

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

The Rhodes University Community Newsletter

Rhodos

Special Edition

AUGUST 2014



"We exist on this earth to create a better society in which everyone's intellect can flower instead of just wallowing in survival where they have to worry about where their next meal is coming from."

If it isn't broken don't fix it - Vice-Chancellor Dr Saleem Badat looks back on his eight years at Rhodes

There are all sorts of sayings that we accept without question. One of these is: *'If it isn't broken don't fix it'*. In this feature we take a journey back in time with Dr Saleem Badat who believes that *everything* needs to be questioned and, in many cases, changed.

"We exist on this earth to create a better society in which everyone's intellect can flower instead of just wallowing in survival where they have to worry about where their next meal is coming from."

All who know Dr Badat instantly recognise this quote as 'classic Saleem'. In his time at Rhodes the creation of a better society has been his key preoccupation. It has meant boldly changing ways of doing things that had been entrenched over a century of the University's existence.

Sitting at the long desk in his office at Rhodes, where he took up the position of Vice-Chancellor on the 1st of June 2006, we share some of his memories, achievements and ambitions these past eight years.

Arriving at Rhodes - A particular way of doing things

"When I first arrived at Rhodes my impression was coloured by the pervasive attitude of *'it ain't broken don't fix it'*," he says.

"I got the distinct message that Rhodes had a particular way of doing things, which had worked for generations, and that I shouldn't come here and start trying to make radical changes."

A Human Resources Manager at the time even took it upon herself to tell Dr Badat, in the presence of the outgoing Vice-Chancellor, to "Look, listen and learn how we do things at Rhodes."

In his inscrutable manner he heard all but said nothing.

"I knew I would deal with all this in my own way and in my own time," continues Dr Badat who set about interrogating how things were done at Rhodes and what needed to radically change.

Strong insights

He already had strong insights about this, given that before he took up the position of VC, he had, since 1999, occupied the position of the first CEO of the Council on Higher Education.

The Council had done an audit on all South African universities, including Rhodes in 2005, which had highlighted its strengths and weaknesses.

"While Rhodes certainly demonstrated itself as an academically outstanding university, key indicators suggested that it was quite shallow in terms of how it was tackling the imperatives of modernisation, transformation, difference and diversity," he explains.

Uninterrogated conventional wisdoms

"There was no deep consideration about what kind of graduates it sought to produce because the thinking was generally based on uninterrogated conventional wisdoms."

"What occurred to me then is that Rhodes was basking in its slogan *Where Leaders Learn* without questioning what this means. It felt like it was some marketing person's invention, rather than a heartfelt philosophy that the University was applying."



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Rhodos Editorial team
would like to express
their gratitude to
everyone who supplied
us with pictures.

Vision of a very different VC
- Distinct in several ways



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And so it was that Dr Badat set about vigorously engaging in the transformation of the University as the new VC who was very different to every previous VC in several distinct ways, as he explains:

"I'm black, I come from a fairly radical political tradition, I come from the Humanities and Arts, I am an atheist, I attended a government school, I did my PhD at York University, not Oxford University, and my first post at a South African university was at the University of the Western Cape - an historically black university where I was recruited by the late Dr Jakes Gerwel.

"I say this because there was a definite tendency among white South African universities to see themselves as the Princeton or Oxford of South Africa. This very tendency breeds the 'if it ain't broken don't fix it' mindset, which entrenches old boy ideologies that ostracise newcomers with fresh, diverse, non-racist, non-sexist approaches.

"Transforming outdated institutional culture was and still is crucial to the future of Rhodes "because if we do not do this, we will not keep black and women academics at Rhodes for meaningful periods because they will not feel this is their home," says Dr Badat who has been highly supportive of organisations like the Women's Academic Solidarity Association (WASA). Established at Rhodes in 2004, it provides an academic mentoring space for women.

"What occurred to me then is that Rhodes was basking in its slogan Where Leaders Learn without questioning what this means. It felt like it was some marketing person's invention, rather than a heartfelt philosophy that the University was applying."



Professor Jakes Gerwel

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Academic project

- Improving academic excellence; addressing 'race', gender, equity and diversity challenges

Part of Dr Badat's challenge to lead Rhodes into the future was to address the University's 'race', gender, equity and diversity challenges, while at the same time improving academic excellence and the sustainability of the institution.

"I was extremely fortunate to have by my side, my two Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Dr Sizwe Mabizela and Dr Peter Clayton, who were appointed in 2008 as part of a senior management restructuring. I am deeply indebted to them for the ongoing support they have given me and for the significant contribution they have made," he says.

"We share the belief that you cannot be a quality university without respecting and affirming differences and embracing diversity. You need to appreciate people from rural and working class backgrounds, middle class backgrounds, black people, white people, gay and lesbian people, people from other countries ... without this, you are not only diminished as a university, you are diminished in terms of coping in the real world.

Plenty of good people

"We are still nowhere near achieving the fullness of diversity, where all people, irrespective of their class, 'race', gender, language, nationality or sexual orientation feel Rhodes is their home. But I am proud to say there are many good people at the University working towards this who will keep up the momentum."

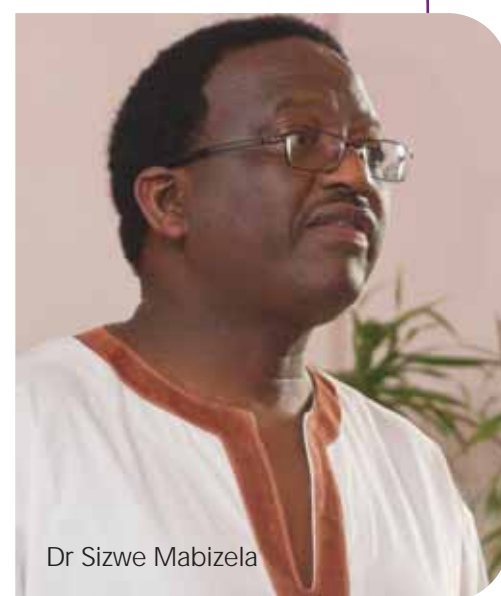
Equity-wise, the University has made significant progress in its student body. Today, 64% of students at Rhodes are black and 47% of these students are from South Africa. At the same time the University has been very successful in terms of maintaining a healthy number of white students.

Academic standards

"Regarding our academic standards, I am proud to say they speak for themselves," continues Dr Badat, "As I said at the graduation ceremony, we rejoice that we enjoy among the best pass and graduation rates in South Africa; that we have



Dr Peter Clayton



Dr Sizwe Mabizela

among the most highly qualified academic staff and the best research output per academic staff member, and that we pursue socially committed and mutually respectful and beneficial engagements with various communities.

"In 2014 we had 2 367 graduates, which is a new University record, and necessitated six graduation ceremonies instead of the usual five. Given our total student body of 7 485 students, this is by far the best graduation rate among South African universities."

"Of these students, 1 286 students received undergraduate degrees, and 1 081 or 46.0% received postgraduate degrees. The postgraduate degrees also constitute a new University record."

"We are also very proud of the fact that 60% of our graduates are women, and 21% are international students from 37 countries in the rest of Africa and around the world."

Academic demographics

The academic body is lagging in terms of the equity profile, with overall black academics comprising 25% and women 42%, but with lower percentages at more senior levels.

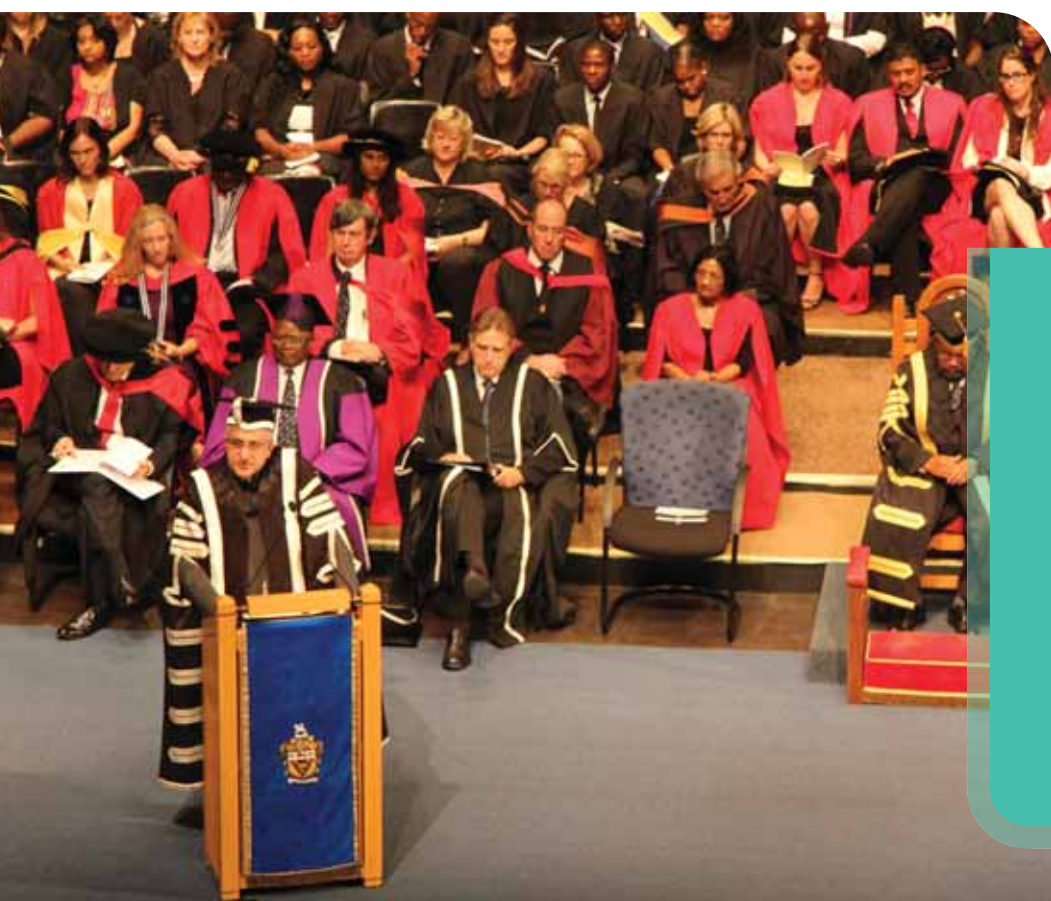
"The figures were 16% black and 34% women in 2006 and I had hoped to considerably improve on this, but various conditions have constrained this," says Dr Badat.

"It must remain a key imperative of the University. At the same time I am a huge critic of blind equality, which has been the path of certain South African universities. Eroding academic quality and integrity to achieve a demographic result does not serve the best interests of students or universities or South Africa."

Equity with quality

Plenty of effort and resources are going to have to be devoted towards pursuing equity with quality and quality with equity, adds Dr Badat who is committed to increasing the number of black and women academics, with an emphasis on South African postgraduates and academics.

"Efforts towards achieving this include prioritising the employment of suitably qualified black and women academics through an Employment Equity Action Plan and the recruitment and selection processes of the University."



"We are still nowhere near achieving the fullness of diversity, where all people, irrespective of their class, 'race', gender, language, nationality or sexual orientation feel Rhodes is their home. But I am proud to say there are many good people at the University working towards this who will keep up the momentum."

Next generation academics

- 41 outstanding next generation academics since 2001

"These are Rhodes-grown academics who can hold their own anywhere in the world," says Dr Badat.



Dr Mandy Hlengwa



Dr Jo-Anne Vorster



Prof Lynn Quinn

Dr Badat has passionately supported a highly successful programme at Rhodes to build the next generation of outstanding academics, with an emphasis on black and women South Africans.

Called the Accelerated Development Programme, it is a three-year academic advancement programme, funded by the University Council and the US-based Kresge and Mellon Foundations.

Participating academics have a mentor and 50% teaching load, to give them time to focus on their postgraduate degrees and research. During the three years the participating academics obtain their Masters or PhDs or undertake postdoctoral work. They also undertake courses related to building teaching expertise.

Since its inception in 2001, 41 outstanding next generation academics have graduated from the programme; most have stayed on at Rhodes.

Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL)

Dr Badat has given his full backing to the Accelerated Development Programme at Rhodes, run by Professor Lynn Quinn, Dr Jo-Anne Vorster and Dr Mandy Hlengwa from the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL).

CHERTL focuses on the development of academic staff as professional educators, and the promotion and assurance of quality in teaching.

Dr Badat persuaded Professor Chrissie Boughey, now the Dean of Teaching and Learning at Rhodes, to turn down a post in the United Kingdom and stay on

at Rhodes to develop CHERTL as a leading African Centre.

Such is his passion for building the next generation of academics and diversifying its social composition that three years ago he chaired a major initiative to develop a comprehensive programme and proposal to persuade the Department of Higher Education and Training to expand the programme at a national level.

The programme has received the support of the National Planning Commission and is included in the National Development Plan. Three years later he is still waiting to see funding support and implementation. In the meantime, Rhodes is actively growing its programme.

Postgraduate and research output

- A research-active university

Another major achievement during Dr Badat's time is the positioning of Rhodes as a research-active university with outstanding postgraduate and postdoctoral success rates and impressive research output across its six faculties.

In 2006 when he joined Rhodes, it graduated 46 PhDs and 171 Masters students. In 2014, Rhodes achieved a new University record of 78 PhDs and another new record of 286 Masters degrees.

"It's a fabulous achievement for the smallest university in the country!" emphasises Dr Badat. "To appreciate the significance of the 78 PhDs, you have to note that a sister university that is four times our size and has over 30 000 students, will award 72 PhDs at its 2014 graduation ceremonies."

Contributing to its PhD record are Rhodes' 10 DST-NRF SARCHI Research Chairs. "Without the considerable effort of Dr Clayton I doubt that we would have 10 NRF Chairs. These are the most

prestigious Chairs that are awarded to a South African university by the National Research Foundation and the Department of Science and Technology," he says.

Dr Badat and his team have worked hard to boost research funding. Since 2006 research funding for Rhodes, sought from a wide variety of sources, has more than doubled - from some R80million to R210million.

Sandisa Imbewu

He has put considerable energy into establishing strategic new research initiatives at Rhodes, such as Sandisa Imbewu, launched with the support of the University's Board of Governors and Council in 2011. Meaning "we are growing" in isiXhosa, it reflects Dr Badat's strategy to grow Rhodes' postgraduate student numbers, research and development programmes and to multiply its postgraduate and research outputs.

"To appreciate the significance of the 78 PhDs, you have to note that a sister university that is four times our size and has over 30 000 students, will award 72 PhDs at its 2014 graduation ceremonies."



Leadership Ethics

- Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics



Dr Badat can also take huge credit for the establishment of the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics in 2012.

A renewable R12.5million bequest from Allan Gray, a Rhodes University alumnus, honorary doctorate holder and founder of the Allan Gray investment company, funds the Centre.

Dr Badat says the University and Allan Gray recognised the need for an institution that will provide education and training dedicated towards producing a generation of leaders with integrity.

"Given the pressing challenges of poverty and unemployment, hunger and disease, social equity and justice, of deepening and consolidating our democracy,

our success critically depends on the extent to which we cultivate, grow and possess responsible and ethical leaders," he says.

"Such leaders are not always easy to find. The lack of ethical, competent and accountable leadership has produced a widespread culture of unprofessional and disdainful conduct and service, and sheer indifference to the basic needs of people."

Dr Badat says that South African society continues to witness the abuse of power by some of those who are given the responsibility to lead. They use their positions "for political, economic and private gain and self-enrichment, as manifested in corruption, fraud and dubious tender-preneurial activities."

"Given the pressing challenges of poverty and unemployment, hunger and disease, social equity and justice, of deepening and consolidating our democracy, our success critically depends on the extent to which we cultivate, grow and possess responsible and ethical leaders."

Prof Pedro Tabensky, Director for the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics

Society and Community

- Community engagement & Engaged Research

2014 Community Engagement RoundTable.

Dr Badat is a strong driver of ethical, mutually respectful and beneficial community engagement at Rhodes, whereby knowledge and expertise are brought to bear on social problems in a way that ensures that there is learning on the part of students

and academics.

He defends fundamental, 'blue skies' research but also encourages research that directly grapples with contemporary economic and social problems and challenges.

Both Dr Badat and his partner Ms Shireen Badat have put in endless hours and effort to bring

Rhodes and the greater Grahamstown community closer together.

He says that he wishes he could have achieved more in this regard, including increasing the number of students at Rhodes who come from disadvantaged backgrounds in Grahamstown.



"Dr Badat defends fundamental, 'blue skies' research but also encourages research that directly grapples with contemporary economic and social problems and challenges."

Upstart

- A Media & Literacy Development Initiative

In 2008 Ms Shireen Badat and Ms Louise Vale started a fascinating media and literacy development initiative with learners from disadvantaged schools in Grahamstown called *Upstart*.

Over the past six years Ms Badat has been a key driver of the initiative, in partnership with the School of Journalism & Media Studies at Rhodes, other Rhodes academic departments and support divisions, students and staff, non-governmental organisations and communities organisations.

Journalism students provide writing, editing and radio production and filmmaking support to the Upstarters who produced the *Upstart* newspaper, a weekly radio show and a series of fascinating short films as part of their film project.

The three-to-five-minute films focus on social issues that Grahamstown youth confront in their daily lives, including violence, rape, poverty and a poor education.



Ms Shireen Badat and Project Co-ordinator, Ms Nompumezo Makinana

Pledge against corruption

- Corruption Watch

In May 2012, with Dr Badat's leadership and urging, Rhodes University became the first institution in the country to sign civil society organisation Corruption Watch's pledge against corruption.

"All forms of corruption are highly corrosive of the moral foundations of our society, of effective administration, and ultimately of development and democracy," he says.

"By signing the Corruption Watch pledge, as individuals and as a University, we committed ourselves to the fight against corruption generally - in our country, province, district and municipality, in the public and private sectors and civil society - and specifically at Rhodes."

Grahamstown's failing municipality

He has been extremely outspoken about Grahamstown's failing municipality, including its inability to manage the town's vital water services and its disregard for the needs of its citizens in a town with 65% unemployment.

He says that far more people could be working productively and earning a salary if the municipality was functioning effectively. Large new building projects are sometimes delayed, and, with it, job opportunities because of inefficiency on the part of the municipality.

He also hopes that through a partnership between Rhodes, the municipality and donors, Grahamstown could become a town in which wifi is available to all.



Dr Saleem Badat

"By signing the Corruption Watch pledge, as individuals and as a University, we committed ourselves to the fight against corruption generally - in our country, province, district and municipality, in the public and private sectors and civil society - and specifically at Rhodes."

Spatial upgrades & building construction

- Major infrastructure projects

A man with a strong sense of not only maintaining what you are given in terms of infrastructure, but also of adding to it, he has spearheaded major spatial upgrades and building construction at Rhodes.

Infrastructure-wise, during Dr Badat's time, Rhodes has benefitted from a spectacular new R75million library, new Education and Environmental Learning buildings, a new postgraduate commons, seven new residences and the new Desmond Tutu and Oppidan dining halls.

"Over the next three years Rhodes will build, with state, alumni and business support, a R120million new Life Science building, a R35million new School of Languages complex, and a new postgraduate residence at a cost of R20 million," he says.



Higher education for talented people

- R150million in financial aid

As part of the legacy he leaves behind, the University will also invest over R150million in financial aid to deserving students in coming years "so that as many talented people as possible can benefit from a Rhodes education".

His concern for the education of future students at Rhodes will not end with his departure in July to take up a senior post with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York as its first Programme Director of International Higher Education and Strategic Projects.

"At the Mellon Foundation I will direct an annual budget of over R90 million to support the arts and humanities at South African universities. If it continues to perform as it currently does, Rhodes will receive its fair share," he assures.

Re-imagine and reshape our future

As Dr Badat prepares to leave Rhodes, he calls upon all the students and academics to continue "to re-imagine and reshape Rhodes and our future, to forge just and humane ways of conducting our affairs, and to ensure that reason, people, human development and social justice are at the heart of all of our conduct and actions." He further calls on all alumni to give back to the institution that has helped to shape them into the people they are today.

"Your support is vital if we are to continue producing knowledge to enhance human understanding and invigorate economic and social development, if we are to continue educating to the full, new generations of students, and if we are to continue serving our society and continent." Financial sustainability has been one of the major challenges to which he has successfully risen, and to which the next Vice-Chancellor at Rhodes will need to do the same.

Farewell to Rhodes

- From the winter of 2006 to the winter of 2014



"Sometime in the future when I have had time to carefully reflect on my time at Rhodes as Vice-Chancellor, and specifically as its first black Vice-Chancellor, I will write my memoirs on this time. For now, I would like to thank Rhodes for the great privilege of leading the University for eight years."





"I wish I could have done more in this and many other areas. At the same time I have never forgotten the wise counsel I received just before I came to Rhodes from the late Johnny Issel, who stands out as one of South Africa's most outstanding anti-apartheid political organisers."

"On a cold evening in London in the winter of 2006, as we walked to King's Cross rail station, he took my hand in his and said: 'Remember you don't have to prove yourself to anyone anymore'. His first point was in recognition of the fact that I was coming to an historically white university, and his second point was that while change is necessary, it is impossible to change everything overnight."





"The Rhodes University of 2014 is a very different place to what it was when he arrived in the middle of 2006."

Deans bid Farewell to Badat

- A sincere thank you

When I became Chair of the Deans' Forum at the end of 2013, I had no idea that one of my tasks in the coming year would be to say goodbye to our Vice-Chancellor, Saleem Badat. While I'm very sad that Dr Badat is leaving Rhodes University, I'm nonetheless honoured to have the opportunity to thank him for all he has done for us.

Apart from his wife and sons, the Deans and DVCs have probably seen more of Dr Badat than anyone else over the last eight years. The annual round of meetings at the University mean we have spent many, many hours with him. The Rhodes University of 2014 is a very different place to what it was when he arrived in the middle of 2006. My experience of Dr Badat's leadership is that the pursuit of social justice - of 'transformation' - has always been his central goal. However, the pursuit of transformation has always been accompanied by an acute awareness of the need to protect what is at the heart of any university - the academic project.

This is not to say that what we research, which knowledge and which kinds of knowledge we produce, what we teach and how we teach it has not been questioned. But rather, in spite of this questioning, Dr Badat has always sought to ensure that we can move forward with the academic project - something that has not always been the case at other universities in this country. For this I believe we all - students, academics, support staff - owe him profound thanks because it is the academic project which makes a university a university and not some other, lesser, sort of institution.

Dr Badat has used his leadership for the pursuit of social justice not by ruling from above, as some other Vice-Chancellors in South Africa can be seen to have done, but rather by engaging with us at all levels. This engagement has been characterized by absolute integrity and the hard thinking and questioning which comes with that integrity.

My greatest hope is that this questioning in pursuit of integrity - the 'hard line' in thinking - is something which lives on as our legacy long after Dr Badat has gone. A new Vice-Chancellor can help us to do this but the responsibility is also ours to take forward the integrity and questioning of the Badat years.

Dr Badat has not been a Vice-Chancellor to sit in his office. Rather, he has been out and about at the myriad events that constitute university life. His knowledge of staff members as people is unparalleled - he knows the names of individual students and the most junior staff members - both support and academic. He knows which gardener's

son got in to the University and how that young person is progressing. He has been interested in individual students and all they have been doing - and has lived in a town full of young people with enormous good humour.

I remember one rare occasion when Dr Badat joined a group of people at the Rat and Parrot one evening. Now, the Rat & Parrot isn't the easiest place to go and enjoy a drink and a meal when you are a Vice-Chancellor and so it was the case that evening. No sooner had Dr Badat's pizza arrived at the table when a young woman approached asking him for a slice claiming that times were hard in her digs and that there was no money for food. I have no doubt that the young woman in question will reminisce for many years about the night she went up to the Vice-Chancellor in the Rat for a dare and managed to get a slice of his pizza. What I remember, however, is the good humour of a man who understood - and enjoyed - young people demonstrated in the way he handed over part of his meal with only a smile.

Engaging with us over the last eight years must, of course, have taken an enormous toll on the time available to be with his family and we owe great thanks to his partner, Shireen, and to their two sons, for all that we have taken at their expense. It cannot have been easy for them to have had to live in a small town like Grahamstown given Dr Badat's position as Vice-Chancellor. The Badat family has managed this with enormous grace and, Shireen, Hussein & Faisal, we thank you for all you have given to us - particularly Shireen with the Upstart project.

And so, Dr & Mrs Badat, as you move on to your new life in the United States we wish you well. I have no doubt that one of the main reasons for choosing to take up your new job is because of the opportunities it will allow you to use your enormous talents along with the funding you will control to pursue the goals you have for South Africa and Africa. We hope that the move will bring you enormous happiness and fulfillment and that your new role with the Andrew Mellon Foundation will allow you to come back to this small town and Rhodes University where you will always be warmly welcomed. For now, though, on behalf of the Deans I offer you sincere thanks.

By Prof Chrissie Boughey
Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Farewell Message

- From Senior Management

If you speak with people who have been at Rhodes a long while, long enough to have known at least three Vice-Chancellors, then before much conversation has elapsed, someone will tell an anecdote of being sent away from the VC's office for not being dressed appropriately (not wearing a tie or a jacket, or wearing pants when they should have been wearing a dress). And invariably someone will comment that would not happen with our current VC.

Well, definitely not the part about being dismissed for your dress sense. But being sent away? Yes! If you arrive with a shallow argument or an un-thought-through proposal, you will be sent away to try again, always with some specific suggestions to help you stretch yourself. This is the VC's office where everyone is welcome to engage, but everyone is expected to rise to their full intellectual potential - there are no exceptions.

Dr Badat returned at one point from a HESA (Higher Education South Africa) meeting and told us that part of the conversation was about how Universities were classified by slogan - Fort Hare was the University of African leaders, UCT was the Afropolitan University, Wits was the World-Class University, and so on. He reported that Rhodes was being referred to as the University of Scholars, and he added "I can live with that!". Well, Vice-Chancellor, we can live with that too.

The leadership era of this Vice-Chancellor will be remembered in the history of Rhodes University for boosting the intellectual standard for which Rhodes is known, and for setting a serious agenda around institutional transformation.

In the first weeks that he arrived, Dr Badat began pointing to a range of urgent transformation needs, igniting a debate which took on an assortment of threads, one being whether serious transformation could be achieved without damaging the quality of the student experience or the academic space. He claimed that it could, and that it must; and his eight years of tough talking and hard working have proved him right.

Student numbers have increased overall, the proportion of black students has increased quite dramatically to better resemble our social demographics, and particularly students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and overall student success did not plummet.

The diversity of postgraduates is reflected in a 79% rise in black PhD graduates and the 77% rise in women PhD graduates, with some superlative external examination reports providing comfort that the standards are just fine.

One of the distinctive features of his leadership is that he has maintained a steady output as a practicing scholar

throughout his tenure as a Vice-Chancellor. This is an extraordinary accomplishment for a person with little spare time, and has made him a role model for both staff and students. There is no better way to win over scholarly people than to lead by example.

The reputation of the university has soared under his leadership, with year after year of record Masters and PhD graduation numbers, a more than doubling of externally raised funds to support research and postgraduate training initiatives, and amongst the highest research output per capita index of universities in South Africa.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has become one of our biggest research and postgraduate funders over the last eight years, and our competitive advantage going forwards is that we know that we will have to step up our game as far as impact is concerned, and have a really proper intellectual case in our proposals.

Ms Badat, Shireen, we salute you (salute is an understatement - we are in awe of you) for the way you have initiated and run UPSTART, and the huge impact this project has had in our town. Also for the variety of other contributions you have made to Rhodes and the broader community, and we thank you for your work as an ambassador for Rhodes.

On a personal note, the years working with Dr Badat have undoubtedly been the most stimulating of my career. Never content with a superficial response, or a poorly thought through argument, this Vice-Chancellor demands from the people around him that every decision is wrestled with, every position has a principled basis, and every difficult response is ethically made. All who have been challenged by him, who worked with him, and who learned from him, are empowered from the experience, and the University is unquestionably a rich and diverse scholarly space because he has led us for these past eight years.

Go well, Saleem and Shireen, and please visit often.

By Dr Peter Clayton

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Development



"If you arrive with a shallow argument or an un-thought-through proposal, you will be sent away to try again, always with some specific suggestions to help you stretch yourself."



“During his time here, the role of the university as an agent for social change has been promoted, and by extension this has raised awareness of the role of each individual academic as an agent of this change.”

Farewell to Dr Badat

- From Heads of Department

It is my privilege to represent the Heads of the 40-odd academic departments at Rhodes at this occasion. In the normal course of university operations, it is rare that the activities of a VC directly influence the day to day goings on of the academic community. It is a particular feature of Dr Badat's tenure at Rhodes that he has had a personal influence on many of us, in many ways, some of which I would like to highlight here.

I can mention features which distinguish Dr Badat's management style, such as his accessibility; his availability to engage with topics of interest to Deans, Heads of Department, and other academic staff members is noteworthy and well-appreciated. He has been actively supportive of both personal and departmental initiatives from a wide range of disciplines, and been useful and engaged with more subtle and delicate issues involving race and gender-based concerns. He also leaves us with a prominent physical legacy in the form of the revitalized university Library, the new Languages building, and the Biological Sciences building, in progress, all of which benefitted greatly from his support and promotion.

However, I would like to highlight two particular aspects of Dr Badat's tenure at Rhodes which have affected the academic community on a personal level.

First, I would like to note Dr Badat's prioritising of social awareness and responsibility at an institutional and personal level. During his time here, the role of the university as an agent for social change has been promoted, and by extension this has raised awareness of the role of each individual academic as an agent of this change. For many of us this is a novel and perhaps radical concept, drawing us away from our focus on personal fulfillment through research, and into a much wider concept of university engagement.

The inclusion of community engagement as a pillar of academic job performance represents a significant broadening of how we see our role as academics in a university setting. The enfranchisement of Diana Hornby's Community Engagement Unit as an entity at the university is one manifestation of this, and their accomplishments were recently highlighted in Rhodes' Community Engagement week earlier this month.

The upgrading of the Academic Development Centre into a fully-fledged research and teaching entity, the Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning (or CHERTL), also reflects a shift in commitment to higher levels of awareness of our academic mission as agents of higher

learning in an increasingly diverse, socially-motivated and relevance-questioning market.

Secondly, I would like to highlight Dr Badat's focus on the university's academic mission. A VC might reasonably be expected to limit himself to “managing the business”, and although Dr Badat has always reminded us of our obligations to fiscal responsibility, in addition to guiding the “Ship of State”, he has been instrumental in the establishment of a diverse and prominent assemblage of specialist nuclei of excellence. These include the Confucius Institute of Rhodes University, whose Director, Professor Marius Vermaak, notes that Dr Badat “has had a huge impact on the Confucius Institute at Rhodes University and the development of Chinese Studies as a major in the School of Languages. He has grasped the strategic importance of developing expertise in China at Rhodes and exposing our students to the Chinese language right from the start. His support has been unstinting and amazing.”

He was also instrumental in establishing the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics under its Director, Professor Pedro Tabensky, and the new Biotechnology Innovation Centre under Professor Janice Limson, to name just a few examples.

The outgoing Dean of Humanities, Professor Hendricks, notes that Dr Badat took the trouble to come to their faculty seminars to debate issues in an open forum, which he doubts any other VC in the country would do.

Dr Badat has also been instrumental in facilitating access to a wide variety of international programmes to support research in the Humanities, not least of which are the Mellon Foundation funds that he will be administering shortly.

Dr Badat also continues to be an active participant in the social science and educational discourse. As food for thought, as we contemplate Dr Badat's successor, I will quote Professor Tabensky, who notes that “we should be eternally grateful that we have had a VC like him who actually believes in the academic project. Most VCs now-a-days think universities are corporations”.

I would like to close by quoting Dr Badat himself, who said in his Solomon Mahlangu Education Lecture in 2007 that “It should be clear that higher education transformation and development and indeed the future of South African higher education will be powerfully shaped by whether and to what extent we are able to better maintain the current generation of academics and simultaneously ensure the reproduction (and transformation of the social composition) of the next generation of scholars.”

Thank you very much.

By Dr Steve Prevec

HoD Geology, on behalf of the Heads of Department at Rhodes in my capacity as current Chair of the HoD Forum.

NTEU bids Dr Badat, farewell

- From the National Tertiary Education Union

Dear Dr Badat, Ms Badat, friends, colleagues, students and visitors.

Today I represent the NTEU, the national tertiary education union, which represents staff grades 6 and above at Rhodes. We as a union are honoured to be able to have worked with you.

You have brought a personal touch to our university. I remember a few months after your appointment, I passed you in the street and you greeted me by my first name. I had no idea you even knew who I was. And that was the first time I felt valued outside my department.

Through the imbizos you organized, you encouraged us to speak to each other openly and frankly. To critique our attitudes, values and practices. Starting those conversations was painful. When you peel back the onion of institutional tradition and complacency there will be some tears. But those discussions started a process of change that we are now beginning to see the fruit of. And we will continue to see the transformative results well into the future.

In an economy, global and national, characterized by taken-for-granted inequality and autocratic decision making by entitled and increasingly unaccountable elites, Universities like Rhodes represent an alternative.

An alternative where governance is accountable.

An alternative where there are democratic freedoms to be protected.

An alternative where staff have opportunities to contribute through Faculty, the committee system and where staff are represented widely in decision making forums.

An alternative where our voices, as staff, are valued and respected.

We therefore deeply appreciate your tireless willingness to speak against the grain.

To promote deep transformation not merely in a constitutional and legal sense but just as importantly a focus on equity and fairness in general.

We applaud your stand courage in making stands against pointless bureaucracy and managerialism.


Your deep commitment to the academic and intellectual project.

And your insistence that we can run a university by actually talking to each other as colleagues.

Thank you, and good luck.

By Mr Mark De Vos


NTEU Chairperson



"We therefore deeply appreciate your tireless willingness to speak against the grain."

Bidding farewell to Badat

- From Nehawu



It gives me a great pleasure and honour to stand in front of a large mass of dignified and learned people of my country. The cream of South Africa. Especially because this is happening in my backyard, at Rhodes University which aims to have an African identity and be internationally recognised university.

It also gives me great pleasure as a unified working class person to be able to say that while under the leadership of Dr Badat, Dr Mabizela and Dr Clayton, Rhodes University has produced many black students. These are students from Africa as a whole, but I am more pleased to say that most of these black students are from the Eastern Cape. Dr Badat promised us that this was his aim, to recruit more black students from the Eastern Cape.

I am proud to announce to you, ladies and gents, that we as Nehawu, the working class Union are witnessing the results of Dr Badat and his team's efforts. I also wish to announce with regret, that from Nehawu's view point, we are very concerned at the slow progress of transformation

in this institution in terms of its senior staff.

We understand the problem of scarce skills within our black society; however this is the second decade of our democracy. Surely this should mean something in terms of black people acquiring these skills. Therefore we think and urge the University to do something to change these demographics. We acknowledge that the University is trying, but we are saying it is not trying hard enough. Why is the Council still white? Why is the Senate still white?

I do not have enough time to elaborate on what I have just said. This is not political; this is our daily lives and the survival of our beloved country. I know that this is a thinking place where leaders are produced. Let us think, ladies and gents, and lead this beautiful country of ours in the right direction, to prosperity.

Dr Badat; you have done your job well. God bless you and your family.

Amandla... Amandla.

By Mr Phillip Ngxitho

Full time shop steward

"I am proud to announce to you, ladies and gents, that we as Nehawu, the working class Union are witnessing the results of Dr Badat and his team's efforts."



"Rhodes University has been your proverbial child, you have nurtured and developed it over all these years."

Farewell to Dr Badat

- Student Representative Council

How does one begin to equate the dedicating of 8 years of your life to the running of an institution? The 80, 100 hour weeks. Meetings over meetings. Travelling across the world to fund raise. Time that you could have had with your family. It's a full time job, Rhodes University has been your proverbial child, you have nurtured and developed it over all these years.

And like every child, it reaches its teenage years, there are ups, there are downs, they sneak off to the Rat and Parrot. You have had to scold them, like every parent does, but you still love them!

Rhodes has had its ups and downs, and you have stood by it time and time again.

As the first black VC, you entered an institution that needed transformation. Your work on the Institutional Development Plan and Institutional Transformation Plan has shown us that your legacy will remain entrenched in the institutional culture that is Rhodes University.

Physically, the University has transformed with many more buildings and developments. More than that, the culture of the University has also been transformed.

Your commitment to community engagement, your courage to spark and lead sensitive conversations. However, as

much as you have done for this institution we still have a long way to go.

And as they say, behind every great man, is a greater woman. Shireen, you have transformed the landscape of the Eastern Cape through your commitment and dedication to community engagement. Your work particularly with Upstart has empowered so many of our youth over the years. Moreover, you have always stood by Dr Badat, and by this institution.

*The leader is best
When people are hardly aware of his existence
When his work is done, his aim fulfilled
The people say, 'We did it ourselves.' (Lao Tzu)*

Your leadership has inspired others to commit to the gains of the institution, if we are to fulfil your legacy, we need to show a continued commitment to it, or else it will all have been for nothing.

Everyone thinks that the principal thing to the tree is the fruit, but in point of fact the principal thing to it is the seed. ~ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Your investment must now grow for future generations to reap the rewards of your leadership here at Rhodes, the Eastern Cape and in South Africa.

Thank you Saleem, Thank you Shireen.

*By Brad Bense
SRC President*



High praise for Badat's dedicated leadership

Speaker after speaker lauded outgoing Rhodes University Vice-Chancellor, Dr Saleem Badat, for leaving Grahamstown on good terms and in good humour.

The glowing speeches were part of a farewell party held in Badat's honour at the Great Field on Saturday 24 May.

Badat would be remembered for his role in stimulating debate around the educational sphere and setting the agenda on transformation at Rhodes University, said Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Dr Peter Clayton.

Clayton, who spoke on behalf of the university's senior management, said that Badat's dedication to the education sector has made Rhodes one of the most recognised Universities in the world. Clayton added that under Badat's leadership, the university increased its intake of black students, and produces more graduates than ever.

The Chair of the Deans' Forum and Dean of Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL), Professor Chrissie Boughey, continued the warm memories that everyone had of the Vice-Chancellor.

"I would like to thank Dr Badat for protecting the academic project which makes the University what it is today," she said, "and for going out and about attending to issues that matter to the university."

Bradley Bense, president of the Students' Representative

Council (SRC) said the VC was not just dedicated to Rhodes but to the Grahamstown community and the Eastern Cape as whole.

"Dr Badat's commitment to the education sector has been outstanding," Bense said, "and for that we would like to thank him and his wife."

Badat said he was humbled by the reception, and grateful for having had the chance to lead Rhodes' achievements.

"The work is not yet complete," he said, "it still needs to be taken forward."

He received a long standing ovation from the hundreds of members of staff, students and members of the Grahamstown community.

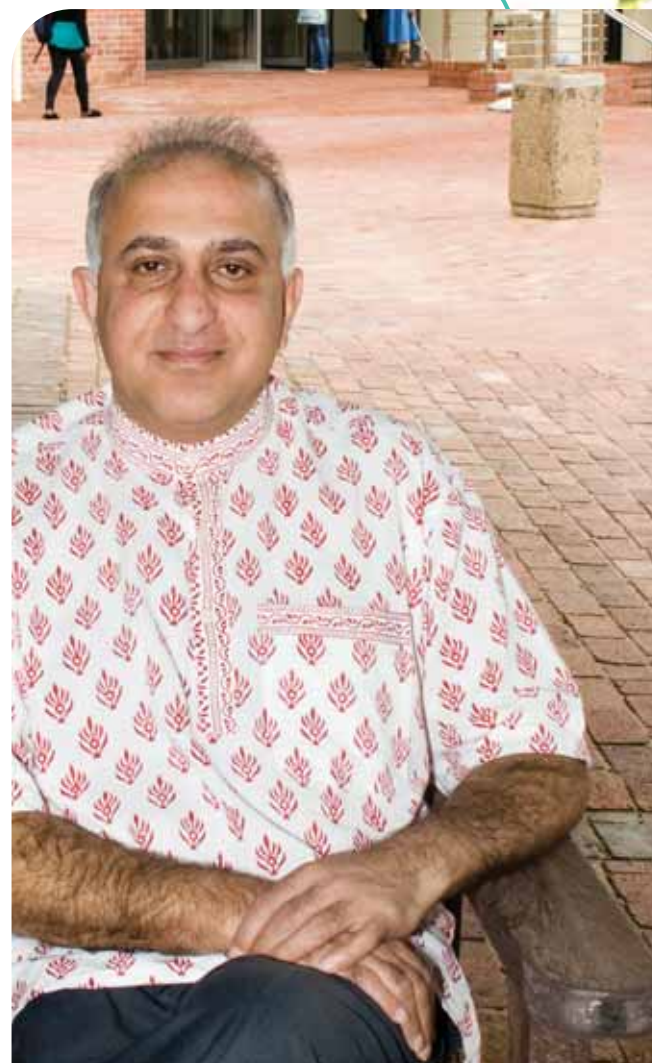
Badat shook hands with students who had turned out in great numbers to see him off; some intent on the free food (and cold drinks), as well as the live brass band, but many also intent on posing for a keepsake picture with him.

Badat's tenure officially ends on 30 June. He will take annual leave in July and start his new job at the Mellon Foundation in New York on 1 August.

He joined Rhodes in 2006 and will have been at the University just short of eight years when he leaves.

By Mncedi Eddie Magade

Source: Grocott's Mail



"Rhodes University has been your proverbial child, you have nurtured and developed it over all these years."



Vice-Chancellor bids farewell to Rhodes University with no frills

The outgoing Rhodes Vice-Chancellor, Saleem Badat, is bidding farewell to Rhodes in the same style he held office: no fuss and no frills.

The office of the Registrar at Rhodes University is organising a farewell tomorrow (24 May 2014).

The event will be held at the Great Field, Prince Alfred Street from 10am-12am. Rhodes University Registrar, Dr Stephen Fourie, said the event will be filled with speeches from various members of the Rhodes community, including the senior management, Students' Representative Council, Chairman of the Dean's forum and trade union members.

The event will feature performances by Rhodes Choirs and a jazz band.

Fourie said the event will not be an extravagant one because "the VC is not a person of expensive farewells".

Badat announced over two months ago that he will be leaving his position as Vice-Chancellor later this year, to take up a position as the first programme director of international higher education and strategic projects at the US-based Andrew W Mellon Foundation.

Fourie said the event was a chance for all students and staff members to wish Badat farewell.

Badat has been the Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University since June 2006.

By Mncedi Eddie Magade

Source: Grocott's Mail



Siphokazi Magadla

"In my mother's generation, black women could once only imagine themselves as maids, teachers or nurses. In my generation we are rising to become scholars who lead South African universities into a hopefully more emancipated future."

For black girls who've considered politics when being strong isn't enough

Rhodes Political and International Studies lecturer, Ms Siphokazi Magadla says we need to look at politics and international relations from the spaces in which we are dying.

"We need to talk about the painful, untidy things in our lives, such as where women in South Africa find themselves. We need to criticise our dysfunctional society where women feel unrecognised and unsafe, and where our murder figures surpass those of countries at war. If we don't address these issues we are just playing around."

Ms Magadla raised all this and more during the presentation of her paper titled *"The personal is the international: For black girls who've considered politics when being strong isn't enough"* at a seminar hosted earlier this year by the Department of Political and International Studies.

The paper was published in December 2013 as part of the special issue celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the South African Journal of Political Studies, *Politikon*.

Ms Magadla's angle for the paper took inspiration from a book by African American political scientist and feminist, Melissa Harris-Perry, titled *"Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes and Black Women in America/For Colored Girls Who've Considered Politics When Being Strong Isn't Enough"* (2011). She argues that at the core of our work as citizens is a "struggle for recognition".

The naturally strong, all-enduring black woman

Ms Magadla localizes this and discusses the struggle for recognition by black South African women:

"We live in a society where we are fed this image of the naturally strong, all-enduring black woman who is able to make ends meet and keep a smile on her face despite unbelievable hardship."

She criticises this stereotype that was unquestioningly foisted on her mother's generation and before; explaining how it embedded a false consciousness about black women that has subjected them to ongoing hardship:

"There is little recognition of their pain and suffering by society and by the post-1994 government, which continues to expect them to endure and not to make claims based on what they might want or feel as citizens."

Ms Magadla's paper pays homage to these unsung matriarchs, who, through their sacrifices, have given the current generation of women the opportunity to make their own decisions about their lives, and to be less bound by the overriding obligation to be strong.

"The reason I picked this title is to recognise these women and to tangibly demonstrate that 'the personal is the political'. We have to question our lives, the interior and exterior, and where women find ourselves," she explains.

I can achieve my academic goals

"I, for one, cannot think about being a lecturer at Rhodes University without thinking about the sacrifices of my mother, Zodwa Magadla, a psychiatric nurse who raised us in Umthatha here in the Eastern Cape. Largely because of her, I have been able to pursue a different path in life where I can achieve my academic goals and immerse myself in thought and theory."

After completing her undergraduate and Honours degree at Rhodes, Ms Magadla won a Fulbright Scholarship to Ohio University in the United States where she completed her Master's degree, then returned to Rhodes to take up a lecturing post in 2011 and to pursue her PhD.

She is part of the new generation of South African women who want university degrees and are opting for academic careers where they are rising through the ranks to Professor level, which is what Magadla desires.

"In my mother's generation, black women could once only imagine themselves as maids, teachers or nurses. In my generation we are rising to become scholars who lead South African universities into a hopefully more emancipated future."

The pervasive masculine, militant culture of SA today

To achieve this, however, she says that we need to experience all women moving from the periphery to the centre in a de-genderised, de-racialised space.

"We need women to feel safe, recognised and respected, and we are simply not seeing this in the pervasive masculine, militant culture of the South African state today," says Ms Magadla who exposes the deep political biases in our culture.

"In the liberation struggle for South Africa, the soldier of liberation has been typecast as a man, leaving the women soldiers in a thankless vacuum."

Rendered invisible

She is currently writing up her PhD on the integration into civilian life of women ex-combatants of liberation from *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the Azanian People's Liberation Army and the Self Defence Units. The majority of these women have never been recognised or looked after as military veterans; most have been rendered invisible.

Once again, the personal reveals itself as the political, just as the personal also reveals itself as the international. They are simply not separable.

South Africa has an international voice

"Today we talk about politics and international relations in grand sweeping terms where South Africa has an international voice and is part of the global conversation, and where a South African heads up the African Union.

Yet little has changed or improved in the daily lives of ordinary people who continue to experience extreme

insecurity due to inequality, poverty, violence and conflict.

"This applies to millions of women in Africa and around the world," says Ms Magadla. "We need to question what the AU or the United Nations has done to address these critical concerns because we aren't seeing them being adequately addressed."

Where dignity fits into the picture

Hence the challenge to International Theory to start thinking from the context in which we find ourselves, and to start asking ourselves where dignity fits into the local and international picture.

"There is global recognition today that international security is about far more than the absence of war. But it is about how we address a range of pressing issues, including poverty, the environment, media, gender, HIV/AIDS, human rights, race, the economy, religion, culture," she explains.

The precarious times in which we are living

"The move to the political right and national chauvinism that we are seeing in Europe is telling of the precarious times in which we are living. Here at home in South Africa we find ourselves with little to

no outside security threat but we live in a country where figures of murder surpass those of countries in conflict. A high percentage of the victims are women and we feel increasingly threatened and unsafe."

Central to the political lethargy around women, Ms Magadla believes, is that as a society we don't look inside ourselves. "How can we think 'revolution' without thinking of the 'interior'?" she enquires. "How do we continue to vote for men who perpetuate public misogyny and still believe that we aspire for a non-sexist society?"

We don't even properly examine love and relationships

This takes us a step deeper where we don't even properly examine love and relationships, she adds. "We are trained by society and western consumer culture to think about love as this irrational power that knows no logic. Yet love absolutely should demand logic and enquiry."

"As women we need to enquire why we should love our fathers or brothers or husbands when they don't treat us well. We need to question why we seek out love relationships that leave us feeling unsafe, when we generally feel far safer in our friendship groups. If we look at this logically, any romantic relationship

should necessarily be based on profound friendship."

These, says Ms Magadla, are all deeply personal and political issues, as important as the question whether it is still possible or meaningful to connect the mind with the struggle for emancipation.

"My generation of scholars, and especially those of us coming from the global south, need to be extra vigilant about how we think through where we find ourselves today and how we think through this particular South African and international moment."

Obscene privilege and violent poverty

"The moment presents itself as less burdened with the liberation struggles of yesterday, yet the present political economy is characterised by obscene privilege on the one hand and violent poverty on the other."

It signals a pressing need to think carefully about how we currently understand the workings of power.

"At the same time we need to offer an alternative language for those of us who feel the levels of security at an individual level are absent in our country; a country that is supposed to be free. We must think about what to do about this and to take a hard look at peace and security from the spaces in which we are dying."

Playing the real game in the real field - 2014 CHERTL Round Table on Community Engagement

Professor Nieves Tapia, Director of the Latin American Centre for Service Learning in Argentina (CLAYSS) made an earnest call for universities to adopt a "solidarity service-learning" approach which she described as "playing the real game in the real field".

According to Prof Tapia, service-learning is about "being as serious and rigorous as you would be in a field work or a problem-based learning class, and as passionate about serving the community as in the best volunteer activity. You design the project knowing not only the service goals, but also the learning goals of the activity."

She said service-learning involves "real, verifiable solidarity" and working with the community, not only for it; active student engagement and leadership in the project; learning contents intentionally linked to social activities such as curriculum contents, research, reflection, citizenship and job skills.

Highlighting the opportunities the service-learning pedagogy offers students to experience social values, Prof Tapia used a sport metaphor to introduce the concept of service-learning and its relevance to higher education institutions in the global south in her presentation "University engagement and academic excellence: a view from the south".

"Learning the rules and drawing the field is not the same as playing the match," Prof Tapia explained, referring to a photograph of international Argentinian footballer Lionel Messi making a pass on a football pitch.

"I am sure Messi did not learn to play like this seated in a desk, studying the rules and drawing the moves in the blackboard. I suspect Messi, as most of the gentlemen here, learned to play football by playing it. In the same way, research show that values, and especially social values, are better learned by emulation and practice," she said.

She highlighted a range of successful service-learning initiatives from Latin America saying "collecting clothing and food for a deprived rural community is service; designing solar panels in the computer for an exam is learning; designing, producing and installing solar devices according to a rural community demands, and training them to do the maintenance is service-learning."

She cited students from the faculty of Engineering in Natural Resources and Exact Sciences School at the Salta National University in Argentina, who are utilising funding from the Ministry of Education and building solar energy devices for rural communities isolated in mountainous areas.

"Engineering students majoring in Natural Resources presented a computer generated simulation of a solar energy device for their final exam. In the last five years, with funding from our Ministry of Education, they are building the actual devices, and installing them in poor, isolated rural communities in the mountains of their province," she added.

Other examples can be found all over Latin America, Prof Tapia said, such as the Veterinary School students who attend to the horses of the "cartoneros" (waste pickers) to help them. "Many of these service projects discovered during their practice that they were finding injuries and pathologies they had never studied," she



said. Similar examples can be found at Rosario National University in Argentina and Temuco Catholic University in Chile.

"Traditional universities are the kingdom of blackboards, and usually our students complain that they receive too much theory and little preparation for the real professional field. In British Universities you still 'read' Law or Sciences. In the field of Social Engagement we risk to operate in the same tradition if all we offer students are big words and great speeches," she said.

She noted that "learning rules is important, listening to advice is fine, but it is important that we give students enough opportunities to go out in the field and put their values, their knowledge and their skills to real work."

Empowering graduates to fulfill civic duties

- 2014 CHERTL Round Table on Community Engagement

Debating the ways in which universities can encourage the development of graduates who have “a proper understanding of their socio-historic and economic context” and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility, Dr Lindsay Kelland and Sharli Paphitis presented “Community engagement and the University as a site for transformation”.

Dr Kelland, a post-doctoral student at Rhodes University and Paphitis, a PhD scholar at Rhodes University and managing editor of the *South African Journal of Philosophy* spoke of the benefits of helping graduates understand the context of their learning environment which they believe will empower them “not only to fulfil their civic duties, but to actively exercise their citizenship in responsible and transformative ways upon leaving university”.

Suggesting why universities should become spaces for transformation rather than being merely transformed spaces, Dr Kelland and Paphitis explained how the transformative process helps students understand social justice. While many strategies have been employed to facilitate the achievement of the goal of having graduates promote social justice after leaving university, few have proved effective. They believe this is as a result of a lack of epistemic transformation in institutional culture and it is only through an epistemic revolution in institutional culture

that universities can become spaces that foster the development of civic minded graduates.

Suggesting that there are three broad goals of higher education which include: the production and dissemination of knowledge through teaching and research, the training of professionals and producing graduates who are socially aware and who are active citizens guided by the principles of social justice; Dr Kelland and Paphitis called for the transformation of institutional culture, engaging in transformative learning practices and institutionalising community engagement.

They also showed how conventional approaches to developing civic minded graduates, such as through the transformation of institutional culture and infusing transformational learning into university teaching and learning activities, have generally failed and called for an epistemological shift in institutional culture.

They suggested that it is by embracing this epistemic shift at the level of institutional culture that transformation could run deep enough to affect the three core pillars of the university namely: teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. This will enable universities to achieve the goal of developing civic minded graduates as well as making universities spaces for transformation rather than merely transformed spaces, both in the eyes of its students and the broader public.

Dr Kelland and Paphitis suggested that institutions of higher learning could come to embrace this new epistemic position through reaching individual academics; building a critical mass of supporters; and



Dr Lindsay Kelland

shifting institutional culture in ways that are meaningful on the ground, rather than simply being reflected in policy documents and listed as theoretical concerns by the institution.

They cited examples of collaborative research between feminist academic Richa Nagar and women in the local *Sangtin* community who published *Playing with Fire: Feminist Thought and Activism through Seven Lives in India*, and a local collaboration between the Church Land Programme and the University of KwaZulu-Natal resulting in the publication *Living Learning*, which reflected on the relationship between so-called academic knowledge and experiential knowledge of the world.

Reconsidering the concepts of “university” and “community engagement”

Following an approach of “epistemological defamiliarisation” by reconsidering the concepts of “university” and “community engagement”, Dr Jerome Slamat, Senior Director of Community Interaction at Stellenbosch University called for reconceptualisation of the role of the university and its obligations to community engagement.

Describing a 21st century university as comprising aspects of collaborative knowledge production and knowledge ecology, innovation, massification, diversity, networks, internationalisation and collaborative learning, Dr Slamat said universities nowadays are generally reflective of these trends.

“There are no more grand narratives in our era; agility and adaptability is what universities require in our complex era,” he said, noting that increased complexity calls for universities to be involved in

pattern detection and scenario-building.

In this changing and complex environment, creativity, innovation, and the ability “to think out of the box” can create unusual products and processes to solve the complex problems of our time, Dr Slamat said. “Even to think about the university as we have always known it may not be enough. We need to think about the kind of university that has never been seen,” he added.

As such, engagement of the 21st century would involve relationship management, networks and partnerships, co-production of knowledge, collaboration and knowledge ecology, diversity (broadening access, widening participation and role of technology), and a focus on sustainability.

According to Dr Slamat, “relationship management and the active management of partnerships becomes a very important aspect of the business of the university in the 21st century network society. The university in the 21st century needs to acknowledge complexity and contingency,” he said.

Dr Slamat believes leadership of universities plays a

key role in the extent to which it successfully negotiates these relationships and ensures sustainability. Universities should be guided to making the most of the opportunities that come its way, including maximising the potential of community engagement-related activities.

In terms of partners, Dr Slamat suggested universities consider widening their conception beyond traditional partners of business and industry and include municipalities, development agencies and civil society formations.

He briefly outlined three conceptions of community engagement which could be helpful to the university. These included detached scholarship, science for society approach and engaged scholarship. While detached scholarship incorporates a view of science as the only kind of genuine knowledge and all science has the same logical form, science for society approach is premised on the idea that science and knowledge is owned by the university and is offered to and consumed by society, with a view of the university as a “knowledge service provider”.

Rhodes students reshaping and remaking Grahamstown

- 2014 CHERTL Round Table on Community Engagement

Conceived as a horizontal process informed by respect, equality, and reciprocity, community engagement at Rhodes University faces the challenge of how to practice mutuality in a space so deeply informed by a top-down structure and legacies of power imbalances between the Grahamstown community and the University.

This is according to Nosipho Mngomezulu, Coordinator of the Student Volunteer Programme and PhD Candidate in the Anthropology Department at Rhodes University, who shared methods and practices employed by the Student Volunteer programme at Rhodes University in her presentation "How do leaders learn? Mirror, mask and mutuality in a university community engagement setting."

Unearthing the "blurred boundaries" between "working with" and "working for" communities in order to bring about transformation in a context where a shared sense of community is often limited, Mngomezulu believes the ideal of mutuality is often negotiated through what she describes as both mirroring and masking.

In South Africa, she explained, there is a great amount of hype around the youth, who are often portrayed as either in danger or dangerous, requiring appropriate socialisation into participation in civic life.

"In all my reading on mutuality and on the understandings of partnerships between universities and community organisations, there was not a single South African University that has made evident the relationship between volunteering and social change.

The dominant narrative is that young people are more apathetic than their counterparts two or three decades ago. However, in my experience of working with so-called 'born frees' in the Student Volunteer Programme, students are anything but oblivious to the dire need for social change," she said.

Over the last two years Mngomezulu has worked with 675 student volunteers, who commit 10-24 weeks of their time, energy and skills to various Community Based Organisations (CBOs) as part of the Student Volunteer Programme.

"Coming from a student activism background, where participation is one of the biggest hurdles, I was pleasantly surprised to see how many students were eager to be part of the processes of reshaping and remaking a more socially just Grahamstown," she said.

Mngomezulu said she is often confronted with the question: "if students are learning so much, why is it that there is little tangible evidence of the transformative effects of volunteering? I am often confronted by people who worry that engagement is more about students learning and makes little difference in the material circumstances of the communities where students are placed," she said, referring to the ever present concern that community engagement should not become what critics call "a voyeuristic exploitation of the cultural other that masquerades as academically sanctioned service leadership".

"There is a real danger that community engagement can become just another cog in the conveyor belt producing elites who don't feel guilty because they give back. Every time a student proposes that they will run yet another Easter egg hunt for a 'disadvantaged' school or will donate their tatty clothes as part of their residence community engagement initiatives, I ask myself whether community engagement is becoming yet another exercise in benefitting the rich by using the poor."



Proposing that understandings of volunteering can be deepened if we examine volunteering as a "space of practice" versus a "type of practice", Mngomezulu called for a distinction to be made between community development and community engagement.

"Why are students more interested in playing with orphans than in offering practical help to home-based HIV care workers? Why are they often reluctant to immerse themselves in community activities outside of their pre-planned volunteer sessions?" she said.

Proposing that understandings of volunteering can be deepened if we examine volunteering as a "space of practice" versus a "type of practice", Mngomezulu called for a distinction to be made between community development and community engagement.

She said that it seems too useful to accept that the volunteering process is an important first step; where students and community organisations engage in mirror masking as they take part in the reflexive and reflective processes of relationship building. "This task is certainly not a linear progression, but participants in community engagement activities move in and out of various spaces regularly," added Mngomezulu.

Crucially, recognition of the lived experiences of volunteers needs to be taken seriously. "The social change we seek in Grahamstown cannot be left to volunteers and community organisations alone, but also requires us to challenge and rethink how we as a university position ourselves in the locus of power in Grahamstown, and truly open ourselves up to being transformed as we seek to transform our context," she said.

What role can universities play in society?

- 2014 CHERTL Round Table on Community Engagement

Debating the main objective of higher education in their presentation “The challenges community engagement poses for higher education in South Africa: philosophically, theoretically and practically” Dr Margie Maistry and Prof Darren Lortan called for a philosophical paradigm shift in the view of higher education institutions’ obligation to social responsibility.

They said that to date, higher education institutions globally have failed to provide solutions to the social, economic and political problems of the world and a new approach is needed going forward. With the dominant view of the role of universities as being the “business of education and the production and dissemination of knowledge”, notions of community engagement are often relegated to the margins of what is considered the core business of universities.

And yet it is exactly the elements of community engagement that are required to address a range of issues involved in research, teaching and learning and to enable education to act as a transformation force that contributes to establishing a humane, just and caring society.

Following increasing interest in the role of community engagement in higher education institutions, more questions have been asked of the role of universities

and how they can contribute to the transformation agenda. Through the adoption of community engagement agendas, higher education institutions can contribute to the socio-economic development of communities and the inculcation of social responsibility in graduates, to encourage the development of “well rounded and well grounded” graduates.

According to Dr Maistry, community engagement challenges the dominance of rationalism or positivist reason which underpins higher education and can help to foster a holistic philosophical paradigm for universities. However, our obsession with quantification and measurement has also exacted a heavy toll, she said.

“The scientific revolution with all its advances and advantages offers us a dead world by shifting out aesthetic and ethical sensibility, values, quality, soul, consciousness and spirit,” she said. The existing models of higher education have built their foundations on western philosophy and paradigms where reason is considered a mental faculty, “absolute, eternal, and universal” and instrumental or technical reason is the reason of calculation and efficiency.

The implication for community engagement is that positivist reason or rationalism disregards subjectivity, they said, with the resulting “crass individualism” an effect of the economic model of higher education. Curiously, the university is actually a vital agency for symbiotic and interdependent relationships, yet this is seldom explored in reality.



Dr Margie Maistry.

At this point Dr Maistry and Prof Lortan called for a theoretical paradigm shift in which the role of community engagement in universities is reconsidered and embraced as being a potential driver of social change and innovation.

In this view, community engagement presents as a platform for a holistic and integral philosophical paradigm for higher education in which the notion of interdependence is a key element. Within a theoretical framework that encompasses social responsibility, empathy and emotional intelligence as integral to endeavours of teaching and learning, the university can encourage a reconceptualisation of social responsibility in its graduates.

Universities do not exist in a vacuum or in isolation

With the proliferation of community engagement initiatives in higher education institutions in South Africa and increasing debate on its relevance and benefits, Ms Di Hornby, Director of Community Engagement at Rhodes University, unpacked various approaches to the role universities have to play in community development in her presentation “Community engagement and higher education: Strategies for engaged research to contribute to community development”.

While the expectation is the nurturing of a mutually beneficial relationship between university and community, the nature of these relationships is as yet unknown, she argued. She said community engagement points to the role that universities have to play in community development and to the generation of knowledge that can address increasingly complex social issues confronting communities, but the role of higher education in society is being

questioned worldwide.

In South Africa, higher education institutions are required to be responsive to the development needs of the country which is highlighted in frameworks such as the Higher Education Act of 1997 and the Reconstructive and Development Programme of 1994.

She said within this context the primary agenda of community engagement is to strengthen the relationship between higher education institutions and society through a greater commitment to social responsibility and responsiveness, as outlined in the 1997 White Paper on Transformation of Higher Education of the Department of Education.

“There is no doubt, given South Africa’s history and context that universities, some of whom have been willing partners of apartheid, have a critical role to play in the reconstruction of a divided and unequal society. The introduction of community engagement is one way in which this role can be played out by universities,” she said, noting that rather than compel, it encourages universities to “infuse principles of social transformation within its culture”.

“Universities do not exist in a vacuum and in isolation.



Ms Di Hornby

They influence and are influenced by the broader community. In South Africa specifically, universities can no longer afford to distance themselves from communities; they are required to contribute to community development,” she said.

“With the introduction of community engagement, the transformation agenda calls for the change in the manner in which the core academic responsibilities of knowledge production (research), knowledge dissemination (teaching) and the application of knowledge (community engagement) are envisioned together in a nexus to inform the work of the university”, said Ms Hornby.