

## Management 1 Lecture

6 September 2011

### Introduction

Thank you for the invitation to deliver this guest lecture.

I have been asked to speak on three issues:

1. Firstly, on *organizational structure*, including why and how I changed the management structure of Rhodes when I became Vice-Chancellor in 2006
2. Secondly, on leadership and its crucial role in achieving the objectives of an organization, including my own leadership style
3. Finally, on organizational culture in relation to Rhodes University.

### Organizational structure and change of the management structure of Rhodes

#### ■ Notion of structure

- ✓ Descriptive sense (building is a structure) versus
- ✓ Analytical sense (building has a structure – foundation on which other aspects are constructed)
- ✓ Formal topography/organogram but also social relations (power relations)

#### ■ Restructuring of Structures

- ✓ The then 'Senior Management' to bring in the Deans – creation of the *Senior Management Forum*; now *Academic Leadership Forum* and *Senior Administration Meeting*
- ✓ Streamlining of Senate and Council and other committees
- ✓ From Academic Planning and Quality Assurance committee to *Institutional Planning Committee*, with *sub-committees* for *Size and Shape*, *Infrastructure* and *Development* and a special annual *New Staffing* meeting

#### ■ Restructuring of Senior Administration Posts

- ✓ Revision of responsibilities of Vice-Principal from Operations to *DVC: Academic & Student Affairs*
- ✓ Disestablishment of Dean of Research and creation of *DVC: R&D*
- ✓ Modification of Registrar of Finance to *Registrar of Finance & Operations*
- ✓ Creation of *Dean of Teaching and Learning*
- ✓ Splitting of Dean of Students (incorporating Residential Operations) into *Dean of Students* and *Director of Residential Operations*

- ✓ Restructuring of the post of Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance to *Director of Institutional Planning* (with Quality Assurance to the Dean of Learning and Teaching)
- ✓ Form part-time Dean of Internationalisation to *Director of International Office*
- ✓ New Director of Research
- ✓ Splitting of Director Communication and Development into *Director: Development and Alumni Relations* and *Director: Communication and Marketing*
- ✓ New Director of Equity and Institutional Culture
- ✓ *Director: Special Projects* in the VC's Office
- ✓ Upgraded Manager of Data Management Unit to *Director: Data Management Unit*
- Revision of reporting lines – all report to one of VC/DVCs/Registrars
- ✓ Community Engagement to DVC: Academic and Student Affairs
- ✓ Risk Compliance to VC (ultimately to Audit Committee)
- Why all these changes
- ✓ What underlying goals/principles? – logic and rationale; structure follows strategy follows goals; capacities; capabilities; collegiality; participation; human dimension
- ✓ What processes? – administrative; governance
- ✓ What impact and outcomes?
- ✓ Opportunities - recent opportunity with Director: Estates; forthcoming opportunity with Director: IT

## Leadership and its crucial role in achieving the objectives of an organization, and my own leadership style

- Leadership and organization
- ✓ On many occasions (as in our historically black schools) the problem is not necessarily people or resources (like money) but the absence or lack of leadership and effective management. So leadership is critical in relation to the health, development and sustainability of an institution or organisation.
- ✓ A number of qualities characterise responsible leadership
- 1. Love and appreciation of knowledge; wisdom, commitment to intellectual endeavour and engagement.

Knowledge is vitally important for properly understanding our changing world, for living in greater harmony with nature, and for insight into the real nature of our problems and challenges. It is also knowledge that must inform all our actions and

efforts to bring about change if we are to avoid disastrous actions based on myths, ignorance, superstition and the like.

2. Willingness to learn through listening, to being open to advice, and keeping one's feet on the ground. (Amilcar Cabral: we proceed with our feet on the ground, from what is what exists. We don't confuse our dreams and goals with that which actually exists!)
3. Deep and unwavering commitment to constitutional values and the rights that our Bill of Rights proclaims - non-racialism and non-sexism, social equity, human dignity, justice, democracy and respect for difference and diversity

Responsible leaders constantly ask themselves whether we can ever be truly free unless and until we create a society in which all South Africans and Africans possess not just political rights, but also the social and economic rights that are fundamental to living full, decent, productive, rich and rewarding lives.

4. Ability to exercise intellectual and institutional vision - two dimensions

An ability to exercise foresight and 'farsight' and to anticipate challenges and developments, to read political, economic and social dynamics and the mood of people and various sectors of society

An ability to define and proactively develop, as well as to challenge associates and colleagues to develop, imaginative, creative and sustainable interventions and initiatives, strategies and tactics, to position an institution or organisation or group to mediate challenges, to take advantage of opportunities, and to ensure institutional development.

To lead is to anticipate and proactively confront challenges, and to position an institution to do so, by stimulating and contributing to considered and informed debate, and by helping to find responses through reason informed by knowledge, research and experience.

Refusal to be paralysed by our history and contemporary problems. Draw on the remarkable ingenuity, acumen and courage we displayed to realise and fashion our democracy. Draw on these positive qualities to now build vibrant institutions that are equitable, contribute to social equity, and contribute powerfully to the economic, social and cultural development our country and continent.

Responsibility of leadership to ensure that, to the extent that changes and discontinuities with past approaches, policies, practices and ways of doing may be required, whether because of vision or to better position an institution or organisation, or as a consequence of new circumstances, such changes *are* indeed formulated and implemented resolutely.

4. Concrete skills and competencies for undertaking institutional innovation, development and change.
5. Expertise, skills and habits that ensure effective management and strong and sound administration. To lead is to be consultative, hands-on, give attention to detail, and inspire expeditious and timely execution of responsibilities and tasks, and a culture of effective and efficient public service.
6. A 'restless' temperament, which considers it to be the role of leaders to gently (and when necessary not so gently) disturb and disrupt complacency and ineffectual approaches and practices that are based on unfounded assumptions, or on the force of tradition or habit.

This 'restless' temperament is one that is unable to accommodate complacency and refuses to be seduced by any notions and claims that our value, contribution and reputation as an institution are all self-evident.

Leaders do not seek self-congratulatory comforting *perceptions* but empirical evidence of the nature and quality of our contribution, of the extent to which we are realising our vision, mission, values and goals, and also mechanisms that provide such evidence.

Leaders have the courage to subject every aspect of their work to penetrating critique and to finding possibly new, different more inclusive, effective and efficient ways of pursuing our vision, mission, values and goals.

8. Sensitively empathetic yet critical, challenge without demoralising. If there is acceptable or outstanding performance, laud this but will also enquire how we can do even better and what it will take to do so. If there is indifferent and less than optimal performance would engage on the reasons for this and to devise and implement corrective measures.
9. Willingness to forge democratic consensus on key issues, but this must be a consensus that is grounded in a framework of principles and ethical conduct that bind all the key constituencies of the university.
10. Integrity is fundamental – without this and whatever other qualities it is hard to consider someone a leader. Principled and ethical conduct, honesty and commitment to democratic, consultative, inclusive, developmental cultures and practices are all vital.

Part of integrity is to embrace the words of a great African revolutionary, Amilcar Cabral: *Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories.*

Leadership is the ability to fuse integrity, values and vision with a sober interpretation of one's life-space, and with perspective, strategy, and careful change management. It also comprises of a willingness to listen and to learn, to engage with different actors, to inspire and persuade, and to communicate effectively with a variety of actors.

- **Leadership style**

- ✓ Lead by example and set the tone
- ✓ Conduct characterised by integrity; listen without necessarily agreeing; equitable treatment and transparency (with respect for confidentiality)
- ✓ Adopt what is appropriate in context, circumstances: formal – when required and appropriate; inter-personal when appropriate

### **Organizational culture in relation to Rhodes University**

- ✓ We confront an important and complex issue here – will use 'organizational culture' and 'institutional culture' synonymously although could use them as distinct ideas.
- ✓ Refer you to Prof. Louise Vincent's article, 'Tell us a new story: a narrative take on institutional culture'
- ✓ John Higgins of UCT notes that 'institutional culture has become a buzzword in recent discussions of higher education in South Africa. Indeed ... there is a growing sense that institutional culture may well be the key to the successful transformation of higher education. Or – to frame the matter as forcefully as do many recent analysts – it is simply the massive fact and bulk of institutional culture that may be the main obstacle in the way of the successful transformation of South Africa's higher education system...'
- ✓ Louise Vincent notes that 'many contemporary commentators have pointed out, for all its apparent significance and ubiquity the idea of institutional culture is difficult to pin down.' Rhodes University has not shied away from defining 'institutional culture'.
- ✓ She also notes that Rhodes University in its Equity Policy (2004:4) 'defines "institutional culture" as the "Way things are done" within an organization; specifically the traditions, customs, values, and shared understandings that underpin the decisions taken, the practices engaged in and those practices that are rewarded and supported'. In order to achieve what it calls a "culture of inclusivity", the Equity Policy talks of the need for 'change in the culture, values and practices of the University' which, it says, are 'as a result of Apartheid practices' and which are 'experienced by some staff and students as alienating'.

- ✓ Prof. Vincent suggests that one way to decipher institutional culture is through the narratives or stories that are told about an institution or organization.
- ✓ What may be the dominant stories about Rhodes?
  - Century old university that is characterized by excellence
  - Liberal values
  - Where leaders learn
  - Small is beautiful and cosy
  - Punches above its weight
  - Best pass and undergraduate rates; among best research outputs per capita
  - Great residential system
  - Committed to Africa and an 'African identity'
- ✓ What may be the stories about Rhodes that are not told?
  - Shameful past of discrimination
  - More conservative than liberal
  - In the Eastern Cape but not of or for the Eastern Cape
  - Alienating for certain social groups
  - Where leaders learn is doubtful
  - Orientation tends to be European/North American etc
- ✓ May be new stories – perhaps budding/aspirational - that are trying to emerge
  - Indeed shameful past/actions and apology for this
  - Commitment to new values and path – based on Constitution and Bill of Rights and fundamental purposes of a university
  - Home for All – respect for difference and diversity
  - Everyone treated equitably, irrespective of class, 'race', gender, nationality, language, religion, geographic origins, sexual orientation, etc.
  - Place where graduates learn to become responsible leaders, professionals, critical thinkers and decent and democratic citizens
  - Committed to development of Eastern Cape, South Africa and Africa