



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Message of Support by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr BE Nzimande, MP, at the inauguration of Ms Thandi Modise as Chancellor of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Programme Director

The honourable Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, and Chancellor of CPUT, Ms Thandi Modise
Chairperson of the CPUT Council, Ms Nogolide Nojozi
Members of Council

Acting Vice-Chancellor of CPUT, Dr Chris Nhlapo

Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors present

Senior Managers and Students

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

It is a great honour for me to be part of this special occasion of the inauguration of our esteemed Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Ms Thandi Modise as Chancellor of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Ms Thandi Modise needs no introduction to any of us. She has an impeccable record in our liberation movement and government, having been elected and served as an MP in 1994 and Speaker of the North West Provincial Legislature from 2004 to 2009, as well as Premier of the North West Provincial Government from 2010 to 2014.

The appointment of Ms Modise into the Chancellorship of CPUT happens at a time when CPUT and our universities in general are confronted with a myriad of challenges pertaining to issues of governance, disruptions of the academic project at various campuses, as well as increasing calls for reorientation of university curriculum. These challenges have in some instances, put at risk the academic project and also threatened to reverse some of

the gains and investments that government has made into our higher education system since 1994. However, they have also presented us with an opportunity to pause and reflect on the academic trajectory our universities have taken since the attainment of our freedom. Issues of relevance and responsiveness to society and communities that our institutions find themselves in, have sharply re-emerged in higher education discourse recently.

It is in times such as these that the issue of leadership (sound leadership) within our university sector becomes even more critical. By leadership I am not only referring to executive or senior management of institutions, but rather leadership at various levels including student leadership. Our universities desperately need leadership that will attend to all these challenges without compromising the core functions of institutions of higher learning, which is teaching and learning as well as knowledge production.

Chancellor Modise, I believe that your addition to the CPUT community will assist the university to overcome some of the intractable challenges that it has been faced with over the last few years. Your firm leadership style and clarity of vision will bring about the inspiration that the university needs to move towards the realisation of its 2020 vision to “move from good to great”. It will assist to create optimum conditions for the university to flourish in its mission to enhance and develop quality and effectiveness in research and teaching.

Your vast experience in leadership, and your standing in society will assist CPUT to attain its goals of offering high quality educational and training opportunities that foster the holistic development of students through teaching and learning, research and scholarship as well as engagement in collaboration with its strategic partners.

Chancellor, indeed a lot has been achieved since the reconfiguration of our higher education landscape in 1994. University enrolments have increased significantly

with black students now making up approximately 70 percent of overall university enrolments, and women around 65 percent. Over the past eight year we have introduced infrastructure development programmes that have seen our universities developing their campuses in order to make them more conducive to teaching and learning.

The funding support to our deserving students through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has also increased over the years, although this input remains inadequate in relation to existing needs. Certainly without this kind of intervention, the majority of our students from economically poor backgrounds would not be able to afford tertiary education.

Having said that, there is still a long way to go. Participation rate and the regeneration of the professoriate remain some of the issues that my Department still have to deal with adequately. In line with the National Development Plan (NDP) we are chasing a participation rate of 25 percent by 2030, from the current

19,2 percent. The NDP also sets the target of 75 percent of university staff to have PhDs by 2030. This will indeed be a daunting task and will require all our universities to play their part in assisting us to realise this goal. From our side, we have come up with a strategy to improve the quantity and quality of academics in our system through the *Staffing South African Universities Framework*. The framework includes programmes for developing a new generation of academics; for supporting existing academics to improve their teaching and research skills; as well as supporting the development of leadership and management at universities.

The *Staffing South African Universities Framework* is seen as a key driver to transform and capacitate staffing at our institutions of higher learning. We hope that the full implementation of this framework will help us to get closer to the targets that have been set in the NDP.

Madam Chancellor, although the core functions of research, teaching and community outreach are defining features of all universities across the world, universities

of technology such as CPUT have a special role to play in South Africa today in the context of massive levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality that continue to afflict a huge number of our people. With their orientation towards the application side of knowledge, universities of technology are instrumental in the production of intermediate and high level skills that will facilitate innovation necessary to keep the country on its pre-determined economic path.

Throughout the world, universities of technology have made a major impact on the development of their countries and regional economies by preparing graduates for the world of work, and applying their research skills to identifying the problems and needs of society and industry, and together finding solutions to those problems. Their career-oriented programmes prepare graduates for the world of work. Their research emphasis on applied research and their links with industry ensure that they remain relevant, up-to-date, and that their graduates are more familiar, through work-integrated learning, with the way industry functions.

Because universities of technology must deliver appropriately qualified graduates to the labour market, they are therefore more closely aligned to the business sector to ensure relevance of the curricula. This entails a continual revision of educational programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels to better address the needs of industry, business and communities.

Certainly the challenges that confront our universities are enormous. However, I believe that with dedicated collective effort from all of us, we will be able to make a positive impact to ensure that our universities remain resilient and maintain their global competitiveness.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment as Chancellor of this important institution. My Department wishes you and CPUT great success going forward. Be assured of our continued support as you strive to assist this institution to fulfil its mission.

Best wishes