

OPENING THE CONVERSATION: ACCELERATING TRANSFORMATION FOR AN INCLUSIVE AND COMPETITIVE WITS

This communique is a reflection of my thoughts following a series of stakeholder conversations that were initiated in response to concerns about allegations of institutional racism and/or the slow pace of Transformation at Wits. It deliberates on the gap between our professed, institutional commitment to Transformation and the ordinary, everyday experiences at the level of the corridor. Rejecting both the colour-blind approach of mainstream liberal advocates and the racial essentialism of some advocates of the Transformation movement, it proposes a series of interventions around Transformation, including the mobilisation of R45 million from internal sources to diversify the Wits academy through new appointments and the creation of an enabling environment for promotions for staff already in the system. It also proposes mandatory curriculum reform discussions in every School, student admissions policies to establish a balance between demographic diversity and cosmopolitanism across the institution, including residences, an institutional culture that condemns racism in every form and ensures expeditious processing of complaints, a proactive approach to institutional naming that takes into account both Western and indigenous traditions, a language policy that develops staff and student competence in indigenous languages, and a nation-wide campaign to end the exploitative practice of outsourcing at universities. I am calling for comments, criticisms and further suggestions from the entire University community, which will inform the development of an executive statement and strategic plan on Transformation to serve before the Senate and Council. It is my hope that this, then, will serve as Wits' definitive response on how to end marginalisation on our campuses and foster the emergence of a diverse, cosmopolitan place of globally competitive teaching, learning and research where every one of us experiences belonging and a deep sense of pride.

Over the past few months, I have immersed myself in a series of stakeholder conversations to understand our institutional successes and failures with regard to Transformation. The first of these conversations happened in November 2014 with a number of African and Coloured scholars from across our Faculties. This conversation was initiated in response to concerns communicated to my office about institutional racism and/or Wits' lack of responsiveness to Transformation. At this meeting, all the scholars without exception suggested that Wits had a problem with regard to Transformation. This prompted me to follow up with a number of other conversations. In the following months, particularly after the Rhodes Must Fall movement emerged at UCT, I had similar discussions with the senior executive team, some of the Staffing and Promotions Committees and Faculty Boards, a group of practitioner and research experts in the field, and a number of individual colleagues and smaller groups.

During these conversations, I asked colleagues what reforms they would like me to initiate with regard to Transformation. Some of these conversations provided some answers. Others suggested that my beginning with this question framed the subsequent conversations in unhelpful ways. Nevertheless, I asked this question because it allowed me to clarify my own thoughts on what needed to be done. I was often struck by how much of what was suggested was already policy and practice, and yet was not having the desired effect. These conversations were crucial in enabling me to understand the blockages to Transformation, and what needs to be done. It also enabled me to understand the structural impediments to Transformation, and the opportunities that exist to, if not overcome these, then at least open up greater room for manoeuvre for progressive Transformation initiatives.

I am obviously aware that I have not consulted the entire University community and that there may well be views that I have not taken into account. The thoughts in this communique are a reflection on the engagements that have taken place so far. I am presenting them to you as a means to open up a broader conversation on Transformation, its implementation and the associated challenges. To this end, I urge you to provide your own thoughts and recommendations. I will follow this communique with engagements with all Faculty Boards and other conversations with a variety of stakeholders. This communique will also be followed within the next 14 days by an executive statement and strategic plan that will be tabled before the Senate and Council. All in all, these multiple processes are meant to open up a deliberative engagement within our institution on Transformation, its successes and failures thus far, and what needs to be done as we move forward in the months and years ahead.

What then does transformation mean for universities in South Africa in 2015? Two views are evident in the public discourse and in the conversations that I have had. On the one hand, there is a call for a more holistic definition of Transformation that involves among others, a diverse and cosmopolitan student cohort, enhanced access for talented students from poor and marginalised communities, a dramatically increased African and Coloured representation in the academy, an evolution of the institutional culture where Black staff and students feel comfortable within Wits, a reorganisation of the curriculum to incorporate African theorists and contextual challenges, and finally an end to the exploitation of workers through insourcing of all outsourced services.

On the other hand, there are those who suggest that Transformation at Wits is really about the lack of African and Coloured representation in the academy and professoriate. There is a fear that a focus on broader issues would merely detract attention from this Achilles heel of the higher education system in South Africa. On balance, from the conversations that I have had and the multiple demands that I have received, it seems that a broader definition of Transformation is necessary at Wits. Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that the single biggest transformative issue at Wits in this historical moment involves increasing the African and Coloured representation in the academy and professoriate. This must receive special attention in the immediate moment.

Two additional considerations have become obvious in the conversations that have taken place thus far. The first is that the Transformation lethargy is most keenly experienced in Faculties, Schools or Departments, or as one colleague put it 'at the level of the corridor'. Yet in almost all of these cases the Deans and individual Heads of Schools and Departments protest that they are open to and supportive of Transformation. The problem lies not in the professed commitment, but in the daily ordinary interactions with colleagues. There are of course cases of overt racism at multiple levels within the institution and where these occur, they must be condemned and dealt with firmly and expeditiously. But the deeper problem lies in the colour blind interactions, for although many may see them as proof of our institutional progress, others view them as being insufficiently appreciative of the burdens of our history. They would argue that you cannot switch from a racialised past to a colour blind present without continuous racialised outcomes.

If you are truly interested in a colour blind future, then you have to innovatively overcome that burden of history. In appointments, this would require going beyond the norm in recruitment processes and encouraging individual Black academics to apply. It requires moving from simple advertisements and even normal headhunting, into accessing Black

academic networks where individual scholars can be identified and recruited. In staff retention, it requires creating an enabling environment for Black scholars to be advanced through smaller teaching loads, and greater support for their research. It requires a managerial maturity by HOS and HODs so that they do not wait for Black scholars to apply for promotion, but encourage them to do so as soon as they are ready, and personally pioneer their applications through the promotion processes. In curriculum reform, it requires HODs and HOSs driving the processes to contextualise our curriculum and teaching pedagogy rather than being reactive and waiting for students to put this on the agenda through a public critique.

To underscore the case, let me provide one concrete example. It was alleged by a colleague in one of the conversations that one of our most sought after postgraduate programmes admitted mainly White students, and only started admitting Black students after the professional board threatened to de-accredit the programme. The colleague used this as evidence to demonstrate the non-responsiveness of White colleagues to transformation. Colleagues in the Department contested this. Confronted by the competing arguments, I requested the admission data for the programme going back a number of years. On interrogating the data, two features stood out. Firstly, Black students had always been admitted to the Department's postgraduate programmes and constituted a sizable proportion of its student cohort. However, a second observation was that in two of the Department's postgraduate programmes, White students comprised in excess of 75% of the student cohort as late as 2010/2011, and in one case even in 2013. How is this justifiable approximately 20 years after our democratic transition, especially given our express commitment to diversity and cosmopolitanism? Is there not some resonance to the assertion that 'the corridors' are not as responsive to Transformation as they could be?

To be fair, we should be asking hard questions about the converse cases as well. There are programmes, like mining engineering, where 99% of students are Black. Many White students in mining engineering increasingly go to another university. Are we comfortable with these racialised patterns of admission in the higher education system? Is this appropriate given our own commitment to diversity and cosmopolitanism? Why is this not recognised as a challenge of Transformation? These are also issues that need to be interrogated if Transformation is to be more than mere lip service or convenience for the achievement of political goals.

This raises the second consideration which involves interrogating the thinking of the advocates of Transformation. Again, there are two issues worth shining the spotlight on. First, many Transformation advocates draw their intellectual inspiration from Steve Biko and Franz Fanon, but they tend to have an ossified and simplistic reading of these activist intellectuals. In many of the engagements of the past few months, I heard colleagues justify non-engagement by quoting Biko's refusal to immerse himself in the official and oppositional structures of power in the apartheid era. But can one truly draw lessons of praxis from the apartheid era to the contemporary one without critically interrogating the possibilities and limitations of the new context? It enables, in my view, an abstraction from institutional power that limits one's ability to understand both the possibilities and limitations of the moment. It allows one to make recommendations for Transformation that need not necessarily realise the desired outcomes. For instance, a leading advocate of the Rhodes Must Fall movement recently wrote in a national newspaper about what he would do to advance Transformation. Every one of his recommendations is already policy or practice at Wits, and I suspect at many other universities. Yet they have not had the desired transformative outcome. Why is this

case, and what does it tell us about our future interventions? Abstracting from institutional power allows one to avoid confronting these difficult questions, without which we are unlikely to make significant transformative progress.

Similarly, Fanon has been read in problematic ways, especially by student and scholar activists involved in the struggles around symbols and naming. It is striking how often Fanon's name is invoked in these struggles in misleading ways. Participants often suggest getting rid of statues and memorials celebrating British Colonialism and Apartheid's heroes, and replacing them with those of the Liberation. But Fanon was as critical of the nationalist political elite that followed colonialism as he was of the white settlers themselves. This suggests that besides a few cases like Mandela, Sisulu, Tambo, Biko, Sobukwe and the like, one should be careful of simply replacing 'White' symbols and names with Black ones. It is worth bearing in mind that if we are meant to follow indigenous African traditions in this regard, then we should probably be naming after symbolic events and/or to convey evocative descriptions. After all, naming after individuals is a quintessentially Western custom. None of this must be interpreted to mean that we should not name after individuals. After all, Western traditions are as much a part of our history as are indigenous ones. All that is being recommended here are deeper deliberations and the use of a plurality of philosophies to undergird naming and the establishments of symbols.

Second and perhaps most worrying is the racial and ethnic essentialism that has come to define a strand of thinking within the Transformation movement. Legitimate criticisms of the colour blind approach of mainstream liberalism have sometimes morphed into an illegitimate racism. This is most easily recognisable in the loose language about all Whites being racists and Jewish donors controlling Wits. The racial essentialism is also manifest in the implicit assumption of some advocates of Transformation that all claims of prejudice by Black staff and students are legitimate. This has sometimes enabled them to blindly defend blatant racism and the opportunistic use of the heightened temperature on Transformation to advance their own career aspirations.

Much of this is done in the name of Biko and Fanon. But it is a deep injustice to both of these activist intellectuals when their philosophy is interpreted in a racial and ethnic essentialism that is typical of Fascist parties and Apartheid's Bantustan leaders. An advance on transformation cannot be premised on the philosophical impulses of a racial and ethnic essentialism. And as was indicated earlier, neither can it be premised on colour blindness. We have to recognise that we come from a racialised history with consequences that translate into our present. Responsiveness to Transformation has to proactively confront our racial legacies and affirm the victims of apartheid. This is the real stuff of contemporary Transformation. But it need not, and should not, translate into a racism and racial chauvinism.

On the basis of these philosophical assumptions and strategic reflections, I recommend that we undertake the following initiatives to accelerate Transformation at Wits University:

1. Diversifying the Wits Academy

As was identified earlier, the single biggest transformative issue at Wits currently involves increasing the African and Coloured representation in the academy and professoriate. There is some dispute on whether this initiative should be limited to African and Coloured colleagues, or whether we should use a broader definition of Black to include Indian

colleagues. A cursory analysis of the demographic breakdown of our academic staff, however, clearly demonstrates that the real challenge in this regard lies at the level of African and Coloured representation. Given this, I hold that the diversification initiative should be primarily targeted at African and Coloured staff.

There are currently a number of initiatives underway to increase the representation of African and Coloured persons in the Wits academy. The New Generation of Academics Programme with the Department of Higher Education and Training has provided us with six posts, and the Teaching and Development Grant has provided us with a further 15 temporary posts at Associate Lecturer level. Yet clearly this is not going to make a significant enough dent in the racial diversity of the Wits academy.

As a result, I propose that we mobilise a minimum of R45 million from our own resources to underwrite two initiatives in this regard. Firstly, R35 million should be dedicated to underwriting the costs of appointing between 25 and 35 new African and Coloured academics. These should be tenured track positions and may require a mandatory period of service for a limited time. For the first two years, the salaries of these academics should be paid for from this central fund and subsequently, they should be incorporated into Faculty budgets through processes of retirement and resignation. Secondly, R10 million should be dedicated to a special programme to advance 30 to 35 African and Coloured academics who are currently within the system towards promotion to the professoriate over two to five years. It must be stressed that the promotion criteria for the candidates would not change. Rather, we should create an enabling environment for them to achieve the existing promotion requirements. This should involve smaller teaching and marking loads through buyouts and the appointment of teaching assistants, a structured programme of research and research support, mentorships, etc. To further address the lack of transformation in the academy, all senior academics should be required to mentor at least one African or Coloured South African.

Deans should be required to have monthly meetings with all of the candidates who had been identified for advancement and personally oversee their academic progress. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Advancement, HR and Transformation should personally coordinate this programme, even though it may be managed on a day to day basis by the Head of the institutional Transformation Office. In addition, the Development and Fundraising Office should try to mobilise a further R45 million from international foundations and local sources to expand this programme both in terms of its longevity and the number of scholars to be supported.

In addition, we should expand representation on the Staffing and Promotions Committees to include a member of the Faculty Transformation Committee, and Deputy Vice-Chancellors who chair Staffing and Promotions Committees should be rotated every two years to ensure continued responsiveness to Transformation within that Faculty. This programme should be governed by a committee, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, and comprising all Deans and the Deputy Vice-Chancellors for Academic; Advancement, HR and Transformation; and Research; four staff representatives, two chosen by the Senate and a further two identified by African and Coloured staff; and three student representatives.

Finally, in one of the many stakeholder discussions, a recommendation emerged for a moratorium on the appointment of White academic staff. My deliberations lead me to question the wisdom of this strategy. Such a decision will paralyse our implementation of the

distinguished professorship and postdoctoral strategies, and our normal appointments processes in certain disciplines. The net effect of this would be to compromise our ability to retain and consolidate our research intensive character, a goal to which we have collectively subscribed and which is in the broader interests of South Africa's inclusive development. We have to recognise that even as we transform, we must remain involved in the global struggle to attract the best academic and research talent. These are not mutually exclusive goals and with imagination, they can be pursued simultaneously. Moreover, a moratorium on White staff could also have the effect of fracturing the University community and compromising who we are in the long term. Given all of this, it is perhaps more prudent to pursue an affirmative agenda in enhancing the representation of African and Coloured scholars in the Wits academy and professoriate.

2. Curriculum Reform

To date, transformative curriculum reform at Wits has been sporadic and largely at the initiative of individual academics and students. This is no longer good enough. Clearly a more proactive strategy is required. Curriculum reform will of course take different forms in different disciplines. In some cases, it may require the inclusion of new subject matter and reference material, a greater heterodoxy, if you prefer, while in others it may require rethinking the teaching pedagogy by either contextualising the subject matter with the use of relevant local examples and/or using alternative technological instruments to transmit knowledge and enhance understanding. In relevant disciplines, this would of course be subject to the requirements of and engagements with industry players and appropriate professional and accrediting bodies.

It should be stressed that curriculum reform does not simply mean a retreat into the local and a focus on the teaching of Africa and its problems. While this is important and needs to become an essential component of our curriculum, we must continue to focus on the rest of the world, and absorb from their academic and scientific communities. In a sense, we must become an equal constituent part of a global scientific academy of commons. How to structure the balance between local responsiveness and global competitiveness in our curriculum should be determined at School and Departmental level, stewarded by institution-wide oversight. We also need to consider the possibility of a mandatory course for all students that speaks to South Africa's history, citizenship, civic service and a broader sense of ethics.

This programme should be formally stewarded through the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, and managed by the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Its governance should be organised through the Academic Planning Committee reporting ultimately to the Senate. Practically, it should involve each School and Department being required to convene multiple curriculum reform workshops comprising representatives of the academic and research staff, and postgraduate and undergraduate students, and where appropriate, relevant external scholars. It is anticipated that this institution-wide curriculum reform would be completed within at least 24 months.

3. Student Admissions

Currently, the demographic profile of the Wits student body is about 75% Black and 25%

White. From the perspective of achieving a balance between demographic diversity and cosmopolitanism, we believe that this demographic profile is about right, although we should be open to increasing the proportion of white students to about 28%, which constitutes their current proportion of the Gauteng student pool. Achieving this demographic and cosmopolitan balance is not only important from the perspective of addressing historical redress, but also for generating the soft skill sets – intercultural personal skills, cultural tolerance across racial, ethnic and religious boundaries – that are required for 21st century citizens and professionals who need to operate optimally in multicultural South African and global workplaces.

Yet this demographic and cosmopolitan success is not equally spread across the institution. There are programmes that are still largely dominated by either White and Indian or African students. This is problematic in terms of our institutional and pedagogical goals, and clearly needs to be addressed. In a similar vein, our attempt to increase the number of talented students from rural schools and quintile one and two urban schools in our MBCh programme has recorded some significant progress, although we have not achieved all of our targets. Clearly we need to identify the challenges in this regard and fashion solutions for them. This agenda to address our demographic and class diversity, and cosmopolitanism, across all programmes should be managed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic in conjunction with the relevant Dean.

4. Promoting Diverse and Cosmopolitan Residence Life Experience

Over 97% of the students in our residences are Black (this includes 4.78% Indian and 1.80% Coloured). Currently only 2.26% of students in residences are White. This violates our goal to promote a diverse and cosmopolitan environment. Moreover, we cannot hold that we want to create a diverse and cosmopolitan environment in the University when we do not do so in our residences. Attempts to address this issue last year were met with opposition from some sections of the residence students who believed that they were not sufficiently consulted. But criticism of the strategy also went beyond our clumsy process of engagement and the technicalities of the residence admissions processes to include the fact that poor students would be disadvantaged and that White students were receiving special attention. The former criticism is a valid one, and a strategy needs to be developed to mitigate this. The latter criticism needs to be challenged. While special attention cannot be accorded to White students, increasing their representation in our residences should be a strategic priority on the grounds of both pedagogy and our institutional goals. Moreover, we should not allow our deliberative engagement on this strategy to be compromised by opportunistic racialised labelling of any kind. But cosmopolitanism means more than an enhanced representation of White students. It must also involve establishing an environment in which persons from multiple religious backgrounds – Christian, Hindu, Muslim, traditional African, Jewish, atheist – and cultural experiences have significant presence within our residences.

Currently we have a special task team comprising staff and student representatives deliberating on our diversity and cosmopolitanism in residences. We should enable this task team to conclude its deliberations and provide us with strategic advice in this regard. We should also consider mitigating any adverse effects on poor students by developing additional residences in Braamfontein and growing the number of beds available to the University. These initiatives will continue to be coordinated by the Dean of Student Affairs.

5. Institutional Culture

It is important to note that many Black students continue to feel marginalised at Wits even though they constitute the majority of students. This should be of concern and needs to be urgently addressed. Equally important are the many allegations of racism that are continuously received from both staff and students. It goes without saying that racism has no place at Wits and needs to be decisively dealt with whenever it rears its head, lest it destroy our ability to achieve the goal of establishing a diverse and cosmopolitan university. Addressing both challenges requires an advocacy and disciplinary capability similar to that established in the Gender Equity Office in the aftermath of our sexual harassment scandals.

These responsibilities should therefore become the primary responsibility of our Transformation Office. The Office should establish an advocacy campaign that identifies the sources of friction between various groups and develops strategies to create a more socially inclusive institutional environment for academic and professional and administrative staff. It should also establish an efficient and expeditious investigative and disciplinary process for racism allegations at the University. Such allegations must not be allowed to go unresolved for months as this contaminates the institutional atmosphere with devastating consequences for all. We should also consider the enhanced representation of African and Coloured staff on strategic committees of the University. Ultimately, transforming our institutional culture requires the effort of every single person at Wits. As scholars of social inclusion have so often argued, it requires from White staff a sensitivity that they do not act or operate in ways that can be read as alienating or discriminatory. But it also requires from Black staff and students a consciousness not to read every act as racist and exclusionary. Building a new inclusive institutional culture requires every one of us to proactively participate in developing new forms of engagement that enhance social interaction, teaching, research and service befitting a leading institution. In a sense, every one of us must feel that we own the corridors of Wits University.

There have been some colleagues who have called for the merger of the Transformation and Gender Equity Offices on the grounds that the various types of discrimination tend to overlap. While this is a legitimate observation, it is perhaps prudent to allow the respective offices to continue focussing on gender and racial discrimination for now. Once some institutional track record has been established in addressing these scourges, we may want to consider merging these offices.

These initiatives around institutional culture should be jointly managed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Advancement, HR and Transformation, and the Dean of Student Affairs, and the envisaged timeline would be towards the end of 2016.

6. Institutional Naming

While Wits does not have any statues that could create political controversy, it does need a proactive strategy on the naming of buildings and other sites. Some of this has been done in recent years, especially on the Education Campus. However, we clearly need to be more proactive in this regard. Two considerations require reflection. Firstly, we need to strike a balance between names derived from sponsorships and donations, and those that emanate from strategic considerations such as the establishment of an institutional identity. Secondly, our naming strategy should be informed by both Western and indigenous traditions. As

indicated earlier, the former follows the convention of naming after individuals while the latter tends to do so through evocative descriptions. This is often not understood by many politicians and activists engaged in naming who often erroneously think that they following indigenous traditions by replacing the names of White apartheid politicians with those of Black politicians and liberation heroes.

We should guard against this becoming a widespread practice for not only is it important in an educational institution to name after scholars, artists, poets and students, but it is also too soon to determine the legacy of most contemporary politicians. This does not mean that we should not name buildings after noted celebrated figures of our liberation, including Biko, Mandela, Sisulu, Sobukwe and Tambo, among others. We should definitely do so. But we should also remember to name beyond celebrated politicians and heroes to also include other categories relevant to our mandate. Moreover, we must be consistent with our indigenous tradition and also name through evocative descriptions.

All of this should be managed by the current Naming Committee under the chairpersonship of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Advancement, HR and Transformation. The membership of this Committee should be revised to include all stakeholders within the University community. This Committee should then call for an audit of all buildings and institutional sites, and should determine which should be targeted for naming or renaming in the coming months and years. It should then call for nominations from the University community and establish a process of naming that unites our University community and creates an institutional identity that speaks to who we are and what we aspire to be.

7. Language

Learning multiple languages, in particular the indigenous languages of South Africa, is an important means of enhancing our mutual understanding of one another. Multilingual graduates are also more capacitated and effective in the workplace. In this context, multilingualism is particularly important for Wits given that we strive to be a cosmopolitan institution and are situated at the economic nerve centre of the continent. However, we must also recognise the primacy of English in global economic and political interactions. This is why it is important to keep English as a primary language of instruction. However, we need to create the resources and instruments to enable staff and students to develop competence in one of at least two African languages located within the two major language clusters of Nguni and Sotho. In addition, our language policy suggests that we adopt South African Sign Language as part of our linguistic repertoire. Perhaps one mechanism to do this would be to develop online courses for these languages so that undergraduate and postgraduate students can complete them at any point during their course of their study. The initiative on language and multilingualism should be managed by the Academic Planning Committee and overseen by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic.

8. Insourcing of all Outsourced Activities

There have been increasing calls by students, staff and external stakeholders such as unions for all services that were outsourced over the past two decades to be insourced by the current management. This has been motivated on the grounds that the workers who service Wits from these outsourced companies tend to be grossly exploited and in some cases even abused.

It is hard to argue against this advocacy when the salaries of workers are considered and their stories are heard. However, the challenge is that Wits does not have the resources required to insource these services and put the workers directly onto our payroll. If we were to do this without throwing the institution into financial crisis, we would be required to increase student fees by an additional 15% above the normal annual increase, or get an equivalent increase in the subsidy from the state. The former is difficult given the current economic plight of our students and their families, and the latter is unlikely to happen in the near future.

We have established stopgap measures by writing into our existing contracts clauses that require companies to abide by certain minimum salary thresholds and observe labour relation requirements. If they fail to do this, we are entitled to cancel our contracts. But the dilemma of activating this leverage is that it effectively leads to workers losing their jobs. We could improve on our existing provisions by hosting regular meetings with employers and relevant unions so that we do not find out about abuses at a crisis point. However, this also will be a stopgap measure and is unlikely to address the core concerns of workers and their supporters. After all, the entire outsourcing industry is premised on the super-exploitation of vulnerable workers who are at the lowest levels of the labour hierarchy. Given all of this, it would perhaps be prudent for Wits to partner with civil society organisations and unions to launch a national campaign, the goal of which would be to increase subsidies to universities with a view to insourcing all outsourced services that involve vulnerable workers. Until we are successful in realising this outcome, however, we are going to have to manage the challenge using the stopgap measures identified above.

All of these initiatives should be overseen by the earlier identified Transformation Committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. The day to day management should be coordinated by the Head of Transformation, and stewarded by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Advancement, HR and Transformation. The plan should be disaggregated into annual targets and measures, and written into both the institutional scorecard and the performance contracts of the entire executive team. In this way, the Transformation programme should be monitored annually and the executive team should be held accountable for its implementation.

These reflections and recommendations are open for consideration by the entire University community. I look forward to receiving comments, critiques and alternative suggestions which could be sent to vco.news@wits.ac.za. These will be considered in the development of an executive statement and strategic plan which will be presented in the coming weeks to the Senate and Council for their consideration and adoption. Thereafter, the plan will be immediately activated for implementation.

All of this is now necessary to pick up the pace of Transformation. While it must be recognised that there have been some significant transformative gains since 1994, these can no longer be deemed sufficient 21 years into the democratic transition. Increasingly, universities have become delegitimised in the eyes of incoming generations of students and academics. This has been evident for some years, although it took the Rhodes Must Fall movement to bring the crisis to a head across the higher education system. Should we not urgently proceed towards the development of an executive statement and plan as Wits' response to this crisis?

Professor Adam Habib
Vice-Chancellor and Principal
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