to be established. Some of the most successful industries (e.g. beer and tobacco companies) prefer to sponsor sporting activities for the publicity they give and not research. It is also common knowledge that businesses are primarily motivated by the yield on their investment. We were made to understand that the authority to raise funds for the University rested with the Chancellor and that authority had been granted only thrice. These efforts, understandably, yielded limited support, except for hostel

accommodation when the former chancellor, National Bank of Malawi, Commercial Bank of Malawi, ADMARC, Limbe Leaf Co. Ltd., Christian Service Committee and the current Chancellor each donated substantial sums of money. The consulting team was unable to find specific reference in the enabling legislation or elsewhere that restricted the University from engaging in fund raising activities or indeed in generating own funds. It is clear, therefore, that the University has relied too heavily on Government funding and little effort has been made, either to generate own funds or solicit resources from the private sector or alumna. It has been shown elsewhere that institutions that rely on public finance are less likely to pay stringent controls on costs as their private sector counterparts. The position of the P&L indicates the future and prospects for the private entity. The public funded ones do not have to worry about the costs. The game appears to be the ability to persuade Government to surrender as much resources as would be required to fund “necessary expenditure”. These handouts, however, lead ultimately to the loss of authority and flexibility on the part of the publicly funded entity. The University of Malawi has not escaped this dilemma.

Similarly, the University has relied on Government grants and considerable donor support for capital formation. Donor support was not only instrumental in providing bed space, the necessary teaching and other equipment but was also a vital lifeline for the University’s efforts in building own local capacity. The international donor community covered the bulk of the fellowships for staff development and also provided substantial technical assistance. But the University can no longer rely on donor assistance in the form of brick and mortar. Equally, societal demands on the University are changing as to the ways the University must govern itself and operate. The level of public contribution can no longer be guaranteed. Even if society recognizes that highly educated personnel are the key to future socio-economic development, there are other, perhaps more compelling, basic subsistence-like demands on public finance such as disasters, basic education and health, etc. The size of public purse, though, is not gaining any dramatic fortunes. These facts, however, does not negate the reality that the considerable investments made by Government and donors over the years in the University require substantial renewal if the productive years of the investments are to be increased. Presently the University lacks independent cash flow to finance even the basic maintenance.

The down-turn in the country's economic fortunes has compelled the nation to adopt policies that focus, among other things, on rationalizing the allocation of public finances. The international community is calling for measures for re-orienting public finances more in favor of basic social services and approaches that enable universities to pay more attention to maintaining standards. Prudent financial management is requiring limiting unsustainable budgetary expansion. Given such a scenario, the University, now and more than ever before, will have to earn its resources from whatever source. The University can no longer expect to receive generous donations on the assumption that the University will spend it wisely. It seems reasonable to expect that a raise in society's contribution to the University will become effective, when the University does. Industry is increasingly concerned about the quality of their work force, parents/guardians are expressing dissatisfaction over the quality of the education that their children/dependents are getting from the University. The students, themselves, are unimpressed with what they are being offered. These factors suggest the need for the University of Malawi to put in place innovative reform strategies to maintain relevance and survive. Survival means that the University must not pursue its own sake but for the sake of the ordinary man and woman. It must be fully committed to active participation in the social transformation, economic modernization and the training and upgrading of the total human resources of the nation. The bottom line is that the University of Malawi, as presently conceived and managed, is in a serious crisis involving identity/direction, internal organization, means/resources and relevance. The challenge is to position University management in a manner that it takes advantage of current opportunities, sees prospects and deals decisively with the present and future weaknesses and threats.

- (a) The University of Malawi faces a funding crisis which has resulted in the depletion of laboratory equipment, supplies, and library resources. These disabling conditions are emerging at a time when the country is faced with many problems which require sustained efforts to deal with. What can the University do to ensure a reasonable level of activity under the current an unfavorable environment which is not likely to change overnight?

2.1.2 BASIC CONCLUSIONS ON UP-STREAM POLICY

1. The success of the nation depends on the creativity and flexibility of its human resources, and their capacity to create and adapt to change. The country faces very severe skill shortages and yet if the country is to be able to afford its people a reasonable standard of living, it will have to depend on institutions which produce and distribute knowledge. Such institutions, as the University of Malawi, cannot alone produce all that is needed, but the country cannot possibly succeed without them;
2. Yet there is no comprehensive upstream policy framework for the University's development and growth. Current Government education policy is clearly skewed in favor of basic education at the expense, if not neglect, of the higher levels of education. However, even the objectives of the basic education will not be guaranteed if commensurate and proportionate attention is not accorded to higher education. Basic education and higher education are interdependent - each one them cannot possibly succeed without the other. This basic logic and relationship does not seem to be sufficiently recognized. While the nation has generally under-invested in education, the situation is especially acute in the case of university education;
3. The University of Malawi was created and is run at some considerable public expense. The government has not seen fit to make any assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of this public investment. Whereas the nation faces severe human resources capacity constraints, a large number of university trained graduates are unemployed - raising the demand and supply mismatch paradox;
4. The University of Malawi has been a victim of a public sector tendency to under-price professional talent and to level out opportunities of varying competence, and political interference in the running of the University is still very much current;
5. There is insufficient awareness among key groups in society of the potential and ability, presently largely innate, of the University to contribute to national development. Nearly all the University's expenditure are borne by the Treasury. Cost-sharing has been important only in principle but not in its level of contribution to the University's recurrent spending. However, the cost-sharing phenomenon is increasingly being acknowledged and understood even for basic services, including primary, secondary schooling and health services. On the other

- hand, the potential for private sector contribution toward University education and research has not yet been fully exploited. Industry, at any rate, will quite reasonably expect a tangible return for any contribution it is requested to pay;
6. Societal demands, as to the ways the University must govern itself and operate, are changing. The economy is increasingly becoming liberalized. The public purse is shrinking and there are increasing calls for value for money and accountability in the ways public resources are allocated and utilized. Yet, society also recognizes that highly educated personnel are the key to future socio-economic development.
 7. Current funding arrangements are inefficient and not in the interest of developing the students in well rounded manner.

2.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS ON UPSTREAM POLICY

- (A) In order to improve allocative efficiency and fairness in the education system, we recommend that the Government urgently consider instituting a process for articulating policy for the education sector in a holistic manner. The education system urgently needs to be reviewed to secure relevance and greater consistency and to effect more and better resources allocation over the entire system. We believe this could be achieved through liaison with relevant ministries and institutions and the establishment of a specialist department in the Ministry of education in charge of higher education. Most countries within the region have specialist ministries for higher education. This approach, provided that the specialist entity is suitably equipped, provides the clearest demonstrable concrete action toward the desire to bring University's development on the nation's development agenda and ensure that the University participates actively in global scientific and technological advancement for the benefit of the nation. The commendable expansion in the lower levels schooling, admittedly, exerts considerably pressure on the Ministry's management to the extent that the higher education issues are inadvertently sidelined and are likely to remain so if the formation of an appropriate institutional set-up is not urgently recognized. However, as noted earlier, the nation cannot possibly develop nor primary and secondary school expansion lead to any significant substantive gains if commensurate attention is not paid to institutions of higher learning. Besides the University of Malawi as well as the new Mzuzu University are publicly funded institutions. Society will increasingly demand that resources, little as they may be

by regional and international standards, allocated to these institutions, are subjected to the same rigorous scrutiny as for other endeavors of public funding. The yardstick is clearly value for money, public universities that are user-friendly, user-responsive and user-participatory. Already the quality of education is being questioned as graduate unemployment becomes a growing phenomenon in a country faced with severe skills needs. The proportion of graduates in the civil services is still less than 2 of the establishment. The number of technical assistance (TA) in government and other public agencies shows no sign of declining. Additionally, there is an apparent conflict between Government's desire and efforts toward localization of jobs and the private sector's propensity to seek temporary employment permits (TEPs) for expatriate personnel for presumed lack of domestic alternatives. Again somewhat paradoxically, there is a growing population of students eligible and thirsty for an university education - the supply of the eligible candidates does not seem to be an issue and yet the University is severely constrained to significantly increase in-take. Substantial gains in enrollment can be achieved by modest incremental investment in university teaching facilities (e.g. library and laboratory buildings projects have stalled at Kamuzu college of Nursing and the College of Medicine, respectively). The College of Medicine does not have its own library and shares one with the Polytechnic. However, the polytechnic library has far exceeded its design capacity even without the added responsibility of having to cater for the college of Medicine students. All the colleges need to upgrade classroom space, laboratories, and library stocks and other technologies e.g. computers. These additions are quite modest given that there are considerable sunk costs in these colleges. The investment can yield higher returns only if a program of modernization is purposely articulated. There is a clear case for government, with donor assistance, to institute such an institutional development program for the University.

- (B) While the current cash-budget approach may be commendable from a fiscal control and macro-economic perspective, it is grossly inappropriate as a method for funding the University. The university needs a guaranteed level of funding, disbursed at regular intervals, for both operations and development. The commitment of the University must be related in terms of the nature of the agreed programs and courses to be offered as well as expected enrollment levels. The

University cannot be expected to scale-down its operations in the middle of a semester (term) on the basis of a broad fiscal-cash squeeze. Such incidences would only erode the credibility of the University with adverse consequences on the quality of education. Quality education clearly depends on the reliability of the University to deliver expected products/services on time. One can expect much intellectual activity at the colleges if the University is unsure about the size of the cheque coming from the Government. We, thus, very strongly recommend that the University be given a dispensation from the cash-budget system and adopt some version of program budgeting. Furthermore, the colleges, in line with a decentralization approach, should be allowed to directly justify their budgetary requirements to Government

- (C) In line with the above recommendations, we would also recommend that the present University Act (which is obviously archaic) be amended to reflect the changing needs and realities. Among other issues, the Act, so emended, should insulate the University and its members from political interference. Those appointed members of the University Council should be people of high standing (in intellectual, political, moral and social terms) in society. Political affiliation and ideology should not be factors in their selection. Another dimension in the selection of University Council members should be to purposely incorporate industry (or private sector), NGOs, alumna, and other stakeholders. If it is so desired to retain the Chancellor position with the State President, this should be understood to be only figurative (or nominal) for patronage purposes as head of state. The development and running of the public funded university requires transparency and a new kind of governance that should go beyond party politics. The country's 'economic survival and security' rests on the nation's ability to develop creative and flexible higher learning institutions which both produce and distribute knowledge. The responsibility is for everyone and calls for an astute sense of patriotism on the part of every citizen. A whole range of reform efforts that we recommend within the University of Malawi will not achieve desired benefits to the institution and to the country if this kind of support is not widely acknowledged.
- (D) We recommend that Government should consider putting in place for financing students directly for upkeep expenses.

3. UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

3.1 TEACHING AND RESEARCH PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Every moment spent planning saves three or four in execution - Crawford Greenwalt

3.1.1 OVERALL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

The public's paternalistic approach to the growth of the University of Malawi has inhibited the emergence of a planning culture within the University. The 1974 University Act, which provides the generic objects and statutes, is almost universally cited as the guiding operative framework of the University of Malawi. On the other hand, one does not get satisfactory responses to such basic questions as:

- ◆ Where does the University of Malawi want to be?
- ◆ How is it going to get there?

But

If you do not think about the future, you cannot have one - John Galsworthy

A budget is often described as a 'plan expressed in monetary terms'. The University of Malawi budgetary process has, like those of government department/ministries and institutions dependent on central government funding, not been based on a program approach. The budgetary process approximates short-sighted book-keeping, remotely related to the importance and scale of operations. Based largely on an incremental basis, the process lacks and hardly demands imagination or creativity. The activities (and specific inputs) that are to be funded by the resources being sought are unclear - ostensibly all behind the large volume of numbers. Rationalization of the budget in this instance cannot reasonably be claimed to have a logical basis. For example, an analysis of the functional classification of the University's recurrent spending indicates an attempt at ensuring an even spread of expenditures across functions in spite of apparent differences in focus and substance among different colleges.

Planning deficiencies, in the system, have certainly contributed to the poor state the University finds itself in. The 'Planning Office' at the University Office has been carrying out administrative-cum-rapporteur functions rather than providing technical expertise and influencing the planning variables. The Planning Office was, in the first place, never designed to carry out planning functions and therefore our criticism is on design flaws. We are not questioning the abilities of past or current incumbents of that office nor the importance of the work they perform/ed. What we suggest is that the functions which were performed do not approximate the planning function and our concern and perspective in this section is planning. "Planning Office" is clearly a misnomer for the office in question.

The planning deficiency is further reflected in the poor state of repair and obsolescence of much of the equipment in the University. The University has been a passive recipient of externally funded equipment - the characteristic illusive wisdom - 'beggars are not choosers'. Technology acquisition, service policy, and procedures have, as result, not been elaborated. It is no an exaggeration that this approach has created a degree of technology damping. Such euphoria, though, is now being felt in expensive maintenance costs, in the inability to exchange data (as a result of a proliferation of incompatible information technologies) even within the same department let alone across departments or colleges.

Perhaps to oversimplify, there are two types of management. That which is done at the top of an organizational structure is strategic management. Everything else is operational management. Strategic planning is the backbone support to strategic management. Strategic planning is the central concern of strategic management but, of-course, not the entirety of the top management job. The first task of top management in strategic planning is the formulation and implementation of strategy. The task of thinking through the mission of the business, that is, of asking "what is our business and what should it be?" This process leads to the setting of objectives, the development of strategies and plans, and the making of today's decisions for tomorrow's results. This function can only be done by an organ of the business that can see the entire business; that can make decisions that affect the entire business, that can balance objectives and the needs of today against the needs of tomorrow; and that can allocate the resources of men and money to key results. Additionally, other tasks of the top management job

must include: standard setting and overall quality control; building and maintaining the human organization; fulfilling responsibilities concerning relationships that only people at the top of an organization can establish and maintain, such as major clients, very important suppliers, or bankers; performing ceremonial duties, such as at civic events; and being the “standby” organ for major crises.

3.2 UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME

The university opened its doors to students in 1964 and its graduates (diplomats) came out in 1967. To date, 14,219 students have graduated from the University in various disciplines and other distinctions. Of these only 2,813 or about 20 per cent are female. Table 3–1 depicts the distribution of graduates of the University of Malawi by level of qualification and gender.

Table 3–1: Distribution of Graduates by Level of Qualification and Gender

Degree/Diploma	Female	Male	Total	% of Grand Total
Certificate	476	204	680	4.78
Diploma	1,288	5,779	7,067	49.70
First Degree	956	5,083	6,039	42.47
First Degree (hon.)	55	252	307	2.16
Master's	38	83	121	0.85
Ph.D.	0	5	5	0.04
Grand Total	2,813	11,406	14,219	100

The Distribution of Graduates by Level of Qualification and Gender (Table 3–1) indicates that the focus of the University has been on undergraduate training, comprising over 99 per cent. Higher degrees account for less than one per cent. Except for certificate awards, the proportion of males graduating from the University has far exceeded that of females.

The distribution of graduates by discipline indicates the majority are in Agriculture (21%), Education (16%), Business (9%), Social Science (9%), Nursing (7%), Science (7%) and Public Administration (4%). The rest of the disciplines account for the remaining 15 per cent. Some of the disciplines with relatively few graduates are those for which the skills are in great demand. Examples include Law (1.7%), Accountancy (1.4%), Medicine (0.5%), and Architecture (0.4%).

At one level, there does not appear to be a rigorous system of periodic evaluation of academic programs of the University. It seems reasonable for the University to justify these programs on criteria that include the demand factors as well as the capacity of the University to adequately deliver on the same. In the absence of such a system some programs that have run their courses are still being delivered and this may be part of the reason for the apparent demand-supply mismatch. Furthermore, given that existing programs are not subjected to rigorous reassessments and the poor research-teaching linkages, the appropriateness of the course contents, even for programs that are known to be in high demand, may be questionable. These aspects are made more complex by the absence of a deliberate regular refresher programs for instructors. It must be noted that a great many of the teaching staff were engaged on the basis of their skills to pass exams and not on their ability to transfer knowledge to others. Hence, there appears an obvious need to equip and sustain teaching skills for these instructors. Oddly, there also appears to be an apparent bias in the academic staff appraisal system towards publication to the detriment of teaching effort. The student input is presently not entered into the staff appraisal system and this is clearly a gross omission. It is clearly advisable to obtain an appropriate balance between teaching and research (publication) on the basis of each faculty's demands on academic staff effort. Again, perhaps it is also prudent to reorient research/publication effort toward domestic needs and expectations rather than the present dogmatic emphasis on publication in internationally accredited journals. The case for international standards and acceptance is in order but there is reason to suppose that this case is being overplayed in the major responsibility of a public university is to the nation.

Postgraduate training has in general comprised less than one per cent of the university's academic programs. However, if the nation's acute shortage of policy analysts is to be addressed it clearly is worth enhancing the postgraduate programs. The additional advantage of such an approach is the greater degree of leverage the University could have in cost-recovery (or cost-sharing). On the other hand, diploma programs are the least inefficient to run as in most cases the student will need an additional year to complete an appropriate degree program. It seems advisable to phase out diploma programs and perhaps only run them on a crash basis on demand and guaranteed funding (usually these programs also contain a premium cost element to take account for efficiency losses in

mounting such programs). Alternatively, the University, under certain conditions may elect to license other institutions (the Institute at Domasi, the Polytechnic Board of Governors, College of Forestry, Natural Resources College, etc.) to institute, under the University supervision, diploma programmes. The University may demand a fee for this services and would still be the authority for conferring the diplomas.

The University of Malawi runs annual programs and admissions once a year. This system restricts annual intake and the number graduating. This is in addition to the limitation imposed by available bed-space.

Female enrollment is still much below that of the male counterpart. If one excludes Nursing, Education and Arts, the proportion of female graduates is unacceptably low. The reasons for this outcome are partly cultural in origin and is a reflection of lower level schooling patterns. The University needs to assist in reversing this adverse pattern by openly declaring a transparent affirmative program to increase female enrollment in general, and in particular, in 'non traditional' disciplines.

Due to the current federal set-up of the colleges, some courses are duplicated. For instance, Science courses such as Biology and Chemistry are being offered in all colleges. Law lecturers are needed at Chancellor College and at the Polytechnic. Home Economics is offered at Chancellor College and at Bunda. Some of the duplication is clearly unavoidable and what perhaps may be required is for colleges to put into place a standardized procedure for procuring staff resources from sister colleges. On the other hand, some economies of scale can be obtained by merging some departments. In this regard, it appears logical to move the Law Department from Chancellor College to the Polytechnic so that it can also serve other disciplines. Currently, Law is a stand alone Department and School at Chancellor College but would more easily support the Business Programs were it at the Polytechnic. Additionally, the existence of the law-related infrastructure such as the courts makes Blantyre ideal for teaching Law. We understand that the differences in the orientations of the Bunda and Chancellor Colleges' Home Economic programs justify their separation. The test may well be whether there is sufficient demand for each of the programs. On the other hand, the basis for retaining some departments, such as Chichewa, French and Classics, appears obscure. There may be some intellectual grounds for sustaining the departments in the current set up but again

when the priorities have to be set for essentially a public funded university, the demand factor needs to play a critical role. It appears doubtful that these departments in their current configuration would pass the test.

We have argued that the system of defining capacity in terms of bed-space limits admissions and ultimately the generation of graduates. However, scraping the system alone would not by itself yield significant results. Simultaneously, several factors need to be addressed, such as: teaching space and other teaching facilities. A good deal of the lecture rooms are limited in number and size, the laboratories are few and mostly dilapidated and obsolete. Computer technology is insufficient and out of date even in such areas as Engineering and Sciences. Thus, increasing admissions would need to be accompanied by modernization in teaching space and facilities, including libraries.

The gross student enrollment-lecturer ratio might suggest that there is room for expanding student enrollment. However, enrollment, everything being equal, cannot substantially expand without associated investment in teaching space and other learning facilities. The University of Malawi presents a case where over-capacity coexists with capacity under-utilization and as such an approach that aims at expanding capacity must pay attention to utilization of existing facilities. Furthermore, the calculation of student teacher ratios provides misleading information. At one level, the University is unable to recruit, develop and retain qualified teachers (for a variety of reasons pointed out earlier). Some departments are relying on unqualified lecturers (Staff Associates or Assistant Lecturers) to take charge of teaching. These often utilize overcrowded classrooms, poor teaching aids and are not supported by adequately stocked libraries. On the other hand, the few qualified lecturers are engaging themselves in 'unofficial' consultancies from which the University does not benefit. These qualified lecturers soon become rusty as they lose touch with teaching and are not routinely subjected to refresher courses. The issues relating to research-teaching linkages have been raised elsewhere above. These factors and a host of other internal efficiency problems lead us to express some serious concern on the quality (both in substance and relevance) and quantity (both in distribution and size) of learning that is taking place at the University of Malawi.

3.2.1 RESEARCH POLICY AND PLANNING

The University does not have what can be regarded as a credible research policy. The University Research Coordinator's office has done some commendable work in terms of mobilizing resources for modest research and publications. The research centres have equally made some impressive attempts at mobilizing research resources with mixed results. However, in the absence of a comprehensive research policy, much of this effort is, at best, fragmented. The current research policy is weak and meaningless - a reflection of compromises arrived at 'democratically' (through the committee system). The Research Coordinator's Office does not provide a leadership role to the research centers nor are there any other practical relationships between his office and any of the research centers.

The research centers are themselves operating on suspect rationale, largely justifying their own context without seeing the grand picture. There is no evidence of research and teaching linkages. The Center for Social Research, has for example an impressive inventory of research publications but during the main visits the we made to Zomba and the CSR, we were unable to locate a student availing themselves of these materials. We would like to believe this an unfortunate coincidence. The centers employ 'permanent researchers' within their set-up. Teaching staff involvement in research is evidently unsystematic and rather ad-hoc. The centers are not accountable to their respective faculties. The CSR is effectively under the Central Administration in spite of "official" protestation that it reports to the Faculty of Social Science. We are un-persuaded by such protestations so long as the Central Administration is in charge of the finances of the CSR. Given this scenario, we are unable to confirm any hard proof of teaching- research linkages of any substance. On the other hand, the research centers seem to be independently mushrooming largely on donor financing. We do clearly see the importance of donor financing but would also wish to acknowledge the risks if these interventions are not made with a holistic perspective of institutional building. The donors are unlikely to sustain funding of these institutions for prolonged periods of time and the University colleges may be landed with yet other citadels that they would find difficult to maintain and sustain within their set-up. Some of the worst violations of technology damping and comparability are, for example, being committed by these centers as they seem thirsty and too ready to receive equipment from donors -ostensibly as a requirement for project implementation. Perhaps, lessons ought to be taken from the

many white elephants within the University itself that result from this kind of zeal. Certainly the University needs donors, but it must articulate a framework for managing this relationship if the University is to enjoy long-term benefits from the relationship.

3.2.1.1 Some Preliminary Propositions

We believe it is prudent, at the state of University development, to bring research centers under the appropriate faculties' management and engage teaching staff in the faculty and other researchers' from industry to undertake research/consultancy assignments on a case by case basis. Engaging a whole stream of researchers and other staff on a permanent basis is a costly option and an ineffective way of ensuring teaching-research and research-industry linkages. Bringing research into faculty, apart from being cost effective, has the advantage of enabling teaching to benefit from research experience while at the same time enhancing research and industry linkages. It would more easily facilitate students' involvement in research. The assumption, of course, is that the faculties will find an integral part of their functions to develop research capabilities in the students. This kind of culture where student are more deliberately involved in research work as part of the academic programme is presently given insufficient attention. Bringing research firmly into the faculty would also permit the allocation of resources to undertake specific assignment to be done on a more rationale basis, and thus ensuring that the final research product will be of quality. The present scenario does not favour this rationalization as the "permanent researchers" have somehow to keep performing regardless of the technical demands of the research assignment at hand. It would seem attractive to "fully" utilize this available resource. It should also be obvious that even jobs such as researching need to be enriched by other experiences, otherwise we risk the inevitability of diminishing returns.

Motivational aspects of conducting researches ought to be handled directly by the relevant faculties based on its priorities and depending on complexity, specific markets factors, etc. Some policy framework and procedural matters need obviously to be elaborated.

3.2.1.2 Underlying conclusions

The foregoing discussion illustrates that the University has no control over its own destiny (both in teaching and research). Improvement in planning and a commitment to corporate culture is likely to bring the University tangible productivity gains.

Given the present scenario, there is a clear case for the University to refocus attention toward strategic planning for teaching and research. This suggestion implies necessarily recognizing that the Central Administration and college management need to retain capacity in policy analysis and planning of teaching and research. At the central level, the function implies the ability to aggregate college plans and formulating a University-wide master plan and the capacity to monitor and revise the plan on the basis of agreed indicators. Clearly, this measure will call for close liaison with colleges in order to formulate the grand policy framework and plan (including projects) and to develop, on that foundation, a credible public relations and marketing strategy.

3.2.2 OVERALL HUMAN RESOURCES ALLOCATION

A good number of staff in the University Registrar's office are unclear about their jobs owing to the absence of job descriptions. Attempts at having job descriptions prepared in the course of this study, perhaps in response to our observations, essentially amount to cosmetic industry. The functional focus of the Registrar's office, in our opinion, ought to be providing the University-wide administration policy, providing secretarial service to the University Council, legal services and maintaining, in a retrievable form, student records. Based on these criteria, there are human resource excesses in the Registrar's office which, partly, came about as a result of the common service approach which has made the office a dumping ground for individuals whose usefulness could not be justified elsewhere. Additionally, work seems to have followed people.

Similar arguments characterize the Finance Office. Quite a number of functions are said to have been decentralized to colleges but there is no indication of a simultaneous and subsequent human resources re-deployment to these colleges. Staff excesses and role ambiguity are also notable features in this office.

The management of the so called 'Common Service', comprising library, sports, the Great Hall, etc., and other University-wide committees (inclusive of Senate, and of course, its committees) impose considerable strain on the University's meager human and financial resources without any apparent benefit to the institution. The university-wide committees provide an illusion of democratic management but in effect generates decision-making process paralysis at considerable expense. Committees are effective if they approximate team work, whereby each member can closely identify with the salient issues. University-wide committees often consist of individual of different and sometimes conflicting interests and orientations and as such any decisions arrived, that is if at all, at the committee meetings hardly represent efficient solutions - there are mere compromises meeting social ends and not economic interests of the institution. Equally, it is clear that the common service is a drag on the University scarce resource. It would be more efficient if these services were to be effectively decentralized to the appropriate colleges. Likewise, the relevant facilities need also to be transferred to the appropriate colleges.

The Estate Management Division within the Central Administration Office may have been justified at the early stages of the University's development. Some of the functions related to maintenance of residential and office accommodation have, understandably, been decentralized to colleges. The need for major capital development works is, arguably, not as urgent as the requirement to make the best use of existing facilities. At any rate, the professional estate management functions can easily be procured by the University or any one of the colleges as and when the need arises.

The Estate Management Division, perhaps by default, concerned itself with the coordination of development projects and as such acted as the nucleus for defining the University's capital budget. The Division did not, however, have any project planning capacity. All the projects reviewed by the consulting team revealed serious flaws in the planning approaches and techniques. Some 12 projects worth over half a billion Kwacha were still outstanding and the Division's role seems to have been simply adjusting the financial figures for inflation and resubmitting the documents annually to government. Even more, the inventory of projects reviewed by the consulting teams suggests that projects were being regarded as merely erecting new buildings. This Division was did not possess the required basic skills in project planning. This was yet another case of

functional misallocation. It would be more appropriate to relocate this function within the policy and planning framework described above. The consulting team understands that the Estate Management Division is presently not staffed and its scraping clearly would not result in any immediate cost saving. What is fundamental is to focus the attention of the University on its core business and clearly estate management is not one of these. It should abolish the function altogether and dispose of the equipment for badly needed cash-flow.

Rationalization of jobs at the Central Administration Office should provide the University with opportunities to rent out the empty space so created in the building to raise needed revenue. Alternatively, the space can be relocated for more worthy requirements of the adjacent Chancellor College.

Maintenance services inclusive of upkeep of premises, transport, etc., employ in excess of 800 workers and command nearly 20 per cent of the budget. This exerts an excessive weight on the University's limited resources. A lot of the required maintenance is performed poorly if at all ostensibly because the University lacks the financial means to purchase the required materials. Yet the maintenance staff are retained drawing wages without any corresponding output or service. Again and perhaps as a result of lack of anything better to do some maintenance staff engage in pilferage and moonlighting activities while yet others are patiently being de-skilled by inactivity.

The University accommodates many of its staff by renting and in its own institutional houses. Table 3-1 and Table 3-2 show the distribution of residential houses:

Table 3-1: University's Institutional Houses

	Academic & Admin. Staff	Support Staff	Total
Chancellor College	143	12	155
Polytechnic	82	0	82
Bunda	48	109	157
KCN	2	0	2
Total	275	121	396

Table 3–2: Rented Houses

	Leaser	Number of Units
Academic & Admin. Staff	Government	11
Academic & Admin staff	Open market	37
College of Medicine	Open market	20
Support Staff	Malawi Housing Corp.	200
		268

In addition to the provision of the houses, the University maintains and used to furnish houses of academic and administration staff at considerable expense. The University started selling the furniture to staff but still retains responsibility for maintenance.

The number of housing units suggests that not all staff, even in the academic and administrative categories are accommodated. In this sense, the present system is inequitable especially since that the compensation for those not accommodated is not transparent and even. The University could, however, save on expensive residential house maintenance by selling the units it owns and those rented from government to seating tenants. The responsibility for maintenance could revert to individuals. All the University needs is to pay a housing allowance which could be calculated as a certain proportional basic pay. Those individuals unable to raise the total valuation cost of the units could use the housing allowances to pay installments on their mortgages. The proceeds from these payments could be used to create a fund from which other individuals could borrow to buy and build their own houses. These measures would also have positive motivational effects as individuals would have the opportunity to own homes of their own.

The maintenance of premises, security and other related services could be sub-contracted on a need basis. Seasonal work may demand selective hiring of seasonal labor. Much of the cleaning, except for common places, in student hostels could be performed by the students themselves. Again some of the required cleaning and clearing work can give opportunities to students to earn money. The basic point is that such measures would rid the University of keeping otherwise unproductive employees on its pay-roll while reducing the administrative and human resource management burdens of keeping such large workforce on a permanent basis.

3.2.3 STUDENT-LIVING ADMINISTRATION

The University has routinely provided accommodation and food to students. Between 1988 and 1995, over K50 million or 15 per cent of the University budget has gone on student living. The budget grew from K1.4 million in 1988 to over K15 million in 1995, a tenfold increase in nearly as many years. There are wide variations in the student living budget item across colleges. In 1995, for example, student living constituted 4 per cent of the total allocation to College of Medicine and 26 per cent for the Polytechnic. The critical factor, however, is that student living, if not urgently addressed, will cause considerable strain on the University scarce resources. The students enjoy the services without paying for them. This arrangement poses a number of concerns including the following:

- (a) The students living responsibilities divert University's efforts from tasks that directly relate to or support teaching and research to searching for food and shelter for students;
- (b) The University is remunerating staff in between school terms when the staff are not rendering any services. Such remuneration (or perhaps 'retainer fees') do not represent a value for money operation;
- (c) Substantial amount of resources are spent on student living at the expense of teaching activities. This aspect is made more complex as the cost food and allied materials are continuously rising. There is little evidence that the colleges have learnt to provide these services more efficiently. For instance, Chancellor College employs over 100 staff for a student population of less than 1,500. Much of the catering equipment is broken down and unserviceable. This is what is given as an excuse for the apparent excesses in staffing in the catering division but clearly the workload factor alone does not justify such a large number of staff;
- (d) The students are unable, as a result, to learn the discipline of taking charge of their own welfare. We, understand, the students are wasteful -sometimes throwing away the "free" food. Lacking in responsibilities some of them engage in pilferage and vandalism. A lot of resources are expended on security to minimize these incidences. This hardly a situation and environment that prepares the students for useful citizenry or the job market when they leave college. This aspect may partly explain the

existence of graduate unemployment in a labor market characterized by severe scarcity of skilled professionals;

Notwithstanding, the students are complaining of poorly prepared food and lack of imagination in designing menus.

The consulting team is of the view that it is prudent for the University to sub-contract student living to private operators. This measure, undoubtedly, would free up considerable management effort expended on student nutrition and welfare. These are the fundamentals which, in any case, the student should begin to learn in preparation for life after college. After all, there is no reason to suppose that private operators would provide these services any more inefficiently than the University is performing. Again, the overriding principle is to focus University management attention to aspects that directly support the acquisition of academic knowledge and skills by students while permitting the students to simultaneously learn the fundamentals of life from those suitably qualified to do so.

The additional advantage of the proposed arrangement is that University selection will no longer be determined by available bed space at colleges as students would be free to procure accommodation they can afford and of their choice. Everything being equal, the subsequent growth in student admission should bring in economies of scale resulting, i.e., in declining unit costs of providing university education. We estimate that with some modest improvements in current teaching facilities student enrollment can double without jeopardizing the quality of university education.

3.3 GENERAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Staff are the most important and costly resources of the University. It is, therefore, essential that the institution derives maximum benefit from the people it employs. The quality and performance of staff is a measure of a university's effectiveness. The consulting team identified concerns pertaining to the areas of general and human resources management. Many of the issues cut across the institution but for clarity and

emphasis the analysis distinguishes between concerns of the Central Administration and the colleges.

3.3.1 CONCERNS AT THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION LEVEL

3.3.1.1 Mechanisms for defining priorities

Scarcity of resources make prioritization of programs and services a necessity for any well managed institution of higher learning. Choices have to be made from a myriad of alternatives. Programs and services provided must be understood to be absolutely vital for the nation. For a public university, these programmes and services should be designed and delivered in line with the nation's best interest.

There is little evidence to suggest that the concern about sustainability is a key consideration in the introduction of programs and services. This is worrisome for such an institution to sustain itself it cannot avoid making economic choices. Faced with financial constraints, non-essential service needed to have been identified and erased

Clearly, the Central administration needs to develop mechanisms that enable prioritization of budget items. It would be critical for such a system to be representative and transparent. Transparent in the sense of allowing greater accountability of resource disbursement to rest as close as possible to the areas of service delivery.

3.3.1.2 Excessive preoccupation with tactical matters

The constituent colleges view the Central Administration Office as one that should provide strategic policy framework for the entire University's operations. Such strategic issues including striving for a closer fit between University's activities and its environment, exploring cooperation arrangements between University and industry, between other Universities and other relevant groups, monitoring and controlling quality and quantity of its major products, and coping with the pressure of a shrinking budget (sub-section 3.1.1).

The Central Administration is excessively obsessed with operational matters, putting a premium on its ability to manage issues of a strategic nature. The Central Administration still is in charge of the preparation of salaries of what it regards as key personnel and makes appointments of its 'senior' staff in the same manner. The most apparent effects of this preoccupation with operational matters is that inadequate attention is given to issues of macro nature resulting in leadership crises and delays in the decision-making process. The sum total effect of this pre-occupation is for the Central Administration to gradually erode its own credibility.

The Central Administration Office is well advised to rid itself of the fear of losing control to the colleges. For example, its arguments for retaining the recruitment of senior staff centrally is for maintenance of standards, fair play and control of the establishment.⁰ We were unable to confirm any mechanisms in place that monitor conformity to standards once the staff are employed. However, the functions of recruitment can easily and more efficiently be performed at college level. It would not only be less costly in terms of time and money but it would also be more responsive to the needs of colleges. All the Central Administration Office needs to do is develop appropriate broad guidelines and monitor compliance. The direct participation of the Central Administration Office in many of the routines is unwarranted. There are obvious advantages for the University to empower its constituent colleges. Regrettably, the over-centralized nature of the University operations has also had the adverse effect of diminishing the motivation for managerial growth in its constituent colleges.

3.3.1.3 Definition of roles and responsibilities

An organizational structure is a means by which roles and responsibilities are clarified. The Central Administration Office could not furnish the structure of the Central administration Office. In the course of the study, efforts were made to prepare such a structure, again perhaps for our benefit. We understand that there are several versions of the structure and were unable to independently establish the authenticity of the version surrendered to the consulting team. Job descriptions were not kept for each job. Again, we understand that these have now been prepared. Similarly, we were unable to establish confidence in the process of their formulation and the utility of the end product. In general, however, the absence of these basic tools can only mean that employees are not

and cannot be held accountable for specified actions. Even more serious, relationships between employees are not rationalized, hence unity of purpose and productivity can not be guaranteed. Given the key role an organizational structure plays in promoting unity of purpose and direction, in facilitating communication, in promoting accountability and in clarifying responsibilities, the need to develop rational organizational structure is not only critical to the sustenance of the University's activities, it is the foundation for its very survival. The Central Administration Office is the nerve center of the University system. It must be the standard bearer in management practice.

3.3.1.4 Decision-making Process

The efficacy of any decision making process is measured by its ability to respond to issues unambiguously, decisively, appropriately and timely. The Central Administration Office has been unclear on a number of issues, matters of funerals provide one of the clearest examples. It has not been dealing with employees that plundered or abused its facilities. It has slashed college budgets without caring to explain the rationale to the affected institutions. It has taken its time to respond to the issues considered by the colleges to be urgent, such as allocation of financial resources.

The combined effect of the nature and quality of decisions made by the Central Administration has lead effectively to the erosion of confidence in its ability to cope with issues perceived by the University community to be pertinent and serious. Consequently and in the process, the Central Administration has injured its own credibility. To regain this credibility and promote more responsiveness to issues, a greater degree of decision-making authority ought to be passed down to line managers at the college level.

3.3.1.5 Politicization of the Vice-chancellor Position

To whom does the Vice-Chancellor owe his allegiance? How politically neutral is the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor? Should he/she be a political appointee. These questions have a bearing on the performance and behavior of the incumbent of the highest executive office in the University hierarchy.

To add more clarity to the point: if, for instance, the Vice-Chancellor were appointed under the MCP era or were pro-MCP, how responsive would the present regime be to his requests for assistance? How confident and secure would he be in the discharge of his responsibilities? Would he be prepared to take the necessary and yet the painful decisions that the University requires in order to survive, such as retrenching certain cadres of superfluous positions? The position on these matters remains vague.

3.3.1.6 Staff Hiring and Promotion System

The University's tenure system is a very costly system and introduces a lot of rigidities in the system. The system appears to have been applied to all staff working in the University. Elsewhere, tenure has been reserved for academic staff upon achieving certain demonstrable competences. But even this selective process is an inefficient way of procuring University's critical resources. In the case of the University of Malawi, people employed to undertake specific programs, by and large, end up permanently working for the University even after the programs they were engaged for have since expired or outlived their usefulness. And even these competences, quite naturally do have a life span for their utility. Dogmatic application of the tenure system may have resulted in the University having an un-defendable large number of otherwise seasonal workers.

Promotions particularly of administrative and support staff are not always accompanied by increased responsibility or the existence of a vacancy. Employees' achievements are, ostensibly, the determining factor in one's progression. While this system makes sense for academic staff, that is if judiciously applied even here, it has had some serious limitations when applied to non-academic staff. It distorts employee responsibilities and duties. Clear examples are the positions of supports to the Registrars (assistant, senior assistant, etc.) in the Central Administration Office.

3.3.1.7 Use of Committees

Committees have their place in managing an institution. It was earlier been observed that the University is using this approach excessively and inappropriately. Membership of committees is spread across colleges. Owing to diversity of the colleges, a good deal of

the membership is not conversant with the subject matter at hand, leading to waste of their valuable time - as there is no common interest to serve and protect. Excessive amounts of resources are expended on transport and accommodation allowances, on copying of documentation, preparation time, etc. for meetings that essentially and ultimately almost always come up with poor resolutions and recommendations on vital issues.

Many provisions in “Terms of Reference” for the committees are unclear. An example of which is the Disciplinary Committee.

Thus, as is to be expected in situation of this nature, there is lack of clarity on matters that must be forwarded to committees and those that must be dealt with by individual officers. We would reiterate the point made earlier that committees work well if they approximate team effort but not when its a mere loose association as is the case at the University of Malawi. Clearly, we are of the view that the sense of ‘democracy’ and collective responsibility has been overplayed as to become meaningless. It must also be acknowledged that there is a province of issues that do not lend themselves to committee management. Some decisions do require a certain level of authority (and oftentimes competence) and should not as easily be relegated to committee management or otherwise - recognizing the boundaries is the core of effective management. At any rate, excessive reliance on a single management tool leads to inefficiency and waste –putting it simply, the University, for its size and complexity, possesses and generates far too many committees for its own comfort.

3.3.1.8 The Establishment

Salary and wages (and related costs) constitute the bulk of the University’s total spending. The salary and wages bill requires justification, particularly in the light of financial austerity. Can the University reasonably justify the levels of administrative, technical clerical, secretarial and support staff it employs? The consulting team is of the view that the Central Administration has some desirable functions but a great deal are duplicative and redundant.

Paradoxically, the University salary levels are relatively low, more especially those for the academic and professional staff. It is the large number of support staff that largely contributes to the unsustainable wage bill. On the other hand, the housing policy for staff living in own accommodation whereby staff are paid an annual lump sum market rental (especially when no entitlement is establishment) is not only crippling to the University's cash-flow but it is also inequitable and subject to abuse. The prevalent practice is to grant a percentage of gross salary as a housing allowance. The unique practices at the University result in the erosion of the University's capability to reward its academic and professional staff responsibly and competitively. The apparent staffing excesses provide the opportunity to derive some savings from a cutback exercise. These savings could provide substantial leverage for the University to reward the core of its employs more competitive compensation packages; in theory at least and even in more informed and need-based fiscal regimes.

3.3.1.9 Framework for Decentralization

For a process as complex as decentralization, it is necessary that a framework be designed that clearly reflects the scope of decentralization that the University wishes to accomplish. The exact nature of decentralization being pursued by the University remains obscure.

Basically, there are two forms of decentralization: de-concentration and devolution. The choice is not which is better than the other - the choice is situational. There are several factors to be considered. A major factor, in the case of the University, should be the kind of role the Central Administration Office perceives for itself. What it believes it is accountable for and its mandate. It also depends on how power sharing is possible without losing control.

There is nothing more disastrous than an unmanaged change process. Its impact on productivity makes it necessary to accord this issue priority attention. It is not enough to off-load activities from the center to the periphery. There is also need to transfer commensurate authority and resources (physical, human and financial). Decentralization is such a complex exercise that its management cannot be left to chance. An appropriate framework, comprising scope, principles and guidelines need to be clearly articulated. All

factors, that must be taken into account in operationalizing the concept, need to be identified. Both the shading party and the victim need to be prepared.

3.3.1.10 Grading Structure for Administrative and Clerical, Technical and Support (CTS) Staff

A well designed compensation system is one way of ensuring consistent and sustainable staff performance. The current system for compensation for administrative and CTS staff lacks rationale criteria. No grade descriptions, depicting the features of the different levels of administrative and CTS staff exist. In fact, the present system of grading is unknown to staff responsible for personnel management at the Central Administration Office.

Promotions have been made to posts without a corresponding match in responsibilities. Defining responsibilities in the absence of a rational organizational structure is understandably a complex task. Promotions should not only seek to satisfy a person's basic needs but also their need for development and a challenging career. It is unlikely that employees' productivity would improve in a work-place where work is routine and boring. Unless grade descriptions, that indicate different levels of competence, are formulated and made transparent, it is meaningless to attempt to design staff development programs or to compensate staff responsibly and equitably.

3.3.2 CONCERNS AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL

The colleges are different from the Central administration Office, at least in terms of the academic programs they offer. Despite the obvious differences, a lot of similarities exist in general and human resources management terms. A great deal of the concerns observed at the Central Administration are replicated at the college level. However, these issues assume somewhat different dimensions at the college level. Again, it has also to be acknowledged that there are degrees of diversity across the colleges. The major emphasis in this part of the analysis is rather the common-thread issues across colleges.

3.3.2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of academic staff are relatively clear and defined. What are grossly unclear are the roles of those academics that are heads of departments, faculty deans and support staff. The consulting team noted that the colleges operate without clear organizational structure, with a modicum of job descriptions, many of which are outdated, in any case. The managerial roles of deans of faculties and heads of departments, and more specifically the former, do not seem to be recognized. The selection of faculty deans, contrary to popular assertions, is largely rotational. The positions, in any case are not established and anchored in the set-up.

3.3.2.2 The Establishment

Mechanisms for establishment control, at the college level, give cause for serious concern. The mechanism for the creation of posts lacks defensible criteria. Once the post is created it seems difficult to have it erased once its usefulness can longer be justified. Such is the case especially for funded programs. The case is even more serious and embarrassingly conspicuous for casual laborers. Most came in as seasonal employees but ended up on permanent establishment (perhaps even on tenure !!!).

3.3.2.3 Style of Management

For a long time, Chancellor College (one of the constituent colleges) suffered severe water shortages, with seemingly no solution in sight. Eventually, a borehole was drilled on donor's initiative and support. There is a case of tight government funding, which the University seems to have been totally unprepared for. The colleges are operating with fear of possible closure or drastic reduction on their programs. Officials, at the college level, have mostly reacted to these events. Solid home-grown alternatives are clearly few and where they emerge they lack expression in the bureaucracy. The motivation, does not exist, for the generation of alternatives. The few alternatives that were ever formulated such as privatization and sub-contracting have never left the drawing board.

3.3.2.4 Work Ethics among Staff

It is not unusual for staff to be absent from work without valid reasons. Academic and technical staff regularly perform private jobs on University's contracted time and often on University premises. Teaching assignments are regularly "sub-contracted" to fellow lecturers while the substantive instructor is away on unofficial "project" work. Routinely, earnings from these consultancy assignments are not accounted for by staff. The projects are often carried out utilizing University's facilities and time at no cost to the individual. Heads of departments and faculty deans appear powerless to discipline their fellow academics. A climate is one of laxity with delays in the submission of examination results a common phenomenon.

Moonlighting has become endemic at the University of Malawi's constituent colleges, ostensibly because the remuneration packages are inadequate and somehow 'one has to survive in these hard economic conditions'. Yet another excuse is that there is no transparency in the way consultancy revenue is being utilized by University authority and thus it is expecting too much for anybody to surrender anything earned when their earnings disappear into the general pool. Whatever the cause of this malpractice, the cause for the lack of discipline is not presently being checked. Clear disciplinary measures are not even enforced. In those rare cases where disciplinary measures have been enforced, there have been accusations of double-standards or unfairness in the application of measures. Can one expect reasonable levels of productivity under these circumstances? Consultancies arranged privately with the sole motivation of lifting one's income often lead to poor quality products (as there is very often no quality assurance and official institutional support). However, the consequent poor performance inadvertently reflects the University's capabilities. Ultimately, consultancies, performed in this fashion, represent lost real opportunities and income for the University.

3.3.2.5 Accountability for College Registrars, Bursars, and Librarians

Conflicts between the Principals and their chief advisers, the Registrars, Bursars, and Librarians often occur as these officers see themselves as representatives of the University Registrar, the University Finance Officer and the University Librarian respectively. This situation leads to dual accountability with adverse consequences for the quality and effectiveness of leadership at the college level. The spirit of team work is

severely compromised and so is overall performance. It has been amply demonstrated elsewhere that a 'common services' approach to organization goes contrary to the ideal of building effective substantive institutional capacity.

3.3.2.6 Management Systems

The existing management systems do not adequately integrate academics in the management of college affairs. Management issues are viewed as part business in academic circles. While the consulting team appreciates that the core business of the University is teaching and research, these functions have to be properly managed. Those in the business must play a key role in managing their own affairs. The laxity in the management of academic affairs also appears to be compounded by the absence of clear incentives and a promotion criteria heavily skewed toward academic achievements - more especially research and publications achievements. The real reason while academics exit, though, is the student. The delivery ability of instructors remains largely ignored.

3.3.2.7 Diversity between Colleges

The colleges that comprise the university have peculiarities and uniqueness that distinguish them from one another. Each college has a unique background, different orientation, attracting personnel from and delivering products to different markets. They are also at very varied stages of development. Unfortunately, these differences do not seem to be recognized. There is an apparent tendency toward uniformity in the formulation and application of policy and procedural guidelines.

While standardization has its merit, it needs to be selectively and judiciously applied in order not to inhibit innovation and the effective development and management of colleges.

Examples of unwarranted standardization include: the insistence that the staff be recruited using a standard ratio, the allocation of funding solely based on student numbers and not on student activities. There is also a standardized entertainment allowances to colleges regardless of the market orientation and complexity and size of the

college. Compensation packages are also even out regardless of competitiveness. These and many others are indicative of excessive control over college affairs.

3.3.2.8 Promotion Criteria and Appraisal System

The consulting team observed that the existing promotions criteria for staff are too narrow. They place undue emphasis on research and publication excellence and exclude other relevant work factors such as teaching workload, students' evaluations, etc. The promotions criteria fail to take into account the demands that different departments make on staff. In some departments, the teaching load is so heavy that staff cannot reasonably be expected to invest sufficient quality-time for research and publication. Perhaps, even the type of journals where staff can be recognized as having published needs to be reviewed in accordance with domestic realities and society perception of a public university.

The case for administrators is even more disturbing. Length of service seems to be the predominant criteria. The situation is compounded by an absence of related performance appraisal tool and process. A closed system of appraisal is used.

3.3.2.9 Turnover among Staff

Turnover of staff is disturbingly high particularly in areas greatly sought after by industry. The main factor seems to be un-competitive remuneration packages in the University. Clearly, the high turnover imposes a premium on the University's capability to guarantee quality .

4. THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY DIMENSIONS

4.1 Academic Programmes

4.1.1 *Teaching*

4.1.1.1 University Graduates

The University opened its doors to students in 1964 and its first graduates came out in 1967. By 1995, 14,219 students have graduated in various disciplines and at different levels of qualifications. Table 4.1 depicts the distribution of graduates by level of qualification and gender.

Table 4.1
Distribution of Graduates by Level of Qualification
and Gender (1967 - 1995)

Level of Qualification	Female	Male	Total	Female Proportion	% of Grand Total
Certificate	476	204	680	70.00	4.77
Diploma	1288	5779	7067	18.23	49.70
First Degree	956	5083	6039	15.83	42.47
First Degree (Hon)	55	252	307	17.92	2.16
Master	38	83	121	31.41	0.85
Ph.D	-	5	5	-	0.04
Grand Total	2813	11406	14219	19.78	100

Source: University Graduation Programme (Various Year)

The table indicates that the focus of the University has been on undergraduate training comprising over 99 per cent. While this was necessary at the inception of the University in order to quickly train

people who would take over from expatriates, times have changed. There is need to introduce post-graduate programmes in critical areas such as policy analysis as a means of building capacity which is currently missing. Of the graduates, only 2813 or about 20 per cent are females. In addition, except for certificate awards, the proportion of male graduates far exceeds that of females.

Half of the graduates have diplomas and yet most of them remain unemployed for a long time or get jobs in areas outside their areas of competence. Moreover, these programmes are run on the understanding that the high fliers will proceed to degree programme or come back after several years of work experience for the degree programme. This arrangement increases the number of years to graduate with a degree to five instead of four as is the case for those who come straight to a degree programme. It is pleasing to note that these programmes are essentially phased out from the University Programmes.

Annex 1 shows that the majority of the graduates are in Agriculture (21%), Education (16%), Public Administration and Social Science (13%), Business Administration (9%), Nursing (7%), Engineering (13%) and Sciences (7%) making a total of 86%. The rest of the programmes account for the remaining 15% of the graduates. Yet some of the areas with the least number of graduates are those whose skills are in great demand in the country such as Law, Accountancy, Medicine and Architecture.

Annex 2 shows distribution of graduates by gender and profession. Most of those who graduated with a nursing award are females (93%) followed by Management (27%), Education (26%), and Arts (23%). It should be noted that these are traditional areas for females. It is pleasing to further note that 21% of graduates in Medicine are females.

4.1.2 Recommendations

1. From Table 4.1 it has been demonstrated that most of the graduates are diplomates, first degree holders and those with certificates. If the acute shortage of policy analysts is going to be addressed, then the University must introduce and strengthen post

graduate programmes in the critical areas. For instance, Bunda has produced enough graduates and diplomates in Agriculture and it is being recommended that expansion of these programmes should be restricted in favour of post graduate courses.

2. Diploma programmes should be phased out in favour of degree programmes. The diploma courses should be shed off to other institutions. It is understood that the diploma programme in Agriculture is being shifted to Natural Resource College. The current practice is that in those disciplines with dual degree and diploma programmes have students pursuing diploma courses during the first three. Those who do very well continue for another two years to obtain a Bachelor degree, the others end up with a diploma. This means the degree students stay in college for five years. In order to increase the supply of badly needed human resources, the degree programmes should be for four years after the diploma courses have been removed.
3. It has been seen that areas of scarce skills such as medicine, accountancy and architecture has the least number of graduates. The University should consider increasing enrollment in these areas and away from disciplines with "excess supply" of graduates.
4. Deliberate efforts should be made to increase the enrollment of female students in the University programmes. At 20% of total graduates, it is not adequate especially if one considers that if you leave out Nursing, Education and Arts the proportion will further go down.
5. The University run yearly programmes and intakes are once a year. The system could not loose anything in terms of quality of education if there were two intakes a year. Therefore, it is recommended that the University should introduce a semester system in order to increase the supply of skilled human resources in the country. This would allow flexibility in resource use and modular programmes would fit very well.

4.1.3 Rationalisation of Programmes

There does not appear to be a rigorous system of periodic evaluation of academic programmes of the University. It seems reasonable for the University to justify these programmes on criteria that include demand factors as well as the capacity of the University to adequately deliver the same. In the absence of such a system, some programmes that have run their courses are still being delivered and this may be part of the reasons for the apparent demand-supply mismatch.

One way of rationalising programmes is to look at the staff/student ratios. Table 4.2 shows the staff/student ratio by department. It should be realised that these ratios are based on establishment and not on staff in post. The logic behind this is that budgets are based on establishment. However, for the purpose at hand, it could be realistic to discount vacancies. Another element is that staff associates are excluded from the figures although in most cases they take full loads. The end result is that in the latter, the ratios are exaggerated while in the former they are understated.

Table 4.2
Staff/Student Ratio for 1997/98 Academic Year

Faculty of Agriculture	Staff/Student Ratio	Establishment	Faculty of Soc. Science	Staff/Student Ratio	Establishment
Agriculture Engineering	13	8	Public of Administration	15	8
Rural Development	11	10	Psychology	13	6
Animal Science	10	12	Economics	12	12
Home Economics	10	7	Sociology	12	4
Crop Production	8	14	History	6	5
Language and Com.	5	4			
Faculty of Humanities	Staff/Student Ratio	Staff/Student Ratio	Faculty of Science	Staff/Student Ratio	Staff/Student Ratio
Philosophy	13	3	Geography	17	6
Language and Com.	12	6	Mathematics	15	13
Religious Studies	11	5	Demography	14	3
Classics	8	3	Home Economics	13	3
English	7	9	Chemistry	8	12
Chichewa & Linguistics	6	3	Physics	8	6
Fine & Performing Arts	6	6	Biology	7	12
French	3	4	Computer Programme	7	5
Faculty of Law	Staff/Student Ratio	Establishment	Faculty of Education	Staff/Student Ratio	Establishment
Law	7	10	Education Foundation	8	10
			Curriculum & Teaching	4	13
Faculty of Engineering	Staff/Student Ratio	Establishment	Faculty of Commerce	Staff/Student Ratio	Establishment
Civil	13	11	Business Studies	23	10
Electrical	9	11	Accountancy	21	10

Mechanical	9	11	Management	5	4
Faculty of Nursing	Staff/Student Ratio	Establishment	Faculty of Applied Studies	Staff/Student Ratio	Establishment
Basic Studies	5	14	Maths & Science	44	3
Maternal and Child Health	5	15	Environmental Health	10	4
Community & Mental Health	4	10	Language & Com.	7	10
Medical Surgical Nursing	4	24	Applied Sciences	8	7
			Technical Education	5	4

The above notwithstanding, some conclusions can be arrived at from the table. On the understanding that the staff/student ratios of 10:12 is the norm, in the faculty of Agriculture, for instance, most departments fall within this range. The exceptions are the Departments of Crop Production, and Language and Communication. The former has a large establishment which cannot be justified by the students numbers while the latter does not have sufficient number of students registering for its programmes.

At Chancellor College, most departments in the faculty of Humanities are below the norm due to limited student numbers registering for their courses. Some of the Science departments and Law have low student ratios due to the inadequacy of laboratory space and equipment, and teaching space. Hence deliberate efforts are made to restrict intakes in these programmes.

There is need to consider increasing the establishment in Public Administration while ways should be found to attract students into History courses. Faculty of Education may have low ratio because of reasons beyond the control of the University – poor incentive packages for teachers. Consequently many students do not opt for Education programmes. By the nature of its activities and by having two campuses, the Faculty of Nursing has high establishment while Business Studies, Accountancy and Mathematics and Science departments need their establishments beefed up.

At the College level, the Academic Boards should analyse their establishments in relation to departmental student numbers and take corrective measures. The introduction of non residential students as proposed earlier, and improvement in teaching facilities may result in increase in the staff/student ratios. However, it is our belief that it may still be necessary to move positions from one department to another within the same college. Where the discrepancies are University-wide, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) in conjunction with College Principal may consider moving posts between Colleges.

We have argued elsewhere that the system of defining capacity in terms of bed space limits admission and ultimately the generation of graduates. However, scraping the system alone would not, by itself, yield significant results. Simultaneously, several factors need to be addressed including teaching space and related facilities. A good deal

of the lecture rooms are limited in number and size, the laboratories are few and mostly dilapidated and obsolete. Computer technology is insufficient and out of date even in such areas as Engineering and Sciences. Thus, increasing student intake would need to be accompanied by modernisation of teaching space and facilities, including libraries.

It is pleasing to note that the University has introduced a semester system. We hope that the modules being developed are stand alone such that any disruptions which result in the closure of the University as is currently the norm, affects only the semester in question and not the entire year. Further more, this gives an opportunity for the University to increase enrolment by having two intakes a year. To ensure full utilisation of facilities and allow students to graduate early, the long vacation could be used to run some modules. Students who opt to use their long vacation this way will have sufficient credits to graduate earlier and give room to new intake.

In addition, the calculation of staff/student ratio may provide misleading information. On one hand, the University is unable to recruit, develop and retain qualified lecturers for a variety of reasons pointed out earlier. This results in some departments relying on staff associated and assistant lecturers to take charge of teaching. These often utilise overcrowded classrooms, poor teaching aids and are not supported by adequately stocked libraries. On the other hand, the few qualified lecturers are engaging themselves in unofficial consultancies from which the University does not benefit. These factors and a host of other internal efficiency problems lead us to express serious concerns on the quality and quantity of learning that is taking place at the University of Malawi.

Another area which needs rationalisation is the duplication of courses among colleges. The following are cases in point:

- Science courses such as biology and chemistry are offered in all colleges;
- Law lecturers are needed at both Chancellor College and the Polytechnic;
- Home Economics is offered at both Chancellor College and Bunda.

Some of the duplications are clearly unavoidable and perhaps what may be required is for colleges to put in place standardised procedure for exchanging staff among themselves.

On the other hand, some economics of scale can be obtained by merging some departments. In this regard, it appears logical to move the Law Department from Chancellor College to the Polytechnic so that it can also service other disciplines. Currently Law is a stand alone department at Chancellor but would easily support Business programmes had it been at the Polytechnic. Additionally, the existence of the law related infrastructure such as the courts makes Blantyre ideal for teaching law. We understand that the differences in orientations of the Bunda and Chancellor Colleges' Home Economics programme justify their separation. The test may well be whether there is sufficient demand for each of the programme.

4.1.4 Recommendations on Rationalisation

Given the financial, human and physical resource constraints, the University must rationalise its academic programmes and take corrective measures where necessary. The following actions could be considered:

4. To ensure that the programme are up to date and respond to the needs of the country, there must be periodic evaluation of the programmes. This way, those which are no longer essential can be replaced by new and relevant courses.
5. The University is failing to recruit and retain qualified staff hence most of the establishments are not filled and departments are operating below capacity. We therefore recommend that staff/student ratios be recalculated using staff in post and compare with those based on established posts in order to arrive at optimal staffing levels. The outcome of this exercise could be the freezing of excess establishments where they are not justified and transferring them to where they are needed. There is no point in keeping positions which are never going to be filled and yet they are distorting the staff/student ratios.
6. Some programmes are not popular with students and hence they have low staff/student ratios. The removal of the admission system based on available bed space may increase the ratios in some departments. Where this fails, it is

- recommended that consideration should be made to reorganise the departments in order to justify their existence. In extreme cases the programmes should be phased out and staff members redeployed somewhere within the system.
7. Staff/student ratios in some departments such as the sciences and law are low because of inadequacy of teaching facilities. Due to this limitations, enrolments in these departments are deliberately restricted. We therefore recommend that investment in teaching facilities should be made in order to improve the situation both qualitatively and quantitatively. Once this is done, these departments will be able to increase student numbers to the required levels.
8. Due to the current federal set-up of the colleges, some courses are duplicated. Although some of the duplications are clearly unavoidable such as teaching of English and sciences in all colleges, there is need to justify the other multiplicities of courses. More specifically, the following recommendations may be considered.
- a) Home Economics is offered both at Chancellor College and at Bunda. He understand that differences in their orientations justify their separation. The question is whether there is sufficient demand for each of the programmes. Bunda with 70 students and 7 teachers has a staff/student ratio of 10 while at Chancellor College the figures are 38, 3, and 13 respectively. In our opinion these figures justify separation considering that one programme is for agriculturist and the other is for teachers. We therefore recommend that instead of merging the departments, a system of sharing resources such as staff between the two departments should be introduced.
 - b) Law is at Chancellor College and law lecturers are also recruited in the Faculty of Commerce at the Polytechnic. We recommend that Law Department move from Zomba to Blantyre such that in addition to teaching law students, the department could services Business Studies Programme.

4.2 Research Activities

4.2.1 Research

The University does not appear to have a comprehensive research policy. The Research Co-ordinator's Office has done some commendable work in terms for mobilising resources for modest research and publications. The research centres have equally made impressive attempts to get resources for research and develop their own policies. For instance, the Centre for Social Research has come up with a policy and of late, organised a workshop at which members of the University, private sector, parastatals, NGOs and government were invited. The purpose of the seminar was to map out future strategies and directions of its research activities. The consultants recognises this initiative and hopes other centres will do likewise.

However, in the absence of a comprehensive research policy, much of these efforts are, at best, fragmented and weak. The Research Co-ordinator's Office does not provide a leadership role to the research centres nor are there any practical relationships between this office and any of the research centres.

At the moment, the Research Co-ordinator's Office is on paper only since no one is manning it. At the same time, we have recommended the creation of the position of a Pro-Vice Chancellor in charge of academic matters. Maintaining both implies duplication of responsibilities, the very thing we are suggesting to be minimised. In addition, we are recommending a highly decentralised system where most activities are transferred to college level and the University Office is left with the grand picture. Therefore, it is necessary to consider phasing out the Research Co-ordinator's Office and the Academic Pro Vice Chancellor take over its activities. While research centres are free to come up with their own policies, this should be done in the context of a University-wide research research policy developed by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic).

4.2.2 Research-Teaching Linkages

It is evident that linkages do exist between the research centres and teaching departments. Lecturers are engaged on research assignments by the centres and students are deployed as enumerators or research assistants. However, there is need to

strengthen this relationship. The impressive inventory of research publications maintained by some of the centres such as the Centre for Social Research should be made readily accessible to students. Teaching staff involvement in research is unsystematic and rather ad hoc. It is important that the arrangement is made more structured than it is at present.

The University Office and/or college administration exert excessive powers over the research centres through their control of financial resources. We were informed that at one point the Vice Chancellor once used CSR funds to purchase computers for Chancellor College Computer Unit and funds from Management Centre were used to rehabilitate Maone Housing Estate. In both cases, the respective directors were not consulted and against their protests. SCR, for instance, is effectively under the Central Administration in spite of “official” protestations that it reports to the Faculty of Social Science. We are not persuaded by such protestations as long as the University Office is in charge of the finance of CSR. This further weakens the research-teaching linkages.

The Centres employ research fellows within their organisations whose functions are exclusively research and consultancies with very little, if any, teaching engagement. These fellows increase in number as time passes causing a great expense to the University in terms of salaries and other benefits in addition to discouraging research-teaching linkages. It is advisable to have a skeleton of core staff at the Centres and use academic staff on most of their research activities. These core staff should also be encouraged to engage themselves in some teaching assignments.

4.2.3 The Governing Board

The membership of Governing Boards include representatives of faculties with little or nothing in common with the centres. The case in point is the Centre for Social Research whose Interdisciplinary Committee consists of representatives of all 12 faculties of the University. In addition, the Vice Chancellor is the Chairperson though being represented at meetings by the Chairperson though being represented at meetings by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science. As some of these members see no relevance of the Centre’s activities nor the benefits of these operations to their own faculties, their

contributions to the deliberations are very limited to say the least. Yet this arrangement is at a great expense to the University.

Elsewhere in this report we have expressed concerns over excess use of committees within the University. The Centres are not immune to this observation. In the spirit of the proposed decentralisation, the need to cut costs, and make the Governing Boards more efficient and effective, the University should consider trimming down the compositions of these Boards. Membership should be limited to the appropriate faculty with all its departments being represented on these committees. Furthermore, to ensure a real belonging to the faculty, the Executive Dean should be automatically become the Chairperson in his/her official capacity and not as a representative of a higher authority.

The option to coopt membership from closely related faculties and departments should be given. In addition, the Board should also reserve the right to coopt members from outside the University system. This way, discussions at meetings will be enriched at reduced cost to University. The University may also consider pushing these costs to the Centres themselves and not to the Colleges as currently is the case. This will result in determining the true costs of running the centres.

4.2.4 Donors Involvement

The research centres seem to be independently mushrooming largely on donor financing but would wish to acknowledge the risks if the interventions are not made with a holistic perspective of institutional building. The donors are unlikely to sustain funding for prolonged periods of time and the University may be landed with yet other citadels that they would find difficult to maintain and sustain within its set-up.

Some of the worst violations of technology damping and comparability are, for example, being committed by the Centres as they seem too ready to receive equipment from donors – ostensibly as a requirement for project implementation. Perhaps, lessons should be learnt from the many elephants with the University itself that result from this kind of zeal. Certainly, the University need donors, but it must articulate a framework for managing this relationship if University is to enjoy long term benefits from the arrangement.

Usually, the donor will fund everything except salaries which is absorbed by the University as a sign commitment to the creation of centre. As the number of research fellows and other staff increases so does the cost to the University. In other circumstance, such as the case with APRU, initially the donor may also pay the salaries but after a time, these and other costs are shifted to the University – burdening an already financially constrained institution. Another reason to properly manage the donor – research centre relationship.

4.2.4 Recommendation on Research

1. The University does not appear to have a comprehensive research policy and the University Research Co-ordinator's Office does not provide a leadership role nor are there any practical relationships between this office and any of the research centres. Therefore, it is recommended that the Central Administration in collaboration with the research centres and Deans of Faculties should develop a comprehensive policy. Thereafter, individual centres would come up with their own policies within the framework of the grand policy.
2. In the context of the restructuring process where the position of a Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) is being proposed, the University Research Co-ordinator's Office becomes redundant. Retaining both implies duplication of responsibilities, a thing we are suggesting for the University to try to minimise. We, therefore recommend that the co-ordinator's office be phased out and all its responsibilities revert to the office of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic).
3. It is evident that linkages to exist between research centres and teaching departments. For instance, lecturers are engaged on research and consulting assignments by the centres though on ad hoc basis and students are deployed as enumerators or research assistants. However, there is need to strengthen this arrangement and we recommend the following for that purpose:
 - The impressive inventory of research publications available at the centres should be made readily accessible to students; and

- The employment of research fellows is open ended resulting in increased costs to the University in terms of expenses of salaries and other benefits in addition to weakening the research — teaching linkages. For both reasons, we recommend that the Centres should have a skeleton of core staff and use academics on most of their research and consulting activities. This would include lecturers taking time off from their teaching and be attached to the centre for a specified period of time for big assignments. Conversely, the research fellows could be assigned to teaching for a semester or longer.
4. The University Office and/or colleges exert excessive powers over the centres through their control of financial resources. This further weakens the teaching – research linkages in addition to the misdirection of financial resources from the centres to other activities which are irrelevant to the operations of the centres. Therefore, it is being recommended that:
- In order to strengthen teaching – research linkages, the centres reports to their respective faculties in all aspects of their operations including financial matters;
 - The research centres, under the supervision of Bursars, should have their own accounting structures including bank accounts. In this way, the financial responsibilities will fall under the Directors of these Centres and be accountable to College authorities through the Executive Deans; and
 - The faculties being sole shareholders of these centres should determine how excess revenue at the end of each financial year should be utilised. Broad principles should be enshrined in the University – wide comprehensive research policy and detailed arrangements be included in individual centre’s policy.
5. The membership of Governing Boards of these centres include some faculties with little in common with the centres. For instance, the Interdisciplinary Committee for the Centre for Social Research is composed of representatives from all faculties with the Dean of Social Science as the Chair on behalf of the Vice Chancellor. Somewhere in this report, we have expressed concern about excessive use of committee structures, this is a case in point. We therefore, recommend that membership to the

Governing Boards be restricted to the appropriate faculty with the option of coopted members from closely related faculties and from industry. It is further recommended that the Executive Dean is the Chairperson in his/her own right and not on behalf of higher authorities.

6. The Consultants support and encourage the use of donor funding for the development of research centres. However, we would like to acknowledge risks involved with these interventions including the following:

- Donors will fund projects for specified period of time and thereafter all costs are the responsibility of the recipient;
- Usually, salaries and related benefits are shouldered by the recipient right from the beginning; and
- More often than not, donor assistance comes with technology dumping, paying little attention to comparability of equipment or the availability of spare parts and/or technical personnel to run and maintain the equipment. Therefore, the University should articulate a framework for managing the relationship between donors and the University in general and research centres in particular.

4.

5. 5. CONCLUSIONS, REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Our analysis of the present situation at the University of Malawi leads us to a number of basic conclusions.

5.1 BASIC CONCLUSIONS

1. It is clear that the Universities management has not , for a variety reasons, been dynamic enough to its response to these changes, let alone anticipate the future and position itself to deal with the situation in ways that would ensure its own survival and develop. It is our opinion that a great many of the problems and innate opportunities described above are symptoms of a basic structural problem confronting the University. These symptoms are reflected in:
 - 1.1. the University's inability to inculcate a culture for planning teaching and research,
 - 1.2. the University's inability to seize a wide-range of opportunities,such as raising own funds to complement public financing,
 - 1.3. lack of apparent linkages between planning and budgeting, on the one hand, and loose linkages between teaching and research as well as that between research and industry,
 - 1.4. the University's inability to develop an overall credible research policy,
 - 1.5. the University's pre-occupation with tactical matters and non-core functions, such as estate management, student living, maintenance, security, transport, etc.. The approach to student living fails to incorporate students in real life situations and does not therefore give the necessary preparation for life after college. The University needs to pay attention to the development of all other aspects of the students' life, and not just academic attainment,
 - 1.6. loose functional classification, undefined job descriptions and human resources overloading,

- 1.7. as yet unclear scope and framework for decentralization,
 - 1.8. Ambiguous and poor, if inconsistent decision-making processes,
 - 1.9. tendency toward standardization or uniformity across colleges irrespective for the colleges different historical backgrounds, stages of development, and substantives unique focus and needs,
 - 1.10. A reactive college management style and a general laxity of work ethics among staff,
 - 1.11. the obsession (clearly an illusion) of democratic management that has led to an excessive reliance on a single management technique, that is, management by committee. The centralization of certain services, regarded as common premises' e.g. 'senate affairs', the Great Hall, Libraries, Sports, etc., has not brought about economies of scale but instead has brought about inefficiency and a clear lack of accountability,
 - 1.12. the 'common service' approach has inhibited the development of a substantive administrative capacity within the University,
 - 1.13. a grading structure for administrative, clerical, technical and support staff without rationale criteria,
 - 1.14. a centralized and costly hiring and promotion criteria,
 - 1.15. narrow promotion criteria and appraisal system which is not, in any case, sufficiently open
2. On the University program side, we note, that as long as university admissions are influenced by bed-space, enrollment can not be expected to increase substantially and also that annual admissions process restricts in-take;
 3. There is a paradox of graduate unemployment at a time of national human resources crisis, indicating a demand and supply mismatch;
 4. There is scope for limited rationalization across colleges to enhance allocative and internal efficiency;
 5. There is generally limited teaching space and facilities across colleges: laboratory facilities are inadequate and mostly dilapidated and obsolete, library stocks are mostly out of date and inadequate, lecturer rooms are limited in number and size;
 6. Colleges management is un-substantive and lack the authority and to provide leadership, guidance and/skill to steer their respective colleges toward credibility and competitive edge;

7. Academic faculties, are not presently adequately integrated in the management of their colleges, have loose leadership structures, no clear roles and responsibilities and, thus, essentially are lacking in accountability and governance;
8. A sound rationale for academic program reviews has never been articulated and applied, demand factors for program introduction and continuation appear not to have been purposely considered;
9. The academic staff assessment is excessively standardized, grossly skewed in favor of research and publications regardless of teaching loads. Paradoxically, the faculties are loosely linked to research efforts. Assessment of the quality of teaching is largely ignored. Students, the principal target group, are not featured in the assessment process. The instructors are not routinely subjected to refresher or upgrading courses in methods of instructions;
10. The diversity in teaching disciplines coupled with the inadequacy in teaching support materials, poor work ethics, sub-standard instructor qualifications, etc. make it inappropriate for the consulting team to advise on an optimal student-teacher ratio for the University. It seems advisable to advise a process of self-assessment for each college and faculty based on some rationale criteria.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations do not attempt to deal with each and every problem and opportunities (or symptoms) as outline in our analysis. Our focus is on broader structural and program issues. Our prime concern is not to provide prescriptive solutions as to what the University's needs to do. Rather we aim at positioning University's management to adequately deal with the critical issues facing a dynamic institution and thereby promote quality and quantity learning as demanded by society. The recommendations are based on a wide-range of consultations we conducted with a number of stakeholders, a limited market survey and our own analysis of the situation.

5.2.1 NATIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

5.2.2 INTERNAL UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

As indicated, the focus of our recommendation here is to deal with broader structural issues related to the federal nature of the University. The underlying concept is to bring

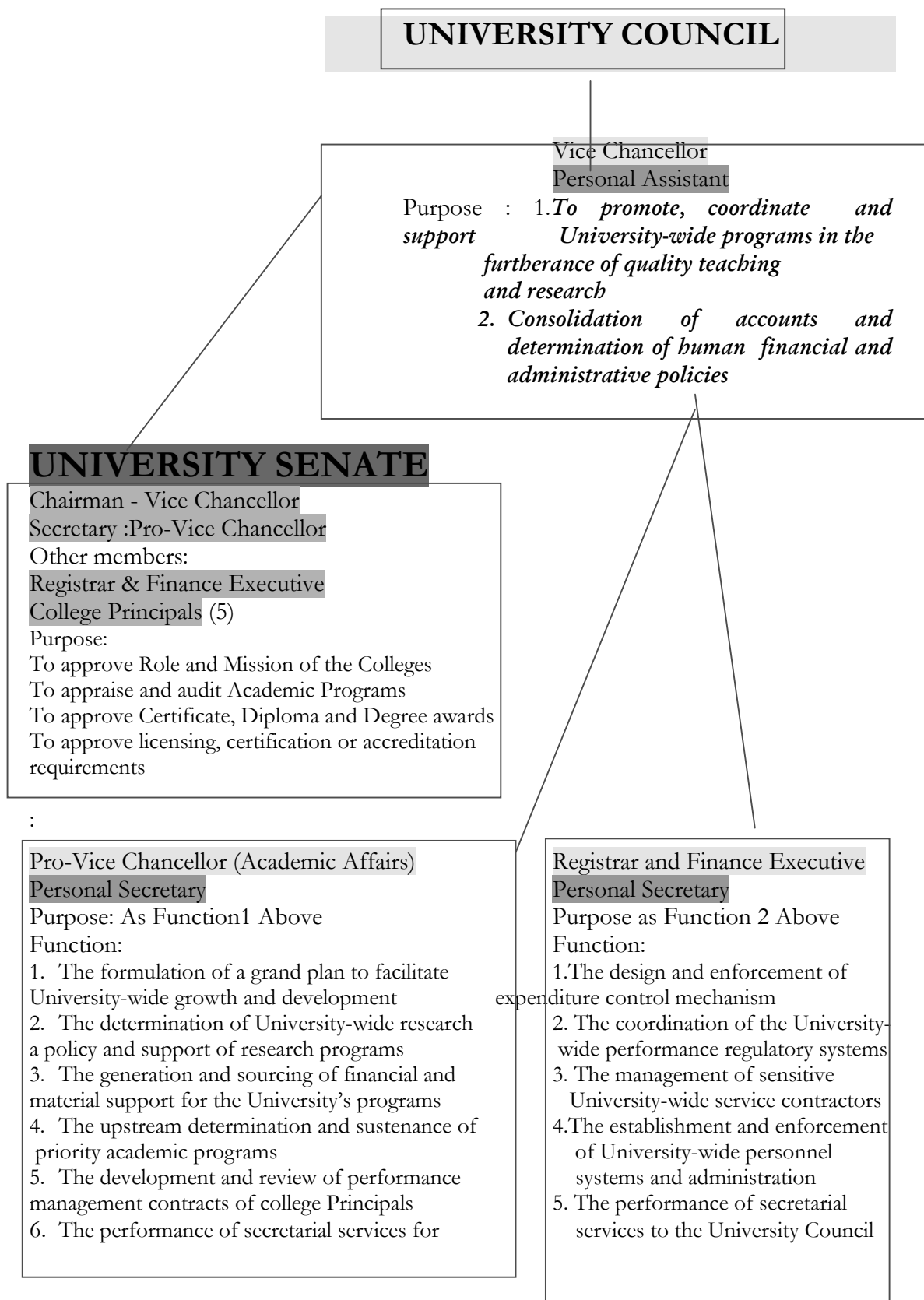
about improvements in allocative efficiency and relevance of the University's products and services through decentralization and functional re-engineering. In reality, this approach aims at establishing, within the University, a capacity and process for strategic management and planning, diversifying and deepening of its financial resource base and to rid itself of non-core functions

5.2.2.1 University-wide Issues and Policy Recommendations

5.2.2.1.1 University Office Structure

The Central Administration's (University Office) primary concern, in our recommended scenario, is to lead the development of University wide policy and planning in matters of teaching and research; engaging in upstream marketing, business development and public relations. In order to effectively discharge these functions, the University Office needs to effectively decentralize all other functions to colleges. It needs to rid itself of excesses and prepare itself for a new role, that is, as "standard torch-bearer of University of Malawi", "the University's Dream Team" that is able to articulate the vision for the University's development and growth and be able to market this vision to the wider society. Figure 5-1 illustrates University Office structure that, if properly equipped and supported, we believe can deliver on the same.

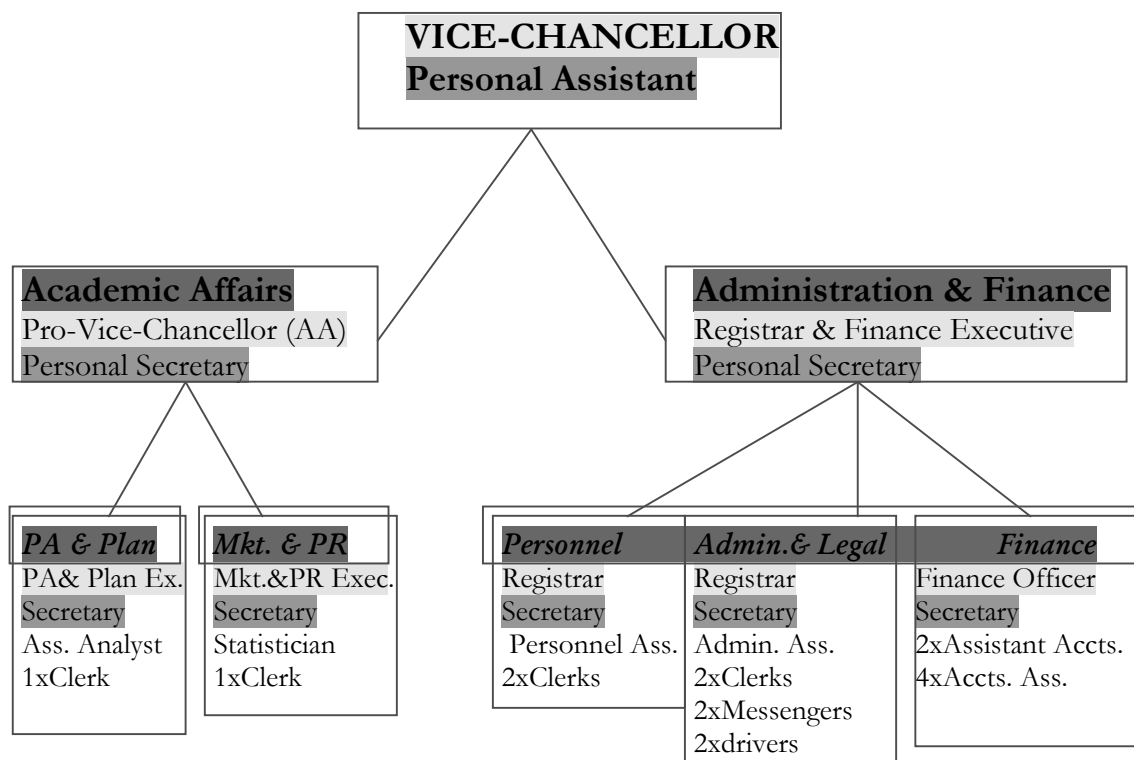
Figure 5-1: Recommended Functional Organization Structure for University Office



the University Senate

6. The consolidation of financial

Figure 5-2: Detailed Organigram for University Office



This new arrangement requires that the Vice-Chancellor and his two deputies are employed, preferable on 5-year performance-based contract, by the University Council. The staff below them are employed on regular terms by the Vice-Chancellor as employees of the University Office. Staff can then not be automatically transferred to colleges but may compete along with other eligible candidates for positions falling vacant at the colleges. In this case, staff who join colleges, under a competitive process, would naturally link their service from that which they held at the University Office. The principle, in this regard, is to abolish the common services arrangement and dual reporting relationships as well as to improve on staff development and career paths for all staff of the University.

The existence of the two deputies to the Vice-Chancellor does not represent any seniority of the deputies to the College Principals. The Vice-Chancellor will recruit, under a 5-year performance based contract, his/her College Principals and they alone at the college level will be responsible to the Vice-Chancellor and the University Office.

Any staff at the college below the Principal will be recruited by the respective Principals of their colleges and in the case of teaching staff upon recommendation of the relevant department, faculty and the College Academic Board. All staff recruited at the college level will remain employees of the colleges which recruited them and should by no means expect to be automatically shifted to any other colleges or University Office expect by open competitive process.

The University's Office's Finance Office will be responsible for payment of salaries, wages for staff belonging to the University Office including Vice-Chancellor and his/her deputies. In general, this office will only be responsible for expenditures directly incurred by University Office, Senate and the University Council. Settlement of all other expenditures sustained by colleges, including payment of college salaries and wages, will be the responsibility of respective college bursars.

The offices of the University Librarian and Estate Development Officer become redundant in our proposal. Under this decentralized arrangement, there does not seem to be any justification for retaining the University-wide librarian. The Estate Development Officer's functions, on the other hand, are clearly superfluous and can easily be sub-contracted as and when the need arises. We recommend that the position be abolished.

5.2.2.1.2 Maintenance

As a matter of policy, we recommend that all maintenance staff be laid-off. The exception to this would be the requirement for the colleges to maintain a critical core (not more than 5 staff for each college, in any case) to carry out emergence and routine maintenance. All other maintenance work should be carried out on sub-contractual basis as the need arises. We are satisfied that external capacity does exist, at competitive rates, in each of the college locations.

5.2.2.1.3 Staff Housing

In relation to the maintenance aspect, we suggest that the University sells off its residential houses to seating tenants and move away from providing this kind of benefit to staff. A few houses could be retained by each college for expatriate and contract staff

needs but even in this case the colleges should levy market determined rentals from such tenants. Apparently, the residential housing stock is not sufficient to sell to each staff member that may be eligible. It is perhaps, prudent to acknowledge the inequity but also to realize that resources to finance a massive program of staff housing are unlikely to be found. Our proposed arrangement does not need upfront financing as seating tenants will be required to purchase the properties at valuation cost. In this situation, all staff would be paid a housing allowance (which could be a proportion of their gross pay - industry standard ranges from 40% -80% of gross pay). This would clearly have to be examined in terms of the remuneration levels vis-à-vis property values. Seating tenants willing to purchase the properties but unable to raise the required lump sum payment could be permitted to use the housing allowance to pay on installments for the housing purchase. The opportunity to purchase houses could be given to other staff members (on transparent criteria that each college can define) in the case where the seating tenant declines to accept the offer of purchase. Revenues generated by this scheme could be deposited in a special fund and to be used for lending to other staff members who may wish to buy or build their own properties. Such a scheme, however, should have a cut-off time and eligibility criteria. Industry only applies this kind of scheme up to a certain level of senior staff and this must be defined for the University and each college. Additionally, we suggest that such a scheme should only be run by the University (and colleges) up to a period not exceeding 10 years and then turn the scheme to regular providers of mortgages (e.g. The New Building Society). There is a real risk here that the University could plunge itself in yet another non-core function over which it has, in any case, no expertise. The University should also arrange to have ownership transferred to itself on the housing property under its control, but effectively own by Government. This would increase the pool of houses that could be sold to staff. After all, the Government is equally disposing of its residential properties to its civil servants.

The housing ownership scheme, while inadequate to cover every eligible staff member, however defined, is considered superior to the present arrangement in that it provides an opportunity for some staff to own their own residential property and also provides hope for those not benefiting in the early rounds of implementing such a scheme. This is likely to raise morale among staff. Remaining with the status quo is not only inequitable and unsustainable but is another added weight and cost for the University to search for

and maintain house for its staff. Staff who are not housed regard themselves as having a raw deal.

Clearing of college premises should be done largely by seasonally employed staff. It is clear an inefficient practice to employ grass cutters on a permanent basis. Security could also be procured more competitively from the open market. The cash outlay could seem deceptively expensive if the cost of maintaining own staff is not fully considered (e.g. lax attitude to work, industrial actions, administrative costs, etc.)

5.2.2.1.4 Student Living

With regard to “student living”, we recommend that the University make arrangements for lease sub-contracting this function to private operators. Even allowing for the poor state of kitchen equipment on most campuses, the numbers of kitchen staff in every case are unjustifiable. It is more than likely that the private sector can provide these services more inefficiently but even if they were as inefficient, the added benefit to the University would be that it would not have to contend with the administration of such large numbers of staff. The University does pay staff for doing nothing (as presently happens during vacations). It would also shift students’ attention on the provision of food toward the private operator. The students, in this arrangement, would have to pay for their food.

Similar arrangements, as for feeding are also recommended, for hostel accommodation. In this effect, though, students should be made to clean their own rooms. The private contractor should only be responsible for cleaning common premises. Students should also be required to pay for these services and for their rooms. Preference should be given to first year students to live in campus accommodation. All other students should be required to apply for campus accommodation. Those unable to find space on campus should look for accommodation elsewhere. Our survey indicates that the students would be able to secure accommodation outside college campuses. We also do not find any justification, in the present economic environment, for the colleges to ferry students from places of their residences and back. This is a responsibility the students should learn to take and enjoy.

Our proposal does not call for out-right of selling these properties (i.e. kitchens and hostel). It is the management, we are attempting to privatise and not ownership. Indeed,

we believe, the colleges could reinvest the rentals levied from private operators in the expansion of hostel accommodation for students. Such investments would not be inconsistent. In future, though, it is recommended for the colleges to include catering facilities in their hostel expansion plans.

The proposal to have students pay for food and accommodation raises questions regarding financing. Where are the students going to get the money to purchase these goods and services? Our view is that the present loan scheme should be redefined to cater for these services provided, again, that the administration of such a scheme should rest with an independent, suitably qualified body, and not the University nor the colleges. This facility could be made available to needy students. Otherwise, some students are in a position (under the auspices of their parents and/or guardians) to afford to pay their way. Indeed, some students, given the proposed arrangements, could opt to stay with their parents/guardians while attending college. We estimate that at current prices, a student would live fairly well on a budget of K10,000 per annum for food and lodge. This could be the figure, suitably adjusted for prices changes, that the colleges might wish to recommend for student living and as students contribution towards their own education. We recommend that the University, Government, private sector and other parties create such a body where scholarships, grants or loans could be administered.

We are presently unable to recommend extending such loans/scholarships for tuition fee purposes. The figures obtained as student unit costs (ranging from K70,000 - K100,000) are out of reach for an average citizen given the low per capita income level (K3,000), besides the low level of skills in the country would seem to suggest that the social return to university education may still be higher than the private return - it may be the case that graduate unemployment reflects other labor market distortions or education quality factors rather than the saturation of the market. In this regard, seeking cost-sharing could merely be a cosmetic exercise. There is, perhaps on public good standpoint, a case for continued public funding of university education. But perhaps, a more fundamental objection to cost-sharing on tuition fees is that the calculation of annual student unit costs include food and lodge expenses (over which we have already shifted the responsibility to the students themselves) as well as the myriad of inefficiencies we have pointed out in our analysis. If the measures, including capacity utilization

through enrollment expansion, eradication of non-core functions, rationalizing staffing and the implementation of a modest institutional development/renewal program, the potential for reducing student unit costs is real. Before that, it does not seem to us ethical to require that student contribute toward payment for excessive inefficiencies. In principle, the tuition fee sharing should gradually be introduced and implemented but, perhaps, only after some reasonable level of basic cost pruning has been effected within the colleges. In the meantime, we would suggest that the University budget requests to government include only what is what is essentially required for teaching and research, staff development and capital budget needs for development and growth.

The exception to this “transitory” funding arrangement is the postgraduate programs for which we believe full cost recovery should be demanded. Funding for these kinds of programs are relatively easier to secure from a variety of sources. We are also made to understand that the University is already demanding close to full cost recovery on postgraduate level training with considerable success. It does not appear warranted to reverse this encouraging trend.

5.2.2.1.5 Costs of Staff lay-off

The suggestions we have made regarding the rationalization of the University office structure, maintenance, security, student living, etc., entail scaling down the staffing levels of the University. It would be inappropriate, at this stage, to provide a precise number of individuals likely to be affected by this exercise. We know for certain, though, that number is sizeable, easily exceeding 1,000. A staff retrenchment operation of this magnitude is likely to generate social and moral concerns and adverse political repercussions. The University needs to proceed with a lot of caution and prepare both Government, politicians, the victims and society at large for the inevitability.

Beyond the moral and political perspectives, there are the financial implications. The savings from such an operation can only be realized in the medium term. Applying the common formula for retrenchment compensation packages (i.e. 2 weeks pay per year worked plus terminal benefits and interest thereon), it is clear that the University would require substantial sums of money. The real value of compensation can only be determined when the actual compensation package has been worked out and affected

individuals have been identified. However, there are also other hidden costs, often problematic to take full account of, related to moving of retrenched employees to their respective homes. This practice appears to be widely applied and while it would seem attractive on the standpoint of fairness, it would cripple an institution trying to resurrect its financial fortunes. On paper, the University would not have to pay salaries and wages and other related costs for retrenched staff. However, such savings are complicated by the cash budget system. In this regard, it seems reasonable for the University to make a phased program of lay-offs and come to some accommodation with Government on the nature of funding of such an operation. Additionally, the University, as a matter of goodwill, can also solicit voluntary retirements for some of the targeted staff. The retrenchment exercise is admittedly going to be an expensive exercise for the University as well as for government. However, these reforms are necessary if the University is to survive in the medium and long term. Delaying the reforms would be a shortsighted proposition as it is obvious that the cost of reforms will grow exponentially over time and could lead ultimately to the collapse of the University of Malawi. The risk is real.

5.2.2.1.6 The University Senate

The Vice-Chancellor will also chair the reconstituted Senate whose membership shall include his two deputies, that is, the Pro-Vice Chancellor and University Registrar and Finance Executive. Other members of the senate would comprise the College Principals. Depending on the matters being dealt with the Senate may co-opt other individuals from colleges or elsewhere but, in no event, should any seating of Senate has more than ten individuals.

The role of the senate would be to approve Degree programs according to uniform definition of degree programs and support areas. The Senate would also be responsible for approval of course offerings at constituent colleges and such reviews and approvals would include consideration of the following:

- ◇ **Approved Role and Mission of the College**
- ◇ **Approved Certificate, Diploma and Degree Programs**
- ◇ **College Degree requirements**
- ◇ **Range and variety of courses necessary to make quality education available to students**
- ◇ **Licensing, certification or accreditation requirements**
- ◇ **Utilization measures (frequency of the use of courses and credit hours generated)**
- ◇ **Size of course inventory in relation to size of faculty**

The Senate would thus encourage colleges to implement, through their respective Academic Boards internal, systematic reviews of their course inventories

In terms of course review, we recommend that the Senate adopts basic “self-regulating guidelines” which are designed to accomplish the following:

First, by upholding the traditional prerogative of faculty to administer changes within their own Degree Programs, this new procedure would help insure the academic integrity of curricular development. Second, by returning more autonomy to those most immediately involved in and responsible for course inventory changes, the new procedure would help expedite the now time-consuming, inefficient process. At the same time the proposed guidelines would allow the Senate to fulfill its legal mandate to ensure that Degree Programs are authorized and offered in accord with such established criteria as quality, role and scope, and need. The guidelines are designed, therefore to prevent unauthorized expansion of courses outside authorized Programs; they would allow for a desired measure of comparability of Degree Programs and course offerings and would promote “truth in advertising” by demanding that all colleges produce accurate, up-to-date catalogs and course inventories.

The following principles could constitute the foundation of course review process:

- (A) Colleges may add, change, and delete courses within already authorized degree programs. All such course actions within already authorized degree programs must be reported annually to the Senate for audit. Automatic and immediate approval will be assumed unless otherwise indicated by the Senate;
- (B) Any course untaught as an organized class for three consecutive years will be automatically deleted from the course inventory in the absence of justification for retention. The Senate will furnish annual records of untaught courses to help each institution keep its course inventory updated;
- (C) Any particular special topics course successfully taught three times within the five-year period must be assigned a regular course number and reported as a new course for an annual audit (if in an authorized degree program) or submitted for prior approval of the Senate (if in a support area)

5.2.3 COLLEGE MANAGEMENT

The decentralization of functions from the University Office to colleges implies that the colleges themselves have to possess the capacity to take on additional new challenges. Our suggestion in relation to this task is to equip college leadership with commensurate executive authority. In this regard, Principals effectively become chief executive of the colleges and as indicated earlier, would have the power to hire and fire staff under them. The Principals are the only ones responsible to the University Office (Vice-chancellor) and the Senate. Each of the college Principals would be assisted by a management team comprising:

- ◆ Executive Deans of Faculties
- ◆ College Librarians
- ◆ College Registrar, and
- ◆ College Bursar.

The Executive Deans would lead academic departments and staff under them. The Faculty in our suggestion becomes a responsibility center as well as a cost center. All heads of department/Research will fall under the appropriate Executive Dean's leadership. Depending on circumstances and complexity of faculty, the Executive Dean, may choose to have sub-responsibility centers and sub-cost centers within their school- e.g. Department or research centers. The faculty would then have to be appropriately equipped, in terms of human, financial and other resources. The faculties would constitute the nerve center of colleges academic programs. The research centers/departments would naturally fall under the appropriate Faculty and Executive Dean. It is our expectation that every academic staff member would be able to teach and research within the faculty - that is, there would no longer be specialization of research or teaching.

The executive Deans would lead the formulation of programs and compile a five-year faculty plan. These plans are to be recycled annually. The aggregation of faculty plans would constitute the Colleges total Academic Program (Plan). The Executive Deans would ensure the quality of both teaching and research programmes in their schools and would also be responsible for the management of resources allocated to the school. Ultimately, they will be responsible for procuring the necessary inputs including

personnel and other materials (the Principals and Academic Boards would merely ratify these decisions) and should only refuse to grant approval by providing valid reasons.

The pooling of services such as transport has no room in this arrangement. If a faculty lacks certain inputs or service, it should procure the service from the Faculties that may possess them. The ability to generate revenue should also be encouraged at the faculty level. Resources so generated should be used within the Faculty or utilized toward motivating staff within the faculties. With the help of Heads of Departments, the Executive Deans should articulate staff review techniques and reward systems appropriate for their schools. We would only require the staff review system to be open as well as to explicitly include student assessment of staff. The reward system need also be linked to the ability to generate own revenue, research and teaching load factors but the systems in this regard need not be uniform across schools, let alone across colleges.

In general, therefore, the Executive Deans, would lead the development and implementation of a “self-assessment instrument” for their faculties. The reduction/expansion of academic programmes or the introduction of new ones would be based on the self assessment exercise as would the appropriate inputs e.g. personnel (both academic and technical support staff), equipment, facilities, costs, etc..

In order for the Executive Deans to perform these functions well they would have to be relieved of teaching and research tasks and concentrate on the management of these faculties. We also propose that the Executive Deans be on a five-year performance based contract.

The Executive Deans along with the College Librarian, College Bursar, and College Registrar form the College Academic Board. The functions of this Board would approximate those of the University Senate. This Board will, in effect, as committee of the University Senate. The Boards would have considerable autonomy to make decision (albeit this authority will be one delegated by Senate)

We see the functions of the College Academic Boards to include the following:

- ◆ **Formulation of role and mission of college**
- ◆ **Identification of Program need/ demand and determine Program potential**
- ◆ **Conduct periodic reviews of content and structure of academic Programs and curricula**
- ◆ **Review the adequacy of Program resource requirements (personnel, library, equipment, facilities, etc.)**
- ◆ **Maintain an inventory of college Programs**
- ◆ **Conduct staff reviews**
- ◆ **Set students' admissions requirements and standards**
- ◆ **Approve college Students admissions**
- ◆ **Etc**

Figure 5-3 depicts, the overall recommended generic structure of constituent colleges

Figure 5-3: Recommended Generic College Structure

