



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

PROF MANDLA MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

ADDRESS: LONG SERVICE CERTIFICATE AWARDS CEREMONY

ZK MATHEWS HALL

9 April 2015

Laying foundations for a fulfilling future

- Madame Chair, Ms Kissoonduth, Director: Remuneration and Administration, HR
- Prof B Erasmus, Vice-Principal: Operations
- Our motivational speaker today, Mr Simphiwe Moyo, Facilitator and author
- Mr Lawrence Leopa Moepa, binding assistant in the SMPD, and awardee for 35 years of service

- Our musician today, Angelo Vaaltyn, who is an officer in the Records Management Department
- Esteemed colleagues
- Our VIP guests this morning – our awardees

In the hurly burly of university life, we are so often involved in strategizing, crafting, managing and operating the institution to ensure that it will be able to overcome the challenges that we are facing and will continue to face into the future, that we tend to forget the past - upon which all that is achievable in the future - rests.

So our ceremony today is important - not only because we will be celebrating your contribution to Unisa, our students and our country, but because it also gives us an opportunity to reflect on those who have gone before us and the legacy that they have left; and the responsibility that we have, to ensure that the flame of quality higher education is still burning brightly, when we pass on that torch to the next generation of Unisans.

There is no doubt that the world as we knew it 30 or 40 years ago, is very, very, different to the one we know and experience today. In the space of 40 years, South Africa has seen the arrival of television (in

1996), the advent of democracy and freedom and of course, with different expectations from our modern day citizens.

While we live in a fast paced world, while our students may want us to move with the times, and while we are called to produce confident and competent 21st Century graduates, there is one aspect that remains unchanged – and that of course, is the expectation of a *quality* education and a *quality* education experience. Needless to say, the quality of the education and the educational experience that our students receive rests on the shoulders of our Unisa staff, that is, you and me. Quality staff begets quality education, and it is our responsibility as Council, Senate and management to ensure by all means possible that we have a workforce who are able to accomplish that.

We are building a University that recognises staff members for who they are and what they bring to our institution, and we are committed to ensuring that staff members feel valued at our institution. We have a responsibility to build a University where those who work at Unisa in years to come will appreciate what we have bequeathed to them, just as we are able to appreciate the legacy of those who shaped Unisa over the past 142 years. I believe we are doing that, and I am very confident that Unisa employees are very well looked after especially as compared with employees from

other higher education institutions. In fact, if the recent remuneration report is anything to go by, Unisa staff are currently among the best paid in the country.

Having said that though, it does help to think about how our life experiences have shaped us as individuals and how this can impact on us and those with whom we work as we move into our more mature years. The extent to which we understand and acknowledge that our individual contexts - that is our languages, cultures, religions, education and so on - shape and dictate the way that we see, understand and communicate everything that we process, will play an important role in terms of your wellbeing and happiness in the South Africa, and the Unisa, of 2015.

Let me share a wonderful quote that I came across the other day as it will help you to think about accepting one another as colleagues, as friends and acquaintances.

Before you speak to me about your religion, first show it to me in how you treat other people; Before you tell me how much you love your God, show me how much you love all of His children; Before you preach to me of your passion for your faith, teach me about it through your compassion for your neighbours. In the end, I'm not as interested in what you have to tell or sell, as I am in how to choose to live and give.

– Cory Booker, Newark, New Jersey.

Unisa is committed to an institutional ethos and culture based on the 11Cs plus one, and let me remind you of them: Communication; Conversation; Conservation; Community; Connection; Care; Collegiality; Commitment; Co-operation; Creativity; Consultation and Courage. Together these qualities should ensure the most wonderful working environment for all of our staff, but we are not there yet. And so I would urge those of you are looking to Unisa as your employer for some time to come, to recommit to the 11Cs plus 1 and in so doing contribute to the environment that we all want to see prevailing in the workplace. I find that a philosophy of *live and let live* works well when it comes to embracing and working alongside one's colleagues.

I also believe that one's ability to accept everyone in the spirit of "Ubuntu", determines the kind of person one will become as one grows older. In fact, as you grow more mature you begin to see a clear distinction between those people who have successfully accommodated and embraced the "other" and those who have not. Those who have embraced others live a good life, while those who have not are miserable - and unfortunately this is unnecessary. We need to accept changes that happen around us as they are to our benefit.

Colleagues, change is inevitable and yes, more often than not it is for the better – if we will just be open to its benefits for us. It is occasions such as these that provide the space for us to look back and to see the improvements in our lives in terms of opportunities and experience. We forget that far too often.

As an institution that is 142 years old, we are standing and building on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. We owe our success to their efforts. You too will be remembered in the same way. Through your years of loyalty and commitment you are continuing and building on the legacy of those who have gone before you, and as an institution we are deeply appreciative of, and thankful for your service and contributions to Unisa, our students present and past, and to South Africa. Well done!

I thank you.