

HESA PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES: SOME CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

Remarks by Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele, Chief Executive Officer, on the occasion of the delivery of a HESA Public Lecture by Professor Michael Young on the topic: *Collaboration between FET Colleges and universities – An analytical framework and its possible implications*, at University of Pretoria's Faculty of Education, Groenkloof Campus, Pretoria, on Friday, 5 July 2013.

Professor Michael Young
Acting Dean of Faculty, Professor Max Braun
Representatives from Department of Higher Education and Training, Mr Chief Mabizela
Representatives from the Council on Higher Education
Representatives from South African Qualifications Authority
CEOs of Sector Education and Training Authorities
Executive Director of CEPD, Mr Paul Kgobe
Researchers from our Higher Education Institutions
Colleagues from HESA
Ladies and Gentlemen

1 Introduction

Good morning to you all. I would like to start off by expressing my sincere gratitude to Professor Michael Young for agreeing to deliver this inaugural HESA Public Lecture today. It is indeed an honour for us as HESA to have you here Prof, and we look forward to debating with you some of the ideas you will raise on this important subject – ***possible collaboration between the University Sector and the FET College sector***, particularly in relation to articulation. Let me also take this opportunity to thank all the delegates for coming to this lecture. Lastly the University of Pretoria, especially the Dean of Education Faculty, Prof Irma Eloff and Acting Dean, Prof Max Braun, for gladly agreeing to host this first lecture with us. I would like to thank Annalize Brynard, the Faculty of Education's Marketing Manager and our own Ms Mateboho Green for making this lecture a reality.

2 Why HESA public lecture series?

HESA, as a university association, seeks to be an active player in the determination and formulation of public policy, advocating on behalf of South Africa's 23 public universities. As you can imagine, we are expected to create a platform to generate policy debates and discussions, of relevance to the Higher Education sector. In the last few years, HESA has responded to a number of public policies that Government puts out for public comments, and where practicably possible, we have proposed alternative policies on a range of matters including funding, transformation, research and innovation and teaching and learning. We also conduct our own research studies on a wide range of policy issues of relevance to Higher Education to ensure that our policy and advocacy work is evidence-based. Against

this background, we have taken a position early this year to introduce a **Public Lecture Series** on policy topics with implications for our Higher Education sector. These lectures are aimed at the broader academic audience, researchers, policy makers, decision-makers and the public at large. The overarching goals of the Lecture Series are the following:

- a. To create platform for the dissemination of research findings from HESA and other key stakeholders from the sector.
- b. To create a platform for international visiting scholars, researchers, academics and HESA's own research fellows to share their ground-breaking research studies on matters relating to Higher Education.
- c. To bring together many national and international scholars and public figures to discuss and debate pressing Higher Education policy issues.

3 Why this specific public lecture?

With the imminent reconceptualisation of Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system for South Africa which is envisaged to be a single, coherent, coordinated and diverse system, it is clear that a Higher Education sub-sector - as we know it - will have to work closely with other components of the system, including the Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges. As the Minister of Higher Education and Training has been highlighting, the success of the PSET is dependent on Articulation between different institutional types, including articulation between FET colleges and universities. In his own words:

Should learners decide to change learning paths or progress to higher levels within the same learning paths, the opportunities should be there for them to do so, with the knowledge and skills already obtained being recognised for further progression. In as much as articulation between colleges and universities is important, we must also not lose sight of another important form of articulation, between educational institutions and workplaces¹.

To this end, SAQA has been requested to work on an Articulation Policy Framework, along the lines proposed by the Minister. As most of you would know, this is not an easy matter, particularly for universities. As a way of sharpening the debate on this matter, we have invited Professor Michael Young to share with us the limits and possibilities of such a framework, taking into account our own context.

4 Next Public Lectures?

HESA intends to have at least **3 public lectures** per year, and these will rotate between our member universities. In all probabilities, our next public lecture will interrogate the evolution

of such principles as *institutional autonomy, academic freedom, public accountability and cooperative governance* – a matter we believe warrants a deeper discussion. Our aim is to offer a public lecture series programme that will inform, stimulate, entertain, and excite debate on key contemporary policy issues facing our Higher Education sector. I invite all of you to travel with us on this journey.

I thank you.

ⁱ Keynote address by Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, at The New Age-SABC 2 Business Briefing, Montecasino Ballroom, Johannesburg, 24 June 2013.