

# Scholarship in a Context of Transformation

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# The Theme

***Scholarship*** in a ***Context*** of ***Transformation***  
- most appropriate theme to frame this induction programme for new scholars.

Invites us to actively and carefully think about ***scholarship***, ***context*** and ***transformation*** as we navigate our way as new scholars at Rhodes University, and as we also construct our developmental path at Rhodes.

# Context

**Two aspects of context:**

**1.The idea of a university**

**2.The Rhodes institutional context**

- ❖ **Institutional structure**
- ❖ **Current situation (and intentions)**
- ❖ **Institutional challenges**

# The Idea of a University

## ❖ Core purposes

- ✓ Produce knowledge
  - ✓ Disseminate knowledge and cultivate minds
  - ✓ Undertake community engagement
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- ❖ Purposes must necessarily intersect and effectively engage with the economic and social challenges of the local, national, African and global contexts

# Rhodes institutional context:

## Institutional Structure

- ❖ Well-established, well-known 106 year-old university, among oldest in Africa
- ❖ Smallest university in South Africa
- ❖ Historically white university
- ❖ Institutional vision - 'outstanding internationally respected' university that 'affirms its African identity' and is 'committed to democratic ideals, academic freedom, rigorous scholarship, and social responsibility'
- ❖ Institutional mission of seeking to produce outstanding internationally-recognised graduates', who embody our motto - Strength Virtue Truth and our slogan, 'Where Leaders Learn'

- ❖ **Contribute, through teaching, research and community service, to to the advancement of international scholarship and the development of the Eastern Cape and Southern Africa'**
- ❖ **Strong commitment to an undergraduate formative and liberal education**
- ❖ **Strong and robust academic culture**
- ❖ **Sound governance and management - aspires to be also a democratic and participatory governance and management**
- ❖ **Particular historical institutional structure of 'race', class, and gender which continues into the present**
- ❖ **Academic and senior and middle administrative and support staff predominantly white**
- ❖ **Highly residential university with very strong residential system.**

# **Rhodes Institutional Context:**

## **Current Situation (and Intentions)**

- ❖ **6 faculties – Humanities, Science, Commerce, Pharmacy, Law and Education**
- ❖ **7 300 students in 2011 – increase to 7 600 in 2013**
- ❖ **About 26% of postgraduate students - seek to become more postgraduate in coming years**
- ❖ **20% international students from about 50 countries**
- ❖ **80% of Rhodes' students are South African**
- ❖ **57% are Black**
- ❖ **40% are Black South African**
- ❖ **65% of the new intake is black students**

- ❖ **59% of our students are women – desirability of this?**
- ❖ **Relatively high entrance/admissions requirements**
- ❖ **Extended studies programme to ensure access for working class and rural poor students with potential**
- ❖ **Highest pass and undergraduate graduation rates among South African universities**
- ❖ **Outstanding postgraduate success rates**
- ❖ **Possess third best research output per capita academic staff – 1.97 (benchmark = 1.25); seek to further enhance research**
- ❖ **Strong commitment to high quality teaching and learning**
- ❖ **Growing community engagement**



- ❖ **Generally strong institutional loyalty among staff and alumni/nae**
- ❖ **Almost 1 in 2 students live in 49 comfortable residences; almost 65% of undergraduate students, and almost all first-years in residence**
- ❖ **Over 1 4000 staff, including over 350 academic staff**
- ❖ **140 hectares of land and 220 buildings**
- ❖ **Annual operational budget of almost R 600 million**
- ❖ **Largest institution in Grahamstown - 65% of town's GDP**
- ❖ **Consume 45% of town's electricity and water - have a special responsibility to town; our well-being and future is inextricably tied to the well-being future of the town.**

# Rhodes Institutional Context:

## Institutional Challenges

- ❖ Issues related to our identity: - 'African identity', 'liberal education', 'Where Leaders Learn'
- ❖ Academic shape and size – pressure on funding
- ❖ Effective institutional research to inform decisions and planning on a longer-term horizon
- ❖ Equity - enhancing the representation of black South African students
- ❖ Equity - enhancing the representation of black South African and women, especially at senior levels of academics and senior support staff
- ❖ Institutional culture
- ❖ New academic infrastructure for increased enrolments and new and specific academic programmes

- ❖ **Additional (postgraduate) student residences and sport facilities**
- ❖ **Academic and support staff accommodation (and schooling for children)**
- ❖ **Continued improvement of staff remuneration**
- ❖ **Scholarship and bursary funding for students in financial need**
- ❖ **Principled and effective partnership with locals schools and municipality**

# Transformation

- ❖ The challenge of social inclusion - ensuring access and opportunity for students of working class and rural poor social origins
- ❖ Developing a new institutional culture - genuine respect for and appreciation of difference and diversity, whether class, racial, gender, national, linguistic, religious or sexual orientation in nature
- ❖ Using the powers conferred by academic freedom to substantively decolonize, deracialise, demasculanise and degender our inherited intellectual spaces

- ❖ **Changing how we think – about ourselves, others, institutions and our challenges and possibilities. Having a capacity ‘for critical examination of oneself and one’s traditions’, which entails developing ‘the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgement’**
- ❖ **‘The ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have’**

- ❖ **Acting in new and different ways - task of understanding that we are 'as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern' – which necessitates knowledge and understanding of different cultures and 'of differences of gender, race, and sexuality'**
- ❖ **Having the courage to be open to and, where necessary, finding new ways of doing things – whether in connection with access and admissions, opportunity, the curriculum, learning and teaching, research, structures and processes of decision making, or managing and administering.**

- ❖ **Embracing certain changes because they are moral, ethical and constitutional imperatives and create the possibilities for the development of social groups and individuals whose talents and potential are all too often wasted and unrealised**
- ❖ **Grasping that such changes create possibilities and opportunities for our own development as professionals, citizens and people, as well as for institutional and social development**

- ❖ **Interrogating the relationship between wider social structures and conditions and social exclusion and inclusion - refusing 'to accept the logic of inequality and the repression that it involves', and have to continue through our scholarship to 'search for human agency, for the means through which inequality can be undone'**