



Private Bag X863 PRETORIA, 0001, South Africa. 123 Francis Baard Street, Tel: +27 12 312 5555, Fax: +27 12 323 5618, +27 12 324 7879
Private Bag X9192, CAPE TOWN, 8000, South Africa. 120 Plain Street, Tel: +27 21 465 5513, Fax: +27 21 465 2943, +27 21 465 7936

25th May 2016

Minister Blade Nzimande to meet Canadian Counterpart and Universities After Securing Significant University Partnerships for South Africa in the USA

Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande heads for Canada today after a successful visit to the United States of America during which he secured a number of significant partnerships which will benefit students, researchers, and universities in South Africa.

Invited to Canada by Reza Moridi, Ontario Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Research and Innovation, Minister Nzimande has a full program of encounters in the capital Ottawa, beginning with the Parliamentary Secretary of International Development, Karina Gould. Meetings with the Canada Bureau of International Education, Universities Canada – the umbrella organisation for higher education institutions – and with the International Development Research Center are also on the agenda.

In Toronto, Minister Nzimande visits three universities and the representatives of other higher education institutions, as well as meeting Minister Moridi. As in the USA, the main purpose of the Canadian leg of the visit is to forge new strategic partnerships in support of the Department of Higher Education and Training's new University Capacity Development Program.

This program aims to strengthen South African universities as they transform, giving students and academics the opportunity to benefit from partnerships, visits, shared research projects, and other exchanges with their colleagues in institutions in other countries. It is a key element within the broader strategy aimed at increasing the number of highly qualified black South African academics active in higher education.

Universities and foundations in Canada and the US have indicated their willingness to participate in and contribute to this strengthening of the South African university sector, both through partnerships and financially. The Minister's trip has been designed to cement those ties and to agree on concrete steps forward.

While in New York, agreement was reached with the internationally renowned Columbia University to create a program to support young South African academics through Masters, PhD, and teaching exchanges.

"The program will be named after Pixley kaSeme, one of South Africa's greatest sons, the first black lawyer in our country, and the first African to graduate from Columbia," said Minister Nzimande. "As the winner of the Curtis Medal, Columbia's highest oratorical honour, as a fighter for freedom and justice, and as a person of great learning and intellectual endeavour, he will serve as an inspiration to future generations as we work together with our American partners to increase the number of black PhDs and lecturers in our universities as part of our essential program of transformation."

While in New York, Minister Nzimande met senior representatives of a number of major US foundations with an interest in the transformation and expansion of the higher education sector in South Africa, including the Carnegie Corporation and the Mellon Foundation. New York University, and the Universities of Pennsylvania and Connecticut, all major institutions with huge research budgets and an appetite for quality partnerships, also sent representatives to meet the Minister in New York.

In the Midwest, Minister Nzimande visited the University of Wisconsin, which has agreed to build on its existing South African partnerships by partnering the University of Zululand to develop a new engineering program at its Richards Bay campus. Wisconsin already has close ties with the Universities of the Western Cape and Pretoria.

The University of Illinois, which already has a partnership with the University of KwaZulu Natal, will now expand to working with the new University of Mpumalanga, particularly in areas related to food security.

In Washington a meeting with 15 universities, many with a long and excellent track record in graduating students from disadvantaged communities, agreed to form a consortium to support South Africa's University Capacity Development Program. Under the leadership of Rutgers University, one of the most formidable centres of learning, teaching and research in the USA, their particular focus will be on supporting relationships between historically black universities in both countries.

"We are excited to work with the partner universities in South Africa and the United States, as well as with the South African Ministry for Higher Education and Training in building this collaborative network," said Kyle Farmbry, Dean of the Graduate School at Rutgers University-Newark, who will serve as the Rutgers coordinator for this initiative.

Minister Nzimande's visit to North America has been in the pipeline for several months, and his visit takes place just before the exam period and the end of the academic year in US and Canadian universities, ensuring that he has been able to meet a significant number of opinion leaders and decision makers within higher education before they depart for the northern hemisphere summer.

"This trip has very real significance for the transformation of our universities, the empowerment of black academics, and the long term positive effect the partnerships we are forging will have on the entire sector for many years to come," said Minister Nzimande. "I am very pleased at the outcomes we have achieved, and I know that academics across the country will also be very pleased once the benefits of this trip begin to filter through to individual universities and departments."

Issued by Ministry.

Khaye Nkwanyana

Director: Media Liaison Officer

Department of Higher Education and Training

Tel: +27 12 312 5555 / Cell: +27 83 952 9723

Email: Nkwanyana.K@dhet.gov.za

123 Francis Baard Street

Private Bag X174

Pretoria, 0001