

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Portfolio Committee Meeting
23 February 2022

Presentation of Reports of Ministerial Task Teams:

- **Implications of the 4IR on post-school education and training;**
- **Recruitment, Retention and Progression of Black South African Academics;**
- **Ministerial Committee of Inquiry into the National Student Financial Aid Scheme; and**
- **Independent Review of the University of South Africa**



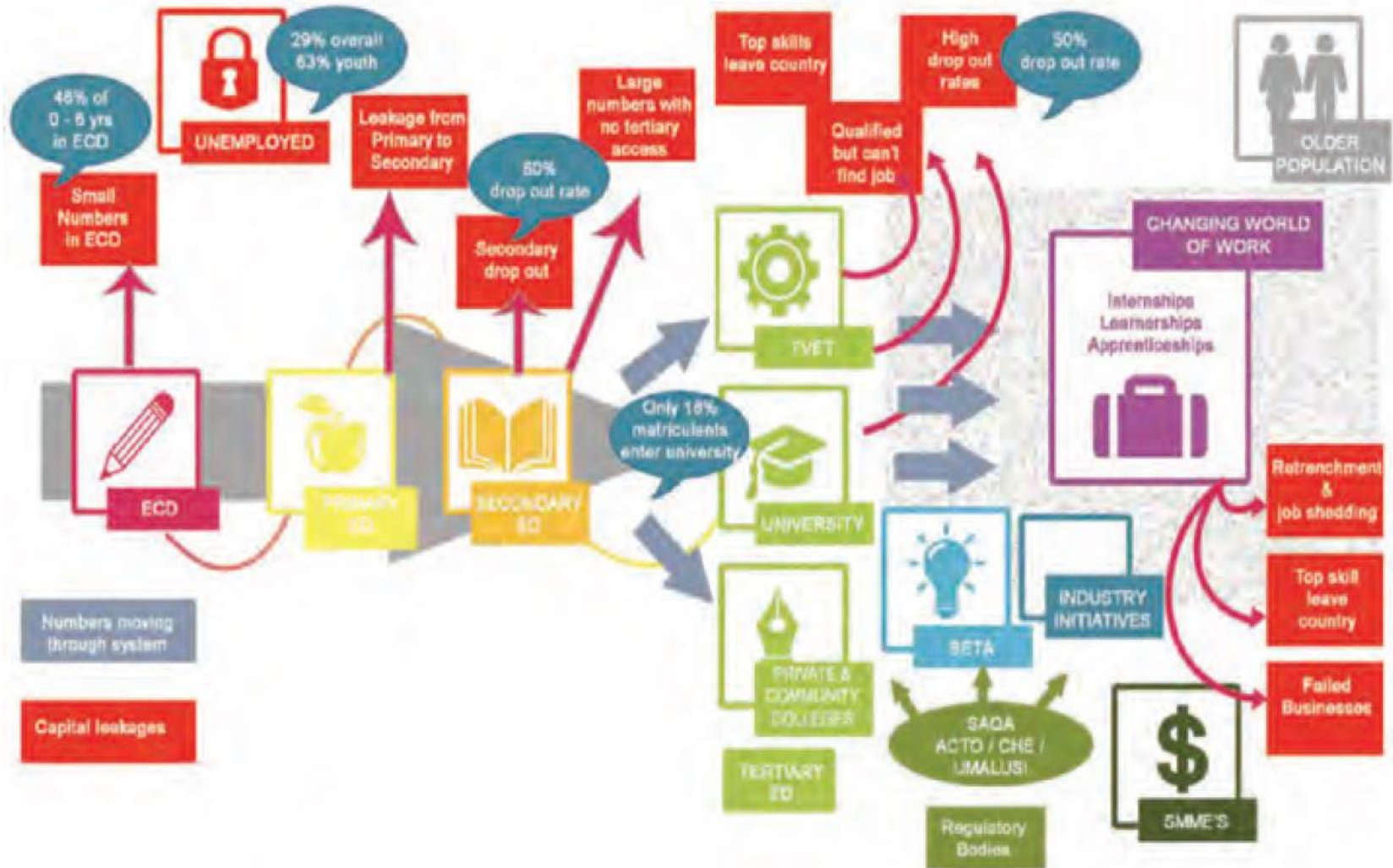
IMPLICATIONS OF THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION ON POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING



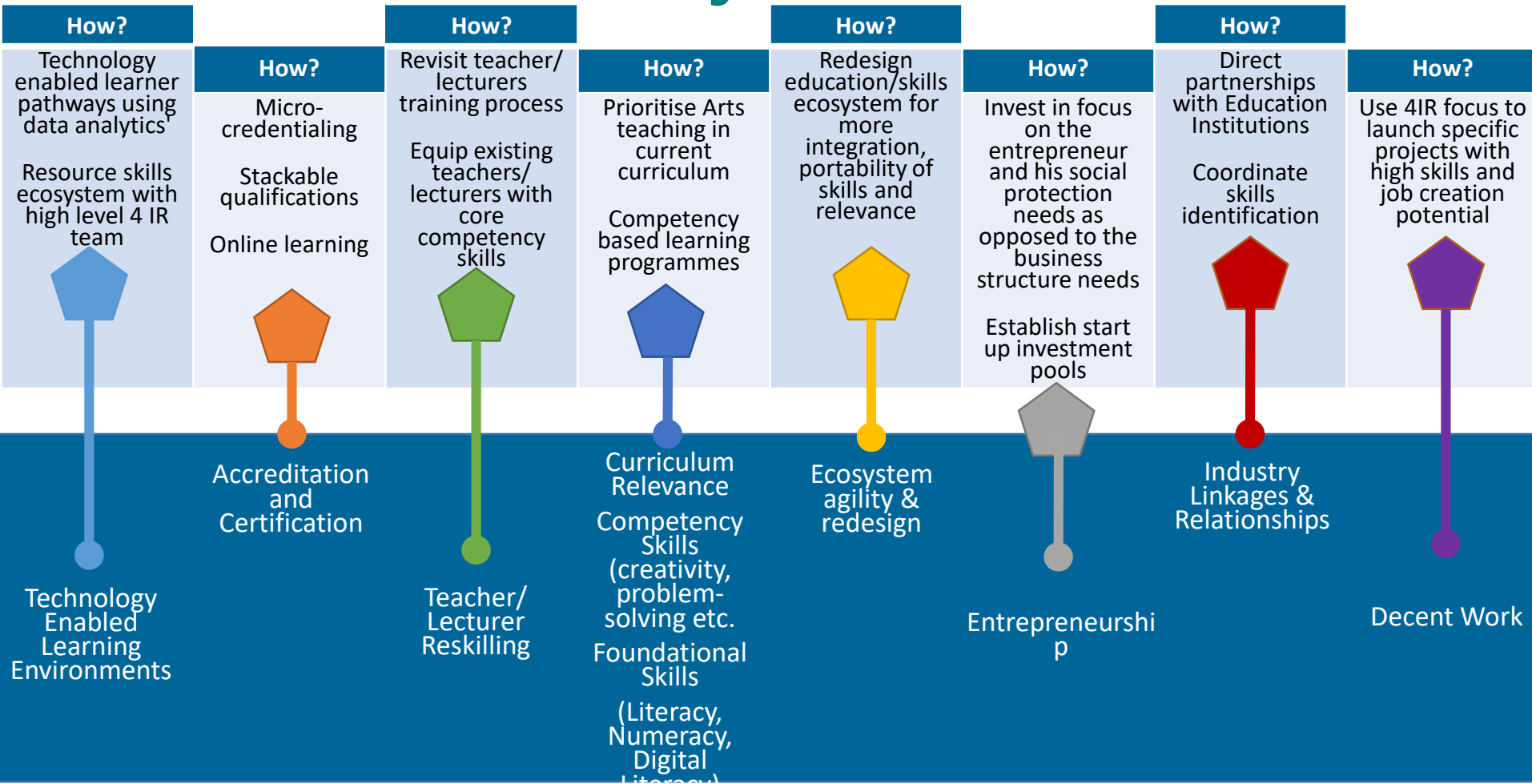
Background

- On 29 November 2019 the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, appointed Prof Zeblon Vilakazi, University of the Witwatersrand as the Chairperson to lead a team of 10 thought leaders and experts (Government Notice No 1557 of 2019)
- The purpose of the MTT was to investigate the capacity of the PSET system to:
 - contribute to the 4IR (research and innovation)
 - provide/produce skills that are in line with the needs of the 4IR (building capacity for functioning in the 4IR); and
 - embrace the affordances of the 4IR;
- and to make recommendations to the Minister as to (in the context of the 4IR) whether what is happening in the PSET system is optimal in the context of the 4IR; what are the gaps; how can the PSET system be strengthened; and what are the new areas of interventions that are required.

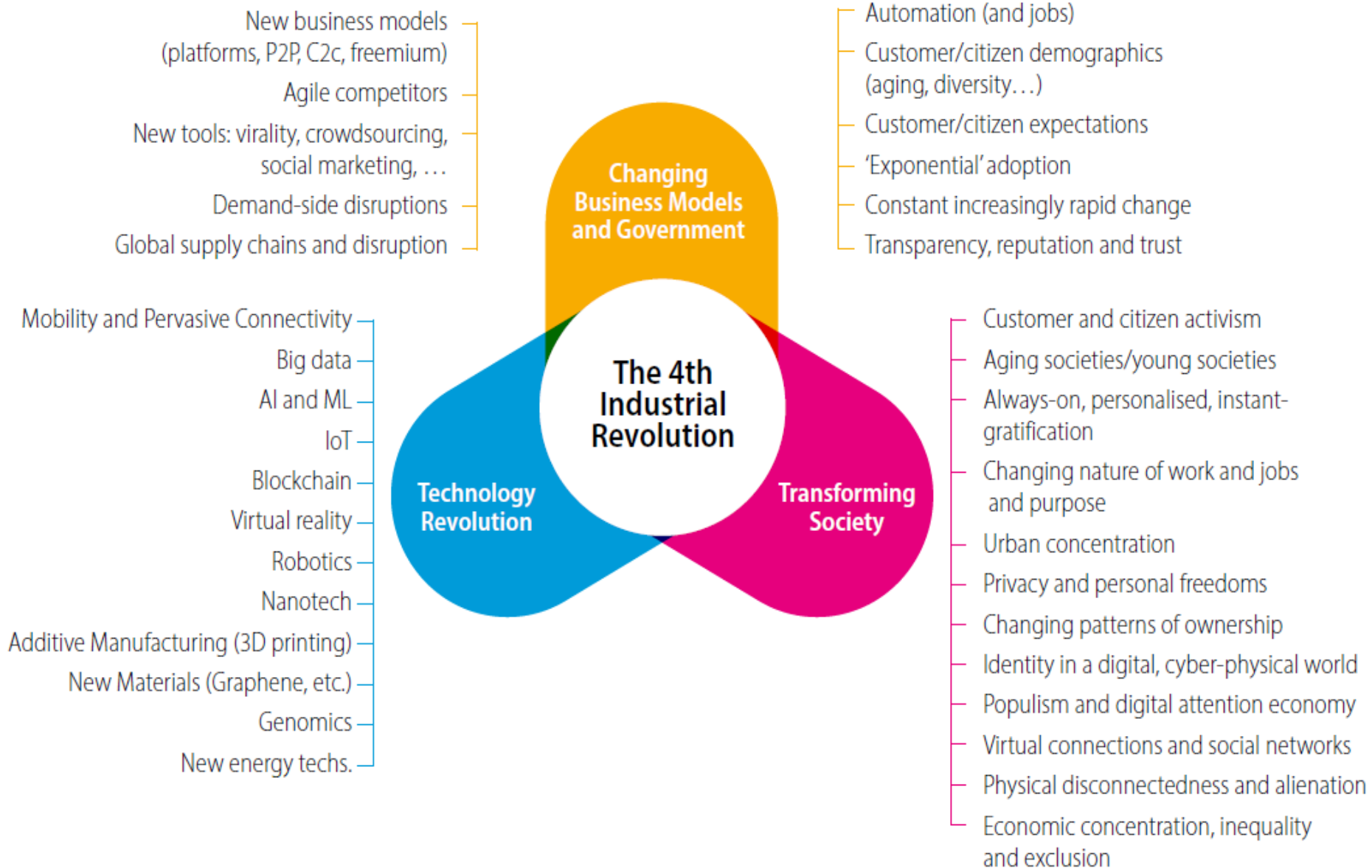
PC4IR – SA Human Capacity Development Ecosystem



PC4IR - Systemic View



Elements of the 4 IR



Implications of the 4IR for the PSET

Education and training systems required to become far more agile

Increased Access

Meaningful & relevant content

Holistic programmes

Specialised skills, content, knowledge, and abilities

Repurpose and reconfigure curricula

New skills required for new technologies

Flexible teaching and learning

Need for inter-disciplinary engagement

Technology is a tool
Data and information is the fuel

The MTT envisioned ...

Flexibility in how and where students access learning opportunities

A strong core of E&T Programmes

Accreditation systems that allow students to accumulate 'stackable micro-credentials'

Massive increases in short-course skilling opportunities

Wider and more pervasive application of work-integrated learning

Emphasis on key generic skills

Recognition of learning outside formal national qualifications

Modes of educational delivery that embrace the principles of open learning

Integrated delivery models

Responsive to the accelerating pace of technological changes

Combine building a strong initial education foundation with ongoing educational and skills acquisition opportunities

The MTT identified dependencies & enablers...

A new vision for PSET implemented in parallel with development strategies

Partnership and collaboration

Flexibility

An integrated ecosystem

Ongoing mobilisation/reprioritisation of funds

Ongoing human capacity development

The MTT identified dependencies & enablers...

Digital Inclusion

(access to hardware, affordable/reliable internet, information literacy, effective integration of ICT into teaching and learning, technical and pedagogical support, access to applications and content)

Provide ongoing and effective student support

Provide ongoing and effective lecturer capacity development initiatives

Build micro-credentialing systems

Develop simpler and more flexible policy frameworks

Develop systemic local and regional approaches – collaboration, co-creation, sharing

Develop agile funding models

**THE MINISTERIAL TASK TEAM TO
INVESTIGATE THE BLOCKAGES
ASSOCIATED WITH THE RECRUITMENT,
RETENTION AND PROGRESSION OF BLACK
SOUTH AFRICAN ACADEMICS IN SOUTH
AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**



Background

- The Minister of Higher Education and Training announced in the 2016/17 budget speech that a ministerial task team would be established to 'look into and propose solutions to the obstacles to the production of South African black academics'.
- Subsequently, the Minister approved the appointment of the Ministerial Task Team on the Recruitment, Retention and Progression of Black Academics at South African Universities, hereafter referred to as the Ministerial Task Team (MTT).
- The MTT was made up of representatives from the Higher Education system and universities, DSI, NRF and DHET.
- The main purpose of the Task Team was to carry out an investigation into the blockages that prevent effective recruitment, retention and progression of South African black academics at universities in the country, to assess the effectiveness of initiatives that have been developed to address these and to make recommendations to the Minister and the Department on how these blockages can be decisively addressed.'

Report Recommendations

The report identified 20 recommendations which are listed below:

- In terms of the postgraduate pipeline, and to address the blockages in the pipeline, the MTT makes the following recommendations.
- **Recommendation 1:** Ambitious but achievable targets should be set for the ideal overall postgraduate enrolment share in the public university system, and the equitable proportionate enrolment share of black South Africans in postgraduate programmes. State steering mechanisms must be directed towards achieving these enrolment targets.
- **Recommendation 2:** Student funding for postgraduate studies must be enhanced to attract high-achieving students to continue to doctoral and postdoctoral programmes and into the academy. Recruitment strategies must take equity issues into account. This will require 'fit-for-purpose' financial packages that respond to the challenges that prevent students, especially South African black and female students, from progressing effectively along this pathway.
- **Recommendation 3:** Sustained attention must be paid to improving undergraduate and postgraduate student success in order to create a bigger pool of undergraduates who meet the admission requirements for postgraduate studies, and postgraduates who can be considered for academic positions.
- **Recommendation 4:** Universities should ensure greater numbers of South African masters and doctoral graduates, specifically African and female South African doctoral graduates, and especially in fields where participation patterns remain inequitable. This should be addressed through the DHET university enrolment planning process.

...Report Recommendations

- In terms of the Significant participation of international instructional/research staff in South African universities, An inequitable South African academic staff profile, Inequitable qualification profile of academics, and the Inequitable academic rank profile, the MTT makes the following recommendations.
- **Recommendation 5:** Universities must develop and implement staff transformation plans that have specific time-bound targets regarding the recruitment and progression of black South African academics. Such plans must be consolidated into one National Staff Transformation Plan for South African Universities. The implementation of the plans should be monitored by the National University Transformation Oversight Committee. National steering mechanisms must be directed towards the achievement of these targets and national and institutional strategies implemented to achieve them.
- **Recommendation 6:** In working towards the National Development Plan goal of 75% of the academic staff at universities holding doctorates, national strategies must prioritise support for doctoral studies for women, African and coloured academics, with a specific focus on academics at HDIs and UoTs.

...Report Recommendations

- In terms of the New recruits report receiving little or no academic support, Black and female academics experience overt and covert racism, sexism, and patriarchy in universities, Research barriers are de facto academic career progression barriers, the MTT recommends that:
- **Recommendation 7:** Support programmes must be made available that comprise sustained programmatic activities that are nuanced to address specific and real needs of new academics generally, and first-generation academics specifically. All universities must implement formal and dynamic mentoring programmes, possibly tied into a national mentoring network, to assist new academics to navigate the first few years of academic life, and to develop a career advancement plan.
- **Recommendation 8:** Many of the new and early-career academics who do not yet hold doctoral degrees are likely to be enrolled and already working towards a doctorate. A concerted effort should be made to identify these academics in the system, understand where they are in the doctoral study trajectory and provide individualised structured support to assist them towards completion in an agreed period.

...Report Recommendations

- **Recommendation 9:** Workload models that enable early-career academics to develop as teachers and researchers must be implemented, and concerted efforts made to ensure early-career academics are able to participate in research teams.
- **Recommendation 10:** Universities should ensure that performance appraisal systems and promotion criteria are clearly understood and implemented in a consistent and transparent manner, and that they consider differentiated performance across the range of academic functions.
- **Recommendation 11:** Perhaps the most important recommendation to be made in this report is the need to tackle institutional and individual racism and sexism in direct and visible ways, including through penalising perpetrators, but also in ways that assist to build institutional cultures that embrace diversity and that are anti-racist and antisexist. This means moving from hoping that this will happen naturally to actually putting measures in place to ensure it happens. Universities must interrogate how institutional cultures and traditional practices maybe creating alienating environments that intentionally or unintentionally work to exclude, and put proactive measures in place to address this. University leadership and management must lead in this regard and must receive training in how to do so where this is needed.

...Report Recommendations

- With regard to Conditions of service for entry-level academics are unattractive, uncompetitive and non-supportive, Employment and staff-related institutional policies do not specifically address the recruitment, retention and progression of black South African academics, Despite policy silence, institutions have a diverse range of strategies, plans and activities in place for the recruitment, retention and progression of black SA academics, the MTT recommends:
- **Recommendation 12:** A system-wide appraisal of the conditions of service of lecturers and junior lecturers, including levels of remuneration across the university system, must be undertaken, with a view to improving conditions of service where necessary so that the best young graduates can be attracted to an academic career.
- **Recommendation 13:** A broad definition of the concept of transformation should be developed that could apply generally in higher education, and specifically to staff transformation. Qualitative and quantitative transformation indicators aligned to the broad definition should be put in place, and national and institutional strategies synergistically implemented towards achieving the indicators, with achievement towards the targets subjected to consistent and effective monitoring and evaluation through the National University Transformation Oversight Committee.

...Report Recommendations

- **Recommendation 14:** Universities must critically review their existing policies, to ensure that issues of transformation generally, and specifically with reference to the recruitment, retention and progression of black South African academics, are explicitly addressed in the primary policies and implemented consistently across the institution. Progress towards the achievement of equity targets should be built into the performance agreements of senior management at the universities.
- **Recommendation 15:** The DHET and the DoL must collaborate to review the extent to which universities comply with employment equity legislation, especially the Employment Equity Act. Any issues that come to the fore must be addressed through the range of DHET steering mechanisms.
- **Recommendation 16:** The mandate of the National University Transformation Oversight Committee must be expanded where necessary to enable it to take forward the actions required of it in this report, and it must be adequately and effectively resourced to enable it to deliver on its mandate.

...Report Recommendations

With regard to “the Staffing South Africa’s Universities Framework”, the DHET’s key instrument to support staff transformation at universities, the NRF support staff capacity development and staff transformation in universities

THE STAFFING SOUTH AFRICA’S UNIVERSITIES FRAMEWORK (SSAUF) The SSAUF consists of 4 core programmes implemented at national level by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and 2 support programmes implemented at institutional level to support the development of university academic and professional staff at various points along their career pathways.			
1 NURTURING EMERGING SCHOLARS PROGRAMME (NESP)	2 NEW GENERATION OF ACADEMICS PROGRAMME (nGAP)	3 EXISTING STAFF CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME (ESCEP)	4 HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (HELMP)
		3a UNIVERSITY STAFF DOCTORAL PROGRAMME (USDP)	3b FUTURE PROFESSORS PROGRAMME (FPP)
The NESP recruits postgraduate students with demonstrated academic ability who are interested in following an academic career and provide them with attractive, structured study and development opportunities which will prepare them to apply for academic positions at universities.	The nGAP recruits new academics against carefully designed and balanced equity considerations and disciplinary areas of greatest need into permanent posts at universities and support them through an intensive development programme.	The ESCEP supports the development of existing academics and professional staff, for example through support to complete formal qualifications, or to develop specific competences through participation in structured and targeted development programmes, short courses, workshops, seminars etc.	The HELMP focuses on identifying and responding to the leadership and management development needs in the university system and on developing future academic and administrative leaders.
5 STAFFING SOUTH AFRICA’S UNIVERSITIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (SSAU-DP) The SSAU-DP is the collection of staff development activities implemented by universities as part of their University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) Plans funded by the DHET.			
6 SUPPLEMENTARY STAFF EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME (SSEP) The SSEP enables universities to recruit specific skills on a needs basis, in a temporary contract capacity to support the implementation of the UCDP and the SSAUF at university level.			

...Report Recommendations

The MTT recommends:

Recommendation 17: The NRF's rating system and funding model must be reviewed in line with national priorities and transformation agenda of the country. This will mean a refocus of the NRF's strategy that prioritizes all higher education institutions and black South Africans. The NRF should put in place strategies of building capacity and expertise at historically disadvantaged universities in the areas of science, technology, and innovation. The implementation of the recommendation should be monitored by the National University Transformation Oversight Committee.

...Report Recommendations

With regard to the limited collaboration between the DHET and the DST/NRF and with universities on academic staff capacity development initiatives, the MTT recommends:

- **Recommendation 18:** There are support initiatives in place specifically designed to strengthen and transform the postgraduate pipeline and the academic staffing profile. Sufficient human and financial resources should be allocated to these initiatives, and they should be more finely tuned towards addressing staff transformation imperatives to enable them to be implemented at a scale that will enable rapid progress to be made in transforming and developing the postgraduate pipeline and academic and professional staff at universities.

...Report Recommendations

- **Recommendation 19:** The DHET should work more closely and collaboratively with universities to align academic staff capacity development initiatives and enable joined-up funding to allow for seamless and continuous support for postgraduate students and academics across the academic career pipeline.
- **Recommendation 20:** Strong monitoring and evaluation processes must be implemented by the DHET to determine whether the range of staff capacity development programmes are having the desired transformation impact in the system, and the evaluation must inform reshaping of programmes as necessary. This includes initiatives being implemented at national and institutional levels. The DHET should work closely with other government departments and entities such as the DoL and the Employment and Gender Commission to ensure that universities implement transformation plans.

Input on the recommendations

- The MTT report with the comprehensive recommendations was completed in 2020,
- The Department deemed it necessary to have wider consultations on the report recommendations.
- Thus, universities and higher education stakeholders were provided with an opportunity to provide written inputs and a total of fifteen (15) universities and higher education stakeholders submitted written responses on the recommendations to the Department.
- These public comments need to be analysed for common themes, trends and views. Therefore, a competent expert is needed to analyse or review the inputs from the stakeholders and compile a synthesis report.
- The synthesis report will inform the DHET's Memorandum to Cabinet which will, in addition to the study recommendations, propose specific interventions and attendant resources towards addressing the challenges identified in the study.

Input on the recommendations

- The Department is in the process of putting in place the mechanisms to get this work done. The Department is working through a University to identify an expert to undertake this work.
- The Department will work with the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) to prepare the Cabinet Memorandum as this work will have to include other recent studies and reports that address the issues that the MTT is trying to address. Such as:
 - *A Study on Building a Cadre of Emerging Scholars for Higher Education in South Africa was released in 2018 undertaken by CREST at Stellenbosch University, and*
 - *A Study on the Retention, Completion and Progress Rates of South African Postgraduate Students (2015) that was also conducted by CREST.*

NSFAS MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY REPORT



MCI NSFAS: Background

- Minister appointed a MCI to conduct an independent investigation into the business processes, systems and capacity of the NSFAS on 21 May 2020. Establishment of the MCI was announced in Government Gazette No. 43345.

Scope:

- to determine the root causes of the problems experienced with the rollout of the student-centred model at NSFAS and the implementation of the new bursary scheme from 2018;
- to make recommendations for future business processes, systems, policies and capacity necessary at NSFAS to administer student financial aid effectively;
- assess what should be done to make the current systems and processes 'fit for purpose' for the future which would lay the basis for a set of proposals for the longer-term.

Recommendations

Organisational Development of NSFAS:

- develop an enterprise architecture plan/operating model that coherently captures its processes, organisational capabilities, roles and systems and meets the requirements for hygienic governance and accountability
- focused attention to improving the organisational culture of the working environment
- systematic response to recommendations of external independent reviews and audits
- develop a systematic approach to developing and reviewing its internal policies to ensure that policies respond to changing environmental and organisational developments
- develop a staffing organogram that focuses on the appropriateness of skills and competencies and allows a strategic recruitment approach
- Board of NSFAS must develop a deeper and a shared understanding of the parameters of its function in exercising its governance responsibilities
- Board must also have a significant proportion of members who have a working knowledge of the academic and student administration processes at PSET institutions

Recommendations

Operational Improvements for a More Effective NSFAS:

- NSFAS must urgently initiate process to re-configure or to replace its core IT-based enterprise management systems.
- NSFAS must review process for student funding appeals and must continuously review and improve data instruments used to determine financial eligibility of applicants
- NSFAS must further develop and improve systems aimed at protecting students and NSFAS against fraud and abuse of funds, mainly through improved systems for identification confirmation

Recommendations

Relationships with PSET Institutions

- Significant and progressive gains achieved during Administration in IT systems management, financial controls and reporting, HR management, human capacity development and stakeholder communication must be consolidated and further developed
- Reconsider the value of having a more sustained presence of staff being physically located at the institutional or regional levels throughout the country
- Primary purpose as providing support to students to maximise their opportunities for successful completion of their studies
- Assess the nature and extent to which students use their allowances for purposes other than for their direct study and personal care needs

Recommendations

Minister and Department:

- National policy environment stabilized
- Accelerate process of developing regulations that are to guide the operation and implementation of the State bursary scheme
- consider the operational effectiveness of the NSFAS Board as a structure for assuring proper governance of NSFAS and accountability to the Minister
- Consider the possible governance and operational benefits of physically relocating the main office of NSFAS and integration with CAS
- Investigate possibility of separating the NSFAS core functions: supporting students to successfully complete their studies, from disbursement of funds to students and PSET institutions: disbursement function to be managed by specialist IT entity

Recommendations

Minister and Department:

- Consider the possible governance and operational benefits of physically relocating the main office of NSFAS and integration with CAS
- Investigate possibility of separating the NSFAS core functions: supporting students to successfully complete their studies, from disbursement of funds to students and PSET institutions: disbursement function to be managed by specialist IT entity

Way Forward:

- The NSFAS Board report on progress made against recommendations was submitted to the Department on 24 November 2021.
- All the recommendations pertaining to the Department will be addressed through the policy review process currently underway.

Progress against recommendations

Recommendations	Progress
Organisational Development of NSFAS	<p>NSFAS has appointed a service provider for the development of a revised operating model and organogram. Work is currently underway and is scheduled for completion by the end of November 2021, depending on the successful completion of project milestones.</p> <p>The recruitment of a new CEO and building of a new management team is making a difference. The APP for 2021/22 includes a measure relating to leadership 360 surveys for employees from grade 11 and above. The survey represents a vital first step to improving the culture, perception of leadership in the organisation and embedding the NSFAS values.</p>
	<p>The CEO has mandated the formulation of a steering committee to oversee all audit improvement activities, including internal and external audits as well as known non-compliance issues.</p>
	<p>The entity has launched an enterprise policy renewal project and a service provider has been appointed.. The current target timelines is for the project to complete by the end of December 2021</p>
	<p>The form and structure of Board Committees have been formalised to take consideration of the key areas that require Board attention, oversight and consideration. Each committee is governed by a clear terms of reference. A Board charter has been drafted and approved. All Board members have been inducted through a formal induction programme. Members of the Board conducts regular institutional visits.</p>
	<p>NSFAS intends to write to DHET requesting that a significant proportion of members who have working knowledge of the academic and student administration processes at PSET institutions be a specific consideration for membership criteria when Board members are selected.</p>

Progress against recommendations

Recommendations	Progress
Operational Improvements for a More Effective NSFAS	<p>The entity has embarked on the process of a system re-design and replace its core ICT-based systems which is part of a longer term strategy and represents a significant transformation project and is also subject to additional administration budget.</p> <p>Key modules are being redeveloped that would contribute to the overall enterprise system in a bid to reduce the risk of incorrect funding decisions and payments being made as well as streamline and reduce process inefficiencies. A new disbursements module has been developed and deployed. The applications module for the 2022 application cycle is being redeveloped with the assistance of service providers.</p>
	<p>Manual control procedures have been designed and implemented that involves assigned an application reference number to each student when completing a manual or online application. The manual applications are collected and scanned by an external service provider who also scans all applications and indexes these, as well as assist with the capturing of application details. Instances of lost applications have not been reported since the introduction of these processes.</p>
	<p>NSFAS has engaged the Central Applications System's project team to establish a working relationship. The teams have been setup to deal with specific processes that will enable process and technical exchange of data. These collaborations will resume in the new year</p>

Progress against recommendations

Recommendations	Progress
Operational Improvements for a More Effective NSFAS	<p>The 2022 student funding policy has been updated to include an objective set of criteria that will be used to evaluate appeals. The policy now makes it clear when appeals will be considered, when it will not and that all appeal decisions are subject to available budget</p> <p>This appeal automation is set to be enhanced further for the 2022 academic year in line with the improvements to the applications system module. Students will be provided with their application outcomes sooner due to improved automation and third-party data confirmation capabilities.</p>
	<p>The key data sources to review and improve the data instruments that are used to determine the financial eligibility of applicants currently in use includes, SARS, credit bureau (to the extent that a SARS record is not found), DHA, SASSA, and HEMIS. Sessions were held with all existing government data providers to agree on enhanced data exchange capabilities, for implementation in the 2023 academic year.</p>
	<p>The entity has proposed stricter qualifying measures in the 2022 student funding policy and has, incorporated a section on combatting fraud and corruption. An in-house forensic unit was established since January 2020 and recently established a forensic panel to assist with capacity constraints as well as a functioning fraud hotline. These reports are actively investigated and are reported to the CEO, the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee. The entity also has an approved Whistle-blower policy and Commercial Crime Policy. The fraud prevention policy is in draft and is under review in terms of the enterprise policy renewal project.</p>

Progress against recommendations

Recommendations	Progress
Relationships with PSET institutions	<p>(1) NSFAS will continue to embark on MOUs with other government entities and data exchanges should ideally be done through integration services rather than manual data exchange processes. This initiative has been started and the earliest implementation timeline as determined by ICT would be for the 2023 academic year.</p> <p>(2) Institutions should be required to share data with NSFAS through the Webservices platform and all other data sharing methods must be discontinued. This project must still be initiated and is subject to budget availability.</p> <p>(3) The registration process at institutions should allow visibility to NSFAS so that it can proactively determine the extent to which eligible students are indeed registered at a public tertiary education institution. This has been actioned as part of the 2022 student funding policy but must still be initiated from a systems enablement perspective for automated and integrated results transfer.</p> <p>The NSFAS TVET unit has now been established</p>
	<p>The entity has also initiated an RFP process to perform deeper research on issues with respect to accommodation (demand, rates, availability, etc.). The aim is to incorporate these findings into preparations for the 2023 academic year.</p>
	<p>While there has been related research on food insecurity amongst university students, the assertion was that students often do not spend money on food and that this is sent to their families. The actual proportion of their funding that is sent home to subsidise family needs has not been quantified. Additional research is thus required in these areas.</p>

UNISA MTT REPORT



BACKGROUND

- the Minister appointed a task team (MTT) to conduct an independent review of UNISA, focusing on the strategic mandate and purpose of the university within the South African context.
- The MTT mandate is to examine all contextual and institutional factors that impact upon the current challenges facing the University, advise on the mandate of the institution and its scope of work as a distance education provider, and make recommendations on measures required to ensure that UNISA is strategically positioned as an institution with a clear mandate and mission, supported by the necessary structures and capacity for a sustainable future.
- The composition of the MTT:
 - Dr Vincent Maphai (Chairperson)
 - Professor John Volmink
 - Professor Louis Molamu
 - Ms Nonkululeko Gobodo, and
 - Professor Brenda Gourley.
- The MTT submitted its final report dated 30 August 2021

Findings and Recommendations

- ❖ The mandate remains appropriate and relevant, as it is essential that the country has a flagship Open Distance e-Learning (ODEL) institution which can focus on excellence in eLearning, lifelong learning provision, and acting as a national resource for ODeL and the HE system in SA.
- ❖ UNISA is perceived by some to be lacking a strategic focus and drifting beyond its 'distance education' mandate by, for example, admitting full-time, and often fresh from school students. There has indeed been a dramatic change in the profile of the student body at UNISA, and this impacts on its strategies for supporting those students but such a development has not translated to "mission drift" for UNISA in its role as a comprehensive university.
- ❖ UNISA has failed to make adequate provision for dramatic change in the profile of the student body. Enrolment targets were unrealistic and, in some cases, even irresponsible, considering the lack of the institution's capacity. It therefore admits more students than it can support, thus prioritizing access over success.
- ❖ Although UNISA's multiple strategies are, overall, valid, they do not match up to the demands of the current environment nor, indeed are they as ambitious as they could be. UNISA should be a national centre of excellence in ODeL. It could and should be a major presence in the Open Education Resources movement, nationally and internationally. It is neither.

Findings and Recommendations

- ❖ There are complex matrix of global, national and internal dynamics that impact on the mission, strategy, and operations of UNISA as well its possible future. While the consequences of these global and national drivers affect all higher education institutions, they do so disproportionately in respect of UNISA.
- ❖ Given the impact of these drivers, the MTT is of the view that every aspect of higher education in South Africa needs to be revisited and higher education policies be re-examined. **As such, a National Commission on Higher Education is recommended to address them.**
- ❖ UNISA plays a significant role in Teacher Education, as this accounts for over 20% of all UNISA enrolments. Its College of Education is the largest Teacher Education institution in Africa, providing training to over 50% of all qualified teachers in South Africa. Despite this, there is no discernible strategic priority given to Teacher Education, and the MTT **recommends that the Minister should urge UNISA to position itself as a National Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education.**

Findings and Recommendations: Governance related

From the governance point of view, the MTT report concludes that the Council is the root cause of the problems at the University based on a number of observations:

- a) The Council has dismally failed UNISA, as it has not equipped itself, or the Management Committee (MANCOM), with the range of skills and competencies necessary to provide the appropriate strategic guidance and direction to a modern ODeL institution in the 21st Century.
- b) The current strategy approved by Council does not encompass all aspects of a modern ODeL institution and fails to build on the strengths and address the weaknesses of the institution such as the dysfunctional and outdated information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure.
- c) The Council has not demonstrated the knowledge, skill, and experience to guide and direct the production of a comprehensive strategic plan for a modern ODeL institution in the 21st century.
- d) The Council has failed to ensure that the serious and strategic risks identified in the Risk Register (2013 – 2015) have been given the attention they deserve.

Findings and Recommendations: Governance related

- Unisa's ICT infrastructure is outdated and has increasingly become less fit for purpose over the years. ICT management has deliberately frustrated the implementation of its strategic priorities. This is regarded as a fundamental dereliction of duty on the part of Council for failing to deliver on its basic fiduciary responsibilities with respect to the infrastructures necessary for education delivery, a function vital to the sound functioning of a university; thus failing to safeguard the health of the academic enterprise.
- This situation has persisted over several years and is unlikely to change without some drastic intervention. Furthermore, the failure to ensure a robust, modern, and secure ICT infrastructure has damaged Unisa's academic standing and administrative competence as a reputable HE institution.
- The Council has failed to ensure the basic assurance services and functions necessary to secure effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes. This places the institution at significant risk.
- There is scant understanding of the vital importance of Compliance throughout the institution and the far-reaching consequences of its neglect. **The need for further urgent investigation by a body with forensic expertise is strongly recommended.**
- There has been a deliberate and systematic plan, over a sustained period, to establish a corrupt network which has resulted in institutional capture. Council has deliberately undermined and incapacitated MANCOM with a view to achieve institutional capture and personal enrichment. In addition, there is a culture of impunity deeply embedded in the institution.

Findings and Recommendations: Governance related

- Based on the evidence presented to the MTT, UNISA suffers chronic management failures in many of the key support systems.
- The performances of departments such as Supply Chain Management, Human Resource Management, Compliance functions and Finance are seriously compromised and fail the university, putting the entire institution in jeopardy.
- A simultaneous failure of multiple management systems points to deficiencies at leadership level, as well as a gross neglect of consequence management.
- The MTT recommended the following:
 - a) The Minister should issue a directive on account of a reasonable belief that the UNISA Council is involved in financial impropriety and/or otherwise mismanaged and/or is unable to perform its functions effectively.
 - b) The Minister should dissolve the Council and appoint an Administrator to whom the VC should account. In addition, the Minister should appoint a multi-disciplinary team of management experts (in Enrolment Management, Facilities Management, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology) to assist the Administrator.
 - c) A new Council to be re-constituted with a revised set of rules and regulations in respect of the composition and appointment of new Council members. It is the MTT's view that unless Council members are appointed based on their experience, expertise and ethical conduct, past practice will be repeated. In addition, the MTT recommends a scrutiny of potential Council members, in terms of criminal records, and with confirmation of educational qualifications and experience.

Way Forward

- The Minister is still considering the report and its recommendations to determine any action to take.



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Thank you