

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO CONVOCATION
RHODES UNION, THURSDAY AUGUST 21, 1986

In a recent survey of British universities, two

X independent accountants ^{emphasized} ~~recorded~~ their
deteriorating financial situations, ^{and considered that} some ~~being~~ ^{were}
nearly insolvent. Although certain institutions

had overstated their difficulties, it appeared to

X the investigators that the ^{parlous} ~~powerless~~ state of many

X was ~~real and was~~ ^{real} a cause for concern.

Many universities in the Republic are also feeling
the pinch.

The State is demonstrating a reducing ability to provide the full subsidies which the ~~new~~ formula specifies allows for and which should be quite adequate.

~~Furthermore~~ ^{we were faced this year} ~~However~~, we are ~~faced~~ with the unnerving position of ^{further} ~~last-minute~~ subsidy cuts, ^{well into the current budget period}. Fortunately Rhodes is in a relatively strong position because of a policy of financial conservation, but this cannot be relied on to continue.

The University will have to ^{reduce} ~~eliminate~~ costs wherever possible, ^{but in such a way as to guard against the} ~~so as to avoid deteriorating~~ erosion of academic standards.

It is essential if we are to do our job properly that the standard of our teaching equipment, buildings and other facilities must be maintained.

- In order to make reasonable provision for this the University*
~~Our staff bill alone is R20 million a year and the~~
Council has with reluctance called agreed to a reduction in real
X ~~University Council has asked for this to be cut by~~
terms of the salaries budget, which would otherwise absorb an
~~10 percent in real terms.~~ *unsustainably high proportion of total*
expenditure.
X Perhaps the Library is ^{the} most seriously ^a effected, *University* ^{senior}

If the 1985 purchases are compared with the previous year's, there was a 12.7 percent drop in the number of books taken into the Library (from 5325 to 4648) and a rather frightening 22 percent drop in the number of journal titles bought (2567 in 1984 to 2000 in 1985).

In spite of the recent removal of the 10 percent import surcharge on books, the weak rand and the imposition of general sales tax on purchases present a bleak outlook for university libraries.

On the brighter side the University Foundation continues to enjoy the wise direction of eminent businessmen and can now claim a portfolio market value in excess of R16 million. This investment provides a very important injection into our own income. So, too, does the interest earned on the

✓ investment of our own reserves, which has ~~amounted~~ ^{approached} ~~to~~ R1.5 millions a year in the recent past.

The state of emergency has effected the University,
to the extent that six students and six members of
the wider university community, including staff and
their families, have been detained. The effect on
a small academic department of the sudden loss of a
specialist responsible for a particular section of
curriculum can be most disruptive and with our
limited resources, it is not always easy to fill
unexpected gaps.

All full-time students

X The ~~University~~ has^{ve} received permission for ~~all~~

full-time students to continue their studies while
in detention.

~~To some extent this ameliorates the personal~~
~~tragedy of certain students whose presence~~
~~represents a considerable economic sacrifice by~~
~~themselves and their families.~~ It remains the
view of ^{the great majority of the community} ~~this~~ University ^{that} bannings and
detentions without trial do not serve the long term
interests of the country.

The rather gloomy picture I have presented so far
is ^{is attributable to causes lying beyond} ~~caused by matters that lie largely out of~~ our
control. To balance it on the other hand, I have ↓
much to report on the positive side.

- / -

Perhaps the development that will eventually have
the most visual impact is the acceptance ^{in principle} of the
Singleton Plan, a landscape masterplan for the
whole University estate, ^{This} ~~which~~ ^{prepared} ~~designed~~ by a
Johannesburg landscape architect, Mr Gareth
Singleton. It establishes clear priorities and a
practical timescale of about 15 years in which to
implement it. It seeks to improve the links
between the central core of academic and
residential buildings and the various satellite
areas.

Among the stated objectives of the plan are the development of a strong greenbelt which will also give the estate "an edge".

One of the first fruits of the Plan was the landscape development of ^{the piazza in front of the library} ~~Library Square~~ and its

environs, ~~which was ready for the official opening in May~~
~~of the three major new buildings round the second and third part of the campus~~
~~quadrangles in May.~~ ^{in the campus completing the development in the central part of the campus}

[⊗] The piazza Library Square has now become a real focal point for the academic life of the University and the intention is to develop the Rhodes Union/Great Hall area as the social focal point.

[⊗] I am not aware of any decision to call this area Library Square

Other objectives of the landscape masterplan are to encourage ^{pedestrian circulation,} ~~foot traffic~~ and to discourage through traffic on the ^{internal} roads and, by providing more parking spaces, to reduce on-street and "informal" parking. One must realise that in an area inhabited largely by students "informal parking" allows for a great deal of ingenuity. I would add that the full report is very technical and includes phrases such as "standardising street furniture and signage and reducing visual clutter". It seems to open up a whole new world for linguists.

next area to be
The ~~area now being~~ developed is the garden in front of John Kotzé House.

~~The opening of~~ The new buildings for English, Geography, Geology and Librarianship ~~was performed~~ *were officially opened*

~~on Library Square~~ by the Chancellor, Dr Mackenzie,

characteristic
X on a ~~real~~ Grahamstown evening in May with the wind adding a certain drama to the occasion. It was an important moment, marking the linking of the Library to the quadrangles and, in a sense, the final completion of what many generations of Rhodians have known as the unfinished symphony of the quads.

The final cost of the four buildings, including professional fees, site walls and landscaping, was R4.2 million.

Although many thought this would be the last major building development in our present economic climate, members will have been pleased to learn of the generosity of The Chairman's Fund Educational Trust, acting on the recommendation of the Anglo American and De Beers Chairman's Fund committee, which has donated R760 000 towards a new residence to be known as De Beers. To ensure there will be no delays, the Fund has also decided to lend a similar amount as bridging finance.

Tenders are being called for shortly and it is
X intended to open the building in ^{February,} 1988. It will be
similar to Gold Fields House, with rooms for about
80 male students.

The fire in Graham House at the end of May has
demanded urgent attention and ^{rehabilitation is due to start} ~~rebuilding~~ started
^{in the very near future.} ~~last week.~~ It should be complete ^{before} ~~when~~ students
return in February next year.

Two other construction works ^{in progress} ~~under way~~ are the
upgrading of Jan Smuts and John Kotze houses, which
should be completed before swot week at the end of
November.

⊗ Check this : I thought it was complete

Also under construction are a new tennis pavilion and extensions to the Great Hall, where the verandah is being enclosed and roofed. This will provide space for another 134 people writing examinations, or a probably untold number sitting-out at dances - but not at the same time, of course.

On census day in June, there were 3636 students registered at Rhodes, an increase of 95 over June 1985. The figure includes 263 students in East London and 3373 in Grahamstown. This reflects a steady growth of . 2,7 %

Perhaps of more interest was the dramatic rise in the number of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded at this year's graduation ceremonies. ~~By~~

~~X~~ ~~an apparent statistical vagary~~^T the 1985 record of 846 awards jumped by almost 9 percent to 920. It cannot be long before the figure passes the 1000 mark.

~~Owing to the growing number of East London students being presented for awards, it has been decided to~~
~~X~~ ~~have~~^{an inaugural} ~~a~~ graduation ceremony in that city ~~on~~^{in May 1987}

~~This will be a major development and illustrates~~
~~the soundness of our early work there.~~ *The local*
board of the East London Division is actively
preparing a strategic study to explore how best it
can complement the University in Grahamstown.
There are now eight full-time academic staff and
three full-time administrative staff, including the
new Dean of Studies, Mr *Raymond* ~~Ray~~ Suttner, who took up
his appointment in February.

At the beginning of this year the Schools' Liaison
Officer conducted a survey among new Grahamstown
students and compared this with a similar survey
conducted in 1979.

While our student population has maintained an East Cape base of one third, the biggest change has been the drop of new students from Zimbabwe from nearly 20 percent in 1979 to 7.5 percent this year. This is also reflected by a drop in other foreign students where the percentage has fallen from 5 to less than two percent.

The increasing independence of youth is reflected in a 15 percent increase ^{✓ stet} ~~of~~ those new students claiming to have made the decision to come to Rhodes by themselves.

I do not understand what this sentence means. Perhaps best to omit it

[The current figure of 58 percent did, however, admit to certain influences.]
parental?

Nearly 11 percent had parents who were Old Rhodians, 42 percent had friends who had been to Rhodes and nearly 74 percent knew other people who had enjoyed being at Rhodes. Other strong influences, varying from 60 percent to 75 percent, were that students lived in residence and that Rhodes and Grahamstown were small. Those coming here because we were the only institution offering a particular course has fallen from 40 percent in 1979 to 27.4 percent this year.

In the middle of last year the University decided to purchase the ^{PLATO}~~Plato~~ system and to set up the X Computer-based Education Unit. There is now an *embryo* network of terminals spreading across the Eastern Cape, ~~based on Rhodes~~. There are 10 ^(X) terminals in Port Elizabeth, three in East London and two in Bisho - our first international connection. Perhaps we shall hear something of those from our visiting speaker, Mr Richard Todd, when he ^{addresses us}~~speaks~~ later.

(X) check this: *it sounds high to me.*

OK RB

The University's interest in PLATO continues to grow and is probably best reflected in the ~~growth~~ ^{increase} of ~~average~~ ^{exposure to computer controlled} student use of local lessons from 4 percent in 1984 to 30 percent this year. Not only are more students using the system but several Rhodes staff are busy designing their own lessons, including academics from Social Work, Pharmacy, Law English, Psychology and Latin.

I am pleased to report, too, that the Computer-based Education Unit may become self-supporting. It is earning an income more or less equivalent to its running costs, and prospects for the future are equally good or better.

I should also like to draw the attention of Convocation to the University's improving sporting record. Although UPE won the annual intervarsity contest earlier this month, it was pleasing to note that until the major sports of hockey, soccer and rugby were contested, Rhodes was leading by 31 points to UPE's 25. ^{while} ~~Although~~ UPE took all the points from ^{these} ~~the three~~ major sports, the Rhodes 1st XV acquitted itself very well in the final event of the day, holding their opponents to 12- all, well into the second half, before finally losing the very well contested match.

OK

Our teams have an improved record in the South
X African intervarsity events and we can currently *boast*
~~field~~ three Springboks, in Shooting, Spearfishing
(X) *None of these distinguished sportsmen holds one*
and men's hockey. I do not think these men hold any
of our first 20 sports bursaries but perhaps the
bursaries are helping to improve our playing
standards.

~~Looking to the future,~~ those with an interest in
the sea and its denizens will ~~do so with some~~ *be eagerly awaiting*
~~excitement as next month sees the~~ *imminent* publication of
Smiths' Sea Fishes. I should like to draw
attention to the apostrophe now following the
final S in Smiths'.

(X) Check with Kit Mills whether or not this is so.
"I do not think" implies that the homework
is not done

Our teams have an improved record in the South African intervarsity events and we can currently field three Springboks, Ian Dore for shooting, Mark Griffiths for spearfishing and Gary Hardman for men's hockey. Ros Heath was chosen for the South African ladies B hockey side and Ryan Baskir, captained the SA Universities Karate team and just missed selection for the Springboks. Three of these people hold bursaries under the new sports bursaries scheme introduced this year.

The Springboks are Rhodes's first since Louis Arde captained the South African soccer side in 1982.

Looking to the future, those with an interest in the sea and its denizens will do so with some excitement as next month sees the publication of Smiths' Sea Fishes. I should like to draw attention to the apostrophe now following the final S in Smiths'.

It is of course a tribute to one of our most illustrious members of Convocation, Emeritus Professor Margaret Smith, whose continuation of her famous husband's work ^{has brought renewed} ~~has continued to bring~~ credit to her alma mater. Those who have worked with her, particularly Dr Heemstra, her co-editor, and Professor Bruton, her successor as Director of the Institute of Ichthyology, have been joined by over 70 other authors from 15 countries, making the book the most important collaborative research publication ever produced in South Africa.

We shall have to re-write the ending (if any) since
Judge Mullins wishes to refer to this, and I must not steal
his thunder.

- 24 -

I must end on a note of some sadness. This is the last meeting that will be attended by two senior officers of the University. The Vice-Principal, Professor J W Brommert, retires at the end of September after nine years at Rhodes.

Convocation's Secretary and the second member of my administrative triumvirate, the Registrar, Mr J O M Wilkinson will leave at the end of August.

Although there will be other occasions when we take formal farewell of them, I should like to draw this company's attention to their considerable contribution to the running of what is steadily becoming a more and more complex organization.

Rev. Chairman, I could present a great deal more information about events at Rhodes during the past twelve months, but I am aware that this evening I am, so to speak, merely the entrées. The piece de resistance is still before us, and in order not to surfeit your appetite I shall ~~thank~~ conclude by thanking Convocation for their continued interestⁱⁿ and support of their Alma Mater. The knowledge that there is a generous fund of goodwill from so many thousands of former members of the university, spread all over the country, and ^{indeed} in many parts of the world, certainly brings light to one's darker moments.

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