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A Strategic View of a Fashion Design Programme: What Can We Do Better?

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Abstract

This paper is based on a review of Walter Sisulu University documents and the researcher's five-year lecturing experience in the WSU Department of Fashion's Fashion Design Programme (FDP). The paper was inspired by the department's inability to plan, implement, and oversee operational strategies to meet the FDP's missions and vision statements, which negatively impacted the programme's portability and cost. I found that academic staff were unable to further their qualifications or produce research despite being given eight hours per week to spend on research or qualification development. The WSU FDP also overspends the money in the students' materials accounts. The FDP has too many subjects, negatively affecting its graduation rates since 2008. I further found that the introduction of computer-aided design as a teaching and learning strategy would cut Creative Design II & III and Technical Drawing II & III expenditure by R175 022 compared to the 2015 costs. The FDP bought machinery in 2009 that was costly for the university and yet remains unused due to space and power limitations. The FDP could financially contribute more meaningfully to WSU's stability and viability if the FDP were offered a spacious building and could develop and implement an extended programme. I conclude this paper by making recommendations for how WSU can improve the FDP, meet the FDP's mission and vision statements, and strengthen its viability.

Keywords: Fashion department, curriculum review, CAD, PhD, academic strategic management and academic skills shortage

1. Introduction

Named after the iconic freedom fighter Walter Sisulu, Walter Sisulu University (WSU) is in its nineteenth year since the implementation of mergers in 2004 (WSU.ac.za, sec. 2014 was a significant year). The university has campuses over 1000km (So What is Different Now, 2014, p. 1). Figure 1 indicates that WSU campuses are in Queenstown, Mthatha, Butterworth, and East London. WSU serves a student population of about 26,700 (The Turnaround Framework Progressing, 2013, p. 4). WSU has 175 accredited programmes with an academic staff complement of about 2,500 (The Turnaround Framework Progressing, 2013, p. 4). WSU's most successful department is arguably the Faculty of Health Sciences, with many innovative programmes (Cezula, 2015a and Cezula, 2015b). Despite the 2,500 academic staff, WSU is ranked 130 on the 2015 African University and higher

institutions rankings (http://ranking.journalsconsortium.org).

Figure 1: Walter Sisulu University (WSU) campuses (McLaren & Mbatha, 2013)

These programmes are made possible by a R1 billion annual budget (Infrastructure and Building Projects Underway at Walter Sisulu University, 2013a, p. 4). However, the budget has proven insufficient to cover the operations of WSU, resulting in the university being put under administration. Figure 2 provides graduation statistics covering seven years of WSU graduations between 2008 and 2014.
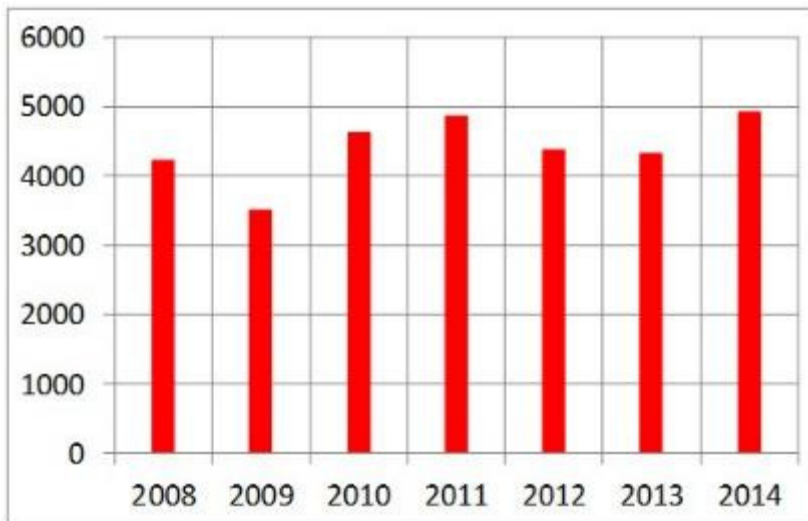
Figure 2: Walter Sisulu University (WSU) 2008 to 2014 graduation statistics[1]

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[1] *Graduations stats sourced from Pulse internal newsletters.*

In light of Figure 2, WSU achieved its best graduation year in 2011, and 2009 was WSU's poorest graduation year. WSU averages an estimated 4,000 graduates per year. WSU experienced a constant decline in graduation output after the university declared bankruptcy (2011). While 2014 reflects an increase since 2011, the increase still falls short of the 2011 figures. However, the upward trajectory is encouraging and shows signs of the university turning around.

2. Walter Sisulu University Fashion Design Programme

WSU is one of the two higher education institutions offering a national diploma in fashion design in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The WSU FDP consists of two delivery sites (Ibika and Cambridge). The merger of a process characterised the FDP's formation as per the South African government's higher education reforms (Badsha & Cloete, 2011, p. 14). This saw the fashion department of Border Technikon merging with Eastern Cape Technikon in 2005.

This study will be based on the FDP at the Cambridge site. The FDP was home to about 95 students in 2015. In 2015, the Department of Fashion underwent another reform as WSU redesigned itself to meet the university's stability obligations efficiently. This redesign saw the Department of Fashion and the Department of Fine Art merge to form the Department of Visual Arts. While the Department of Visual Arts is yet to develop a clear operational plan as to how it operates as a department, the content of this paper will undoubtedly be a point of discussion for the Department of Visual Arts as it reviews the FDP.

The word strategy comes from the Greek word *strategia*, which means 'office of the general' (Robert, 1998, p. 2). Mbatha (2014, p. 16) advises that "strategy is a set or a group of actions that an organisation would take to best achieve their mission and vision statements". The faculty's prospectus (2013, p. 40) states that the FDP's vision is to "develop students with the skills and knowledge to be entrepreneurs in their communities and to become professionals in the fashion industry with pride in their work".

The following selected FDP's missions are detailed and implicated in this study (WSU Faculty Prospectus, 2013, p. 40):
   i.   Developing and maintaining a relevant programme with a good balance between theory and practice
   ii. Providing the best affordable teaching to facilitate quality learning for students
   iii. Creating maximum opportunities for staff to grow and develop students' potential
   iv. Ensuring that facilities and support services in the department are of an acceptable standard
   v.   Developing and maintaining an entrepreneurial approach in the department and providing students with entrepreneurial skills to enable them to create their own employment.

In its pursuit of the vision mentioned above and selected mission statements, has the FDP been strategically effective? Are there areas of improvement that can facilitate the FDP to strengthen achieving its vision and missions? Furthermore, the FDP will reach its accreditation expiry date in 2016. Therefore, this paper comes at an opportune time when the FDP has to review its programme for SAQA accreditation (SAQA.com, sec National Diploma: Fashion, n.d). The paper also comes when WSU strives to improve fiscal throughput and a research position while recovering from bankruptcy. WSU's bankruptcy led to Prof Lourens van Standen being appointed administrator (RSA, 2011, p. 2). Since 2011, WSU has been refining its operations to achieve a lean teaching and learning machine fueled by its mission and vision statements. The Draft Turnaround Framework Released (2012) article states that WSU prioritised eight projects to rescue the university. In an interview, the new Chief Financial Officer, Brigid Mosola, stated that she would like to strengthen internal financial controls (Cazula, 2015c). This paper seeks to contribute further to a positive rounded-out WSU by increasing the strategic effectiveness of FDP.

In this paper, I briefly study the effectiveness of the 2007 to 2021 FDP curriculum against its graduate rates between 2005 and 2014 (the old and new programme's graduation). I also seek to address students' daily claims that they have too many subjects to do and that their timetable does

not allow any space for project executions. I will also examine the financial impact of offering two technological subjects versus the current manual approach. The provision of technology training is also linked to the FDP's quality and portability. The human resource strengths and weaknesses were also studied with the FDP's physical resources. This will lead me to identify financial wastes and opportunities for the FDP to contribute more meaningfully to WSU's fiscal recovery and stability.

3. Methodological Approach

I took an explorative approach when writing this paper because previous studies covering the range of strategic points covered in this paper are almost nonexistent (Neville, 2007, p. 2). Since this paper compared the cost-effectiveness of offering Creative Design and Technical Drawings manually and technologically, it also assumed descriptive characteristics (White, 2005, p. 98). Lastly, this study also applied an analytical approach to analyse the FDP's strategic points as defined by the paper (Neville, 2007, p. 2). University documents and relevant literature were used to supplement my observations. Through my previous positions (Programme Coordinator and Site Head of Department) and studies, I believe I have the academic expertise to author this paper. Various FDP staff were required to provide me with documents related to this study. In areas dealing with activities that happened before my working period in the department (before 2010), I occasionally asked staff members who were there to verify the information. The head of the Department of Visual Arts was also consulted regarding budget-related information. The gathered information was translated into tables and graphs to emphasise strategic points central to this paper. This account of the research process highlights various steps taken to ensure the validity, trustworthiness, and reliability of the findings of this study.

3.1 Findings and discussions

The key strategic areas the FDP could improve were found through analysing the departmental documents, WSU websites, and prospectus. These findings are reported under the following headings: the Fashion Design Programme qualification mix, physical, human, and fiscal resources. Tables and graphs were also used to make sense of the findings. Recommendations addressing the headings will follow the findings and discussions.

3.2 Fashion Design Programme qualification mix

The FDP was last accredited by the South African Quality Authorities (SAQA) for the period 2005 to 2016 (SAQA.com, sec. National Diploma: Fashion, n.d). SAQA stated that the department should offer a relevant and responsive programme to the needs of the community. Table 1 highlights the FDPs' strategy to achieve the programme objectives in pursuit of the latter statement. The FDP shown in Table 1 was first implemented in 2007.

Table 1: National Diploma Fashion Design curriculum (FSET prospectus, 2014, p. 46)

	First level	Second level	Third level
Practical subjects	Pattern Technology	Pattern Technology	Pattern Technology
	x	Pattern Grading	Pattern Grading
	x	Computer-Aided Design	Computer-Aided Design
	Garment Technology	Garment Technology	Garment Technology
	Creative Design	Creative Design	Creative Design
	Technical Drawing	Technical Drawing	Technical Drawing
	Drawing & Illustration	Drawing & Illustration	Drawing and Illustration
	Life Drawing	x	x
	2 and 3 Dimensional Studies	2 and 3 Dimensional Studies	2 and 3 Dimensional Studies

	First level	**Second level**	**Third level**
Theory subjects	Computer End Use	Computer End Use	x
	Textile	Textile	x
	Clothing Management Technology	Clothing Management Technology	Clothing Management Technology
	History of Fashion	History of Fashion	History of Fashion
	Communication	x	x
	Intro to Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship	x
	x	x	Marketing
	x	x	Professional Skills
	Total: 13	**Total: 13**	**Total: 12**

Table 1 shows that the FDP had 13 subjects for both the first and second levels and 12 for the third. In my experience, since 2010, students complained that they could not cope with the number of projects they were expected to do. Figure 3 highlights the Department of Fashion's graduation statistics between 2005 and 2014. Figure 3 shows that between 2005 and 2007, the FDP had good graduation figures. However, there is a consistent decline in graduation figures since 2008. This decline began after the implementation of the new programme (see Table 2). The relationship between the FDP's graduation figures and the curriculum has proven to be negative. It also provides substance for the students' view that the WSU FDP has too many subjects, making it hard for them to cope.
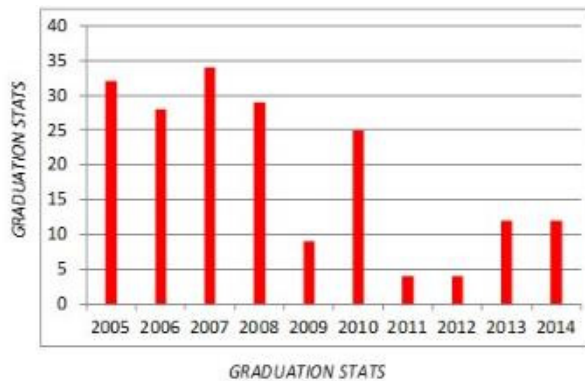

Figure 3: Graduation statistics[2]

The current window cycle for recurricularisation presents the FDP with an opportunity to develop a more efficient and effective strategy. This recurricularisation will require a review of its physical, human, and fiscal resources critical to an efficient programme. This review will be followed by recommendations from the researchers on how the WSU FDP could turn the situation around, thus contributing to WSU's overall well-being.

3.3   Physical resources

According to the SAQA requirements for the WSU fashion design curriculum stated above, technology forms a critical part of its teaching and learning (SAQA.com, sec National Diploma: Fashion, n.d). Due to the importance of technology, the WSU FDP spent approximately R2 million purchasing modern apparel machines to achieve the requirements of the SAQA. These machines were purchased with clear strategic plans regarding how the machines would assist the FDP in

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[2] *These stats are sourced from the WSU faculty office responsible for graduation verifications.*

improving the quality of teaching and learning, portability of the programme, quality of the graduates' output, and the achievement of the mission and vision statements of the department. However, there were some strategic flaws. These flaws included the lack of space for the machinery, the building's unsuitability for housing a heavy industrial embroidery machine, and the lack of electrical capacity to run the machinery. As a result, the WSU FDP is yet to use most of the specialised machines. This flaw highlights a strategic failure by the programme and the institution to use its R3.5 million investment. As a result, the absence of these resources weakens the WSU FDP's quality of apparel competitiveness.

Table 2: Fashion production machines

FDP machinery	
1. Double chain stitching machine	1
2. Bar tacking machine	2
3. Overlocker machine	10
4. Straight stitching machine	73
5. Button attaching machine	2
6. Boiler ironing	3
7. Vacuum ironing	4
8. Fusing machine	2
9. Steaming machine	2

The FDP failed to upgrade its computers for years before the university was declared bankrupt. This failure continued after 2011 despite budgeting for new computers. The financial situation could not allow such a purchase. Since the 2012 plan to improve teaching and learning technology and equipment, the FDP revamped its computer lab in 2015 (Draft Turnaround Framework Released, 2012, p. 2). While this improves the FDP's quality and portability, the availability of skills to take full advantage of these computers is in question.

3.4   *Human resources*

The WSU Department of Fashion has 11 staff members, a machine mechanic, and a fashion technician. The FDP shares an academic secretary with many other programmes as part of the Department of Fine Arts. Figure 4 details the qualifications of eight fashion design programme's academic staff.
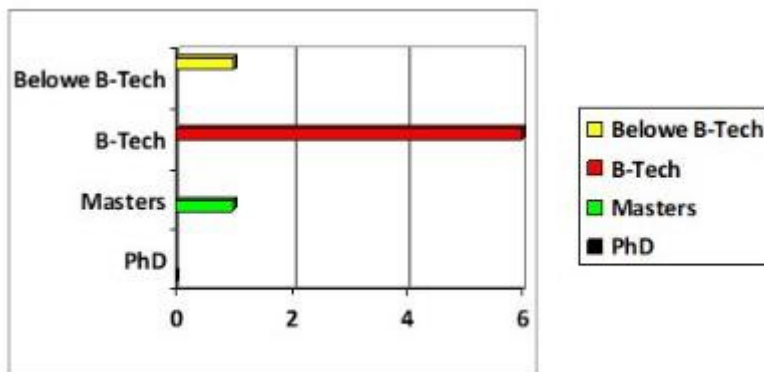
Figure 4: Fashion Design Programme's academic staff

The WSU Department of Fashion is still working on having an academic staff member with a PhD. Most staff members are currently engaged in their postgraduate studies. However, this is a trend in South African universities with fashion departments. Mbatha (2017) states that only 6.6% of South African fashion department academic staff members have doctoral degrees, 39.3% have master's degrees, and 54.1% have no master's degrees (they have BTechs and below BTech). The South African Department of Fashion Design's qualification trend is similar to the WSU FDP qualification profile. This lack of qualifications highlights a general oversight of qualification improvements within South African fashion departments.

With reference to WSU, Sotshangane (2013, p. 65) reports that WSU academics are of the view that they do not have enough time to do research. However, the WSU policy on workload advises that academic staff members should have 12 hours per week dedicated to research (WSU Academic Staff Workload Policy, 2009, p. 7). This policy indicates that these 12 hours per week amount to 500 hours per year. In light of the above, Sotshangane's findings suggest that WSU employees have workloads inconsistent with university policy. In 1998, the FDP developed a strategy of allocating eight hours (one day) per week for each academic staff member to pursue postgraduate studies or research production. This strategy aligns with the FDP's mission to create opportunities for staff to grow and develop their potential. This day is known as Research Day. This weekly day gives 336 hours to each academic staff member in the WSU FDP to pursue postgraduate studies or research production. Since these hours are below the policy-stated hours, one would expect staff to finish their postgraduate studies within five to ten years. However, only one staff member improved his qualification within five years. Most staff members have not improved their qualifications despite 17 years of research days. Since introducing this strategy in 1998, the WSU FDP has produced no doctoral graduates and one master's graduate. This lack of qualification improvement highlights the FDP's failure to fulfil its mission for staff to pursue postgraduate studies and research production. This situation highlights a strategic failure by the FDP to execute its qualification and research production strategy.

The WSU FDP currently has academic expertise in its core subjects (practical). However, the expertise is not at the cutting edge of its discipline. The lack of skills development opportunities has negatively affected the FDP due to the university's bankrupt status since 2011 and human resource's inability to spend the skills development levy strategically, among other examples. In 2011 and 2013, human resources requested that all academic staff members indicate their skills needs to satisfy these needs. In both cases, human resources failed to act on the skills needs of the FDP's academics, among other staff members. This failure to provide for skills needs has seen academic expertise being outdated regarding the envisaged programme outcomes detailed on the SAQA website. This outdatedness has seen the FDP produce graduates unable to champion the vision and mission of its programme.

Kobe (2015) advises that universities increasingly adopt information technology (IT) to improve the apparel manufacturing industry with technological developments. These developments saw the introduction of computer-aided design (CAD)[3] being widely adopted by the apparel manufacturing industry. For the university's graduates to be employable in the apparel manufacturing industry, universities continuously upgrade to CAD. The following four subjects are generally offered using CAD in most South African universities' fashion departments:

   i.   Pattern Technology
  ii.   Pattern Grading Technology
 iii.   Creative Design
 iv.   Technical Drawing.

Through its CAD subject, the WSU FDP only offers Pattern Technology at a basic level. As a result, students never produce garments with patterns made during the CAD subject. In addition,

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[3] *"Computer-aided design (CAD) is an electronic tool that enables quick and accurate drawing with the use of computer"* [10].

Pattern Grading Technology, Technical Drawings, and Creative Design are currently not yet offered using technological software. The fiscal cost of not offering these Creative Design and Technical Drawing subjects using CAD is discussed below, among other operations negatively affecting the budget.

3.5 Fiscal resources

The FDP had an average of R1.2 million set aside to purchase student materials critical for teaching and learning in its annual operations budget. This amount is charged additionally to the students' fees. The researchers believe that the trips taken to Durban in KwaZulu-Natal to purchase materials related to garment construction are no longer efficient for the FDP and WSU. The tables are used as a cost analysis on the impact of the trips to the FDP and WSU to support my view. The costs for this trip are charged on to the third-year garment students through student fees.

The materials trip costs are divided as follows:
- R3 000 is for transportation, hotel bookings, and lunch and dinner allowance; and
- R3 345 is for the garment construction materials for their final collections.

Lecturers' expenses are included in Table 3 since the expenses are hidden costs associated with the materials trip.

Table 3: Expenditure for the materials trip

Expenditure for the materials trip			
Subject budgeted under	Total number of students	Total for the tour	Total for material consumption
Garment Technology	36	R 3 000	R 3345
Total budgeted		R 108 000	R 120 420
Total spent		R 64 063	R 144 000
Cost centre over or under expenditure		R 43 937	-R23 580
Lecturer's costs for the trip		R 27 925	
FDP's total over or under recovery		-R 7 532	

When looking at the *Total for material consumption* items in Table 3, it indicates that the FDP spent R23 580. When looking at the *Total for tours item*, the FDP spent within its budget limits, resulting in an underspending of R43 937. However, when all costs are taken into consideration (R43 937 − R23 580 – R27 925 = -R7 532), the FDP spent R7 532 more on the materials trip. This highlights that the FDP has to look for other strategies to ensure that its students have the latest garment construction materials to fulfil its mission (Developing and maintaining a relevant programme with a good balance between theory and practice as well as providing the best affordable teaching to facilitate quality learning for students (WSU Faculty prospectus, 2013, p. 40).

3.6 What can we do better?

3.6.1 Research days must be a privilege and not a right

The FDP's strategy of giving every lecturer a Research Day without monitoring and accountability strategies put in place has proven to produce dismal results since its implementation. The researcher recommends that Research Days must be a privilege and not a right if the FDP is to realise its mission and vision. This approach is motivated by the negative use of Research Days and the desire to meaningfully contribute to WSU's recovery. It is the researchers' view that lecturers that require a Research Day must motivate for the day. Their motivation must include targets shared with the research department and human resources for seamless implementation. Research Term Reports (RTR) should be used as an accountability tool to advise the line managers if the programme is

producing postgraduate studies and research production. This report will also inform the research department of the milestones and weaknesses of the university's research strategy. Lecturers that fail to honour their targets despite various interventions will be prohibited from applying for promotions in the following two years. Lecturers who choose not to motivate for their Research Days will end up with workloads representing the programme's strategic positioning. Through this approach, the FDP will have a lean, mean academic machine crucial for improving the WSU's African Research Ranking of 130 (http://ranking.journalsconsortium.org).

3.6.2 *Let there be a new curriculum at the WSU Fashion Design Programme (FDP)*

The following FDP missions guided the researchers in proposing the below curriculum, namely (WSU Faculty Prospectus, 2013, p. 40):
1. Developing and maintaining a relevant programme with a good balance between theory and practice
2. Providing the best affordable teaching to facilitate quality learning for the students
3. Creating maximum opportunities for staff to grow and develop their potential
4. Developing and maintaining an entrepreneurial approach in the department and providing students with entrepreneurial skills to enable them to create their own employment.

4. Foundation level

The programme in Table 4 suggests that the FDP introduces a foundation level. At the foundation level, all the basics will be offered in the Fashion Design course. The foundation level will also allow the programme to prepare its cohort for the road ahead. Communications move from the first level to the foundation level. The principles of business management will be introduced in the foundation programme. Only students who acquired over 50% in high school business studies subjects will be credited for the subjects should they wish to apply for credits. Textiles (as it is known) will move to the foundation level. Computer End Use will also move from the first level to the foundation level. This is to speed up the ability of students to use computers since the FDP will take the technological route. The foundation level will have nine subjects.

Table 4: Walter Sisulu University (WSU) new undergraduate Fashion Design Programme

	Foundation level	First level	Second level	Third level
Practical subjects	Intro Pattern Technology	Pattern Technology	Pattern Technology (CAM)	Pattern Technology (CAM)
	Intro Garment Technology	Garment Technology	Garment Technology	Garment Technology
	Intro Creative Designs	Creative Designs	Creative Design	Creative Design
	Intro Drawing & Illustration	Drawing & Illustration	CAD and CAM programmes	CAD and CAM programmes
Theory subjects	Computer End Use	CAD and CAM Programmes	CAD and CAM programmes	CAD and CAM programmes
	Textiles	Textiles (Texturising & Accessories)	Basic research methodologies (Fashion)	CAD and CAM programmes
	Clothing Management Technology	Clothing Management Technology	Clothing Management Technology	Work Integrated Learning
	History of Fashion	History of Fashion	History of Fashion	History of Fashion (range focused)
	Business management (Com & Principles in BM)	Business management (Retail Management)	Business Management (Sourcing & Buying)	Business management (trade regulations for the clothing industry and company registration)
	Total 9	Total: 9	Total: 8	Total: 7

4.1 First level

At the first level, the FDP will still apply the manual strategy during the Fashion Design course. This strategy will develop the techniques and skills crucial to fashion design. Drawing and Illustration will be integrated with life drawings. Live poses, or figure drawing, will also be introduced at this level. The Fine Art programme within the Department of Visual Arts can also offer these drawing skills. The fashion staff will only focus on the illustration part of the subject. CAD and CAM software will be introduced at this level. This introduction paves the way for second and third years to apply the software as they produce their Creative Design, Technical Drawings, and Pattern Technology. Textiles at this level will focus on Texturising & Accessories, which will replace the 2 and 3-dimensional studies from the old programme. This focus will pave the way for students to apply these skills in their second and third levels to integrate the richness of Eastern Cape art and beading. Lastly, Retail Management will replace Introduction to Entrepreneurship. The first level will have nine subjects, four less than the current curriculum.

4.2 Second level

The Pattern Technology and Creative Design subjects will be offered at the second level using technological software. Written tests should also be integrated as a form of assessment for every model covered under Pattern Technology. In an effort to prepare students for their final range and postgraduate studies, basic research methodologies will also be offered in the second level. Research for range development will also be touched on to equip students for the demanding third-year collection in these subjects. Fashion Sourcing and Fashion Buying subjects will also be offered in the second level to deepen the student's understanding of how the global fashion industry works. The second level will have seven subjects, six less than the current curriculum.

4.3 Third level

The long-overdue Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Programme will be introduced. This programme will allow students to gain practical experience in their field. June holidays are recommended for this experience. The fashion lab technician should administer and assess the WIL Programme. In History of Fashion, students should write a year-long assignment depicting the history of the kinds of trends they will follow when making their range. All referencing methods learned in the second level should be put into practice in the History of Fashion. In the third level, the students produce evidence of their company registrations with the help of two government agencies: the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA). These agencies' contributions should be integrated into the FDP to produce entrepreneurs who contribute to the National Development Plan's (NDP) vision of 2030. In the History of Fashion, the trade regulations and schemes related to fashion and the clothing industry must be offered to students to arm them for the entrepreneurship road ahead. The Durban materials trip for purchasing should be cut from this new programme. Students' fees should be adjusted accordingly. The third level will have six subjects, six less than the current curriculum.

4.4 Aggressively pursue the skills development levy

It is evident from the above discussion that the FDP lacks practical industry-related expertise, modern technological expertise, and massification and diversification expertise. The WSU's human resources department continues to advise the South African Revenue Services that its annual spend is approximately R3 500 (R3 500 x 8 academic staff members = R28 000) per FDP academic staff member. The researchers believe that the FDP must develop a skills-development strategic plan to

assist the programme in accessing funds for its skills-development endeavours. The Centre for Learning and Teaching Development (CLTD) is also available for the FDP's academic staff to increase their academic expertise aggressively. The centre's mission is to "promote excellence in learning and teaching by providing integrated and specialised professional expertise and services for all faculties to improve institutional learning and teaching culture" *(*WSU.ac.za, sec. CTLD overview, n.d*)*. The centre further offers education technology and innovation, and continuous professional development, among other opportunities for the FDP staff. For the FDP to make the technological jump, the Centre for Learning and Teaching Development must be a strategic partner. This partnership will strengthen the FDP's quality and relevancy. The researchers' view is that an increase in research output would be a spinoff from industry skills development.

4.5   It's time to focus on broadening fashion programmes

Mbatha and Mastamet-Mason (2015, p. 4) indicate that the WSU FDP is the only fashion department in the country that offers a single programme, making it closer to the Central University of Technology (CUT). Sotshangane (2013, p. 63) advises that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) accepts that not all universities should be research intensive. However, the WSU's mission and vision demand that its programmes respond to provincial needs, among others. The researchers' view is that the FDP can strengthen its provincial relevancy and the WSU's financial position by developing short programmes. As the number of academic staff members with postgraduate degrees increases, the FDP can establish research-related degrees. In pursuit of these new programmes, Research Days can then be turned into New Programme Development Days (NPDD) within the WSU FDP.

4.6   Suitable building should be pursued

In 2013, the FDP authored a document detailing its space requirements to source a new building (Mbatha, 2013). This document outlined the FDP's space needs and use purposes. The document further outlined how the FDP aims to use the machinery stored away as an incubation centre for fashion (Sepeng, 2010). The new building would provide the high electricity use currently preventing the FDP from using its specialised machinery. The R1.2 million embroidery machine would also facilitate the FDP in developing a third-stream income and putting its investment to good use. The need for a more suitable building to house the FDP remains crucial if the FDP is to improve its own and WSU's financial position.

5.   Conclusions

This paper highlighted the negative impact of the FDP on WSU's financial position as the university tries to stabilise. It is the researcher's view that this trend can be found in other universities' fashion programmes. The negative impact of WSU's human resources' failure to sharpen the swords of its academic staff has also been highlighted. The impact of poor financial management by the FDP, line managers, and the WSU finance department has also been highlighted. This paper shows that while WSU has made strides to improve its financial situation, the FDP still has to improve its financial effectiveness. This paper has also shown how WSU can strengthen its research development and programme development through Research Term Reports (RTR) and New Programme Development Days (NPDD). This paper makes a crucial contribution to developing a more effective and efficient WSU FDP. In an institution recovering from bankruptcy, strategies employed should seek to enhance the viability of the institution. The introduction of the foundation programme also contributes to a financially stronger WSU.

The fashion curriculum is overloaded in such a way that it has negatively impacted its graduates. The skills levels among the fashion department staff complement also limit the

department's ability to review its curriculum and implement curriculum review decisions.

While these findings propose a new and relevant curriculum for the FDP, there is a greater need for more aggressive skills-development strategies to ensure that the proposed curriculum satisfies the FDP's mission and vision statements. The relationship between the FDP and the Centre for Learning and Teaching Development should be strengthened since both parties can better achieve their visions and mission statements through improved relations.

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