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First Among Equals

Stories from higher education leaders in South Africa

HE higher education **LEADERSHIP
and MANAGEMENT**





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Preface

Academic institutions have historically made appointments to institutional leadership and management positions not necessarily based on the individual's innate ability to manage people, processes and systems, but on academic credibility, the amount of publications, the papers delivered and the standing among colleagues. The concept of academic leadership has been transferred to the notion that excellence in academia translates, via *primus inter pares*, into institutional management material.

It does not follow that academic excellence can be equated with the ability to lead organisations; in fact it is possible that the better the academic; the more time is spent in the solitary activity of researching, reading, writing and publishing. The quiet, reclusive space of books, and uninterrupted time that constitute knowledge production through research is in stark contradiction to the unscheduled and unanticipated events that mark the average day for those leading institutions of higher learning. Paradoxically then, excellence achieved in an exclusive field of study is rewarded by thrusting a perhaps isolated researcher into the full gaze of public participation. Moreover where once he/she was motivated by forwarding his/her own thoughts and arguments, she is rewarded by having to expound the collective perspective of the institution.

Forwarding this stereotype requires that the converse is also presented. The growth of managerialism in the face of the international decrease in state funding together with the drive to maximise additional revenue streams has meant the rise of the imported leader, whom has either been fast-tracked through the system or brought in from the corporate environment, full of management and business theories and best practices. Invariably these leaders set about transforming the institution into something that looks like a regular corporation - driven by profit

margins and stakeholder returns. Contingent with this entrepreneurial approach is the ranking of disciplines according to the external profit they are able to generate, the removal of disciplines perceived to be esoteric and the re-ordering of the curricula in order to satisfy short-term market gaps in accordance with customer demand rather than societal need.

Obviously, what is required is a balance that understands the nature of the higher education institutions but that is also proactively engaged with the real social and economic issues, nationally and internationally. However, these two stock characters lend an exaggeration that serves to establish the extreme poles of the higher education leadership continuum. It also highlights the demands for leadership and management development as these two sources of institutional leadership will remain the primary pools of recruitment.

It is within this context, that the complexity of designing and delivering suitable leadership and management development interventions should be recognised, as the needs and learning requirements of the individuals motivated to attend these programmes would be as diverse as his or her location on the continuum. Leadership and management programmes continuously grapple with the question how to respond, especially in considering the target audience and their institutional contexts in order to provide optimal opportunities for development and enabling leadership and management to manage the changes and complexities of higher education.

The partnership between Higher Education South Africa (HESA) and the American Council on Education (ACE) – under the aegis of the ACE Fellows programme – is detailed in these pages via personal accounts of the leadership challenges faced within South African higher education.



The uniqueness of the ACE Fellows programme has been its sensitivity to the above challenges and it therefore constantly seeks to balance theory and practice in programme delivery. Currently, 22 South African higher education executive managers have participated in the six week programme, and many continue to participate in various international peer networks.

These learning opportunities have been made available through a longstanding partnership between HESA – that facilitates the application and selection processes and the management of donor funding and the American Council on Education that welcome the South Africans to participate in the highly acclaimed leadership seminars and the management of the placements with the individual American university presidents.

Immense gratitude is also due to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its generous financial contributions that enable the South African candidates to participate in the Fellows programme as well as the individual institutions that allow Fellows a considerable amount of time off to participate in the programme.

Prof Duma Malaza
CEO: Higher Education South Africa

Definitional difficulties – The university and leadership

What is the nature of academic leadership and what unique personal and professional qualities are required for success? These are questions that this publication seeks to address. The approach that has been adopted has purposefully steered clear of over-theorising leadership in higher education. Rather than viewing leadership from the outside, using one or another theoretical lens, these stories offer an opportunity to view the challenges of leadership from the inside out.

By way of establishing a context for these brief narratives, one must understand that academic leadership is not the same as leadership in business or government. This is primarily due to the nature and identity of the university.

For example, there is no longer a thing that can simplistically be called the university. To use the term university immediately requires that one finds additional adjectives to describe it. Red-brick, Ivy League, historically disadvantaged, Land Grant, universities of technology, comprehensives are some of the descriptors that are needed to add precision to an amorphous term. Current higher education debates around managerialism, entrepreneurialism, massification, ICT channels, distance, borderless opportunities and threats are terms that attempt to situate the debate within the existing understanding of the university. What is less obvious is that we continue to use the term ‘university’ without problematising its very nature. The current higher education debates and the changing relations with government mean that when we talk of the university we are in fact using a euphemism for an entity that we cannot fully describe.

“For the university to continue to fulfil its important role within a post-modern society, requires leadership that needs to take universities, in whatever shape or form, into the future.”

For the university to continue to fulfil its important role within a post-modern society, requires leadership that needs to take universities, in whatever shape or form, into the future. But because of the multiple functions within the modern university, leadership is answerable to multiple stakeholders. Students, parents, staff, executive management, council, senate, different state departments, the private sector and donors all feel equally that the Vice-Chancellor and the management team are answerable to them. At a forum¹ held in 2003, South African Vice-Chancellors spoke of the threats of burn-out and loneliness in a role that simultaneously required them to be a visionary, lawyer and fire-fighter. As Jon File points out, the university is ambiguous about its goals because they are multiple – teaching, research and outreach – and its clients because they are many (students, parents, employers)².

Unlike the equivalent corporate position of CEO, there is no agreed definition as to what the role of the leadership entails at any one institution; there is rarely a clear mandate or scope of work that actually reflects what the leadership will have to do on a day to day basis. The demands on and expectations of top management also vary from one institutional culture to another. The demands made on a institution that is located in a poor rural area with inadequate access to ICT, high prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS, immense poverty, inferior secondary schooling and demoralised teaching staff, make for a work experience that is very different to an urban culture with a growing student base, internationally recognised academics, a healthy demand for short courses and access to other third stream revenues as well as a strong investment portfolio.

In order to showcase the range of leaders from different institutions confronted with very diverse challenges, HESA has compiled this series of interviews.

Each story deals with the same experience – the American Council on Education (ACE) Fellows Programme; an exchange programme that gives South African leaders the opportunity to learn and share with United States counterparts.

As the following narratives will make clear, the returning Fellows that were interviewed come from both sides of the South African higher education spectrum.

What is consistent in these pieces is that these are leaders who are passionate about higher education, attuned to its specific and complex challenges and, at the same time, driven by a desire to ensure the sustainability of their institution and the reputation of the sector as a whole. It is also clear that the American Council on Education Fellows Programme allowed these South African participants defining moments in their lives as present and future leaders within South African higher education.

¹ SAUVCA (2003). Leadership Development Workshop Report

² File, J. (2000) A Comparative Perspective on Leadership and Institutional Change. Leadership and Institutional Change in Higher Education. Pretoria, CHET.

The ACE Connection

Higher Education South Africa comprises the 23 Vice-Chancellors at South African universities. In 2002 HESA put in place a comprehensive response to strengthening leadership in higher education through the formation of a programme named Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM). The central idea was to support leadership and management capacity development in the South African higher education sector. Its mission was to explore and create relevant and cutting edge solutions that address organisational and individual capacity needs in higher education leadership and management.

As part of this process, HESA in partnership with the ACE established an international executive management exchange programme with higher education institutions in the United States.

Since its inception in 2003, the exchange programme has evolved into a dynamic capacity building initiative. By 2008, 22 senior managers³ have participated in the programme with the majority occupying executive positions in their respective institutions. Only senior and executive institutional managers are targeted to participate in the programme and those who are finally chosen to attend emerge through a thorough selection process.

The South African Fellows participate for six weeks on the United States programme. The programme consists of attending a national one week opening seminar, which includes financial and strategic management, marketing, leadership theory, personal leadership assessment, policy, government relations and institutional identity. After this intensive exposure to the theory and praxis of leadership issues in higher education, the Fellows take part in a five week placement at a United States higher education institution under the mentorship of a president or chief academic affairs officer at a host United States institution.

Crucial to this process, Fellows are required to draw up a learning contract. Its purpose is to articulate learning goals that the Fellow would like to achieve. These goals are specifically tailored to the needs of the home institution. The learning contract is finalised once the Fellow has met the mentor at the host institution and discussed the possibilities and opportunities to realize these learning objectives. A final requirement of the programme is for the Fellow to submit a reflective/evaluative report to the home institution and to HELM upon completion of the visit.

The brief stories that follow offer valuable insights into the exchange experience and the implications and consequences of this mentoring process.

³ A complete list of all the participants, their home institutions and positions and their host institutions is attached as Appendix A.



Prof. Narend Bajjnath

Year of fellowship: 2004

Current designation: Vice-Principal Strategy, Planning and Partnerships

Current institution: University of South Africa

Host institution during the fellowship: Old Dominion University

A map of the world, pinned to a sizeable notice board behind Professor Narend Bajjnath's paper laden desk, is a fitting embellishment for the office of the Vice-Principal for Strategy, Planning and Partnerships at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

The map serves as a constant reminder that UNISA is a distance learning institution with cross-continental and global reach. At the same time it is an instantaneous orientation tool to pinpoint the exact origins of UNISA's 22 000 international students. On the whole the chart is perhaps a symbol of the in-depth global intelligence that Bajjnath, as the key strategist of South Africa's only distance learning institution, has to navigate each day.

He explains that in the execution of any long-term planning exercise there is no room for hunches.

"If we say that we want to open up a learning centre in a certain region, say East Africa, you need to know how many students you have in that region. You need to know the jurisdiction there, and what the regulatory requirements are; you need to see what the potential is for recruitment. So, our information and intelligence are vitally important. They inform all our planning," he says.

Arguably no other South African institution has UNISA's huge planning capability, pulling together strategic and operational planning, supported by sophisticated management information and analysis. In fact, the work that Bajjnath is heading is regarded as leading edge internationally.

But the university did not always have this capacity. It had to be developed – and rather urgently – following the merger between the former Technikon SA (TSA) and UNISA in 2004, which grew student numbers from 130 000 to 286 000. In the immediate post-merger period, Baijnath was given the responsibility of research and planning.

“It was immediately apparent to me that the merging institutions did not have any planning capacity to speak of. The old UNISA had a management information capacity, but it didn’t have a planning capacity, and the opposite was true for TSA: while it had some planning capacity, it didn’t have any dedicated management information capacity,” he said.

Baijnath, responsible for planning at TSA as DVC, and before that as Director of the Academic Planning Unit at the University of the Western Cape, had the benefit of studying planning at six institutions in the United States as far back as 1996. Organised by the American Council on Education, it allowed Baijnath his first opportunity to interrogate best practices.

The Americans impressed him.

“I thought the American universities were streets ahead in terms of their planning, institutional research and also in the areas of strategic planning, and management information systems,” he says. So when he got another opportunity to take his learning further, this time by attending the ACE Fellows Programme, a flagship initiative aimed at nurturing higher education leaders, he did not hesitate.

A period of reflection

His motivation for accepting the fellowship was that it would be an ideal avenue to take a fresh look at regimes of planning at selected universities in the United States. But this time he would do so with much clearer defined objectives as the six weeks he was about to spend in the United States would be a precursor for the task at hand when he returned to South Africa in 2005 - thrashing out a strategic plan for UNISA for the next ten years. As part of his preparations he wanted to do an in-depth literature review, collect best practice exemplars which he could review and could serve to benchmark UNISA’s plan against, and network with top planners.

Viewed as a whole, it was to be a period of serious reflection.

The study visit to the United States started with a week long seminar, a standard feature of the fellowship, which Bajjnath rates very highly. For him it served as a critical orientation in terms of planning theory, financial planning, and strategic planning. This was a platform where the top experts in the United States, who had been at the cutting-edge of higher education analysis for 20 to 30 years - shared leading edge, highly distilled insights and theories with fellows.

"In that sense it was a real highlight: knowing that you need not necessarily go to the North as the fountain of knowledge. There are things that the North can learn from us."

"That's invaluable stuff. You benefit from the vast and diverse experience of leaders at the top of their game. They are able to draw case studies from various institutions in the United States; not just from their personal knowledge. They also have deep, intimate knowledge of the American higher education sector, that they're able and willing to share. I found that immensely valuable," he said.

Participation in the seminar, says Bajjnath, reaffirmed that South Africans could compete with their American counterparts on any issue. Moreover, our cooperative, collaborative style, outclassed peers from other parts in the world.

"We were four South Africans that went, and we did a joint presentation; we each had to present and we were able to cooperate very quickly. These guys just couldn't fathom that it is possible to do things through a team approach in a cooperative way instead of in a competitive way. In that sense it was a real highlight: knowing that you need not necessarily go to the North as the fountain of knowledge. There are things that the North can learn from us."

Following the seminar and for the next five weeks Bajjnath was placed at Old Dominion University in Virginia. While he did what he set out to do, the institution also benefited from Bajjnath's planning experience.

"When I arrived they had been busy with their strategic planning exercise for three and a half years already. I could see what the dynamics and the politics were that were paralyzing the process, and that with a very small institution. It was an important lesson in some senses about how not to do things."

Returning intellectually energised, Bajjnath was ready to embark on UNISA's strategic planning process. He could apply his experiences at Old Dominion University directly upon his return.

"I had to deliver our plan within a year, and UNISA is 10 to 20 times bigger than that institution with 20 times the amount of politics. I was able to produce our strategic plan on time, after a very intensive consulting process," he added. "And I could do so confidently, knowing that I was on the right path and also knowing the alternative ways of doing it. In the end we have crafted our own way here, that was home-grown to an extent, but also influenced by leading-edge factors internationally."

Passing it on

Overall Bajjnath describes the ACE Fellows Programme as an "outstanding experience". On a personal level the cross-national and cross-cultural engagement sharpened his social intelligence. On a professional level he expanded his networks while tapping into leading-edge sources of knowledge. At the institutional level he returned to apply his knowledge immediately and in a demonstrable way.

Bajjnath recommends that against the backdrop of skills shortages and the brain drain in all sectors of the South African economy, that there should be an organised transfer of knowledge from those who had benefited from the ACE Fellows Programme and other learning opportunities.

"I've got 20 years of experience in higher education, with a dozen of those at senior management level and I believe I have a lot to share in terms of insights, experience, and knowledge. Anyone who comes under my wing does benefit - and I play that mentoring role with my staff."

"In contrast, I had to learn on my own, and the first big boost I had was the ACE programme in 1996. Then of course the ACE Fellows Programme in 2004. These were the two huge boosts in my learning, understanding and networking. There are very few people, I think, who get such opportunities. One should say: 'I have benefited from these and now I wish to contribute to the development of other people,'" Bajjnath concludes.

"In the end we have crafted our own way here, that was home-grown to an extent, but also influenced by leading-edge factors internationally."



Prof Thokozile Mayekiso

Year of fellowship: 2004

Current designation: Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts

Current institution: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Host institution during the fellowship: University of Washington

Clinical psychologist Professor Thokozile Mayekiso was well into her third year as the University of the Witwatersrand's Head of the School of Human and Community Development, (which encompasses Psychology, Social Work, Specialised Education, Speech Pathology and Audiology) when she realised she wanted to move a rung or two up the academic career ladder.

To this end, she applied for the ACE Fellowship with the intention of shadowing academic managers. She viewed this as a means of enhancing her leadership and management capacity.

She was awarded a fellowship from August to October 2004 at the University of Washington, in Seattle and about a year after her return to the University of the Witwatersrand, Mayekiso was appointed Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, then acting Dean. In 2007 she became Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the newly created Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The institution was born out of a merger between University of Port Elizabeth and Port Elizabeth Technikon and the incorporation of the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University.

Says Mayekiso: "I had three main objectives in my learning contract during the fellowship – to learn more about fostering an institutional culture at a university; postgraduate studies management; and boosting teaching and learning support. These objectives were informed by the strategic plan of the University of the Witwatersrand, "Shaping the Future 2002-2005."

She says the opening seminar of the Fellowship, which was held in Denver, allowed her an opportunity to reflect on challenges and opportunities in higher education, internationally, with specific reference to financial management, strategic planning, and leadership strategies for effective team work.

“From the didactic and experiential-based approaches to learning I was in a position to step out of my role as head of school and reflect on my leadership journey at the Universities of Transkei and Witwatersrand.” She refers to a presentation by Natalie Krawitz, Vice-President for finance and administration, at the University of Missouri, whose similar background in Psychology made her realise she too could accomplish an advanced understanding of the budgeting process.

Institutional Culture

From her interactions with a range of senior academics, including her mentor, Dr Susan Jeffords, Vice-Provost for academic planning at the University of Washington, Mayekiso says: “the one thing that I learnt was that the person responsible for transformation at the university was at the level of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The elevation of the office of Minority Affairs to the level of Vice-President contributes towards sending a message to the community at the University of Washington that the university is serious about addressing diversity issues.”

“I spent time with a number of senior academics like Dr Nancy Barcelo, Vice-President for the Office of Minority Affairs and Dr Helen Remick, Assistant Provost for Equal Opportunity. I focused on processes they followed instead of what they want to achieve.” An example of this, she says, is the approach of the University of Washington in asking units or departments to provide information on how they are addressing diversity issues. “They did not ask questions to individual staff members. The culture surveys focused on staff experiences as a group. The university found that people started to realise that some of their experiences are the same. If you express your fears as a group it provides a safe space for people’s comments.”

She has used the knowledge she gleaned from these experiences in her current role as a member of the Transformation and Equity Committee and convenor of the Task Team on Organisational Culture and Values at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. “I am using my insights on how to get people to talk about their experiences of institutional culture.” The challenge for Mayekiso is to include all staff in decision making processes. “The merger threw up diversity issues and we need to include everyone in decision making.”

Nurturing a postgraduate culture

Another issue Mayekiso was grappling with was: how do you sustain a postgraduate culture and nurture interest in academic careers? While South African universities appoint postgraduates to teach in a non-formalised way, postgraduate students play the role of teaching assistants in the United States. “At the beginning of the academic year there was a week’s training for them. This was important as they need proper training to perform this important function effectively.”

She observed that it is compulsory for the whole university to run the training in a workshop style, where students who had taught in the previous year share their experiences on how they approached certain lecture room challenges, while other examples on teaching strategies were provided by academic staff.

The teaching assistants were taught how to “include all students in your class and how to make sure you reach different levels of intellectual abilities”. The focus is not on the content but how to approach teaching. The emphasis is on interpersonal issues. How you teach is as important as what you teach, she explains.

On her return to the University of the Witwatersrand, she started in-house training for postgraduate students in Psychology. More recently, at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, she has introduced something similar for her faculty. “It is however not university based. There is no university-wide workshop for student assistants”.

Mayekiso is adamant that the university sector as a whole needs to explore this concept. “Most people do not have a teaching qualification.

They move from being honours to masters students, then to lecturer. You need to learn how to teach properly.”

She now chairs her faculty’s Higher Degrees Committee and tries to ensure that when students’ research proposals are presented, she and her colleagues provide feedback in a constructive and empowering manner. “I try to create an enabling environment as it may be the first time that a student is writing a research proposal and the criticism should not be an off putting experience.”

Teaching and learning support

What impressed Mayekiso was the University of Washington’s focus on its teaching staff. “They have an induction programme for academics which runs over one week. They get the previous recipients of teaching awards to speak to staff and the impact has a lasting effect. It’s very good when the professor of political studies who has won a teaching award talks to staff. In the programme, academics teach new staff the do’s and don’ts in class. “In the induction programme you are taught not to see people as representative of groups. You are taught to move away from stereotypes. Academics are taught to see themselves as mentors and role models to students.”

Furthermore, at the staff induction, convenors talk to new staff about promotion opportunities. This affords newcomer staff the platform to think about career development. “The Americans see the staff induction as not just about speaking to them about meeting conditions of service but about promotions. It shows they care about you.”

Leadership and communication

Mayekiso’s most memorable experience was observing the new president of the University of Washington, Professor Mark Emmet, who had himself completed the ACE programme, chair his first meeting with the Board of Regents. “He chaired his first meeting and looked relaxed as though he had been there a long time. His management style was engaging and inclusive. I looked forward to his meetings.

“Furthermore, at the staff induction, convenors talk to new staff about promotion opportunities. This affords newcomer staff the platform to think about career development.”

I learnt that you can be in a leadership position and take a difficult decision in a relaxed way. This was his first job as a president. He should have been nervous but he never appeared so," says Mayekiso.

"I learnt that if you are in a leadership position you must show confidence in what you do. It does not mean being arrogant. People need to be confident that you can lead them."

She says that shortly after Emmet was appointed, an administrative workshop was held to give him a sense of the progress staff were making in achieving the goals of the university's strategic plan. "He wanted to find out what was distinctive and successful and what was impeding the achievement of success."

From her interactions with her American colleagues during her Fellowship, she views weekly communication with her faculty as a top priority. "Meetings do not have to be long. You have to check your idea with them or make it their idea," she laughs.

Local mentorship

She would fully endorse the idea to set up an initiative in South Africa that is similar to the ACE fellowship. "It would be a very good initiative. There are many people in senior management who would be available to mentor fellows as well as some who have retired and have a wealth of experience." Dr Rolf Stumpf, the former Vice-Chancellor of her current university is one such example. "He could mentor people. It would address some of the gaps one sees in higher education."

She has meanwhile read books on leadership which were recommended to her during her fellowship and cites author Tony Manning as being influential. Her fellowship was a springboard for her involvement in a forum "The Forces and Forms of Reform in Doctoral Education" in which 14 countries are involved in examining changes in doctoral education. Set up in 2005, the group met in Australia in 2007 and the next meeting is 2009 in Germany. "I wrote a chapter on quality and evaluation in doctoral programmes and this came out of my fellowship," says Mayekiso, adding that she feels "more empowered and better equipped".



Prof Darren Lortan

Year of fellowship: 2006

Current designation: Executive Dean Faculty of Applied Sciences

Current institution: Durban University of Technology

Host institution during the fellowship: Texas Tech University

In 2006, Durban Institute of Technology – now Durban University of Technology (DUT) – was experiencing upheaval despite it being five years in existence from a voluntary merger in 2001 between ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal, in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

According to Professor Darren Lortan, who was the new institution's executive dean of engineering and the built environment from 2003, the merger was a minefield as major political players from the individual institutions before the merger, remained in positions of authority. "There were factions of senior managers who were bent on undoing the work of others while there were some who were committed to the merger." Members of the university's leadership played musical chairs: many of the executive managers resigned or were offered packages and were replaced, while they had no executive power. To add fuel to the fire, the university's council was viewed as a puppet of management.

Lortan, who holds a PhD in applied mathematics, was asked to act as Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and found it difficult to ignore the political instability, while wanting to move on with the task of providing strategic direction to the academic sector in alignment with the vision and mission of the DUT.

During this time he witnessed infighting and politicking, which led to his career reaching a crossroads. "I experienced a crisis in confidence in my ability to lead a faculty." He was about to submit his letter of resignation, and was in need of time out to find the space to reflect on his career and whether he wanted to be in higher education management or even higher education at all.

He looked to the American Council on Education Fellowship as a lifeline – an attempt to get away from the institution he worked at, and to introspect on what he wanted, career-wise. He wanted to be an outsider, looking into his own life.

He participated in the programme in 2006 and was hosted by the Texas Tech University, which in spite of the technical connotations of its name, was a top research producer.

Leadership lessons

For Lortan, “the ACE Opening Seminar may prove to be the most rewarding event of its kind that I have had the privilege of participating in. From the prescribed readings and the animated formal activities (which included the much anticipated Pennyfield case study) to the one-on-one mentoring sessions with seasoned former presidents and the informal exchanges over lunch (with the future of American higher education leadership).” He was so taken in by the experience that he returned in 2007 to participate in some of the remaining seminars.

Lortan says a 360 degree survey of his leadership attributes was conducted prior to the commencement of the Opening Seminar and the outcomes fed into a Development Plan he had to produce, while he was at the university. His growth areas centred on him refraining from taking on too many responsibilities; learning to delegate more tasks to colleagues; and focusing more on his planning and organisational skills. He amassed reading materials on the programme. “This interactive, iterative process is ongoing and remains one of the most meaningful personal developmental exercises that I have participated in.”

To this day he continues working on his growth areas but concedes that he provides staff with opportunities to take on projects but if there are no takers, he would rather do the task himself, instead of having the wrong person ruining a great opportunity. He modestly attributes his time management improvement to his personal assistants.

He looked to the American Council on Education Fellowship as a lifeline – an attempt to get away from the institution he worked at, and to introspect on what he wanted, career-wise.

His biggest strength is that he is “very approachable”, something which he in the past did not recognise as a strength.

“If people are confident that they can talk to you about anything, it says a lot about you,” he laughs.

Mentorship Process

Dr Clyda Rent, former president of the University of Mississippi, played the role of mentor and coach, while he interacted with key role players including Dr William Marcy, the Provost and Senior-Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr Tom Anderes, Senior Vice- President for Administration and Finance. He also conducted interviews with Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dr Jane Weiner and the Dean of Engineering, Dr Pamela Eibeck.

His meetings with the university president, Professor Jon Whitmore centred on his views on leadership, his approach to management, and the role he played in realising the strategic vision of TTU and higher education in Texas.

“I also attended the President’s Advisory Council on a number of occasions and participated in a number of presentations that he made to a variety of stakeholders on his document Realizing Our Vision For Future Growth at Texas Tech University. This document served as a catalyst for most of our discussions. It became immediately obvious that the same document was used by President Whitmore to serve a variety of different (yet related) purposes. The skillfulness with which he changed emphasis for the different audiences was evidence of his mature leadership.”

Says Lortan: “The document itself is a carefully assembled monitor of achieved goals over the period of review. It also represents a reflection of what changes were required in order to remain on track to realize the vision of TTU. What distinguishes this document from an Annual Report is the animated manner in which the information was distributed. President Whitmore also presented me a copy of Jim Collins’ bestseller Good to Great. All of the members of the Board of Regents of TTU were reading the book.”

Lortan meanwhile shadowed Dr Gilmour Reeve, Director of the Strategic Planning Division, whose expertise lay in kinesiology, yet he made strategic planning his profession by publishing papers on the matter.

Strategic planning

Prior to the Fellowship, Lortan says he viewed “strategic planning” as an exercise that leaders have to participate in. “I had a version of the notion of Strategic Planning and my definition, while rudimentary, and probably not original, satisfied the requirement that it should be easily understood by most who encounter it: “Strategic Planning is the instrument by which we ensure that what we’re doing and how we are doing it, is perpetually driven by why we are doing it in the first place.”

He says that although his version of strategic planning has not been changed by his experiences at TTU, it has been embellished. His interest lay not only in what constitutes strategic planning at TTU, but also how it evolved in recent times.

He says that in the autumn of 2000 an analysis of TTU was conducted and strategic plans were developed. In November 2001 the Board of Regents approved the University Mission and Vision and in December 2001, the Board authorised the implementation of the University Strategic Plan. “The difference between the two verbs, as explained to me by the Dr Reeve, is crucial. An approved document contains a set of words bound in time and any changes to these words requires further approval, whereas authorising implementation enables a set of words to become a dynamic document”.

Reeve’s appointment to the Office of Strategic Planning took place in January 2002. In the same month a Strategic Planning Council was established, while a Strategic Planning and Assessment website was developed and the first sets of Annual Assessments (evaluations of the achievement of goals) were conducted in 2002, 2003, and 2004.

In 2003, Whitmore was appointed to lead TTU. In his inaugural address, he outlined his approach to realising the vision of TTU.

To many of the staff, this was interpreted as ‘another President another vision.’ “However, Dr Reeve immediately published a comparison between the strategic objectives outlined in President Whitmore’s Inaugural Address and the strategic priorities of the university as a whole. The overlap soon became obvious and fears of restarting the process were allayed.

From the interviews with President Whitmore, I have established that he deliberately remained within the 'scope' of the strategic priorities of TTU. His intention then was to simply announce his Presidential Priorities into which those of the university would naturally fit. The seven strategic priorities and goals of the university are now captured in all publications under four themes. It is these four succinct themes (or statements) that find their way into every communication from the Office of the President."

For Lortan, it is difficult to avoid making comparisons between the development of the Strategic Planning process at TTU and a similar experience that unfolded at DUT. Since the merger in 2001, DUT had undertaken two major strategic planning exercises, each event precipitated by the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor. The two mission and vision statements differed and at that time, the strategic goals were yet to be refined into a set of achievable outcomes that could be measured against defined benchmarks. He is hopeful that DUT's recently appointed Vice-Chancellor Professor Roy du Pré will preserve the fundamental differences between the Mission and Vision and the Strategic Planning to realise the Vision (especially the longevity of the Mission and Vision). In other words it is hoped that they will outlast the lifespan of Vice-Chancellors.

Lortan has meanwhile learnt that when there are conflicts or personality clashes which make managing the workplace difficult, the safest way to resolve this is to do so in a manner that "complies with your strategic priorities. Look at the issue and how it affects what's at hand".

"I also learnt that strategic planning can consume your energy and result in you losing focus. I've learnt that a good leader should look at an organisation's strategic plans and see if he can make a difference. He or she should not come in and tell people to do this and that. You should do things in accordance with the stated goals."

Freedom to lead

Lortan says he believes the two major focal points of his learning outcomes – the deepening of his understanding of the strategic planning process and its relation to resource allocations were achieved.

The TTU is a fairly decentralised organisation, while it would appear that many of the role players in the hierarchy have differing views with regard to the extent of the decentralisation. “I have observed that given the slightly more relaxed labour law in the United States (by comparison with South Africa), the ability to assume responsibility for the appointment process of new faculty, the opportunity to shape budgets around strategic priorities, and the ability to change these plans and to account for these changes, academic leaders at TTU have far greater responsibility for decision making that (when necessary) links resource allocation with planning than some of them realise. Their ability to make decisions and to responsibly authorize the implementation of plans on the ground would be the envy of most academic leaders at the DUT”.

His home institution is committed to the decentralisation of resources but does not always follow through with this.

On getting students to belong

Lortan says he was “blown away” by the significance that sport plays in a typical United States university. In the first week of term, students are involved in team building, “which is used to start a loyalty programme from day one. You are made to love and appreciate the university and made to feel a sense of belonging”. This is glaringly absent at South African universities where Orientation Week “is not enough to get you to feel as though you are part of a university. One of the biggest reasons for drop-outs is that there is a lack of identification with the institution students are attending and that they make the wrong choice of subjects.”

Outcome

The most valuable outcome of the fellowship for Lortan occurred from the inside out. He made a decision to remain in higher education. “I was satisfied that I did not need to be a dean to provide a service to higher education. I believe that I shall remain in higher education leadership and management for as long as I continue to perform to the satisfaction of those I serve: the students, the staff and the management of DUT.”



Prof Rocky Ralebipi-Simela

Year of fellowship: 2003

Current designation: Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic

Current institution: Central University of Technology

Host institution during the fellowship: University of Missouri-Rolla

Prof. Rocky Ralebipi-Simela's trenchant passion for her work in higher education is difficult to ignore, as she recounts some of the important roles she has been propelled into, in recent years.

Fresh out of the strenuous task of chairing the Higher Education Quality Committee panel which audited Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in September 2008, she underscores how important the quality audits are – it is a process that can only improve the sector.

Her zestful personality shines through as she refers to the paper she is about to deliver on women in higher education at the Hers-SA women in leadership conference in Cape Town. It is abundantly clear that this is an issue that bothers her, given the minority of women academics in senior positions in South-Africa. In the past, she was invited by HESA's leadership training programme, HELM to facilitate workshops on leadership and development for senior academics. Ralebipi-Simela directly attributes her leadership achievements to her participation in the ACE Fellows programme in 2003 at the former University of Missouri-Rolla (UMR) (currently renamed Missouri University of Science and Technology).

Before she left for Missouri-Rolla in her capacity as Executive Dean of Humanities, Management Sciences and Law at the University of Venda, the latter institution was undergoing reconstruction to change its focus from the humanities and social sciences to science and technology. "This was a radical move as about 80% of its staff and academic programs were in the social sciences and humanities, she explains".

Based on these changes which were in line with the developmental and human resources needs of the country, she wanted to learn more about how a university of Science and Technology could produce “well-rounded” graduates even though it focused on one area i.e. science and technology. “I’m a librarian and information scientist and I love to dance and listen to music,” she laughs, indicating that it is possible to integrate various disciplines.

UMR was the “perfect match” for this observation as it is part of a four-campus University of Missouri System and a premier source of science and engineering education in the state. It is a small rural institution with about 5 000 students.

Learning Objectives

She wanted to focus on science and technology education and how the university prepared students for the world of work. She also wanted to explore the different roles of industry in the work of the university.

Interdisciplinary Programmes

For Ralebipi-Simela, “it became very clear to me that UMR were educating engineers and scientists with a human conscience. The College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Management provided opportunities for students to learn how to communicate and to manage companies. They were running courses with modules in marketing, human resources and communications.”

The College facilitated a process of students learning and working together, as group work was important because engineers tend to spend hours by themselves and they might not know how to collaborate, or present themselves, she explains. Furthermore, the students had to work together to design and produce a solar-powered car for example at the Design Centre. This car won the 2003 Solar Minor Car Competition in the United States. “Without collaboration they could not have come up with such a car”.

Furthermore, the university has a campus about 40km away, which was offering engineering training to members of the US military.

“The war in Iraq had just started and the military were being trained to do technical jobs. I realised that you can come from any academic background and learn different skills if you focus on them. You don’t always need a four to six-year degree to acquire technical skills in a particular area.

She has plans in her current position as Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic to introduce a core or interdisciplinary curriculum across Central University of Technology’s faculties. “Currently students are learning in silos. In order to produce well-rounded technologists and scientists. We’ve are introducing a core curriculum which will equip students with communications, and other human sciences skills, like the writing-up of resumes as well as presentation skills.” The idea has been introduced to the university’s senate but she concedes that there is much work to be done.

The art of diplomacy

Shadowing the UMR Chancellor, Dr Gary Thomas, Ralebipi-Simela says she learned the art of diplomacy amongst other things. Thomas was perceived to be an outsider as he came from New Jersey and was viewed with suspicion by the UMR community. His major challenges were to restructure the university from seven faculties to four. “One dean vehemently refused to participate in the process but Dr Thomas kept his wits about him. He knew that the dean was to retire in 18 months and student numbers were dwindling. He was prepared to wait, instead of forcing the Dean and Faculty to participate. I learned to choose my wars very carefully. Leadership is about give and take.” She cites another example of how Thomas recognized the importance of networks and alumni as he attended the university’s football matches, despite the team’s losing record.

“I learned that as a leader of an institution you have to be very astute in the way you understand the environment. Leadership is about how you relate to people and the environment.”

On her return to her home institution she was in a position to use the leadership knowledge she had gleaned from the fellowship in many ways – she was initially perceived by the UNIVEN Campus Community

“I learned that as a leader of an institution you have to be very astute in the way you understand the environment. Leadership is about how you relate to people and the environment.”

as a threat – someone who had been brought in to restructure academic programmes with the potential of people losing their jobs. Once she understood the perception her tactic was to communicate and allay their fears, and to inform staff that she had come in to work with them in improving the university's academic performance "I had a whole group of ACE Fellows that I could send emails to and got support on issues as and when I faced them."

The university funded her attendance of the fellowship's mid-year and closing seminars and when the then Vice-Chancellor, Prof Nkondo did not have his contract renewed as Vice-Chancellor of the institution, Ralebipi-Simela was asked by joint university structures to help lead the institution. She became part of an interim management team that ran the university until the new management was in place. "We made sure the academic core was held together. Because my fellow academic deans were also ACE Fellows it was easy to run the university. Having the support of all the university structures helped build my confidence too."

Partnerships

UMR has a major focus on its alumni who contribute more than 60% of its revenue and the graduates go back 50 years. The university is also home to big companies such as Boeing, which views the university as an incubator for research and innovation for the State of Missouri and the world. Furthermore, 60% of the institution's contract research came from Boeing and other companies whose leadership are UMR alumni.

She learned that the head of Advancement and Marketing, Dr Connie Eggert worked closest with the Chancellor growing and enhancing in strategic partnerships of the institution. Dr Eggert opened the doors and the Chancellor closed the deals. "Eighty percent of the Chancellor's job is fundraising. And he has very little to do with the day-to-day running of the institution as the management team takes care of this."

On her return to the University of Venda, Ralebipi-Simela helped to improve the work of the community engagement office, who believed this initiative would set the university on a path to realising its community engagement mission.

At CUT, she views community engagement as core business. She interacts with many partners in research collaboration and industry partners who provide valuable “world of work” experience to the students and support new innovations geared to improve the living conditions of people in the region. She is also keen to see the university alumni engaged in the development of the institution and their support (financial and otherwise) of the university’s strategic priorities.

Using our own expertise

“I got an opportunity to drive the Solar Minor Car. This experience was invigorating,” she laughs, explaining that students came from diverse backgrounds but they managed to produce a solar propelled car that travelled over 1000km. “It highlighted what we can achieve if we work together. Some academics like to think that students bring nothing to the teaching and learning environment. They bring what they already know, and given a conducive teaching and learning environment, they can thrive and become very creative.

She says she believes that the University of Technology Environment is a springboard for huge opportunities in terms of research and technology innovation. “There is a lot that universities of technology can do. I’ve already made a suggestion to the engineering faculty to look at a model for an integrated design centre.”

Ralebipi-Simela says she would be the first to support a HESA mentorship project that is similar to the ACE fellowship. “I put it in my recommendations to HESA when I returned from the Fellowship and have already supported the participation of other ACE/South African Fellows since then. If HESA could invite retired Vice-Chancellors and other senior academic leaders to be a resource in this programme they could create a pool of experience and talent and support to mentor academics and those interested in academic management and leadership. This is what the ACE is doing with its Fellowship Programme.

For her, participation in the ACE was a highly positive experience, and as many higher education managers and leaders as possible, should be exposed to it.



Prof Errol Tyobeka

Year of fellowship: 2005/2006

Current designation: Vice-Chancellor of Tshwane University of Technology

Current institution: Tshwane University of Technology

Host institution during the fellowship: Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas

For Professor Errol Tyobeka the chance to participate in one of the world's most prestigious leadership programmes in higher education could not have come at a better time. His nomination to participate in the ACE Fellows Programme intersected with a critical moment in his professional growth trajectory.

He had just been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and despite his decade plus experience as a senior manager in higher education his mind was pre-occupied with one question: How do you run a university well?

The track record of the ACE Fellows Programme - having prepared senior university administrators since 1965 - suggested that the likelihood of having this question answered was significant. The ACE Fellows network is powerful; one which allows an ACE Fellow to draw on the goodwill and expertise of his fellow fellows at any time.

A perfect match

But Tyobeka's search for an answer was aided by a careful choice of objectives in his learning contract. Firstly, running TUT well entailed more than honing his skills as a manager and an administrator. He was also interested in probing some of the peculiar realities that shaped TUT as an institution.

Consequently the second aspect of his learning contract dealt with strengthening the place of technology – information technology – in the teaching and learning environment. The third aspect of his contract was to deal with the management of diversity.

Having just gone through a merger, TUT had to deal with a student population and staff from very diverse backgrounds.

Tyobeka was placed at the Texas State University in the town of San Marcos in the south of Texas. Despite his well-defined needs and the obvious challenges the ACE programme managers face to ensure Fellows are placed at suitable institutions, Tyobeka says: "For me it was a perfect match".

For starters the fact that an average American student is computer literate has long forced the United States higher education system, even small universities, to harness technology in creative ways to meet the expectations of these digital natives. This ensured that Tyobeka had his chance to take a closer look at e-learning.

"One of the things that I thought our university really needed to strengthen – apart from technology supporting our administration – is to bring technology to the teaching and learning environment. I thought that technology would assist us in dealing with the challenges of learning and teaching so we can pursue it at our university," he said.

Another plus of Tyobeka's placement at the Texas State University was that the geographical location of the university, near the Mexican border, posed challenges to the institution in terms of diversity management. Back home he was acutely aware of TUT's own diversity challenges following the merger: a student population consisting of individuals who came from very different backgrounds and staff who came from different institutions and who were suddenly part of a whole new order.

But perhaps most important – given the question that was preoccupying his thoughts – was the opportunity for Tyobeka to shadow the university's president for six weeks. "I think this type of learning – just watching how people operate in a different environment and how they do things – is extremely helpful," says Tyobeka.

Putting objectives into practice

He believes that the objectives in his learning contract, and his achievement thereof, have had an important influence on his work at TUT. In fact, his time in Texas has not only brought about major strategic changes at the university, but also affected how he runs his office on a day-to-day basis.

For instance the president at Texas State University did not allow executive meetings to exceed two hours and his diary only allows for slots of 30 minute meetings. Tyobeka has come back and implemented these practices to ease the pressure on his packed daily schedule. “And I find it useful because if you don’t have that pressure people will start asking you about things that are not relevant to the discussion at hand. Our diaries as managers are chock-a-block and if you don’t manage that, you might just find yourself sitting around and chatting with people without dealing with the issue at hand,” he said.

In terms of his learning contract the exposure to diversity management has subsequently allowed Tyobeka to tap into international links to bring in American experts in multiculturalism and diversity to interact with staff and offer generic courses on diversity management to staff. “My sense is that if you have staff who understand and manage multiculturalism, they can transfer that to the student population,” he said.

But perhaps the most far-reaching impact that Tyobeka’s participation in the ACE Fellow Programme has had on TUT is in the area of e-learning. Upon his return, TUT has created a portfolio for the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Teaching, Learning and Technology and at the moment the institution is working furiously on increasing its capacity in e-learning. Part of what TUT is doing is to provide technology to each and every classroom, but also to start using technology for the process of assessment.

“We are bringing smart technology into our system. If you come to this institution in the next two to three years you will realise that we are not just a university of technology in name, we are a real one – and a good one at that. I think that the American system in particular set me on a course of doing things in this regard,” he admits.

“My sense is that if you have staff who understand and manage multiculturalism, they can transfer that to the student population.”

But Tyobeka also rates the ACE Fellows Programme highly for its outcomes outside the ambit of the formal learning contract. He refers to the unexpected best practices, information and linkages which one comes across – the inevitable positive outcomes of this type of programme.

Many of these practices emanated from the orientation seminars, which have been likened to mini-MBA's and which fellows can attend before and after their stay at a United States institution. During one of these seminars participants had to come up with strategies and present them to a panel to turn around a troubled university – the well-known Pennyfield case of a floundering higher education institution. Highly competitive and highly academic, this session marked the highlight of the programme for Tyobeka.

He attended both the before and after seminar and believe he emerged “knowing how an institution should function”. These seminars also impressed upon him the respect that the American higher education system has for its retired presidents. New leaders use them as a repository of expertise.

A further offshoot of the fellowship was the obvious establishment of linkages allowing for an exchange of expertise and appreciation of institution and country-specific challenges. “They appreciate that we are doing a lot with very little. What I think is even more important is also that they’ve come back to say to me: ‘You know, the American system is different. We tend to have a general education and begin to specialise much later.’ But many of them who interacted with our students come back saying: ‘Your students are well trained! However what you do is different from what we do, because you guys begin to really train them in a more focused way for the world of work, much earlier than we would do in America’. So it’s that kind of appreciation of differences which is really valuable,” Tyobeka says.

Apart from the benefits the programme offers at an institutional level, it offers rich benefits to individuals. What stood out for Tyobeka was that he had grown in confidence and on his return was ready to lead TUT.

The value of programme

So is this a worthy initiative?

“I think every time someone says to me – even within the South African context – that he or she has gone through this programme, I would recommend the employment of such a person to any other university management. If you go through this programme you get a much broader insight into the terrain of the university,” he says.

He believes a similar programme would greatly strengthen higher education leadership and should be extended to cover the whole SADC region.



Prof Gonda Perez

Year of fellowship: 2004

Current designation: Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences

Current institution: University of Cape Town

Host institution during the fellowship: Idaho State University

Professor Gonda Perez's path to the Deputy Deanship of the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Health Sciences was not a conventional step-by-step climb up academe's ladder. Perez spent four years at the University of the Witwatersrand's Faculty of Dentistry, more specifically in the Department of Community Dentistry, but the biggest part of her working life was immersed in the public health services of Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Employed first by the post-1994 Department of Health and later on in the Department of Public Service and Administration, the activist turned civil servant was well-versed in changes in the health sector when she became the transformation officer of UCT's faculty of health services.

Given the wide-ranging scope of her portfolio which included employment equity, gender and disability as well as institutional culture, Perez increasingly became involved in the academic work of the faculty. Barely two years later the call came – literally – to serve at a higher level. At the time she was on the faculty's selection committee for the Deputy Dean. She became aware of a meeting taking place without her.

"I was furious that I was not invited! I went off and was scarcely out of the building when I got a phone call from the Dean asking me to apply for the position of Deputy Dean, which was strange. Though I have the qualifications and a research record, I did not really have academic experience. Clearly they thought I'd be suitable. But I wasn't the only one asked; there were other people asked as well to apply, and after the selection process I was appointed," says Perez.

Learning Goals

Because she did not rise to the post through the usual academic ranks, Perez felt she needed a more thorough grounding in the inner workings of universities and their many structures to enable her to do her job. More specifically, she wanted to understand leadership at the faculty level in all areas; be that financial planning, human capital or curriculum design.

When UCT's Vice-Chancellor at the time, Professor Njabulo Ndebele nominated her to participate in the ACE Fellows Programme in 2003, she saw it as an opportunity to plug the gaps in her preparedness for the Deputy Deanship. The fellowship started with the week long orientation seminar in Denver, Colorado.

"That was most enlightening. It gave us a view of how universities and the higher education system work within the United States. It also provided a view of how we don't do things and what good in their system we can apply here."

"We met people who were being very serious about their careers. For us who were there (from South Africa), we emphasised the societal responsibilities over individual careers. That was interesting for me to see."

For the rest of the programme Perez went to Idaho State University, a small rural university in the city of Pocatello. For Perez, coming from an urban university such as UCT, it was a mismatch. "I am not sure what the criteria was for placing me at Idaho State University. It is a very small university and has health sciences, but very different kind of health sciences," she said.

Budgeting for Health

Despite the incompatibility of the health science offerings of the two universities and the effect this had on Perez's learning objectives, she still returned with insights and ideas that have been relevant to UCT on many fronts. For instance, Perez did work very closely with her counterpart at Idaho State University on the budgeting process.

She believes this exposure has given her greater insight into the preparation and dismantling of budgets. This was particularly useful given the budgeting crisis that faculties of health sciences were facing at the time. Perez did an investigation into the causes of the problems before her fellowship.

The long-term outcome of this investigation, in particular a conference on the financing of Health Science Education has assisted in bringing about an agreement with Education Minister Naledi Pandor to inject R800 million into the clinical training of health sciences students over a period of three years. The ring-fenced funding, announced in 2008, will be used to employ clinical training staff and buy equipment for training and the improvement of clinical facilities for training. This will also allow for better supervision and teaching in the hospitals and clinics where students are placed.

“The time in the US confirmed that it was right to investigate the difficulties in the budget and how to go about dealing with our budget crisis,” says Perez.

Another result of Perez’s participation in the ACE programme has been a change in some of the programmes in the Health Sciences Faculty’s curriculum. At Idaho State University rehabilitative health workers such as occupational and physiotherapists are trained together. Perez brought the idea back home. “I was able to get the physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech language, pathologists and audiologists talking and now they are rearranging their whole curriculum to redesign areas that are common to all of them, and then separate for those that are specific to the profession,” she says.

Perez was also impressed by the use of technology to reach more students. Idaho State University has off-campus students whom they reach thanks to technology.

“So in front of you you’ve got 50 students, but your image is being broadcast to a number of other sites. On screens you see where the students are. And they are able to press a button and you see that they want to ask a question, so you listen to their question and respond.

This means you are having a three or four way discussion, some of which is to a remote site. I've been pushing the idea here. We send our students to community health centres, and when they have to have a lecture, they have to come back here. When I came back, this was another area that I got involved in, trying to promote telemedicine and greater utilisation of our video conferencing facilities This idea is poised to materialise if funding is forthcoming.

Perez also picked up on the way in which US universities leverage alumni for funding. Alumni are a major source of funding for institutions in the United States; a far cry from the situation in South Africa. "I went to a number of public events where alumni were giving money to the university. I thought that we could learn from them about alumni tracing - finding out how alumni impact on society, where they go, where they end up. We don't follow up."

"And then the donor acknowledgements. We give people a tax certificate. We don't acknowledge donations in a big way. When donors give small donations in the United States, institutions give them a medal to acknowledge their donation. Donors seem to love that."

Perez subsequently supported the faculty's initiative to erect a donor board at its Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IIDMM) and to hand over certificates and gifts to donors at a public event at the opening of the building. "I supported these ideas because I saw how successful they were in the States," she said.

Developing our own

Perez believes the ACE Fellows Programme has helped her to understand the academic environment and its peculiar inner workings better.

This has given her the confidence not only for the Deputy Deanship, but for stepping into the Dean's position in an acting capacity shortly after she returned; a position in which she served for a year. "I had more confidence when I came back to take on the role of the Deanship. I had seen how the Dean at Idaho State University worked, and I was able to incorporate some of her ideas into my management style," she said.

At an institutional level UCT has also entered into an agreement with Idaho State University to allow for an exchange of staff and students. Her counterpart from Idaho State University visited and subsequently her daughter, who was doing medicine at the time came to learn with UCT's students.

"She went to Khayelitsha. She was blown away just by the size of medical problems in South Africa compared to those in the United States. The burden of disease was very different. What we allow our students to do – we give hands-on training – was also very different to her experience where they stand and they watch. Because of her experience, she is now doing her PhD in public health. It shows what kind of influence the experience here had on her," said Perez.

For the Deputy Dean of UCT's faculty of health science the ACE Fellows Programme was a valuable experience on a personal, professional and institutional level.

She feels strongly, however, that these fellows should attempt to establish their own South African network upon their return.

"I think we should have regular meetings in South Africa of all the ACE fellows so that we can still continue to learn from one another. I would have liked to have been able to attend one of the ACE Fellows weekends that they have every year; not just to meet up with others, but for the learning experience," she said.

"I think we should have regular meetings in South Africa of all the ACE fellows so that we can still continue to learn from one another."

Appendix A

CANDIDATE	DESIGNATION AT TIME OF PLACEMENT
2003	
Dr/Prof Colin Johnson	Vice Principal
Prof Raymond Nkado	Professor and Executive Dean
Prof Rockey Ralebipi	Executive Dean: Faculty of Humanities
2004	
Prof Narend Bajinath	Vice-Principal: Research and Planning
Prof Thokozile Mayekiso	HOD
Prof Ezekiel Moraka	Vice Rector: Student Affairs
Prof Gonda Perez	Associate Professor
2005	
Prof Sophie Mahoko	Executive Dean: Faculty of Health
Prof Najma Moosa	Dean: Law
Prof Patrick Sibaya	Vice Rector
Prof Errol Tyobeka	DVC
2006	
Prof Nthabiseng Ogude	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
Ms Martha Steyn	Campus Registrar
Prof Peter Omara-Ojunga	Executive Dean: Natural and Applied Sciences
Prof Darren Lortan	Executive Dean: Faculty of Applied Sciences
2007	
Dr Prins Nevhutalu	DVC: Research, Innovation and Partnerships
Ms Vuyokazi Memani-Sedile	Executive Director: Finance
Prof Nomthandazo Gwele	Executive Director: Faculty of Health Sciences
2008	
Professor Hellicy Ngambi	Acting Deputy Dean of UNISA SBL
Dr Metsu JG Vinger	Registrar
Dr Moredecai Lidovho	Legal Advisor to the Vice Chancellor
Prof Nomahlubi Makunga	Dean of Humanities

INSTITUTION	PLACEMENT	DESIGNATION 2008
RU	College of Staten Island affiliated to the City University of NY	Retired
WITS	Old Dominion University	Private Consultant
UNIVEN	University of Missouri at Rolla	DVC: Academic - CUT
UNISA	Old Dominion University in Norfolk	Vice-Principal: Strategy, Planning and Partnerships
WITS	Washington University in Seattle	Dean: Faculty of Arts - NMMU
UFS	University of West Florida in Pensacola	Vice Rector: Student Affairs
UCT	Idaho State University in Pocatello	Deputy Dean: Faculty of Health Science
UNIVEN	Kutztown University of Pennsylvania	Retired
UWC	Old Dominion University	Dean of Law UWC
UZULU	University of Albany	Vice Rector: Academic Affairs and Research
UJ	Texas State University	Vice-Chancellor: TUT
NMMU	University of Kansas	Vice Principal: UP
NWU	Old Dominion University	Campus Registrar
UNIVEN	University of Montana	Executive Dean: Natural and Applied Sciences
DUT	Texas Tech University	Executive Dean: Faculty of Applied Sciences
TUT	Texas Tech University	DVC: Academic
UNISA	New York State University	Executive Director: Finance
DUT	University of West Florida in Pensacola	Executive Director: Faculty of Health Sciences
UNISA	Willamette University, Salem OR	Acting Deputy Dean of UNISA SBL
CUT	Wentworth Institute of Technology Boston, MA	Registrar
UNIVEN	Northeastern University Boston	Legal Advisor to the Vice Chancellor
UZULU	Trinity University, Washington DC	Dean of Humanities

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