

Minister visits USA and Canada to forge PARTNERSHIPS



FUNDING FOR CHANGE: Former Rhodes University Vice-Chancellor Dr Saleem Badat is now at the Mellon Foundation, USA, which will fund seven SA universities' work on curriculum transformation, specifically on decolonising the curriculum.

GHALEEB JEPPIE

HIGHER Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande undertook official working visits to the United States of America and Canada recently to consolidate and forge new institutional partnerships to support the University Development Capacity Programme (UCDP), for strengthening the capacity of the university system as a whole.

This aim included the seeking of mobility and development opportunities for South African academics and students to pursue postgraduate studies in critical and scarce skills areas.

The visit also explored new support for the implementation of the Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF), which includes capacity building, mentoring and international mobility opportunities for newly appointed lecturers at South African universities as part of the New Generation of Academics Programme, which aims to encourage more young South Africans to enter the academic profession.

The Minister also met with university representatives and specialist education agencies, and visited Community Colleges in order to understand aspects of the community college model that can be adapted to the South African context.

WORKING VISIT TO THE USA

At an Education Partnership Discussion Forum, the Minister

indicated that the UCDP was developed to address the challenges identified in strengthening university capacity. The UCDP has three components: a student component, an institutional component and a staff development component.

Its purpose is to identify and nurture academic talent early in the academic development trajectory, at senior undergraduate level or early postgraduate level; and to support newly recruited academics to acquire doctoral degrees (or Master's Degrees in selected fields); develop teaching expertise; develop research skills, including scientific publication skills; and provide development opportunities for academic staff at all levels;

The 15 USA universities at the Partnership Forum agreed to form a consortium to support South Africa's University Capacity Development Program. To further support the initiative, funding sources will be investigated, including the use of alumni networks, briefing the USA's Chamber of Commerce in South Africa and considering requesting the Deputy-President as chairperson of the Human Resources Development Council of South Africa (HRDC-SA) to engage with American businesses as well as attracting retired academics to come and work in South Africa for short periods.

Adult Education: The Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School A visit was undertaken to the Academy of Hope Public Charter School in Washington DC, which has been offering adult education courses since 1985.

The academy provides a variety

of programmes and services for adult learners, ranging from adult basic education, digital literacy and computer training, and career counselling and career development. The academy's model of implementation will be considered, including its funding strategy and its capacity to attract teacher volunteers, in the establishment of pilot Community Education and Training Colleges.

The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) This meeting agreed that a number of areas of cooperation are possible, including the areas of health and engineering through the sharing of faculty staff, student exchanges and the development of new areas of cooperation.

The College of Nursing could be an ideal partner with the new Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, particularly in relation to their curriculum development work in nursing.

The University of Illinois Urbana Campaign The Vice-Provost of the University of Illinois supported the need for partnerships with South African Universities.

The university, 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.

Meeting at the Consulate in Chicago Several USA universities attended this meeting:

- UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

This university has a 30-year partnership with the University of the Western Cape (UWC). One of the outcomes of the partnership has been an extensive capacity-building model which covers the sciences, humanities, training of postgraduates and faculty exchanges.

More than 400 PhDs have been awarded to date. According to the two Vice-Chancellors, the benefits have been mutual.

A range of opportunities were further identified for discussion, including the advancement of more Humanities and Social Sciences exchanges.

Collaboration must also be explored beyond UWC with other Historically Disadvantaged Universities.

● ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY The University has partnerships with the University of Cape Town's Centre for Humanities. The strength of Roosevelt University in relation to faculty and student exchanges would be in their professional Masters programme. The University of KwaZulu-Natal is also collaborating with Roosevelt University on student exchanges.

It was agreed that further engagement on expanding collaboration would need to take place, especially concerning its professional Master's programmes.

● UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO Potential opportunities for partnerships would be in the area of Master's and PhD programmes. The University of Chicago has a partnership with the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences and the University of Cape Town. It was agreed that there could be information sharing on existing

programmes as well as the possibility of developing a customised three- to four-week summer programme.

Meeting with Dr Saleem Badat, Programme Director International Higher Education and Strategic Projects, Mellon Foundation The Minister expressed appreciation for grant funding and continued by providing a briefing on the University Capacity Building Programme.

After a meeting held with the Minister in September 2015, the Andrew Mellon Foundation allocated R1-billion over the next five years for country programmes. R800-million will go towards South African universities and R200-million for the rest of the universities in the African continent.

A further R16-million will be awarded for developing a professoriate in seven South African universities over five years. Furthermore, the Foundation will fund seven universities' work on curriculum transformation, specifically on decolonising the curriculum.

The Institute of African Studies at Columbia University Agreement was reached with Columbia University to create a programme to support young South African academics through Master's and PhD co-supervision and sandwich programmes, as well as teaching exchanges.

The programme will be named after Columbia University alumnus and president of the ANC in the 1930s, Pixley ka Seme (1881-1951).

Western Kentucky University It was indicated that WKU focused on PhDs for public health, nursing education, engineering programmes and doctorates for practical nursing. Currently WKU had exchange programmes with the University of Limpopo. It further provides teacher education at Master's level for Community Colleges and Technical Colleges.

The Carnegie Corporation At this meeting, the Minister expressed appreciation for the ongoing support to the higher education sector and briefed the Carnegie staff on the importance of support for the UCDP.

As a way forward, the Carnegie Corporation was requested to co-ordinate and share information with the Department in relation to existing funding allocations to SA universities.

University of Connecticut This university is keen to internationalise and South Africa is one of the targeted locations for partnerships. The university has an archive of papers of the African National Congress and a memorandum has been signed between the ANC and the university. It was suggested that scholarship opportunities should be offered to students to conduct research on the history of the ANC.

The University of Pennsylvania As one of the oldest US universities The University of Pennsylvania, is well positioned to provide opportunities for international

exchanges. The university has prioritised four regions as part of internationalisation efforts.

New York University New York University identified potential programmes as a contribution to the UCDP. There was an indication that one of their strong areas was in student support and mobility opportunities for students.

It was indicated that 100 USA students visited the University of Free State annually for two weeks of exposure.

Another potential area of collaboration is a focus on women leaders. Summer modules were held three times a year in New York. A third possible area would be on school leadership development. University leadership would be targeted for this programme.

It was indicated that the Bank Sector Education and Training Authority (BANKSETA) annually sent management and leadership to attend programmes in the School of Business.

There was agreement that a number of further activities will be undertaken.

WORKING VISIT TO CANADA

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) THE CBIE is a 50-year-old organisation composed of universities.

Its purpose is to explore international education partnership, do research, advocate and create



1 University of Toronto



2 University of Chicago

INCREASING GLOBAL COLLABORATION: The aim of Minister of Higher Education and Training Blade Nzimande's North American visit included the seeking of mobility and development opportunities for South African academics and students to pursue postgraduate studies in critical and scarce skills areas, and for strengthening the capacity of the university system as a whole.



3 Chicago University's Harper Midway campus

linkages with government, provide professional development and host an annual national conference on higher education issues.

There was agreement that more advocacy will be undertaken on the scholarship of the African Leaders for Tomorrow programme. It was agreed the administration of the scholarships programme should be reviewed.

Universities Canada A range of opportunities for collaboration were identified, including that Universities Canada was administering a new scholarship programme, the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee scholarship.

Research exchange grants were also available for possible exploration.

It was agreed that there must be follow up on the scholarship programmes, including facilitating formal links between Universities Canada and Universities South Africa.

The International Research Development Centre (IRDC) The IRDC presented its various programmes on grants for fellowship programmes: the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee scholarship for Commonwealth countries, doctoral and post-doctoral degrees, twinning programmes and a Chairs programme.

It was agreed that the IRDC programme resonated well with components of the UCDP.

As a way forward, there should be an exploration of a twinning programme between South Africa and Canada, a Chairs programme and support in the Science, Technology, Engineering and

Mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

The Ontario Universities Application Centre A presentation on the model of the Ontario Universities Application Centre indicated the scope and governance arrangements in the Centre.

The centre processes undergraduate applications to all 20 Ontario universities.

A college applications system also exists that is managed by the Ontario College Application Service.

It was agreed that a critique on the draft South African Central Applications Systems policy would be conducted.

Meeting with Canada's Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Reza Moridi welcomed closer collaboration and noted that there were more than 77 000 international students in Ontario.

Given that the lingua franca is English, South African students will have no difficulties settling in and various universities have scholarship programmes for international students that must be explored.

Ontario, it was noted, has one of the best schools internationally for animal and veterinary sciences.

Minister Moridi indicated that his province has 50 community colleges, that the reputation of the college sector is very high and that the employers value the training given to students.

Opportunities to become job-ready have seen an increase in participation rates. The colleges have a very close working relationship with industry. The perception is that with a

college certificate, your job prospects are better. 75% of students find jobs within six months after completing their college programmes.

University of Toronto The University is ranked in the top 15 institutions globally and the presentation at this meeting focused largely on the work of the Faculty of Medicine.

This faculty has the capacity for training PhDs, faculty development programmes and innovative combined Master's and PHD degrees.

International faculty and student exchanges are therefore encouraged and opportunities are available.

This resonated well with the purpose of the UCDP and the Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF).

It was agreed that further follow-up is necessary because South Africa has established the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University as a dedicated facility for Health Sciences.

Meeting with Ryerson University The university is an urban university with 50 000 students. Its President pointed out that there are a number of fruitful projects with South African universities that have been in existence for a few years, particularly with Wits and Stellenbosch Universities.

There was a need to meet with key stakeholders on issues of business incubation in South Africa.

Mr Ghaleeb Jeppie is Chief Director: International Relations at the DHET

The Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework includes capacity building, mentoring and international mobility opportunities for newly appointed lecturers at South African universities with the aim of encouraging more young South Africans to enter the academic profession.

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