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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

I   INTRODUCTION

Firstly, please accept my apologies for not being able to present this address in person, however, I believe I have the best possible apology that any person could tender, and that is that my own daughter is graduating. I'm sure you would agree that that is one of the highlights of any parent's life and so I rest assured of your understanding of my absence. May I also use this opportunity to thank Prof Ncube for reading this address on my behalf.

When I looked that your very impressive programme ladies and gentlemen, and the wide array of topics, I was initially stumped. What would I talk about that would find resonance with such a diverse audience? And so I turned to what I know best, and that is of course, the

strategic global trends and dynamics that are shaping education discourse and finding their echoes in education practice at all levels, in this continent and country.

For those who may not know, the University of South Africa is the largest Distance Education institution on the Continent, with enrolments of around 380 000 students. What makes Unisa quite unique is that we are a formal part of the South African higher education sector – in fact more than one-third of all South African students are enrolled with Unisa, and so we are also subsidised and funded by Government, albeit at different rates to our residential universities, and acknowledged as a key role player in South African Higher Education. We are also one of the very few distance education institutions in the world whose formal qualifications are quality assured and accredited by government, and recognised by all Commonwealth countries, amongst others. As such Unisa is regarded as a leader in Global Open Distance and E-Learning, and a good part of my time is spent discussing ODeL global strategy and implementation with my global and continental peers.

Following on the hugely successful 26th World International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) Conference hosted by Unisa at Sun City last year, I was honoured to be appointed President of the Executive Committee of the ICDE, which provides a wonderful opportunity, not only to keep at the cutting edge of global higher education trends, but also to insert and advance in a very deliberate way, the *voice* of African Distance Education, particularly as articulated in the strategy of the African Council on Distance Education. It has been my experience that most education trends emanate from concerns that are generic to both distance and face-to-face education (although to different degrees) and it is within this context and understanding that I would like to touch on some of these and the way in which they are shaping 21st Century Leadership and Management. I am sure that you will find that they find their echoes in other levels of education as well.

II   EDUCATION IN TRANSITION

There was a time when education leadership and management was fairly straight forward. Leadership, management, the academe and students knew what was expected of them. It was all fairly predictable, even through times of socio-political transformation. In fact, the

institution that is the "university" has remained remarkably unchanged for almost 1000 years. All of that has changed and we are living a revolution in education that is impacting on everything that we know.

Gibbons (1998:9) encapsulates the prevailing environment and the more direct challenge of 21st Century higher education (including ODeL) when he asserts:

> During the past twenty years, a new paradigm of the function of higher education in society has gradually emerged. Gone, it seems, is the high-mindedness of a von Humboldt or a Newman, with its pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. In their places has been put a view of higher education in which universities are meant to serve society, primarily by supporting the economy and promoting the quality of life of its citizens. While it is true that universities still retain their role as the "conscience of society," the critical function of universities has been displaced in favour of a more pragmatic role in terms of the provision of qualified manpower and the production of knowledge. These changes are not notional. Rather, they are intended to have direct practical impact on the behaviour and functioning of higher education institutions.

There are specific global drivers that have contributed to a number of identifiable higher education trends that have contributed to this changed role of higher education. These include:

- *globalisation, internationalisation, quality and competitiveness* (2006; Enders and Fulton 2002; Knight 2006; Scott 2000, Van Vught et al 2002);
- *massification and ongoing demands for access* (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley 2009);
- *the changing role and function of the academe, linked to the ascendency of managerialism or corporatisation* (Ginsberg 2011; Middlehurst 1993);
- *the changing role, shape and content of research and development, knowledge and pedagogies*; (Porter, L W., & Lawrence E. McKibbin, LE 1998; Gibbons, M. 1998)
- *the growing role and influence of stakeholder engagement and relations* (Hodges & Dubb 2012); and
- *changing governance and management practices* (Brown, M.C., et al. 2010).

These trends have come with significant challenges, some of which are mentioned below, by Lad (2011), Ernst & Young (2012) and others:

The ubiquity of knowledge and the demand for access

There has been a massive increase in, and availability of new knowledge that has coincided with the global mass expansion of access to university education. Universities are no longer the sole producers or repositories of knowledge, nor is the knowledge produced typical of that which has been traditionally generated by universities. Massification has also resulted in a decided shift in the distribution of the world's tertiary education students. The 'balance of power' in terms of tertiary student enrolment has moved decisively from the combined 'north' (or the developed nations) which previously enrolled two out of every four students (now one out of every four), to the developing nations which collectively enroll 3 out of every four students, representing an approximate 25%: 75% ratio (UNESCO 2009:10). (It should be noted however that *participation* rates are still skewed in favour of the "North").

The impact of technology

The so-called "digital revolution" has transformed our lives in a fundamental way, likewise higher education. In this dynamic context there are divergent opinions on the future shape of higher education, and these span the spectrum from completely online to hybrid models that include both face-to-face and online delivery. One thing is certain: technology is playing an increasing role in our core business, in the way in which "education is delivered and accessed, and the way 'value' is created by higher education providers, public and private alike" (Ernst & Young (2012))

Higher education funding and financial management

Globally, higher education is receiving less support from government. HEI's must now do more with less while being steered more stringently and held more accountable in terms of increasingly bureaucratic regulatory compliance, socio-economic transformation and their traditional core mandate. This has resulted in the perceived need to increase third stream income, maximise the use of existing facilities and capacities, move into multi-stakeholder engagement and in a growing trend, compete for students.

Internationalisation and multi stakeholder engagement

National and global student, academic and brand mobility is gaining traction. At a more macro level, the rising phenomenon of marketization is rendering the notion of education as a common good and a vehicle for social justice increasingly obsolete. It is very firmly a

tradeable commodity, listed as such on the GATS on borderless transnational education. HEIs are called to find alternative means of countering the reduced numbers of local student enrolments and subsidy income through the active solicitation of higher-fee-paying international students and top academics, and the aggressive promotion of the university brand as a means of attracting both. This trend affirms the probability of increased global partnerships between higher education institutions, as well as between higher education institutions and stakeholders from government and public and private enterprises.

Altbach and Reisberg (2013:2) assert:

> Global student mobility creates big business. Approximately 3 million students are studying abroad, contributing more than US$75 billion to the global economy…..Many countries and institutions depend on international student enrollments to balance academic budgets. In some cases (Australia, for example), government policy has identified international higher education— including foreign study in Australia, branch campuses, and other initiatives as a significant income stream for higher education. The United Kingdom similarly views international education as a source of income, charging non-European Union foreign students higher fees. Increasingly, American universities also see international education as an income stream.

The success of global mobility is likely to exacerbate the gap between both the "haves" *vs* "have-nots" *and* the digital divide institutionally, nationally and globally – indeed latest reports indicate that this is in fact the case.

Declining state funding for education and reduced financial aid for students is causing HEIs to consider seriously, multi stakeholder engagement, agreements and partnerships in both the public and private sectors, and with education and non-educational entities. It is likely that in future, (Ernst &Young, 2102) assert, "universities will need to build significantly deeper relationships with industry in the decade ahead — to differentiate teaching and learning programs, support the funding and application of research, and reinforce the role of universities as drivers of innovation and growth".

The internationalisation of higher education is currently a dominant trend, especially in Europe. There is a quite deliberate and concerted effort to harness and leverage existing capacities (both human and infrastructural) towards the achievement of clearly defined strategies and agendas, with the intention of expanding these into the rest of the world, and

especially the domains of developing nations. In South Africa the recent White Paper on PSET (2013) specifically encourages the sharing of available resources in order to maximise their affordances and Continentally, one now finds such institutions as the recently established African Union University which aims to do precisely the same, at a continental level. Clearly sharing and caring is the way to go, and conference such as this one provide an excellent opportunity to cement relationship and networks to that end. However, on entering into such agreements there must be clear evidence of and confidence in a win-win situation, as developing nations have often found, at their costs, that the potential of a project is not reflected in the reality.

The changing regulatory environment and increased governance and accountability

Increasingly legal, regulatory and policy environments are in a state of flux as governments adjust their strategies and regulatory regimes to a dynamic and relatively unpredictable global environment, and to national imperatives. The impact of ICTs and the possibilities for education, for example, OERs, MOOCs, and the protection of students' personal information have brought to the fore complex legal barriers and impediments to the uptake of these innovations, thus introducing additional elements of higher education management. Additionally, many HEIs are being "steered" more tightly through increasingly stringent regulatory reporting requirements, whose compliance is monitored and measured along business lines to ensure that agreed operational targets have been met. This speaks to a growing emphasis on accountability and a performance management culture that has brought compliance to the fore in line with sound and transparent corporate and cooperative governance as key institutional imperatives and drivers. This leads to my final observation.

The policy and decision making processes at universities have become increasingly complex as more stakeholders and role players become involved in education delivery. Vossensteyn states: "they become more and more a part of a multi-layered system where agenda setting and decision making take place on various levels (and across various sectors simultaneously)" (2006: 34).

Perhaps as a consequence of this increasingly complex environment, there is a move towards the inculcation in higher education leadership and management, of ethical leadership, corporate governance, and co-operative governance and stakeholder relations and management. In South Africa for example, we find these espoused in King III (2009). (And please note the draft King IV has just been released for comment.) Governance, enterprise risk management and accountability are swiftly becoming fundamental pillars of higher education leadership and management alongside, and integrated with, strategy, planning, funding and quality, to be used as a primary means of ensuring compliance with internationally benchmarked governance practices, and the steering of HEIs into the desired norms, practices, behaviours, accountability and outcomes.

CONCLUSION

I would like to suggest that higher education is at one of those rare junctures in history. There appears to be a momentum towards various convergences among and between the traditional and less traditional models of education provision, and I suspect that this will be influenced by geo-politics. In South Africa for example, we are witnessing a fundamental reshaping and reordering that is clearly drawing HEIs closer together and integrating them in a way that presupposes far greater collaboration – not only amongst institutions, but amongst sectors, as well as government, business and other HEI stakeholders.

I am not convinced that the future shape of South African higher education - and perhaps even higher education in the developing world - will mirror the shape of that in the North (or developed world) for example, to the extent that it does at the moment; neither am I convinced that South African ODeL will mirror that which one might find in the North in the future. I suspect that as the education world frantically *reformats its hard-drive* (to use an ICT analogy) we might find some very different HE models emerging, including in ODeL.

I say that, because in the reformatting of our "education hard drives", we open up a space to write new identities that reflect our uniqueness, our current circumstances and our national and institutional aspirations: identities that are not poor imitations - or pirate copies – of an original that was written a long time ago. It will indeed be interesting to look

back in ten year's time and see which routes we have followed. The future of education is both exciting and daunting, and it is the responsibility of today's education leaders, academe and teachers - you and I - to ensure that most elusive of goals: the flourishing of quality education in Africa towards a genuine manifestation of Africa's rising.

I thank you

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