

NEGOTIATING A POLICY FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

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ABSTRACT

The University of Port Elizabeth's (UPE) management of change is predicated on the notion of transformation through negotiation. This paper outlines the model and presents a critically reflective case study of the process whereby the Affirmative Action Working Group investigated, developed, negotiated, communicated and navigated through the institution a policy which aimed to develop the diversity of the institution. The Working Group examined and rejected policies of other institutions, and decided to re-visit the notion of affirmative action from the perspective of its vision of the purpose of a university in UPE's context.

The account, seen through the eyes of the person who convened and chaired the Working Group, identifies critical elements in the process, including initiation, preparation, gate-keeping, maintenance, communication, defence and integrity. The final policy is critically analysed with particular reference to its potential contradictions of the University's mission.