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‘How open are our doors? A comparison of academic staff transformation at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand’.

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2007-02-28T11:23:05Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/2150

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ABSTRACT

This research report asks 'how effective has academic staff transformation been at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)?' This question was examined from four angles: i) the historical engagement of UCT and Wits, as employers, with race, class and gender, ii) the impact of government directive and the legislative context on the transformation of higher education workplaces, iii) the institutional role and response of UCT and Wits to the race, class and gender of their academic staff and iv) academics' experience of UCT and Wits as workplaces. The findings are based on in-depth interviews with 50 academic and senior executive staff at UCT and Wits. The results illustrate both continuity and change in the way in which academic staff experience institutions. Whilst there are progressive elements identified, there are also disconcerting expressions of prejudice, discrimination and harassment which undermine the transformation process.

KEY WORDS

Academic staff transformation

Employment equity

Institutional culture

Transformation

Higher education

University of Cape Town

University of the Witwatersrand

WitsETD