



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

**PROF MS MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES, (ISTE), GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, MATTHEW GONIWE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AND
GOVERNANCE: LAUNCH OF THE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
(INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE)**

ZK Matthews Great Hall, Muckleneuk Campus

31 January 2015

- Table of precedence to be provided (VIPs include: the Gauteng MEC of Education, the Deputy Director General, and other dignitaries from the GDE.)

I am delighted to bid you all a warm welcome to this important launch of the Teacher Development Strategy, which is aimed improving the competency of 501 grade 8 and 9 maths and science educators.

Unisa's College for Graduate Studies, in their capacity as the head of the Institute and Technology Education (ISTE) is very proud to be hosting this event in association with the Gauteng Department of Education and the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance.

The kind of collaboration that this school represents finds its echoes in the our National Development Plan and the *White Paper 4 "Post School Education and Training: Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated System"* – to name but two of our seminal policy documents which articulate quite pertinently the need for us to harness and leverage our collective capacities and resources in pursuit of socio-economic development, and in this case, education.

This agreement also epitomizes our very fundamental belief and strategy at Unisa, of engaging in mutually beneficial and collaborative endeavours that will build up the capacities within the system and in so doing contribute towards a healthy, vibrant and quality cohort of educators *and* learners and students. We are of the very firm opinion that universities cannot operate as ivory towers in isolation from the

rest of the system. We believe we have a critical role to play in contributing to the health of the entire education system. As an institution of higher learning we should be able to contribute in a very meaningful way to the generation of knowledge and scholarship, as well as the development of those tasked with the serious responsibility of moulding and developing the minds and capacities of the learners who will one day enter our own portals into the world of higher learning. I speak here of course of the hundreds and thousands of students who at this very moment, are flooding our campuses and yes, even threatening to launch protest actions because of the difficulties they are facing in gaining admission and funding for further education and training.

The scary part of course, is that they have not yet seen beyond the admission and funding challenges to the realities of higher learning, and we are the ones who are faced on a daily basis, with eager learners who are woefully unprepared for this highly competitive, brave new world. In fact, I would hazard a guess to say that it comes as a huge shock and disillusionment to many students, and this is evidenced in our worrying stop out, drop out and failure rates. The education that they have received at primary and secondary schools has just not equipped them

fully, with the knowledge and skills that they need to flourish in the higher education environment.

Government has made it clear that throughput and pass rates have to improve and all of our higher education institutions are addressing this imperative as a matter of urgency. Just this week our Minister of Higher Education and Training, Minister Blade Nzimadi increased pressure on HEIs when he spoke of expectations upon us, to produce the planned numbers of postgraduate students for the country. So the pressure is really on! Thus far Unisa has made some pleasing progress but we have a long way to go – as do our sister institutions.

I believe that if we have learnt one thing in South Africa's long, and fractured education history, it is that we cannot afford to compartmentalize – to segregate. We cannot remain aloof, focusing only on our own needs - and we cannot stick a Band-Aid over a deeply festering wound and believe that we have solved the problem. What is required of us is to get back to basics and to tackle our many challenges in a sensible, practical and holistic manner. And that is precisely what we are doing with this Teacher Development Strategy.

This collaborative venture lends credence to that statement and belief, bringing together as it does, key role players in education who collectively, will:

- Provide appropriate supportive funding for the programme
- Provide a quality assurance function for the entire programme, including the participants and subject content
- Provide a specialist as well as trainers to train 501 grade 8 and 9 educators in mathematics and science.
- Source 501 grade 8 and 9 educators for the training and ensure their availability for training
- Provide ICT training during the implementation of the training programme and audit the availability of tablets for training
- Develop collaboratively, training material to be used during the programme
- Develop and administer the aligned assessment tool to measure the success of the programme
- Select appropriate participating schools in the Tshwane region, and
- Facilitate procurement and logistical arrangements and make available appropriate launch and training venues for the programme

Ladies and gentlemen I think that you will agree that this strategy covers all of the bases, both in terms of its integration of key role

players and collaborators and its contribution to the national imperative to address the critical shortfall of well-equipped maths and science education; bearing in mind of course, the longer term aim of learners who are well educated in these two crucial subjects.

Our calling as academics and the conduct of our profession cannot stand in isolation from the communities that we serve. I have already stated that Unisa is of the view that capacity building and collaboration should be a key pillar of our scholarship and our institutional strategy.

So much so in fact, that in acknowledgement of this commitment, as well as our clear stance on an unambiguously African articulation and practice of ODL, we have been invited to host the The 26th ICDE World Conference with the theme: *Growing capacities for sustainable distance e-learning provision*. This is the first time the Conference is being held on the African Continent, and besides our commitment to capacity development in ODL, the awarding of the the bid to Unisa also speaks to our commitment to the type of collaborative engagement, to which I alluded to earlier.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to welcome you once again and to wish you all well for this very important programme. We look forward with great anticipation to the fruits of your endeavours in the years to come. I thank you.