



*The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor*

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

**PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SAPS ACADEMY**

**PAARL, CAPE TOWN**

**30 JANUARY 2014**

Mr Programme Director : Lieutenant General CN Mbekela

The Minister of Police, the Honourable EN Mthethwa

The Minister of Higher education and Training, the Honourable Minister BE Nzimande

The National Commissioner of the SAPS, General MV Phiyega

The Deputy Chairperson of Unisa Council, Dr S Makone-Matabane

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to you all.

On 15 January - just two weeks ago - the University of South Africa was honoured to host the launch of the new White Paper on Post School Education and Training: *Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated System*. In true South African democratic tradition, the process leading up to the White Paper has been a broadly consultative one, and as such, it represents the voice and the view of broader South African society. These are reflected in its main policy objectives, which include:

- a post-school system that can assist in building a fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa;
- a single, coordinated post-school education and training system;
- expanded access, improved quality and increased diversity of provision;
- **a stronger and more cooperative relationship between education and training institutions and the workplace;**
- **a post-school education and training system that is responsive to the needs of individual citizens, employers in both public and private sectors, as well as broader societal and developmental objectives.**

Today we see these policy objectives in action. The launch of this SAPS Academy epitomises the kind of collaboration that is needed to bring about positive change in our society on the one hand, and the improvement of individual lives on the other. It is in my view, the ultimate win-win situation, and certainly the kind of co-operative model that was envisaged when Unisa crafted its vision to be *the* African university in the service of humanity.

Unisa celebrated 140 years of existence last year, and with that celebration came the realisation that our university has consistently been in the service of humanity; that we have consistently championed ordinary men and women - many of whom have gone on to make significant contributions to our country and its people. A number have achieved personal greatness. We take pride in the fact that our Alumnus Roll of Honour includes some of the greatest leaders of democracy and freedom that this country, our continent and this world has ever seen. We are quintessentially, a university of the people, for the people.

But at the foundation of all that we do and believe, in fact, our “reason for being”, is education – driven by our unshakeable view that education is the gateway to opportunity. Education changes lives and its influence and impact echo down to future generations. Education empowers people with knowledge, skills and most critically, self- assurance to claim their space and to do so with confidence and maturity.

Our partnership with the SAPS in establishing this academy is firmly grounded in the belief that we can and we will succeed in enhancing the professionalism of the police service through education. And while some might have reservations about “book learning” for police, abundant research has shown that the integration of empirical, ontological and epistemological-based learning, *and* practical training, is key to successful vocational training. It is my view that we need to look beyond the traditional modes of teaching, and, within the context of South Africa’s unique challenges and environment, be sufficiently

innovative and confident, to include experimental work and hands-on training, supported by appropriate simulations and electronic resources.

As a dedicated ODL institution, Unisa is ideally placed to fulfil this function. In fact, the value of ODL when it comes to partnerships with professional bodies, was acknowledged by Unesco as early as 2002, and global growth in policing degrees speaks to the growing success of police-academia partnerships. Furthermore, as post school education and training focuses more concertededly on technical and vocational education as a key pathway to assisting individuals to improve their personal and employments prospects (and this is especially true of South Africa), partnerships such as this one, will grow in significance and importance. Given its flexibility and accessibility and its ability to respond effectively to the particular demands of working adults, distance education is in fact supremely positioned to be a successful driver of occupational and vocational training and education.

This is particularly relevant when one considers that our police, teachers and nurses are those professions which impact fundamentally on our communities, and on each and every one of us as individuals. They are our mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters. They live with us and among us. They know us and they know about us. They see us at our best – and at our worst. They occupy a unique place in our lives. It could be argued that they are us and we are them. And perhaps that is why it hurts so badly when we are on the receiving end of bad or non-existent service; of violence, cruelty or neglect; or when we hear of bribery and corruption, unprofessionalism and other forms of dereliction of duty. We are directly impacted by their conduct in ways that don't apply to other professions in the same degree.

No one can doubt the urgent need for the professionalization of our police services. Professionalism implies life-long learning and the sustainability of embedded service excellence. It implies further opportunities for growth and development and, as mentioned, it tends to have a very positive ripple effect, encouraging others to follow suite. Once a learning culture begins to take root, it inevitably generates its own momentum – to the long-term benefit of all.

Formal learning also tends to elicit an acknowledgment of legitimacy and respect from the broader public. At a personal level and because of the knowledge and experience gained, it tends to produce confident professionals who are informed and motivated by pride and service excellence, rather than by

greed and self-interest. Unisa's many graduation ceremonies each year provide abundant evidence of that pride, confidence and respect, and it is with that picture in mind that I must say that I look forward with much anticipation, to the graduation of the 120 learners who have commenced the Bachelor of Policing degree this year. To those learners I say: "You owe it to yourselves, your families and your country to pass and pass with distinction, so those who follow in your footsteps will feel similarly constrained to excel. Do not let us down! You will go down in history as the first graduates of this unique academy. Make sure that that record brings honour to your name. "

Distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen, the ability to change lives, irrespective of circumstance, is what makes Unisa unique and it demonstrates unambiguously, the impact that Unisa has had, and which it will continue to have, on individuals and our country, over succeeding generations. It also explains why the University of South Africa is so delighted to have partnered with the SAPS in establishing this Academy – the first of its kind in South Africa. There are of course many considerations and challenges that need to be addressed as the process unfolds, and these include for example, financial support and delegated roles and responsibilities. However, in my view these are normal operational matters which we will approach with open minds and in a spirit of cooperation.

In conclusion distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, there can be no doubt that when it comes to our police services both the public and SAPS need a mind-shift. 21<sup>st</sup> Century living requires a highly professional approach to policing that sees police primarily as community servant leaders, rather than enforcers at one level, and able to match the sophistication and capacity of the criminals and syndicates that they are investigating, at another. It is a big and complex challenge, and we would do well not to expect miracle overnight. As Andrew Carnegie so famously said: *"Anything in life worth having is worth working for."* The SAPS Academy is most assuredly worth having and worth working for. Unisa will play its part.

In that process we must acknowledge the importance of leading by example. EthicsSA asserts *"the tone from the top"*. We are told repeatedly about *the rotten apple in the barrel*, and that *"the fish rots from the head."* The question is: How seriously do we take that? The public at large has every right to expect leadership to lead by example. Failing that, we cannot expect any initiative – including one such as this - to succeed. That is the famous *burden of leadership* that one hears about so frequently and to which we will be holding one another accountable.

Today I would like to place on record our congratulations to the National Commissioner General Phiyega and the Honourable Minister Nathi Mthetwa, for their vision and foresight in taking this very bold step in beginning to construct meaning and build the new narrative of the profession.

The University of South Africa has full faith and confidence in this project, and we look forward to the outcomes of this partnership in the years ahead.