



*The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor*

**PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**CONGRATULATIONS CERTIFICATE CEREMONY: BUILDING TOMORROW'S LABOUR LEADERS**

**15 April 2015**

- Madame Programme Director Ms Firoza Patel
- Vice Principal, Operations: Prof Barney Erasmus
- Ms Gwen van der Berg, Manager, Leadership and Management Development
- Attendees of this programme – Members of organized labour and Unisa's leaders of tomorrow

Good morning colleagues, and a warm welcome to you all

In September last year I welcomed you to the launch of this Building Tomorrow's Labour Leaders programme, which is aimed at approaching leadership at Unisa from the perspective and context of organized labour, where staff are both labour representatives *and* leaders at

Unisa. The aim has been to both inform and empower labour as you fulfill the sometimes difficult dual role that you have to play at Unisa. I would like to reiterate what I said at the launch, namely that the BTL programme, and our Young Academics Programme, are one of a kind in higher education and they have already received acknowledgement for their innovation and empowerment on a number of high-level fora. As the first graduates from this programme I think you can feel justifiably proud.

Recent events and debates at a number of our sister institutions have demonstrated very clearly that transformation is something that must be taken seriously; something that should receive dedicated, ongoing attention. I believe that at Unisa we are doing so in a constructive way, and I am genuinely pleased and gratified that we have organized labour - and students - who not only treat their responsibilities with the gravitas that they deserve, but who are using the prevailing structures to exercise their mandates in a productive manner. For us at Unisa, transformation is not only about numbers and profiles – its goes deeper to issues of cultural transformation, to the affirming of our dignity and our humanity and also, to the sharing and teaching of our histories and the contributions of the many South Africans and Africans who drove and shaped our democracy and who won our freedom. That process is very vibrant and will be driven in a more integrated manner as we

move into our next strategic phase, next year, and we look forward to the constructive blossoming of this vital component of our personal, national and institutional transformation.

Your participation in, and completion of this course has demonstrated your seriousness about leading and serving. By your attendance you have indicated to your constituents and the university that you are willing to lead and serve. This programme aimed to expand on the leadership skills and capacities that you already have acquired as organized labour leaders, to include capacitation in *institutional* leadership and management. For our part we trust that we will have achieved that and that you now feel equipped to fulfill your roles in a more informed, confident, focused and effective manner.

As I said at the launch, each person starts off their leadership journey from a particular paradigm, defined as *“a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them, especially in an intellectual discipline.”* Your past experiences, your religion, your politics, your culture, your upbringing, the position you occupy at Unisa, the location of your office, your expectations of the future, and so on informs the way you think, feel and act. And in a country like South Africa and of course at a University like Unisa, these paradigms will be hugely diverse and

complex. As the leadership of this institution we need to forge our own, shared set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them. And in our case, that community is Unisa.

I hope that today you will be able to reflect on that statement and to assess in an informed manner, the extent to which you have grown and developed by completing this course. We have all agreed that we want a truly African, high-performance University that is warm, caring and inclusive and that we will be jointly responsible for constructing a new DNA for our institution. The main responsibility for that transformation lies with us as leaders and management. We must lead from the front responsibly, ethically, transparently and by example.

Leadership is multi-faceted and the more you learn, the more you realise how much you have yet to learn. Leadership is never easy, especially in a complex university like Unisa and the competing interests and forces with which one has to contend. Effective leadership requires total immersion into university life and a genuine and abiding commitment: firstly to higher education and the students that we are tasked to educate and graduate and secondly, to the long term sustainability of the institution through sound leadership and management, and equally importantly, through the ethical stewardship

of our resources. These are the institutional “constants” that will remain irrespective of other competing agendas and interests. Unisa colleagues, is bigger than us all.

In acknowledging your role in our institution you will understand my real pleasure at congratulating you on the successful completion of this programme. I look forward to reading at some stage, all of the presentations that you have prepared. I genuinely hope that you have found the programme to be worthwhile and of lasting benefit. Unisa is positioned and poised in terms of its strategy, vision, mission and goals, *and* in terms of its Transformation Charter and leadership strategy and intent, to grow toward the kind of high performance institution that we aspire to. I trust that as you progress on your leadership journey, equipped with new knowledge, skills and information you will take very seriously the responsibility entrusted to you and that you will use it constructively for the benefit of all.

I thank you