



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

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BLACK MANAGEMENT FORUM
KEYNOTE: THIRD ANNUAL TRANSFORMATION SEMINAR
8 MAY 2012**

“Transformation in Higher Education and the HE Green Paper “

Last year you invited me to speak on the topic “Developing Managerial Leadership” with the theme *Transformation in Higher Education*. I spoke about higher education transformation at a global level, emphasising the effects and impact of globalism. Today I would like to focus on our national transformational challenges and how we as an institution are attempting to contribute to their resolution, in partnership with government and all other relevant stakeholders.

This year is a seminal year in that it marks the release of the long awaited Green Paper on Post School Education, in which there is abundant evidence of a clear and deliberate focus on the FET sector education. Much of this is in response to the approximately 2.7 young people between the ages of 17 and 24, who are neither employed or in any form of

education. It is felt that their hope for gainful employment vests in equipping them with the skills that will render them employable, hence the focus on FETs.

At university level some of the challenges we face include the following:

1. On the one hand we find *Tighter state steering in which the state uses a variety of steering mechanisms to direct and 'enforce' the implementation of policy.*

This brings to mind, for example, the new Integrated Reporting Framework for our Annual Report that is aligned to the King III report and that introduces into mainstream university administration, reporting on ethics, performance, progress and sustainability amongst others. The evidence of progress stands to be edited by the auditor general. This places quite an onerous burden on universities in terms of the administration that is involved in gathering the relevant data, writing up the report and ensuring that the evidence provided is "auditable." I think that we need to be careful as higher education institutions our institutional autonomy and freedom is not sacrificed on the altar of increasing administrative bureaucracy. While institutional efficiency is undoubtedly a necessity, care must be taken to ensure that it does not subsume our core business of teaching and learning, research and community engagement. We need to be vigilant about this.

I can also tell you that funding for higher education institutions is increasingly being allocated in line with what the state deems to be education imperatives, perhaps fairly so, given the serious socio-economic realities that we have to deal with in South Africa. We see this clearly in the latest higher education budget vote where Minister Nzimande stated the following:

In this, the centenary year of the African National Congress, job creation has become one of the key priorities for our government, and education and training are a critical component of this priority as reflected in the President's State of the Nation Address and the budget allocations for the 2012 MTEF period. Education now constitutes more than 21 per cent of Government's total allocated expenditure for the 2012/13 financial year. Of this, my Department receives R41.1 billion, of which R9.6 billion are skills levies that go to the Sector Education and Training Authorities and the National Skills

Fund (NSF). The Department's budget (excluding levies) increases from R28.2 billion in 2011/12 to R31.5 billion for 2012/13. This is an increase of R3.3 billion (11.7%) on the 2011/12 allocation. Universities will this year receive R20.9 billion while R4.8 billion is allocated to the Further Education and Training Colleges (FET) Conditional Grant. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) will receive R5 billion during the 2012/13 financial year for loans and bursaries in the University and FET Sectors. The rest of the budget allocation is shared between our statutory bodies and normal operating expenses of our Department. Government remains committed to the progressive introduction of free education for the poor up to undergraduate level. This has already been introduced in FET colleges. I have now established a Working Group to conduct a study to determine the actual cost of introducing fee-free university education for the poor. The Working Group will report by the end of June 2012 on the costs and options to implement this commitment.

2. On the other hand we face challenges in relation to *the notion of the Developmental State in which public higher education is subordinate to and in service of the state; market forces which influence the kinds of qualifications and graduates that higher education institutions need to produce to meet socio-economic demands, and which impact on the research profiles and curricula of higher education institutions; and the 'mismatch' between the graduates that higher education institutions are currently producing and what is required in the market place*

All of these challenges underlie the budget allocations I have just mentioned, and are clearly reflected in the Green Paper, which was released in January this year. The *Green Paper on Post School Education and Training*, sets out a vision for a single, coherent, differentiated and articulated post-school education and training system. The system aims to expand access to post-school opportunities, overcome inequalities in education, and achieve high levels of excellence and innovation. It will also result in closer cooperation between universities, colleges and levy-grant institutions and between these institutions and the labour market. The Green paper focuses on key areas such as;

➤ **Teacher Education**

The basis of any good education system is the quality of its teachers and teacher education will continue to strengthen. R450 million has been ring-fenced for the 2012/13 to 2013/14 funding cycle to expand university infrastructure capacity for teacher education and this will continue in the next funding cycle. Particular attention is being paid to the development of Foundation Phase teachers, especially African language mother-tongue speakers. To accelerate the process 3 former training colleges will be re-opened. In line with the growth vision for the FET College sector, lecturer development will be a strong focus this year.

An amount of R499 million has been allocated to all universities for teaching development grants to assist in improving graduate outputs and R194 million for foundation programmes to improve the success rates of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. In the coming financial year programmes will also be initiated to support the academic and professional development of lecturers in universities. In addition, R177 million for research development has been allocated to 15 of the 23 universities to develop research capability of university staff, especially for those institutions with low numbers of staff with Masters and Doctorate degrees.

➤ **Universities**

Pending the finalisation of submission from the universities, there will be a change in the funding framework by April 2013. Priority will be given to addressing the shortage and quality of student accommodation. To this end, for the period 2012/13 to 2013/14, R 850 million has been specifically earmarked for universities to build and refurbish student residences, with the bulk (86 %) of this being allocated to historically black institutions. DoHE&T is also soliciting additional funding from the Public Investment Corporation and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) to provide more substantial funding for student accommodation. A regulatory framework is envisioned on university accommodation, including giving priority on accommodation to first-year and NSFAS students. Attention will also be given to regulating standards and quality of privately owned student residences to ensure that these are liveable and learning communities.

Over the next two years, R3.8 billion has been earmarked for universities' overall infrastructure development, prioritising historically disadvantaged institutions. Of the R3.8 billion infrastructure allocation, an amount of R1.6 billion has been set aside specifically for historically disadvantaged institutions.

On the academic front, DoHE&T has committed to increasing the production of graduates in Engineering, the Natural Sciences, Human and Animal Health Sciences and Teacher Education. Bodies such as Higher Education South Africa (HESA) and the Deans of relevant faculties will be engaged to accelerate especially black and women graduate outputs in these areas. As publicly funded institutions we accept that there will inevitably be some direction from the state, particularly in regard to the kinds of skills required for socio-economic development - in fact we see this in the drive for increased student numbers in science and technology. Fortunately where we have been feeling a little concerned about the decline in the humanities and social sciences, government has taken these concerns seriously. On 29 March this year, Minister of Higher Education and Training, Minister Blade Nzimande responded publicly to the *Humanities and Social Sciences Charter Report*, which was arrived at after an exhaustive process by hundreds of academics under the leadership of Prof Ari Sitas and Dr Sarah Mosoetsa. The report has made wide-ranging, ambitious and bold recommendations in regard to revitalising the humanities and social sciences in South African universities, more especially theoretical and empirical research on the realities of our societies, the social, political and economic life of our people and their creativity. It is pleasing to note that following the DHET-commissioned study of the humanities and social sciences, "and to ensure that these important disciplines are not neglected", a National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences will be set up. Work has already begun.

In line with a commitment last year to establish an advisory panel on African languages, such a panel now exists and has started its work. It is chaired by Prof Pitika Ntuli and includes leading African language scholars.

In order to assist in tackling the problems faced by students wanting to enrol at a university, the Minister intends to establish a National Information and Application System (NIAS) which will centralise applications, so that students will not have to apply to multiple

universities, each with its own application fees. The new system will also centralise NSFAS applications.

Two new universities are envisaged – one each in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape and the intention is to establish Medunsa as a separate, self-standing university of health sciences. DoHE&T is also looking at other opportunities for expanding the training of medical doctors and other health professionals, including animal health professionals and some universities have been asked to urgently provide concrete plans to expand in this regard.

➤ **National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)**

The NSFASBoard has adopted a student-centric model and it plans to build relationships with students even before they enrol at higher education institutions. Some R98m has been allocated to NSFAS to develop state of the art ICT infrastructure and systems. NSFAS Loans and bursaries to poor students have been expanded substantially over the last three years, and funds made available to students grew from R2.375 billion in 2008 to R6 billion in 2011. NSFAS funds have been made available for special purposes such as R50-million for post-graduate scholarships, R63-million for students with disabilities, R350 million for poor continuing students who were unable to register due to outstanding debt and insufficient funding in 2012.

➤ **Further Education and Training Colleges**

Over the past two years, enrolments in FET Colleges have been rising dramatically, exceeding projections by 24%, to reach an enrolment of reached 437 060. That figure is expected to increase to 550 000 this year. Over the 3-year MTEF period starting in 2012/13, R15-billion has been set aside to ensure increasing enrolments in FET colleges, to build them into institutions of choice. DoHE&T aims to have 4 million enrolments in FET Colleges and other non-university post-school institutions by 2030. Growth in this sector can in part be attributed to the bursary amounting to 100% of fees for all those with a family income of under R 122 000 per annum. In 2011, 165 273 students were awarded bursaries. Earlier this month, the President announced an amount of R2, 5bn over the next 3 years from levy funds for infrastructure, machinery and programmes in FET Colleges. Given the state of disrepair of many of the FET colleges, an infrastructural audit is being completed to identify

those institutions in need of refurbishment. It is envisaged that in the short-term there is a need to build 12 new campuses attached to the existing FET Colleges. Of central importance to the improvement of the colleges is the revision of their programmes. DoHE&T has just completed a review of the National Certificate (Vocational). Umalusi and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) have started a revision of the N3 curriculum and the QCTO has undertaken to revise the N4-N6 curriculum. Legislation is envisaged, among other things, to establish a South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education which will provide professional support to the colleges and possibly also the SETAs.

➤ **Adult Education and Training**

The Green Paper proposes to absorb the public adult learning centres into a new institutional type, provisionally known as Community Education and Training Centres (CETCs). These centres will offer far more than the current adult learning centres, including vocational or work-oriented programmes, and will provide opportunities for a significant proportion of post-school youth and adults, especially targeting those with less than grade 9. A Ministerial Task Team has been appointed to conceptualise the development and implementation of CETCs. One of the offerings in the CETCs would have to be the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) which has now been gazetted for public comments.

➤ **The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**

SAQA and the Quality Councils will be giving focused attention to ensuring that all qualifications are part of an articulated system of post-school education, with no qualifications that lead to a dead-end. In addition, a Ministerial Task Team on the recognition of prior learning has been established, aimed at developing a national strategy for its wide-scale implementation.

➤ **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND LEVY GRANT INSTITUTIONS**

In July 2011 the National Skills Accord was signed by all the NEDLAC partners. Government, business and labour made commitments to expand the numbers of apprenticeships, learnerships and internships. A central role in this regard is to be played by the state-owned enterprises, with government departments and agencies as well as municipalities expected to increase their intake of various types of trainees. All major government infrastructure

programmes will be expected to take on trainees. DoHE&T aims to turn every workplace into a training space!

Now colleagues, it is clear that Universities are not the focus of DoHE&T at the moment. It is also clear that Higher Education institutions need to ensure that they are strategically geared to played their role in the envisaged *single, coherent, differentiated and articulated post-school education and training system* which aims to *expand access to post-school opportunities, overcome inequalities in education, and achieve high levels of excellence and innovation, and ensure closer cooperation between universities, colleges and levy-grant institutions and between these institutions and the labour market.*

Unisa is doing precisely that. Since I took up my tenure last year I have made it clear that we are part of an holistic higher education system and as such we cannot isolate ourselves from that system. All that we do is ultimately aimed at ensuring a high performance institution that radiates excellence and innovation in all that we do. I announced at our Academic Opening that we have reconfigured the *Unisa 2015 Revisited* (That is, our institutional strategy) into 5 simply-stated goals which reflect Unisa's key focus areas for the next three years. All of the existing actions and projects have been reallocated according to these priorities. They now include very clearly for example, our dedicated foci on people; risk, ethics and governance; and stakeholder engagement and partners, which we introduced last year. Of course, all of these underpin our institutional priority and our core business of teaching and learning, research and community engagement. That priority can and will never change.

And so the newly formulated goals centre around :

1. Academic - this includes all activities in the academic domain
2. Governance – This covers all governance, sustainability and compliance matters
3. People - this includes all HR and people-focused matters
4. Service – this includes systems, processes and actions that impact on our various levels of service
5. Partners and Stakeholder Engagement – this covers broad partner stakeholder engagement

The intention is that this simple exposition of our priorities will draw planning more closely into the mainstream of our daily operations, through a deepening our collective understanding and appreciation of its fundamental role in our quest for high-performance and in line with national imperatives as articulated for example, in the Green Paper. Of the utmost importance of course, and in pursuit of institutional efficiency and high performance, is the goal focussed solely on Service. And you will be hearing a lot more from me on this in the days and weeks ahead.

Of course that means that as an institution we will need to be agile – and I have also spoken to all Unisa staff about that. We need to become comfortable, in this very dynamic HE environment, with adapting and adjusting to changing national and institutional priorities. This will require a special kind of leadership that is open minded and egalitarian rather than autocratic; it will require teamwork rather than individual efforts. In short, I believe it will require the characteristics that one finds embodied in Servant Leadership.

I have noted with interest of late, how more and more articles are asserting the benefits of Servant Leadership in today's society. The underlying ethos of Servant Leadership asserts:

The servant-leader is servant first... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?"

I would like to leave you with this interesting article that I came across recently. It speaks to the **8 Core Beliefs of Extraordinary Bosses**. The writer says:

Some years back, I interviewed some of the most successful CEOs in the world in order to discover their management secrets. I learned that the "best of the best" tend to share the following eight core beliefs.

1. Business is an ecosystem, not a battlefield.

Average bosses see business as a conflict between companies, departments and groups. They build huge armies of "troops" to order about, demonize competitors as "enemies," and treat customers as "territory" to be conquered.

Extraordinary bosses see business as a symbiosis where the most diverse firm is most likely to survive and thrive. *They naturally create teams that adapt easily to new markets and can quickly form partnerships with other companies, customers ... and even competitors. **Now that sounds like agility to me!***

2. A company is a community, not a machine.

Average bosses consider their company to be a machine with employees as cogs. They create rigid structures with rigid rules and then try to maintain control by "pulling levers" and "steering the ship."

Extraordinary bosses see their company as a collection of individual hopes and dreams, all connected to a higher purpose. They inspire employees to dedicate themselves to the success of their peers and therefore to the community—and company—at large. **Do our 11 Cs +1 sound familiar?**

3. Management is service, not control.

Average bosses want employees to do exactly what they're told. They're hyper-aware of anything that smacks of insubordination and create environments where individual initiative is squelched by the "wait and see what the boss says" mentality.

Extraordinary bosses set a general direction and then commit themselves to obtaining the resources that their employees need to get the job done. They push decision making downward, allowing teams form their own rules and intervening only in emergencies. **The 11C's +1 again?**

4. My employees are my peers, not my children.

Average bosses see employees as inferior, immature beings who simply can't be trusted if not overseen by a patriarchal management. Employees take their cues from this attitude, expend energy on looking busy and covering their behinds.

Extraordinary bosses treat every employee as if he or she were the most important person in the firm. Excellence is expected everywhere, from the loading dock to the boardroom. As a result, employees at all levels take charge of their own destinies. **Creating a new DNA for a warm, caring and inclusive institution? Our Charter on Transformation?**

5. Motivation comes from vision, not from fear.

Average bosses see fear--of getting fired, of ridicule, of loss of privilege--as a crucial way to motivate people. As a result, employees and managers alike become paralyzed and unable to make risky decisions.

Extraordinary bosses inspire people to see a better future and how they'll be a part of it. As a result, employees work harder because they believe in the organization's goals, truly enjoy what they're doing and (of course) know they'll share in the rewards. **Creating a new DNA for a warm, caring and inclusive institution?**

6. Change equals growth, not pain.

Average bosses see change as both complicated and threatening, something to be endured only when a firm is in desperate shape. They subconsciously torpedo change ... until it's too late.

Extraordinary bosses see change as an inevitable part of life. While they don't value change for its own sake, they know that success is only possible if employees and organization embrace new ideas and new ways of doing business. **Our Charter on Transformation?**

7. Technology offers empowerment, not automation.

Average bosses adhere to the old IT-centric view that technology is primarily a way to strengthen management control and increase predictability. They install centralized computer systems that dehumanize and antagonize employees.

Extraordinary bosses see technology as a way to free human beings to be creative and to build better relationships. They adapt their back-office systems to the tools, like smartphones and tablets that people actually want to use. We are an ODL Institution. Technology must become our friend and it will. **We are spending huge amounts of our resources on ensuring that the systems are being put in place to ensure superior performance and service excellence. This will require teamwork and commitment to transformation on the part of everyone. Will you be a change agent or a change impediment?**

8. Work should be fun, not mere toil.

Average bosses buy into the notion that work is, at best, a necessary evil. They fully expect employees to resent having to work, and therefore tend to subconsciously define themselves as oppressors and their employees as victims. Everyone then behaves accordingly.

Extraordinary bosses see work as something that should be inherently enjoyable—and believe therefore that the most important job of manager is, as far as possible, to put people in jobs that can and will make them truly happy. **We are trying to do just that with our career conversations and our talent management strategy.**

Colleagues I truly believe that Unisa is ideally positioned to become a high performance institution as envisaged in the HE Act, The Green Paper and our own revised strategy. Probably the most complex and consistent effort in that transformation will be leadership and I call upon all of you to play your part. I trust that you will rise to that challenge, Unisa needs you and the youth of South Africa need you.