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# WHERE INTERSECTIONS ARE IMPERATIVE: ADVANCEMENT STRUCTURES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## Abstract

Advancement structures in HEIs in SA may include fundraising and development, alumni relations, marketing and communications and related functions. Their mission is the garnering of resources for the university's development and sustainability. However, there are variations on a theme, influenced by several factors: the historical standing of the institution and its type, understanding of advancement, and the resources available to effect its mission, amongst others. One key aspect is its outward-facing focus, as stakeholders are external, from the private sector, industry, partner organisations and community, making for a cross-cutting thrust to attain results that advance the institution. It is in this arena that intersections are in fact imperative, as experience shows that collaboration achieves more. The factors which impede progress and those which give advancement traction, are therefore the crux of the matter. Resource Dependency Theory is used to frame the dependency of HEIs on external resources due to limited state subsidies and the increasing financial demands of operating a modern educational institution. This paper expands analytically and critically on the nature of the intersections referred to, as well as the challenges faced, with reference to the experience of Mangosuthu University of Technology.

**Keywords** advancement, resource dependence, South Africa, university of technology

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## I. INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDINGS OF ADVANCEMENT

Institutional Advancement (IA) in the context of South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is defined historically as the fundraising arm of the institution, established to seek support for development projects and institutional priorities; it is also the action of advancing the state of being to a desired state (for example, towards higher development, financial sustainability, improved leadership and governance or efficiency. In common parlance, it suggests promotion or elevation to a higher range or position or quality, the progression to the highest level of development. In South Africa (SA), Higher education institutions (HEIs), advancement in its most general sense is the strategic process by which institutions advance their mission effectively. The structure itself may be a separate entity affiliated to the university or one integrated into the university's structure. It may comprise a suite of functions: Fundraising and Development, Alumni Relations, Donor Relations, International Relations, Events Management, Website Management, Marketing, Corporate Affairs, Partnerships, Bursaries and Scholarships, Schools Liaison, Communications, Publications and Brand management, or a selected few of these. However, not all HEIs are able to advance advancement, as it were, in its replete form, given a myriad factors which characterise institutions and their strategic direction and goals, specific needs, challenges, resources and

opportunities. The ASPIHE Reports, for example, refer specifically to the operational needs of the traditional advancement model, encompassing fundraising, development, and alumni relations functions, and not other “functions and components of Advancement such as marketing, media relations, public relations, events and communications” [1] In South African HEIs, advancement has most often been equated with Fundraising and Development, the fundraising arm of the university, perhaps because that is where it all began: the specific brief of identifying and connecting donors to the universities’ mission in way that is relevant and beneficial. Development is thus designed to mobilise resources and contribute to the overall advancement of the institution and its sustainability.

In its more comprehensive conceptualisation, advancement is an integrated method of managing relationships with key stakeholders to improve the understanding of an institution and leverage support for it. Thus, it could also be conceived of as harnessing all dimensions of the system and dynamics of the University so that they work in concert to bring about progress, which must be defined based on the individual institution. In this conceptualization, the intersections that it engenders with multiple partners and resources, are foregrounded, along with the process of identifying both the nexus of activity and its relationship with supporting activities at all levels. But one can still ask, what is advancement all about? Essentially, institutional advancement is about projecting, positioning, powering and propelling the institution forward. It is about strategically consolidating and integrating institutional policies, processes and structures, to optimise goal achievement; about creating that enabling environment for excellence and success and setting in motion, streamlining and strengthening an ongoing sequence of annual and long-term plans to secure a sustainable future for generations to come. Indeed, for the planet.

With this brief historical backdrop, this paper elaborates on the mission of advancement structures, the structures themselves and the spectrum of advancement work, as an arena which intersects with several sectors and stakeholder constituencies, internally and externally, and which makes cross-cutting initiatives imperative. As universities grapple with the challenges of the day, including the business model that has met with some resistance, some lessons could in fact be learned from the advancement model. That such entities are not uniform, across institutions, which are themselves different historically, and that such entities do not fit neatly within the traditional categories of ‘academic’ or ‘administrative/ support’ in terms of structure, ethos and function, is clear. The Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) of Pfeffer and Salancik [2] is used to frame the dependency of HEIs as organisations on external resources, and the implications thereof, with reference to the MUT-specific context.

### **Resource Dependency Theory**

In theorising around the mission, structure and ethos of Institutional Advancement, Pfeffer and Salancik's [3] theory provides a suitable framework to understand the need for HEIs to secure external resources due to limited state subsidies and the increasing financial demands of operating a modern educational institution. This theory is fundamental to organisational theory in general, since research has literally snowballed on the external factors which impact organisational strategy, behaviour and performance. It can be argued that Advancement structures, through the lens of this theory, exist within a network of interdependencies composed of multiple interest groups: ... “no organization is completely self-contained or in complete control of the conditions of its own existence. Because org import resources from their environments, they depend on their environments. Survival comes when the organisation adjusts to, and copes with, its environment, not only when it makes efficient internal adjustments” [4]. This takes us to the heart of the matter here, when one considers that universities are dependent on multiple external resources and that advancement is at the nexus of external intersection and impact. It is no coincidence that strategic PESTEL analysis [5] are so helpful in this sector of work, as a framework which systematically categorises external factors into 6 main types, offering insight into opportunities and threats. These 6 categories are political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors. The relevance for IA is that these structures are externally facing as a matter of course. Yes, we do have to know what is happening inside the institution, but our focus of interaction is externals: we are inward looking but outward facing. RDT, in this application, foregrounds the fact that resources and relationships are externally-sourced; access to them, their

optimization and stewardship, have both quantitative and qualitative impact and implications. Key tenets of the RDT [6] are as follows:

- Resource Dependence - organizations depend on outside resources beyond their control, such as funding, expertise, materials, and legitimacy. A key driver in terms of strategic planning and decision-making, is securing resources.
- Power and Influence – power dynamics among organizations are influenced by the relative dependence on resources. Those that control a resource needed by others hold more power internally and over the needier organization.
- Strategies for Managing Dependencies - various strategies are used to manage resource dependencies and mitigate risks, including vertical integration, forming alliances and joint ventures, diversifying the resource base, and influencing the environment.
- Environmental Uncertainty and Constraints – these constraints shape organizational behaviour; critical resources may be available or not and organisations have to show agility in adapting to changes in the environment.
- Inter-organizational Relationships - inter-organisational relationships and networks, collaborations and partnerships, need to be sustained and nurtured, and this becomes a critical aspect of securing resources.
- Organizational Autonomy and Survival – survival and sustainability are organisational goals, and enable autonomy, if they manage their resource dependencies and power dynamics well.
- Influence on Strategic Decision-Making – in terms of leadership and strategic management, external resource dependencies can make or break strategic choices and organizational development and structures.

The applicability of RDT to universities in general and advancement structures in particular, is an interesting one and significant, given the South African context and global challenges around the funding of HE, as well as the emphasis on diversifying income streams.

How is Resource Dependence Theory manifest at MUT? While this paper will link theory with practice, the contradictions and complications inherent in the timing (the relatively late introduction of advancement as a structure, compared to many other HEIs), coupled with the fact that it is starkly under-resourced, against the obvious and overwhelming need for the project, confirming the perception that the historically advantaged continue to get more, are difficult to navigate. The glass cliff phenomenon [7] comes to mind in this scenario.

## II. RATIONALE FOR ADVANCEMENT

The past few decades have seen unprecedented global crises in the economy, climate change, political instability, social ills, crime and health, with the COVID-19 pandemic setting the pace for extreme reaction and response. Higher Education has been fraught with challenges and changes that, particularly in South Africa, centre around leadership instability, operations, and funding shortfalls. Here financial resources derive from state subsidies (first-stream income), student fees (second-stream income) and funding from other sources (third stream income). State subsidies are dwindling in proportion to need, and inflation and the devastating impact of years of disadvantage under apartheid and poverty, mean that students are in trouble. Fee income is low and student debt is high. The SA Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has indicated that further budget cuts can be expected and that university tuition fee increases have to be constrained. There is a sense globally that financing higher education needs to be supported by multiple resources, and that the private sector must take on more [8]. Consequently, universities have increasingly turned to third-stream income to mobilise resources for their operations and development [9].

Thus, HEIs are propelled in the direction of third-stream resources because of changing times, uncertainty and unpredictability, with the more recent disruption of COVID-19 being a good example. Environmental uncertainty and constraints shape organisational behaviour; critical resources may be available or not and organisations have to show agility in adapting to changes in the environment. While some resourced HEIs made an almost seamless transition to an online mode of delivery, others battled. Data and devices were not the only resource lacking for many students; there was also the re-alignment of material, assessment, proctoring, and the psychological

adjustment to the new mode, given the continuous hazard of technological glitches. The ASPIHE Report is clear: “Income escalation can also be attributed to universities investing in professional fundraising, alumni relations and support staff. The numbers suggest that the more an institution spends on attracting philanthropic income, the higher such income. It is a reminder of the need for greater professionalisation of Advancement at HEIs if these institutions are to thrive, particularly given the severe fiscal challenges that South Africa faces” [10].

The main assumptions of resource dependence theory surround the impact of environmental constraints, the resources required by the organization and the uncertainties regarding accessibility to these resources, by different organizations. It argues that very few organizations are internally self-sufficient. All face environmental uncertainties. Hence organizations initiate contact with other resource suppliers (or service providers) in order to manage their environmental uncertainties and to meet internal resource needs. This implies the establishment of a relationship, and stewardship of that relationship. In market conditions where the uncertainty of resources and resource concentration is high, the mutual relationships between the producers and suppliers may turn into mutual dependence in time. Organizations tend to increase the level of coordination and control process. Therefore, they seek opportunities to manage dependence by reducing uncertainties; they learn to manage dependencies consciously and seek ways to link up with other organizations. Some environmental uncertainties are:

- Huge demographic shifts in society, economy, environment and in Higher Education
- Changes to the eco-system (endangered planet and species)
- The fourth industrial revolution
- Decreasing resources of all kinds, including government subsidy and grants
- The growing needs of students and university, as different ways of doing have become imperative
- Student protests and increasing fee structures, with lower staff pay and higher inflation
- The burden of unpaid fees
- The need to build healthy financial reserves towards self-sustenance

According to Hassanien [11], recent years have brought enormous changes in all aspects of life, and universities all over the world have been confronted by dramatic changes in their external and internal environments such as decreasing financial support, rapid technological advances, changing demographics and outdated academic programs. Therefore, many universities have engaged in strategic planning as a means to “make beneficial, strategic changes … to adapt to the rapidly shifting environment” [12]. The strategic process in university is quite different from that in business. In addition, the models used for strategic planning in universities are different to some extent from those used in business. In other words, universities have been adjusting the “Business Strategy Model” to the higher education context. Some models for strategic analysis, like SWOT analysis, could be used successfully in both. On the other hand, some models, like the BCG Matrix [13], are unique for business strategic analysis. Third-stream Income is defined by Regal [14] as “…all income derived from sources other than public subsidies and student fees for tuition or accommodation.” The long-standing Duncan Report [15], affirms this, as “all income derived from sources other than public subsidies ('first stream income') and tuition and other student fees ('second stream income')”. The Duncan Report [16] asserts that Third-stream Income typically comprises the following:

- contract or sponsored research funding ('contract income')
- entrepreneurial and commercial income ('contract', 'sales of services' or 'other income')
- philanthropic funding ('donations and gifts')
- internal financing ('interest/dividends' and 'income from investments')
- long- and short-term financing
- other private income

In short, third stream has to do with the interactions that occur between universities and society [17]. South African Universities have thus embarked on establishing mechanisms to diversify income streams and bring in third-stream income, to remain going concerns. Universities of Technology in SA have historically been less successful in this quest, and the need to set up systems to activate this key resource is compelling. The historically advantaged

continue to thrive in this arena, but cuts in resources compel all, which are contextually, culturally and programmatically unique, with a different academic identity, to explore diverse income streams. All need to devise individualised plans for development and sustainability. All 26 HEIs are under financial pressure. MUT is no exception. Uncertainties generated by an institution being placed under administration, no doubt impact its functionality, stability and reputation, bringing a crisis in staff morale as well.

RDT is vital for the annual strategic and performance planning at universities, where external partnerships can assist with resource dependency. It emphasises the importance of diversifying income streams to reduce dependence on state funding [18]. By expanding third-stream income through partnerships and enterprise development, HEIs like MUT can mitigate their vulnerability to fluctuating government subsidies and student fees, alongside the huge student debt.

### **Sources of Third-Stream Income**

Four sources of potential Third-stream Income in South Africa are generally considered most viable [19], and resonate with global trends:

- Fundraising or Development Office
- Endowment and Reserves Management
- Contract Research
- Commercialisation of Research (i.e. technology transfer mostly flowing from a sound foundation or well-established research programme).

These, it is argued, will have the greatest impact in South Africa, since:

- They are also supported by the South African government through the Departments of Higher Education and Science & Technology;
- They are sustainable sources for academic institutions;
- They are relatively easy to tap into;
- The process of tapping into these sources fits in with the financial systems and procedures of a university (supports its missions, visions and objectives), and
- They provide lower risk in terms of financial investments or potential fraud.

HEIs foreground different courses of action (e.g. short courses, Campus Commercial Ventures, academic consultation, etc.), but most include these sources. For Barker [20], endowment is a major source of Third-stream Income generation, and this is evidenced in the US, where hundreds of endowments exist at individual institutions. These constitute the permanent funds of a non-profit institution, consisting of cash, securities or property. Only the income from interest on such endowments is accessed to help finance ongoing operations and strategic development projects of the institution. Barker [21] asserts that success with endowments is impacted by:

- Leadership by University Vice-Chancellors, Council members and Board (or equivalent)
- An appropriate spending policy
- Qualified investment staff with adequate resources (or Fund Managers)
- Governance structure, and
- A development or fundraising office

Alumni also serve as resources, and can be seen to both donate cash and resources (time, expertise, tools, opportunities) which champion the cause of the university. As the largest constituency, usually (at MUT there are approximately 45 000 alumni), they are a resource to be engaged with directly and deeply. Overall, the importance of strategic decision-making by leadership is argued [22]: asset allocation and the provision of resources (or lack thereof) and accessing external resource dependencies can make or break strategic choices and organisational development and structures.

### **Mission, structure and ethos of Advancement**

The mission of advancement structures homes in on the sourcing of resources for the development of the institution, which contributes to its financial sustainability. However, in terms of the actual organisational structures, there are variations on a theme, with mission and structure intersecting in different ways and influenced

by several factors: the historical standing of the institution and its type, shape and size; legacy practices which drive and determine performance; internal understandings and adoption (let alone prioritisation) of advancement; support structures and the resources available to effect the mission, amongst others. In SA, this is embedded in the context of the pre-democracy era, with historically white HEIs receiving more resources and being able to cultivate better relationships with donors across the giving spectrum, attaining tangible results in advancing the institution, followed by good stewardship functions. Alumni in some HEIs therefore give as a matter of course, and regularly, very much like the United States model, where alumni giving is not only relied upon, but the largest giving sector and responsible for the most significant developments. The type of institution is of relevance too: today in SA there are 26 HEIs: traditional universities (11), which are academic in focus; universities of technology (6), which are more vocational, and comprehensive universities (9), which offer a combination of both types of qualification, all with unique niche areas, priorities and organisational structures.

Indeed, advancement structures are known to be “different” from traditional academic and support enterprises, and for this reason, are catered and planned for poorly. They may be an affiliate to the university – as a Trust, Foundation or NPO - governed by a Board of Trustees and a Trust Deed; integrated into the university fully, or a combination of both, where personnel are on the university system but paid by the affiliate structure. They find themselves in the gap between academic and business/corporate, public and private sector: they require human resources who know both the university and the private sector environment, who can straddle both, who bridge the gap between sectors and needs and who can engage in and transition between both worlds with ease. Advancement work is both inward and outward-facing, with an emphasis on the latter: practitioners have to have inside knowledge of the institution’s development plan, needs and goals, and while aware of its stresses and challenges, to harness its strengths, in order to market projects and the university brand to prospects. Then they engage directly with external entities – who operate at their own pace, with their own decision-making, approval and reporting mechanisms, and follow through with both internal and external project leaders, so that agreements are crafted, negotiated and signed, projects are managed well, delivered according to the terms, and reported on. They also focus their energies on external stakeholders and partners, from the private sector, industry, partner organisations, community and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), evidencing a multi-pronged approach to attain results that advance the institution.

Internal understandings of what advancement is and does, impact on the resources allocated (human, space and otherwise), the foundations laid (policies, guidelines etc.), the nature and efficiency of support structures and roles (financial administration, bursaries and loans etc.) and approval and reporting structures. The relationship between this function and the goals of the university are not in some cases clearly articulated, with advancement seen as add-on, add-hoc and nice-to-have, while often in contradiction, noting the need for diverse income streams. Further, there is another more complicated and unfortunate phenomenon, when the advancement language spoken is not shared; when some advancement experience comes up against an existing cohort with little or limited conversation around advancement and is met with scepticism: new advancement experts may actually find their credibility and confidence undermined in these contexts. Hence motivations and efforts have to be doubled to achieve any of the objectives which within a context of commonly-shared understanding, are attained more naturally and easily.

Advancement structures in HEIs in SA are varied. Their reporting lines in some cases link them directly to the head of the institution, the Vice-Chancellor or to a Deputy. They could be conceived of as a larger umbrella structure for several related functions, or much smaller, specific units. Historically associated with Fundraising and Development (FRD), the thrust is the attainment of third-stream income from across the giving spectrum. Such units or divisions were resourced with a senior post at Executive Director level (to align with the level of interactions envisaged in the private sector), with key leadership, administrative and development posts such as Directors, Development Managers and Officers; Prospect Researcher; Proposal Writer and Finance Officer. This could be a very lean structure or well-resourced with several Development Managers in different focus areas (individual giving, corporate giving, foundations and trusts etc.). In practice, overlaps occur within the different

key functions, as the teams merge and synergise or re-group, depending on what is a priority delivery in the structure's strategic implementation plan. Also, the tension and demands between strategic and operational levels for the head of the structure are well known and often the gap in the system: here too, there are blurred lines of functioning.

According to Resource Development Theory [23], institutions need to adapt their organisational structures to reduce vulnerability to resource shortages and build resilience through diverse income streams. Different universities' advancement structures are shaped by their historical relationships and dependence on external resources and how they have strategised to manage and sustain those dependencies. For example, a large proportion of third stream income in historically advantaged HEIs is from alumni giving and key benefactors who make annual contributions. A comparison with the experience of historically disadvantaged HEIs, reveals many differences [24], and that is not surprising, given both historical and current contexts. Interestingly, though, we embrace the need for diversity – in admissions, demographics, programme mix, research priorities etc. – yet we expect outcomes to be the same or similar. They cannot be. In contexts such as the United States, donor support implies (yes, it still does) legacy giving and also legacy admissions, as generation after generation remain loyal to a university which in turn honours them.

In line with RDT, the intent in advancement's FRD work is to proactively seek partnerships which mobilise external resources and garner support for the university's development plan and projects. To this end, it activates the advancement cycle advocated by Inyathelo, the South African Institute for Advancement, a resource for HE advancement practice. The cycle [25] involves a multi-layered series of actions which compel engagement with Foundations, trusts, embassies, non-governmental organisations, alumni, individuals and the private sector): prospect research, project identification, proposal crafting, approaches, securing of donations, financial administration, reporting and stewardship, with the beginning of a new cycle.



Figure 1. The Advancement Cycle (Inyathelo, 2016)

This cyclical effort is intended to garner resources, which may include income, equipment, and gifts in kind, which are often formalised through a contract or partnership agreement. Donations could be made to development projects, bursaries or directly to the university's financial coffers, for use at its own discretion. The reporting line would be to the Vice-Chancellor (ideally, but not practicable in many under-resourced HEIs, the chief Fundraiser of the institution). To regularise these efforts, institutions have approved policies on Third-stream Income, Donor recognition and Stewardship, amongst others. As noted in RDT, inter-organisational relationships and networks, collaborations and partnerships, need to be sustained and nurtured, as a critical aspect of securing resources.

#### IV. MUT'S STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Given this need and the challenges of HE funding and resources, MUT recognised the need to proactively mobilise resources by engaging alumni, donors, subscribers and partners who will invest in the University and bolster its resources through a range of initiatives. It thus appointed an Executive to head the structure, in 2022, well after most other HEIs set the trend; it approved an organisational structure as well, constituting four pillars: International Relations, Fundraising and Development, Enterprise Development and Marketing and Communication.

A fully-fledged drive had not been conceptualised before, although full-scale realisation has posed challenges. The initiatives would include the establishment of:

- An International Relations office, with a focus on collaboration (research, project, funding) and international student recruitment, to put MUT on the international map as a higher education option for collaboration, partnership and recruitment;
- A Fundraising and Development office, enabling the solicitation of donations and gifts through the advancement cycle [26] to support the institutional development plan and approved projects and needs, from philanthropic sources and partners;
- An Enterprise Development office with entrepreneurial initiatives such as the offering of short courses and consultancies to meet the needs of industry, government and the private sector, and the upscaling and support of campus commercial ventures, technology transfer and commissioned research, and lastly,
- A review and refinement of the existing Marketing and Communications arm, which plays a significant role in marketing the MUT brand, communications and stakeholder engagement, including schools' liaison.

Perhaps this conceptualisation was too ambitious: the absence of an advancement conversation, let alone the embedding of its philosophy and practice; the lack of provision of human resources for advancement; the level of readiness of the institutional culture for the full scope of IA and its integration; the absence of tools and mindset to address the escalating need to assist in addressing financial shortfalls (a critical demand), despite the need to diversify income streams, pose challenges. Indeed, the factors which impede and enhance progress are the crux of the matter.

#### Challenges and risks

Historically, any third-stream resource at MUT has been gained through an ad hoc approach, resulting in decentralised, fragmented endeavours. Although there are a few pockets of excellence in terms of identified projects and how resources have been attained, with potential for development, several challenges and risks emerged:

- Policy and foundational guiding documents are necessities; the process is time-consuming, but they are crucial for supporting coordinated, professional, intersectional efforts for the enterprise to run smoothly.
- A lack of cohesion internally with scattered and uncoordinated initiatives have led to information and practice that is not consolidated, generating perceptions that impact results, as well as communication; the tendency to work in silos and remain territorial over resources and partners (putting the individual before the institution) as well as misalignment between related structures, are inevitable when efforts are ad hoc.
- The approach tends to be more inward looking and restricted, rather than external, wide, intentional and goal-serving for the institution; one of the key areas of difference is that advancement looks outward, to external resources and opportunities.
- Any existing fundraising and development functions are not optimised upon through proper training, job titles and affiliation to relevant bodies that provide support to fundraising and development offices.
- The very resource being sought, third stream income, is needed for the structure and its drive. This includes set-up costs ("to bring in money you need to spend money"); human resources and the revolving door syndrome in HR structures, where getting to the next level or effecting action is almost an impossibility; the tools needed (sophisticated software and access) and - in this sphere – financial administration and planning. The systems for this enterprise, which occupies the space between sectors e.g. between academic and corporate, to put it

simplistically, and the nature of its activities (making approaches in formal and informal setting, hosting of events, publications, community engagement, stewardship etc.), demand a different approach than either the purely academic or administrative.

- The need for an endowment is emphatic: this would fund certain advancement initiatives and make for some degree of sustainability (if established when the University was established, 45 years ago, the interest on investment would be significant) e.g. an alumni bursary fund.
- The need for dedicated teams for the different pillars of advancement e.g. Alumni Relations, Fundraising and Development, Enterprise Development.
- An institutional culture that is not resistant to change and change management is important, with the agility to adapt to many different contexts and needs as individuals, while pulling together as a team; alongside this, a pre-occupation with historical issues (of unresolved conflict, non-realisation of recommendations made for institutional progress and disadvantage) can be unhealthy.
- There needs to be wider and deeper reach into community, by optimising our location; the fact that we are the only university located in a township in SA (Umlazi), with potential community linkages and partnerships/collaborations, named after a Founder, is a unique strength. We sit in the cradle of history, transformation and legacy.

There are other factors which, as may be expected, impact the work of advancement in general: institutional reputation and stability in leadership, with an overt show of good governance; national crises which harm reputation and investment in the country; economic trends and downturns; internal crises which impact reputation; decline in interest from subscribers in initiatives and projects; poor delivery and project management; a compromised database, and national student and HE debacles and protests. One can add to the list: the range and quality of programme offerings, performance management, fit-for-purpose reviews, re-engineering, restructuring, the dynamics of mergers, and turnaround strategies.

From the perspective of RDT, the power and politics inherent in any organisation, include internal knowledge of who has power, who is more powerful than others, and who gets things done [27]. It points to why MUT's fragmented efforts exacerbate its resource dependencies, and how an integrated advancement structure could reduce these vulnerabilities. Hillman, Withers and Collins [28], who review RDT, focus on the measures it proposes to minimize environmental dependences, namely, mergers/vertical integration, joint ventures and other interorganisational relationships, boards of directors, political action, and executive succession.

### **Refining and streamlining**

In order to give traction to the resource mobilisation role of IA at MUT, what followed was a strategic refining and streamlining of functions and structure (as per RDT's emphasis on strategic decision-making), with the established arm of Marketing and Communications absorbing International Relations, and Advancement taking over Alumni Relations along with Fundraising and Development, and Enterprise Development. This represents the intricate balance needed to both engage and intersect and sharpen the focus simultaneously. Surveying the landscape at MUT, and what MUT is and strives to be, and considering what is do-able given resources, it was deemed to be a useful and strategic re-structuring. A few horizontal transfers of human resources gave traction to this through literal re-grouping. With the lens of advancement now firmly retrained on resource mobilisation, the implementation strategy unpacked three direct resource mobilisation initiatives as the most likely to elicit positive results:

- Project based solicitation (Institutional Development Plan, Project Portfolio, Case for Support)
- Enterprise Development with regard to short courses and consultancies, and
- Accessing the large alumni constituency as key resources

These three initiatives, based on the three pillars, incorporate and imply several complex layers of planning, research and implementation, for hybrid modes of operation, in terms of what they mean, what personnel are needed, what tools are essential, what support systems needed to be set up, what the goals are and what potential they have to deliver.

FRD is identified in the literature on third-stream resource mobilisation as being most viable and less likely to incur risk in HEIs, but Enterprise Development is usually a separate entity. The intersection is that it is intended as a vehicle to offer non-credit bearing short courses to as wide an audience as possible, to generate income. It also thus requires the facilitation and direct involvement of all academic and support structures, and illustrates that these resource mobilisation initiatives not fall under the ambit of Institutional Advancement alone. They are, in principle, the responsibility of ALL, a campus-wide effort: the academic sector, to champion and enable the activities that can be not just quick wins, but long-term development projects, the support sector to provide the efficient mechanisms for its successful engagement with external stakeholders in industry, government, corporates, sister institutions and foundations and trusts, along with high net-worth individuals, and a governance structure which leads and supports the enterprise, enabling it to survive and thrive. Thus, alongside specific resource mobilisation initiatives from the IA structure, it is essential that the entire university takes ownership of advancement which runs parallel to other transformation and turnaround strategies in which we have been active participants; other initiatives such as the internationalisation of the University through international recruitment, research collaborations, knowledge-sharing, staff exchanges and the upscaling of the standards of practice and delivery at every level, academic and administrative, bear reference.

The over-arching role of Institutional Advancement is to proactively seek opportunities, facilitate collaboration, broker partnerships and sustain relationships through stewardship. It also seeks to enhance the discourse on and about ourselves to a more progressive and positive one (to increase brand equity and positioning as well). Various strategies are used to manage resource dependencies and mitigate risks, including vertical integration, forming alliances and joint ventures, diversifying the resource base, and influencing the environment. Given resource constraints, the institution will have to be strategic in identifying opportunities all round, and using the intersections available optimally. It is in this arena that intersections are in fact imperative, as experience shows that collaboration achieves more.

Through an implementation strategy which emphasises specialisation amidst collaboration and a whole-institution approach, aligned with the Strategic Plan and country goals, advancement at MUT has since detailed its approach to introducing, integrating and embedding advancement philosophy and practice. The necessary balance required to pivot between focussed expertise and dedicated performance areas, and the whole spectrum internally as well as externally, is not easy to achieve. Other levels of complexity arise. The use of the term 'resource mobilisation', for example, captures better and more accurately the range of support, gifts, and contributions we may receive, as opposed to third-stream income, which is one of the resources. The inward-outward facing role requires navigation skills, given the completely different management styles of HE and business/the private sector: policies, processes and performance operate on very different metrics. Joining forces for the desired outcome institutionally, is fortunately becoming a standard for all.

## **V. CONCLUSION: INTERNAL CROSS-CUTTING PARADIGM SHIFTS**

This paper expands further on the nature of the intersections referred to in this arena, with reference to the experience of MUT. At the outset, at MUT, what we need for holistic institutional advancement are paradigm shifts, a change in culture and attitude; fresh thinking, expert resources alongside on-the-ground operations, and the adoption of a consummately professional approach, including:

- Seeing the work around advancement and philanthropic giving and solicitation as a normal, habitual process to institutionalise Advancement philosophy
- Taking responsibility for advancement and resource mobilisation: everyone is a fundraiser! (thus giving traction to the Advancement Cycle)
- Sharing relevant resources and news about opportunities, giving and awards, by profiling projects, project managers and givers
- Offering stewardship to our donors and partners, and acknowledging contributions via an external newsletter

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- Integrating advancement practice into the University's discourse, curricula and planning (institutionalising Advancement practice)

These shifts require CPR (yes, cardiopulmonary resuscitation), to breathe LIFE into Advancement:

- **Culture** shifts – taking ownership positively, playing a role in building goodwill and acting intentionally for progress, forward-facing.
- Shifts in Professional **Practice** – institutionalising the values, systems and work that speak excellence and embrace high performance and delivery, as well as giving back/paying it forward.
- Shifts towards respectful **Relationship-building** internally and externally – co-operating internally and externally, for the good of the institution, going forward, for sustained growth.

All of the above speak to not just DOING differently, but BEING differently: shapeshifting in its positive sense. Bridging the knowing-doing gap, which for Pfeffer and Sutton [29] stresses how fear can prevent acting, and internal competitiveness turns friends into enemies, is extended to is being, in a way that influences institutional culture, commitment and performance. It is aligned to the turnaround, transformative impetus the institution has embarked upon, and supported by its newly appointed Vice-Chancellor. The Institutional Advancement Office aims to set up systems to enable the aforesaid CPR, for transformation, and regarding resource mobilisation and the garnering of philanthropic grants, the solicitation of donations and bequests from a range of local and international donors, including corporates, foundations, trusts, alumni and grant-making partners.

MUT's institutional goals will be served in this endeavour, as all university sectors engage in a collaborative effort. Establishing and deepening relationships with external partners is crucial, ultimately, to enhancing the financial sustainability of the institution. IA also seeks to engage community, higher education networks and partnerships, in ways that can advance common goals. Hence it articulates its vision and mission as follows:

**Vision:** To become an exemplar of institutional advancement practice and a worthy social investment partner

**Mission:** To advance MUT through resource mobilisation, philanthropic partnerships and enterprise, for a sustainable future

### Synergistic Opportunities

There was and still is clearly a need for a comprehensive, collaborative effort towards advancement across MUT, in terms of information dissemination on advancement; to progress, by adopting new platforms and taking new measures in an agile approach to transformation; to appreciate the advantages of cross-cutting intersectoral efforts, while making the right contribution in a given role, and thereby moving away from disaggregated as opposed to centralised and consolidated activities, on many fronts.

It is envisaged that centralising and consolidating all advancement efforts, and setting in motion carefully planned advancement initiatives will, with resources, contribute to realising the goals of development, assist with financial sustainability and help create an enabling environment at MUT, now and in the foreseeable future. We need to prioritise the following, all of which underscore the cross-cutting thrust that must become central to our modus operandi:

- Tapping into funding opportunities across the spectrum to put MUT on the donor radar
- Responding to calls for commissioned research from industry and business
- Developing projects for Faculty and support initiatives, within the advancement cycle approach
- Establishing a brand that is recognised polished, professional and progressive, which will allow MUT to shine at national and international platforms
- Connecting more meaningfully with our giving alumni cohort
- Extending our reach into the burgeoning SMME and other opportunities in Umlazi
- Gaining and sustaining the interest and availability of local partners at all levels (cultural, historic, corporates, private etc.)
- Seeking greater regional, national and international collaboration

- Positioning ourselves more strategically as an institution, in governance structures, in the media, in the HEI landscape and internationally
- Aligning our strengths better with national and global imperatives and goals
- Re-affirming our academic identity and integrating it positively through an empowered and confident narrative
- For advancement, rewriting the script in a way that maximises opportunity and benefit

In advancement, building on previous initiatives, identifying synergies and similar projects and existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), and seeking opportunities with which we resonate, should be par for the course: this is foregrounded in RDT in more than one main tenet. It is imperative in prospect research in the advancement cycle, which in turn determines the next steps. Bilateral agreements and expanded, roll-over plans, are part of the stewardship required in the advancement cycle, leading to another round of support, of sustaining the relationship for mutual gain. This is done respectfully, with due acknowledgement of the terms and conditions that exist. It is the institution that wins overall, and the partners (however many) who benefit in one way or the other.

Externally, advancement as discussed cannot hope to succeed with little or sporadic and superficial engagement with a range of stakeholders. While MUT is still finding its way with corporate and philanthropic donors, with small gains, it is successfully engaging with Sector Education and Training Authorities and high net worth individuals who have pledged their support. The new initiative in the incorporation of Enterprise Development and the delivery of short courses and consultancies, will take on external partners as co-facilitators and subscribers, with both sharing the benefits.

Internally, these intersections are with all other stakeholders: Finance and Financial Aid, Project Leaders, the Registrar's Office and Academics, Students and Student structures, and Research, Cooperative Education and Community Development. In the quest to realise the strategic goals of creating an enabling environment towards financial sustainability, to streamline functions and initiatives while collaborating, to professionalise and optimise outcomes, to share data and resources, the intention is to learn and grow together. While advancement structures leverage support of all forms, it itself needs support. Advancement is indeed a collective effort: it is not just about giving back but giving forward; it is not an appendage on the side, but fully integrated function; it is not just about branding or marketing, it is about multidisciplinary, complex processes which Advancement drives but all need to embrace an adopt; it is not just about the money or the gift, it is about the people, the politics, the struggles and the priorities; it is not just about the gift, it is about mutual benefit and partnership; it is not just about the contract, it is about the relationship, the development and stewardship; it is not just about fixing the gap and funding, it is about sustainable development; it is not just a side hustle and affiliate with its own agenda, it is an intentional plan to secure the future of the university and the next generation, and it all comes with a big dose of emotional intelligence and a willingness to adapt to a different way of doing and being within the context of the university. In our organisations' interactions and negotiations, buffering and bridging strategies are crucial in order to develop and sustain good relationships which bring resources. What is clear is that we need resources to attract and build resources!! The knock-on impact of value creation, value add, and knowledge economy, are all resource and systems dependent.

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