

REAP

RURAL EDUCATION ACCESS PROGRAMME

Accessing higher education for rural youth from poor communities



A -8 YEAR PROGRESS REPORT **Jubi Ufml' s by 200-**



Building skills & knowledge
Providing opportunity
Developing a community serving humanity



Student Advisor with REAP Mentors

REAP

Rural Education Access Programme

www.reap.org.za

Tel: 021 696 5500
Fax: 021 696 9572
Address: P O Box 198, Athlone, 7760
35-37 Birdwood Street, Athlone, 7764
Email: reception@reap.org.za

Director: Clairissa Arendse
E-mail: clairissa@reap.org.za

NPO registration no: 015-634
PBO Exemption no: 930 002 334

REAP is an associated body of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference
REAP is in partnership with the National student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

REAP MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

JANUARY TO JUNE 2009

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. STUDENT PROFILE	2
2.1 Numbers	2
2.2 Gender.....	3
2.3 Institutions.....	3
3. STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES.....	3
3.1 Toll Free Counselling and Monitoring.....	3
3.2 Field Trips	3
3.2.1 March Visit	3
3.2.2 May Visit	5
3.2.3 Workshops	5
3.2.4 Liaison with institutional staff and external service providers	6
3.2.5 Budgeting	7
3.2.6 Community Service	7
3.2.7 Student Challenges	7
4. RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING	8
4.1 Interrim Mid Year Results	8
4.2 Conditional Status	9
4.3 Inservice Training Students	9
5. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT	9
5.1 Selection Process	9
5.2 Student Development Programme.....	10
5.3 Mentors Programme	10
5.4 Grade 11 Programme Pilot	11
6. REAP's RESEARCH PROGRAMME	11
6.1 UWC Colloquium	11
6.2 Research Findings	11
7. ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS	12
7.1 Staff Matters	13
7.2 Staff Training	13
7.3 Organisational Development Project	14
7.4 Financial Overview	16
8. CHALLENGES	16
9. CONCLUSION	17
10. ANNEXURE STUDENT STATISTICS	18

1. INTRODUCTION

The first semester of 2009 was a very exciting period for REAP in which the organisation initiated strategies to improve and streamline the REAP programme.

It was also a very busy period for REAP staff to balance the time spent with organisational development processes and student support activities. While the selection process of new students was completed, a major challenge was the slow confirmation of offers of places to study at higher education institutions.

The first year challenge: It appears as if the first year intake of students (in 2009) emerging from the National Senior Certificate (NSC) appears to be differently competent when compared with similar students in previous years. According to academics at Wits University, one of the consequences of the introduction of the NSC has been the restructuring of the Mathematics curriculum which has resulted in areas of the discipline being categorised as optional areas of study, to be taken in Maths paper three. The concern expressed by the academics is that this may have negatively affected the mathematical competence of learners emerging from the NSC system and that this may be reflected in their performance at university studies. Thus, given the fact that an overwhelming number of applicants presented with superior Grade 12 examination results in Mathematics and Physical Science earlier this year, indicates that REAP should be concerned about the first year students performance in Maths and science-based subjects and ensure that students have adequate academic support to assist them overcoming the constraints pertaining to the new curriculum.

As a result of REAP's research "Facilitating success for disadvantaged students undertaken in 2008, the first colloquium was held in May 2009 at UWC. This exciting event, attended by more than 70 stakeholders, placed REAP at the cutting edge of focusing on the challenges and interventions needed to promote the success of disadvantaged rural students.

2. STUDENT PROFILE

2.1 Student Numbers

REAP is currently supporting 340 students, 139 first years and 201 senior students spread across HE Institutions in the 9 provinces. REAP's first year students constitute 41% of REAP's total number of students supported in 2009.

Whilst REAP offered access support to 152 first year students at the start of the 2009 academic year, only 139 students accepted. Thirteen (13) students declined REAP support due to the following reasons:

- 5 students had offers of full cost bursaries
- 2 students decided not to study in 2009
- 2 Mechanical Engineering students could not secure a place for the first semester as the course was already full.
- 1 student opted to study at an FET College

- 2 students accepted Anglo Plats offer of work exposure for one year followed by sponsorship to further their studies at a higher education institution
- 1 student failed to meet REAP during the March and May field trips

2.2 Gender

Whilst REAP ascribes to retain a gender balance with our student intake, the programme is currently supporting 177 males and 163 females.

2.3. Institutions

Similar to 2008, REAP has the highest concentration of students in Gauteng (119/35%) followed by Kwazulu-Natal (70/20%) and the Western Cape (68/20%). The highest intake of new students was in Gauteng with 59 students and in Western Cape with 27 students.

As was reported in 2008, REAP has seen a trend emerging where there is an increased number of students who are opting to study for degree and not diploma courses as was previously the case. Currently, 216 (64%) of REAP students are studying towards degrees, whilst 124 (36%) are doing diploma courses.

REAP still has the following disciplines dominated by males, namely, Engineering

53 males compared with 19 females and Commerce having 39 males & 31 females. The most popular study stream for REAP's students is Commerce.

3. STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES:

3.1. Toll Free Counselling and monitoring.

The students on the REAP programme call in once a month to the REAP Office to discuss their academic and social needs and well being with their student advisor. Their student advisor will then attend to the monthly subsistence allowance, including allowances for books and travel monies which each student receives. In these monthly meetings the Student Advisors explore students' integration at the institution, their academic progress and challenges faced as well as their general wellbeing. In addition to the daily dynamic enquiries received from students, the Student Advisors had an average of 5 to 6 student consultations per day. In an attempt to settle in at their institutional hubs, of the first year students contacted their Student Advisors for support more than the obligatory monthly telephonic consultation. This service along with REAP's three face-to-face student engagements annually formed the core of REAP's student support programme to all of the REAP students.

3.2. FIELD TRIPS

3.2.1. March Visit

The student advisors conducted two field trips to their institutions in March and May respectively.

The purpose of the March trip was to:

- Contract first year students on the REAP programme and renew contracts with senior students.

- Meet with institutional staff members who can be of assistance to REAP students both for academic support and social/counselling needs.
- REAP conducted an academic and life skills audit with each of the REAP students and provided them with feedback on their strengths and development areas. A recurring theme that emerged from the majority of the students was the fact that they needed to develop their study and time management skills.

The student advisors conducted both group and individual sessions during the contracting field trip in March. Interactive group sessions of approximately two hours were conducted with the students at the various higher education (HE) hubs. The student advisors facilitated this session that focussed on general information sharing on the REAP programme, the values and mission of the organisation, the conditions of support as encompassed in the contract students sign with REAP and the contractual responsibilities they need to uphold as REAP students. The group session facilitated much discussion amongst first and senior students. The first years were able to gain important survival strategies/tips and connect with seniors who were either sharing the same accommodation or faculty as them.

During the individual sessions the students shared with their student advisors both their challenges and successes related to their personal lives, academic progress and institutional integration. Although, the students were encouraged to balance their academic and social demands, the advice given was that they needed to prioritise their academics as furthering their education was their primary goal. It was during these sessions that the student's financial needs for 2009 were discussed, their access budgets tailored to meet individual needs and they signed their annual contracts with REAP.

REAP staff learnt the following valuable lessons:

- In order not to create disruption to the academic programme of the students, the ideal time to conduct workshops and individual sessions are over week-ends when students are reasonably available to attend to meet with REAP staff and participate in any of it's programme activities.
- The value of senior students experience in the contracting workshop. The Student Advisors utilised the inputs from senior REAP students at the contracting workshops to practically demonstrate the various facets of the REAP programme.
- Given the intense work load that REAP staff need to cover in the March field trip, the value of having two REAP staff conduct the March field trip cannot be over stated. REAP saw the benefits of having two staff members engage with institutional staff and sharing the responsibilities of meeting and contracting with the each student individually. It minimised the enormity of the task. This action also bodes well for any future internal succession strategies at REAP as most student advisors will have a familiar sense of other institutional hubs they might be requested to attend to in future.

3.2.2. May Visit

In May, all the student advisors travelled with the exception of Tsepo Senoamali (for the Pretoria and Limpopo regions) accompanied by either a senior staff member or an Intern student Advisor. Thus, the huge student caseloads of KZN and Gauteng were shared amongst the student advisors and their Interns. The Interns assisted with meeting the students in their individual sessions. They reviewed the academic progress of the students, addressed their challenges, referred and linked students with the necessary institutional support resources. The Programme Manager, Anthea Nefdt accompanied Charity Bafana, the newly appointed student advisor of Free State. The purpose was to orientate her to the HE institutions, introduce her to REAP's partners at the Financial Aid Office, Student Counselling and to the student cohort in the Free State. Clairissa Arendse accompanied the Assistant Student Advisor for the Eastern Cape, Bongsi Mahlangu where relationships were further forged with both the institutional staff at NMMU and Rhodes University.

Given the academic results of the first term tests, the Student Advisors' May visit to the institutions focused primarily on the students academic progress and preparation for the June examinations. In the individual counselling/support sessions students were advised to seek academic support and tutorial sessions, referred for career assessments to ensure that their choice of study is applicable to their abilities and dealing with the implications of low self esteem due to many first years failing their tests. The student advisor also briefed students about their community service obligation that had to be undertaken during the mid-year vacation.

Student advisors were also able to meet with academic staff at the Commerce and Engineering Faculties to discuss the progress/challenges of the REAP students and familiarise themselves with the academic curriculum of respective streams of study. Student Advisors were further able to collect any outstanding documentation and complete NSFAS Loan Agreement forms.

Lessons learnt from the May field trip:

The timing of the May visit is critical and must be convenient so that it does not impact on the students' final week of lectures prior to the commencement of their June examination.

Student Advisors need to factor in enough time to allow them to meet with institutional staff at faculties to explore solutions to the challenges students face, meet their students individually and administer the NSFAS loans. Thus, future planning might mean that May field trips are extended to an 8 -10 day period.

3.2.3. Workshops

In order to complement REAP's Student Development Plan, the programme team facilitated additional skills training workshops during the March and May field trips.

These workshops promote the holistic development of REAP students as they are able to network with their REAP peers, gain support amongst themselves as students and gain social and lifeskills that will better prepare them for their future roles in society.

With the exception of the Contracting workshop held for all first year students at institutions in the Western Cape during February, REAP has not been able to implement any workshops for this group in the first semester. A workshop on Sexuality, relationships and peer pressure is scheduled for August 2009.

The following workshops were held for REAP students, using external service providers:

Date	Topic	Institution/hub	Service provider
February & March 2009	Contracting Workshop	At all institutions	REAP staff
February 2009	Motivation	University of Pretoria, Tshwane University of Technology and Wits University	Erica Raolane - The Motivation Company
May 2009	Sexuality	University of KwaZulu-Natal (Female students)	Thokozani Poswa - Social Worker at Child Welfare Society, Durban
May 2009	Motivation	Witwatersrand University	Hector Motau – The Motivation Company
May 2009	Work preparation +CV	Rhodes University (Senior Students)	Ronelle Plaatjes, Centre for Teaching and Learning
May 2009	Sexuality & Assertiveness in Relationships	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	Onelle Petersen - Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa

The students reported that the workshops provided:

- them with the opportunity to get to know their REAP peers,
- the facilitation style of the facilitators provided them with the confidence to articulate their needs,
- information and skills around motivation, attitudes, setting goals and planning, sexuality and work preparation (CV development).

The students responded well to the topics and the first year students reported that they were provided with some tools to survive in their new learning environment. The point that rang true for all the first year students was that of a metamorphosis - that their new environment demanded a shift in attitude or mindset. Students contributed their own motivational mantras and also learnt from each other.

3.2.4. Liaison with institutional staff and external service providers

REAP acknowledges that the organisation needs to be knowledgeable and keep abreast of the HE institutional context. The strengthening and extending of our relationships with institutional staff at the various Departments remains key to us delivering a holistic programme of support to our students.

During March and May, the contact with financial aid and student counselling departments yielded the following:

- REAP is able to apply for the payment of private residence accommodation via the NSFAS loan application.
- Accommodation in residences remains limited. REAP students can be assisted with accommodation at the university residences if application is made for them in August of the previous year. The implications of this time frame, means that REAP will need to accelerate the selection process for students to the beginning August of a year in respect of the following year to attain residence accommodation for the applicants. Therefore an early selection process of the REAP programme needs to be considered.

3.2.5. Budgeting and NSFAS Administration

REAP has an annual allocation of NSFAS for R2 million. REAP anticipates that 75 students will require NSFAS loans administered by our organization. REAP plans to submit its final loan applications by end October to ensure that the students fees are settled by end of the year.

3.2.6. Community Service

REAP students undertake to do at least three days of community service per year as a form of pay back for the support that they receive from REAP. Almost 80% of REAP students completed their community service for 2009. The reports that the students have forwarded to REAP reflects the positive impact that these pay back sessions had for them. By far the majority of the students return to their rural villages to spend time with Grade 11 and 12 learners, informing them of how they too can become students at HE institutions, the criteria, about the REAP programme etc. In fact, these students pass on valuable lifeskills to their fellow peers out in their communities. Other students volunteered with community projects involving the aged, disabled and especially working with HIV/AIDS projects especially vulnerable and orphaned children.

3.2.7. Student challenges

- **Time for support workshops:** Students report that it is sometimes difficult for them to attend academic or lifeskills workshops – the times often clash with lectures or tutorials. They also already have a heavy workload and would sometimes rather prepare for tests or do assignments than attend workshops, which may not be essential.
- **School-university transition:** First year students who were used to getting A's and B's at school feel discouraged when they do badly or fail at university. Either the standard of education at schools are too low, marks get inflated, or students are not used to the more independent, self-disciplined and analytical way of studying required at university level. They tend to learn by rote and do not pro-actively seek out information or enquire beyond what is given to them in class.
- **Language:** Most REAP students are studying in their second or third language and find it difficult to fully understand the often complex academic terminology.
- The mentorship programme works well where the mentees are forthcoming in meeting with mentors; but in many cases the mentees do not make contact or do not see this as important. This affects their integration into university life and often has an adverse effect on their marks. Mentors also need to be supervised and held accountable. Mentoring takes time and

competes with the academic workload. It works better if the mentor and mentee are in the same field of study and live in the same residence or area.

- **Attitude towards support:** Student advisors report that a small percentage of the students do not seem to appreciate or recognise the REAP programme or feel accountable to it. They demand payments but when they are asked to send documents, attend meetings or make contact with the advisor, they do not do this. This makes it difficult to give support.
- **Late registration:** The fact that first year students often receive late notice of their acceptance at university results in their missing out on orientation sessions and therefore have difficulty finding their way around campus. Registration processes often take precedence over orientation.
- **Accommodation:** The recruitment and selection of students in January was very stressful as accommodation for students became a priority and there was a race against time to place students at residences or in private accommodation. Late arrival of letters of acceptance by institutions placed further pressure on the student advisors, to organise registration letters and students changing courses on the last minute was problematic.

4. Results and Performance Monitoring :

4.1. Interim Mid Year Results

REAP's interim pass rate: 86% (students who have passed 50% or more of their courses taken)	
Females : 92,5%	Males : 82%
First Years : 81%	Continuing : 92%
University pass rate: 84%	University of Technology : 92%

Of the 338 who wrote mid year examinations:

No	%	Commentary
150	44%	Passed half or more of their courses taken& can proceed with Their studies for the second semester (included are 68 students who wrote tests for their year courses) 78 of 138 first years or 69 of 200 continuing students
141	42%	Passed all of their courses taken 34 first year students, 107 continuing students
45	12%	Failed more than half of their courses 28 first year students , 17 continuing students
4		Doing In service Training
70		Obtained 94 distinctions

- 2 students were withdrawn from the programme in the first semester due to a lack of contact and compliance to REAP conditions of support

REAP's two top mid year achievers who each obtained 4 distinctions. They are:

1. Fullicia Farmer, is a second year Marketing student at CPUT. She passed 4 out of 5 semester courses with distinction.

2. Norman Dau, is a first year Agricultural Management student at TUT who passed 4 out of 5 semester courses with distinction.

4.2. Conditional Status:

At the start of the first semester thirteen (13) students were placed on conditional status as they failed their final examinations in 2008. REAP students are given one opportunity to improve their performance by committing to seek additional academic assistance, tutorial attendance, consultations with academic staff and participating in academic development workshops and counselling. Students sign a commitment to undertake these tasks and understand that REAP will withdraw support if they do not meet REAP's academic requirements. Eight (8) conditional students improved on their academic performance in June, were re-instated and now receive full support; two (2) students were withdrawn due to the fact that they did not improve their academic performance or comply with REAP's requirements. Currently, three students are still pending a final decision.

4.3. In Service Training students

Four (4) students spent the first semester completing their in service training placement.

5. Programme Development

At REAP's annual planning session in December 2008, the primary foci was to further consolidate REAP's Student Development Plan, including the mentorship programme, refining selection process for 2010, identification of programme development areas such as distribution of REAP's research project, the early selection of students for 2010 and the tracking of REAP students.

5.1. Selection Process for 2010

In addition to REAP's core student support activities, REAP reviewed its selection process in April 2009 with the intention to complete the selection of students to the programme earlier and to provide for early registration at the HE institutions. REAP's selection process for 2010 is currently underway. Glenda Glover worked at adapting the selection process that involves both the paper rating of the application forms and data collation for the rating of academic results (English, Home Language and Mathematics) that produces a shortlist of applicants to be interviewed by REAP's volunteers, the regional representatives. Lynette Harding is overseeing the process. REAP distributed 2500 application forms and received over 1000 responses from applicants. A shortlist of 250 applicants to be interviewed during October has been generated.

In 2008, whilst in the throes of selection for 2009, the challenge for the programme team was to balance their time between the confirmation of new

students at team presentations and to attend to the needs of the senior REAP students. The senior students indicated that they were unable to speak to their Student Advisors as they were caught up in meetings around student confirmations. The REAP management team has ensured that this matter is addressed and thus for 2010 selection and confirmation of students, a Selection Committee will be in place so that the programme team is available to address the needs of senior students.

5.2. Student Development Programme (SDP)

In 2008, REAP further refined and formalised the Student Development Programme which aimed to ensure the development of skills via the implementation of a series of activities starting in a student's first year of study and progressing through to the final year of study. REAP hoped to ensure that REAP students would develop both academic and lifeskills to succeed at their studies and upon graduation attain employment. Following the first year of implementation the Student Development Programme, the programme team after consultation with both students and institutional staff reduced the number of workshops students were expected to attend. For 2009 first year students are now expected to gain skills in time management, study skills, skills in reading, writing, examination and assignment preparation whilst senior students focus on work preparation and CV preparation in their final years of study.

5.3 Mentorship Programme

REAP programme staff was able to broker relationships with the institutional staff at their respective institutions to provide REAP mentors with training before the start of the 2009 academic year. The training focussed on the characteristics of mentors, facilitation and presentation skills, referrals that a mentor needs to make when confronted with a student challenge and the debriefing of the mentors.

REAP has 23 mentors at institutions in the Western Cape , Eastern Cape , Gauteng, Free State and Kwazulu Natal. The mentors acted as a peer assistants to REAP's first year students. Their role was to help REAP first year students become familiar with their respective campuses, introduce them to the various services and resources on the campus and also learn about the REAP programme in greater detail.

Reflections on the mentorship programme include:

- The REAP senior students with their unique experience as a rural student were well placed to provide first year REAP students with a very practical, hands on view of REAP, academic expectations and campus life.
- Both first years and mentors seems to have benefitted from the experience, i.e. mentors felt that their leadership abilities were being developed whilst the first years felt that they were able to find their feet in a strange environment with the aid of their mentors.
- REAP mentors need training in both REAP related programme content and from their respective institutions around facilitation and presentation skills, institutional resources, services and facilities.
- The need for REAP to select and provide training to students in the year preceding their stint as the mentors about the content REAP

programme, i.e. the operational processes that REAP students follow with their student advisors, how students access their monthly allowances from REAP, the conditions of support, and the expectations that REAP has of its students. REAP has ensured that the REAP mentors for 2010 would receive their training by REAP staff on the REAP programme content in August 2009.

5.4. Grade 11 Programme Pilot

REAP has not been able to focus attention on its Grade 11 pilot programme aimed at addressing some of the challenges relating to career guidance, study and institutional choices. Progress with this project has been very slow with no significant results to report as yet. REAP held a one day selection planning session that included the exploration of a model for early selection. The outcome of the one day process confirmed for REAP that much more time and thought needs to be spent on the conceptualisation of the programme and that REAP would need additional human resources to implement the process.

6. REAP's RESEARCH PROJECT

After the completion of REAP's research project: "Factors facilitating success for disadvantaged Higher Education students" at the end of 2008, REAP used the report findings to advocate for student access via the implementation of widely distribution of the report to stakeholders, the publication of press articles and a colloquium held at the University of Western Cape in May and another planned at the University of Johannesburg in August.

6.1 UWC colloquium

A colloquium was held at UWC during May 2009 to initiate discussions around the findings of a research study conducted for REAP in 2007/8. The full report on research conducted in 2007/8 on *Factors that facilitate success for disadvantaged higher education students: an investigation into approaches used by REAP, NSFAS and selected higher education students*, is on REAP's website – www.reap.org.za.

The colloquium was jointly organized by the Rural Education Access Programme (REAP) and the Centre for Student Support Services at UWC. The colloquium was intended to summarise key issues arising in the research study, highlight a number of initiatives that have already begun at selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Western Cape and encourage debate on the ways and means of improving institutional responsiveness to disadvantaged students.

6.2. Research findings

REAP provides a package of financial and academic/lifeskills/mentoring support to selected higher education students from impoverished and mainly rural circumstances. Previous studies have suggested that REAP students have some advantage over other disadvantaged students, unrelated to school academic achievement and that their success rate is higher than the average for HEIs. The purpose of the research study was to understand why this was so and to investigate ways of improving on this success. This was not an impact study: the focus of the research was on exploring the experiences of impoverished, rural students in HEIs who gain access to HE through NSFAS loans.

The conclusions, recommendations and suggestions from the study were as follows:

- There is a gap between institutional intention and experienced reality for many students, but especially for disadvantaged, rural students.
- There is a gap between institutional missions and their implementation.
- There is a need for an institutional response – as opposed to isolated, individual responses within institutions - to meet the needs of these students.

Key issues and discussions

Some key issues that emerged from the colloquium were:

- Low-income students are more likely to begin higher education academically under-prepared than those from more affluent backgrounds.
- Beginning higher education with fewer academic resources than their peers, these students are less likely to complete their degree programmes.
- No long-term solution to the problem of retaining and graduating under-prepared low-income students is possible unless institutions find a way to address their holistic experience.
- Student success should be considered as broader than just throughput, such as their ability to make a contribution to the development of the country.
- Mentoring can assist in building on students' strengths and developing a strong identity - something that the REAP programme does.
- Institutional capacity and willingness to change can present obstacles to implementing effective tracking and monitoring systems. At-risk students are an international phenomenon in higher education and there are therefore international examples of sophisticated tracking and monitoring systems.
- Much more research in certain areas is required; a critical mass of research is needed for the sorts of broad changes that are needed to take place.
- Universities need to redefine and expand their core business for broad change to happen.

The colloquium highlighted the importance of implementing holistic strategies to substantially increase the numbers of graduates in higher education. This colloquium is to be followed by others of a similar nature at HEIs in different provinces.

7. ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

A full Board Meeting took place in April 2009. By April 2009, REAP had a full staff complement as the Programme Manager position which was vacant for the last six months of 2008 was filled by Anthea Nefdt who joined REAP in January 2009. During this time Clairissa Arendse, the Director mentored and supported Anthea in her new role of managing the REAP programme team and programme activities.

7.1. Staff Matters

At the beginning of the year, the programme team led by Anthea Nefdt as the programme manager had a full complement of 5 student advisors, a programme assistant and two intern student advisors. By end of February 2009, Lungile Koti vacated the position of student advisor for the Free State. This position was filled by the Programme Assistant, Charity Bafana who had gained valuable learning experience around student development work as she acted as a temporary student advisor for a period of 6 months in the Kwazulu Natal in 2008. Anthea Nefdt, the Programme Manager tendered her resignation at the end of June citing the fact that her ill health impacted on her ability to perform effectively in the demanding, responsible position of Programme Manager.

The Student Advisor for Eastern Cape, Phumla Hobe went on maternity leave in April 2009 and her position is currently being filled by a competent, young graduate, Bongsi Mahlangu.

The average student advisor caseload is 64 students. Currently three student advisors are sharing the Western Cape caseload (68 students) in addition to their provincially based institutions. REAP recognises the challenges posed within the context of our current work arrangement. The ideal for REAP would be to have a dedicated student advisor supporting students in the Western Cape. A further discussion and planning of the way forward will be discussed at REAP's strategic session in November 2009.

In order to manage the administrative tasks associated with the REAP programme, the services of a temporary administrative assistant, Kim Meyer was sourced to provide support to the student advisor team and to the office staff.

7.2 Staff Training and Support

The REAP programme team had the opportunity to attend various training sessions to improve their skills to effectively deliver student support. The team had exposure to two debriefing sessions following the March and May field trips. These essential sessions were presented by a consultant from the Community Development Resource Association and provided the programme team the opportunity to derole from their emotionally taxing face to face engagements with the students on their field trips.

The programme team also had the opportunity to attend a team building and problem solving workshop with their new manager during April where they highlighted their passion for the work that they do as well as the challenges they face in dealing with the day to day demands of the REAP programme.

Intern Programme

The purpose of the internship is to create succession in the organization and to complement the young student advisor team. Two interns, Lethabo Tloubatla and Mpumi Williams, joined REAP at the beginning of 2009 and underwent a structured induction period, with formal training provided by REAP and practical experience gained through accompanying student advisors on field trips. Whilst Lethabo joined Charlene Nel, the student advisor for KZN, Mpumi worked with Kanyisa Diamond, the student advisor for Gauteng.

The approach to the Interns placement at REAP was a developmental one i.e. for the first two months at REAP, they were exposed to learning the REAP programme, the context of the Higher Education Sector and the day to day programmatic activities of a student advisor. The interns received in-house training on a weekly basis that focused on REAP as a programme, the REAP database, student support, referral of students and maintaining student files, conducting field trips, meeting with institutional staff and engaging with students in face to face consultation.

In May, once the REAP trainer felt confident that the intern student advisor would be able to provide student support, each intern student advisor received a caseload of 20 REAP senior students. The interaction between the interns and their students were dynamic. The intern student advisors were on a sharp learning curve as they explored their institutions in Gauteng and Kwazulu Natal, met with key institutional staff at Student Counselling, Financial Aid Unit and Student Accommodation offices to learn about the services offered to students. The interns are also exposed to time management and planning their daily activities, maintaining a monitoring system and writing monthly evaluation reports regarding their learning and development.

Whilst , the theoretical intern training covered all aspects of the work that the student advisor is meant to do, including student loans, institutional support, student backgrounds, the learning process was interactive, with interns doing presentations to the staff and providing fresh viewpoints and opinions.

As a large part of the students advisors' work comprises writing, both interns attended a report writing course. Although their writing skills were already of a high standard, they found the course useful, particularly as it covered how to write more concisely and with a specific audience in mind.

Training of the Student Advisors overseeing the Intern Student Advisors

The supervision of the intern student advisors were implemented by two student advisors, Charlene Nel and Kanyisa Diamond. While the student advisors were enthusiastic about sharing knowledge with the interns, they recognize the need for formal supervisory training. The two student advisors are currently attending supervisory skills training presented over 7 sessions. The training sessions focus on the critical aspects of the supervisory relationship, the developmental approach to supervision, contracting with the individual to be supervised, the tools and techniques of supervision, action planning and dealing with difficult situations in the workplace.

7.3 Organisational Development Project

REAP has initiated a review of its internal organization in order to streamline work, build greater efficiency, free up people for new projects, create career development opportunities for younger staff as well as create a work environment that is stimulating for staff and aligned to students' communication needs. This reflects a transition in REAP's organisational lifecycle that addresses the need for greater formalisation and modernization to make REAP an attractive workplace for young people and create a platform for continued organizational sustainability.

Starting in May 2009, this organisational development process aimed to review and redesign the work processes of the Student Advisory Services, which form the core of REAP's work. The process will continue in the second semester of 2009 and will include the alignment of jobs with jobholders (i.e. staff members) and the identification of career paths and succession planning.

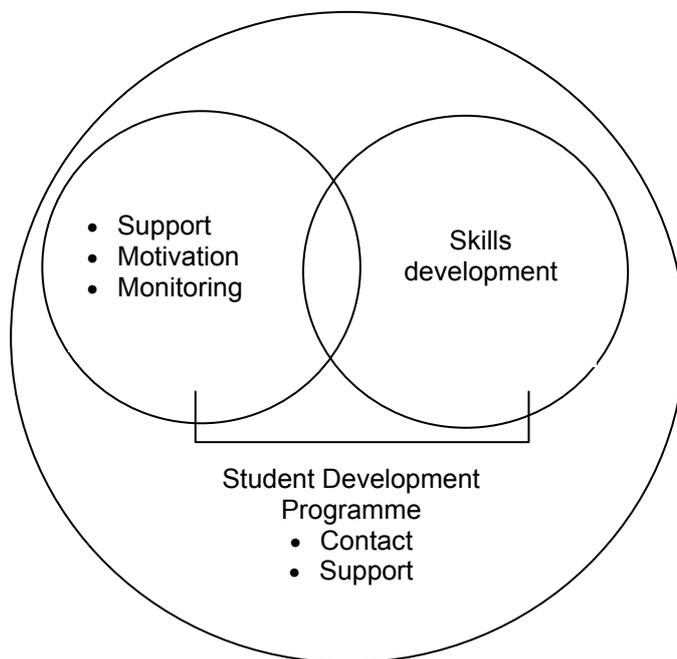
The process kicked off with a week-long Performance Management course, so that all staff had a better appreciation of this concept and so be better prepared to participate in the review and redesign of work processes.

With the assistance of an organisational development consultancy, staff then designed a detailed and thorough visual representation of current ("As Is") work processes. This stage included the drawing up of a classified list of all the activities performed by the team, including the Student Advisors, the Programme Manager and other people in REAP who are involved in the day-to-day work of the department.

The staff defined the essence of the programme team's role as:

- Lots of personal contact with students.
- Monitoring students' progress.
- Knowing the context and situation of students in the institutions.
- Paying money to students and institutions.

The staff also designed the following visual representation of the role of the Student Development Programme



The 'As Is' work model showed powerfully the range and complexity of the work and the large volume of administrative work and report-writing that is built into it. The team has proposed an 80/20 time allocation between support/development and administration, highlighting a key area of desired change: more time for student contact and less time in report writing, planning, scheduled and ad hoc meetings and admin.

The next stage of the organisational development process will involve redesigning the work processes of the Student Advisory Services into a new “To Be” model, based on the difficulties identified in the “As Is” model. The team realises that while the need for change is recognised in REAP, the process of making change is difficult for everyone.

7.4 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The REAP annual financial statements for 2008 have been fairly presented in accordance with the organisations accounting policies.

Despite the global economic recession, REAP is privileged to have the organisation’s funding partners sustain their relationships to ensure continued support for the advancement of education of the rural student. However, given the current prevailing economic climate, REAP in order to sustain the organisation, expenditure remains frugal and on the basis of priority needs.

Since grants are received mainly for student support, REAP seeks to provide individual tailored support to sustain students needs. As stated in previous reports, REAP management is very conscious of the organisation’s current context of under-expenditure, and strategies are currently being explored to address this challenge.

REAP wishes to extend gratitude to the donors and partners who have shown commitment to the objectives of the REAP programme via their continuing support to the financial sustainability of REAP. REAP understands the impact of the global recession on some of our donors and thus we are appreciative that they are still able to support REAP during this period.

8. CHALLENGES

Organisational challenges

The main challenge for the programme team is one of balancing time spent on administration and organisational processes with time spent on student contact and support. REAP has recognised that the early identification, selection and registration of students will significantly reduce bottlenecks at the beginning of the year, and also ease the accommodation problem. In addition, early acceptance will give students more time to be orientated to university life and so ensure a more grounded calmer start to the academic year.

Retention of Staff

Given the demands of the higher education sector, staff retention is of concern to REAP. REAP is currently ensuring that staff development processes is in place to provide additional Student Advisor capacity, build capacity and skills for the REAP team, implement an assessment process of the team in relation to the responsibilities that they are able to manage and work quite independently on providing a qualitative student support service.

9. CONCLUSION

Despite the staffing challenges experienced during this period, REAP continues to strive for excellence both internally, by improving organisational capacity and systems, and externally, through liaison with tertiary institutions to provide the best possible service to students. At the heart of the REAP programme is our dynamic team of student advisors who continue to provide holistic support to the students and are always ready to go that extra mile.

With the programme development and research component moving to join forces with academic institutions and other organisations in the field of educational support, REAP is becoming a powerful source of information for many and an inspiration to organisations wanting to ensure the development of rural communities and the rural students.

REAP students have shown amazing tenacity and a willingness to succeed, despite the challenges that they face. With organisations like REAP, their dreams can be fulfilled and their talents recognised.

During this time of the global economic and educational crises, we greatly appreciate the support and efforts of the donors, the board, the regional representatives and our partners in the Higher Education sector who ensures that REAP is able to provide the access of rural students to higher education each year.

STUDENT STATISTICS

GENDER	NEW	CONTINUING	TOTAL
Male	74	103	177
Female	65	98	163
Total	139	201	340

Institutional Breakdown

PROVINCE	INSTITUTION	TOTAL	NEW		CONTINUING	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
Eastern Cape	Walter Sisulu	1				1
	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Univ	22	2	3	7	10
	Fort Hare Univ	2	0	0	2	0
	Rhodes Univ	12	4	2	4	2
	Total	37	6	5	13	13

Free State	Central Univ of Tech	16	1	3	9	3
	Univ Free State	16	6	3	3	4
	Total	32	7	6	12	7

Gauteng	Wits Univ	29	10	7	7	5
	Univ of Jo'burg	48	18	10	11	9
	Pretoria Univ	13	1	2	5	5
	Tshwane Univ of Tech	28	8	3	11	6
	Vaal Univ of Tech	1			1	
	Total	119	37	22	35	25

Kwazulu Natal	Durban Univ.of Tech	22	2	5	7	8
Check DUT	Mangosutho Tech	3	2	0	1	0
	Univ of Kwazulu Natal	45	10	7	9	19
	Total	70	14	12	17	27

Limpopo	Univ Limpopo	10	2	1	3	4
	Total	10	2	1	3	4

North West	North West Univ	4	0	0	4	0
	Total	4	0	0	4	0

Western Cape	CPUT	21	3	9	3	6
	UCT	18	2	3	9	4
	Univ. Stellenbosch	7	1	1	3	2
	Univ Western Cape	22	2	6	4	10
	Total	68	8	19	19	22

Institutional Hub	University		Univ of Technology		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Bloemfontein	9	7	10	6	32
Cape Town	21	26	6	15	68
Durban	19	26	12	13	70
Eastern Cape	14	12	5	6	37
Gauteng/Pretoria	38	31	34	16	119
Limpopo	5	5	0	0	10
North West	4	0	0	0	4
TOTAL	110	107	67	56	340
	217		123		

Summary table of Streams by Gender and Institution

Stream	University		Univ Tech		Total		Overall
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Arts	2	5	1	-	3	5	8
Built Enviro	3	-	2	4	5	4	9
Business	-	1	1	3	1	4	5
Commerce	26	24	13	7	39	31	70
Education	7	4	1	1	8	5	13
Engineering	21	4	32	15	53	19	72
Humanities	4	14	-	-	4	14	18
Law	8	8	-	-	8	8	16
Management	3	4	8	15	11	19	30
Medical	13	19	1	7	14	26	40
Science	22	24	5	2	27	26	53
Technology	1	-	3	2	4	2	6
Total	110	106	67	56	177	163	340

Study Streams grouped by Field of Study, Institution and Gender

Stream	University	M	F	Univ Technology	M	F
Arts (8)	BA	1	3	Drama	1	
	Communication		1			
	Drama		1			
	Journalism	1				

Built Environ (9)	B Sc Construction Studies	1		Building	2	2
	B Sc Property Studies	1		Town & Regional Plan		1
	B Sc QS	1		Surveying		1

Business (5)	B. Business Mgmt		1	Marketing	1	3
---------------------	------------------	--	---	-----------	---	---

Commerce (70)	B Accounts	2	1	Accounting	1	
	B Bus Sc (Finance)	1		NHC: Accounting	7	5
	B Com	7	6	Cost & Mgmt Accounting	2	
	B Com Acc	1 4	15	Internal Auditing	2	
	B Com Marketing	1		Financial Info Systems		1
	B Economics	2	2	Taxation	1	

Education (13)	B Education	5	3	B Education	1	1
	BA Education	2	1			

Engineering (72)	B Eng (Chemical)	3		Chemical Engineering	3	
	B Eng (Electrical)	3	1	Civil Engineering	4	5
	B Eng (Mech)	3		Computer Systems Eng	1	
	B Sc Engineering	3	1	Electrical Engineering	11	5
	B Sc Civil Eng	7	1	Industrial Engineering		3
	B Sc Mining Eng	2	1	Mechanical Engineering	11	
				Metallurgical Engineering	1	2
				Mining Engineering	1	

Humanities (18)	Social Work	2	5			
	Social Science		5			
	BA Culture History		1			
	BA Psychology	1	2			
	B Comm Devmt	1	1			

Law (16)	BA Law	2				
	LLB	6	8			

Management (30)	B Admin	2	2	Agric Management	2	1
	B Com HRM	1	2	Hospitality Management		2
				Human Resource Mgmt	1	5
				Logistics	1	1
				Management	1	1
				Office Management		1
				Public Management		1
				Public Relations		1
				Travel & Tourism Mgmt	3	2

Medical (40)	Dietetics		1	Biomedical Technology		3
	Medicine	4	4	Dental Technology		1
	Nursing	3	7	Emergency Medical Care	1	
	Occupational Ther		1	Radiography		2
	Optometry	1		Podiatry		1
	Pharmacy	4	2			
	Physiotherapy		2			
	Speech Therapy		1			
	B Sc Medical Sc	1	1			

Science (53)	B Agriculture	4		Analytical Chemistry	1	1
	B Science	7	1	Environmental Health	1	1
			4			
	B Sc Actuarial Sc	2	1	Landscape Technology	1	
	B Sc Biodiversity		1	Maritime Studies	1	
	B Sc Biological Sc		2	Nature Conservation	1	
	B Sc Biomed Sc	1				
	B Sc Biotechnology		1			
	B Sc Chemical Sc	1	2			
	B Sc Environ Sc		1			
	B Sc Geology	7	3			

Technology (6)	B Sc (IT)	1		Information Technology	3	2
-----------------------	-----------	---	--	------------------------	---	---

Summary of Students' Province of Origin

Province	NEW			CONTINUING			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Eastern Cape	8	13	21	16	19	35	24	32	56
Free State	7	4	11	12	5	17	19	9	28
Gauteng	3	3	6	6	3	9	9	6	15
Kwazulu Natal	18	15	33	19	28	47	37	43	80
Limpopo	22	9	31	25	16	41	47	25	72
Mpumulanga	2	0	2	2	4	6	4	4	8
Northern Cape	6	9	15	6	12	18	12	21	33
North West	6	2	8	10	4	14	16	6	22
Western Cape	2	10	12	7	7	14	9	17	26
Total	74	65	139	103	98	201	177	162	340

PROVINCE	STUDENT NOS			%
	NEW	CONT	TOTAL	
EASTERN CAPE	21	35	56	17
FREE STATE	11	17	28	8
GAUTENG	6	9	15	4
KWA ZULU NATAL	33	47	80	24
LIMPOPO	31	41	72	21
MPUMALANGA	2	6	8	2
NORTHERN CAPE	15	18	33	10
NORTH WEST	8	14	22	6
WESTERN CAPE	12	14	26	8
TOTAL	139	201	340	

PROVINCE	HOMETOWNS
EASTERN CAPE	Aliwal North, Bisho, Bityi, Burgersdorp, Cofimvaba, Duncan Village, Dutywa, Ezibeleni, Flagstaff, Humansdorp, Jamestown, Libode, Lusikisiki, Matatiele, Middelburg, Middeldrift, Mthatha, Nqamakwe, Port Alfred, Port St John, Queenstown, Qumbu, Sterkspruit, Stutterheim, Tsomo, Whittlesea
FREE STATE	Bethlehem, Botshabelo, Dikgakeng, Ladybrand, Mokodumela, Qwa Qwa, Thaba Nchu, Vrede, Witsieshoek, Zastron
GAUTENG	Tembisa, Rosslyn, Kromkuil, Klipgat, Winterveldt
KWAZULU NATAL	Bergville, Blaauwbosch Farm, Bothas Hill, Bulwer, Dannhauser, Donnybrook, Dorpspruit, Elandskop, Escourt, Greytown, Highflats, Ingwavuma, Isipingo, Jozini, Kokstad, Kwangwanase, Ladysmith, Madadeni, Maphumulo, Mariannhill, Mooi River, Ndumo, Newcastle, Nqutu, Osizweni, Pietermaritzburg, Port Shepstone, Qotho, Richmond, Tshelimnyama, Stanger, Ubombo, Umzinto, Vryheid
LIMPOPO	Apel, Bokane, Boleu, Burgersfort, Driekop, Dwarsriver, Giyani, Jane Furse, Nkowankowa, Kutama, Lenyenye, Letaba, Lwamondo, Mafarana, Mahwelereng, Makgodu, Manyama, Mashashane, Matovhela, Moetladimo, Mokopane, Motetema, Muwaweni, Polokwane, Ramokgopa, Sekhukhune, Seshego, Sibasa, Sifahla, Sinthumule, Steelpoort, Thohoyandou, Trichardsdal, Tshalama, Tshifulanani, Tshivaneng
MPUMALANGA	Grobblersdal, Hazyview, Hlukvukani, Kriel, Leroro
NORTHERN CAPE	Concordia, de Aar, Ipokeng, Keimoes, Kimberley, Mankurwane, Nababeep, Okiep, Phutanang, Port Nolloth, Steinkopf, Upington, Vergenoeg
NORTH WEST	Brits, Jericho, Jouberton, Klerksdorp, Lenatong, Modderspruit, Rustenburg, Saulspoort, Silverkrans, Taung,
WESTERN CAPE	Caledon, Citrusdal, Gansbaai, Genadendal, George, Grabouw, Hawston, Hout Bay, Knysna, Malmesbury, Masiphumelele, Montagu, Mossel Bay, Ocean View, Oudtshoorn, Paternoster, Plettenberg Bay, St Helena Bay, Stilbaai, Tembaletu

CASELOAD MANAGEMENT

Student Advisor	Institutional hubs	No. of Students
Charlene Nel & Lethabo Tloubatla (intern)	Kwazulu Natal	70
Bongi Mahlangu (Phumla Hobe on maternity leave)	Eastern Cape, UCT (W/Cape)	55
Charity Bafana	Bloemfontein, UWC & US (W/Cape)	56
Tsepo Senoamali	Pretoria, North West, Limpopo & CPUT (W/Cape)	84
Kanyisa Diamond & Mpumi Williams (intern)	Gauteng	76



Western Cape Students at a Workshop held at the RÒCÚ Offices



Students with REAP in 2009 have been supported by:



Irish Aid



Dka Austria Horizont 3000, supported by funds deriving from the Austrian Development Corporation



FNB Bursary Programme



Anglo American Chairman's Fund



De Beers Fund

Oppenheimer Memorial Trust



Stichting Tania Ruth Leon Studiefonds voor zwarte Zuid-Afrikaanse vrouwen



Jackson Foundation



Anglo Gold Ashanti Fund

The D G Murray Trust



Barloworld



Anglo Vaal Industries Ltd



Deutsche Bank Africa Foundation



BoE Education Foundation



Home Choice Development Trust



McCarthy Ltd



The Restitution Foundation



The Bishops' Lenten Appeal

Lord & Lady Laidlaw Foundation

Francisca Diez De Rivera, the Loewenstein Trust, Tydstroom Chickens (Pioneer Foods), **apm** Artistes Personal Management, guests at the wedding of Natalie and David Buckham, Rainbow Farms (Pty) Ltd, F C Carter Will Trust, Frederic Fish Trust, Catherine Stone, Maria Mosala (an alumnus), Telkom Giving from the Heart Programme, Stigting Projecten Zuid-Afrika, Bernadette Leon, Cheryl Phillips & Janssen Cilag. REAP also provided support to students supported by Kagiso Trust.