



THEME: “2017: THE YEAR OF THE HUMAN PROJECT”

INTRODUCTION

For the past few years, we have focused on the Academic Project, in order to improve the relevance and impact, and enhance the quality of our learning, teaching, research and innovation practices. We have embraced the 2016 theme of “*The Year of Innovation & Entrepreneurship*” with many accolades and achievements – to such an extent that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) recently indicated that “*CUT is the leader in the country pertaining to interventions in innovation and entrepreneurship*”.

The theme for 2017, as approved by the Management Committee (Mancom), will be “*2017: The Year of the Human Project*”, focusing on staff, students and other stakeholders, and enhancing the human reconciliation drive.

WHY THIS THEME?

The theme entails a renewed focus on our people – our staff, students, alumni and stakeholders. At the heart of *people excellence* is the building of a high-performance culture. Nothing supports an individual more than to be given responsibility, and the knowledge that he/she is trusted. Almost without exception, people management theorists have indicated that real motivation comes from within an individual. Individuals develop such motivation when they feel that their efforts are valued, and that they are doing something worthwhile. Feeling part of a successful team is part of the engagement process. Individuals who feel valued want to contribute to the success of the organisation.

Our business as a University is education, but this can only be achieved through people. People are the most important asset of an organisation. However, the difficulty is that, in reality, people in an organisation do not always experience that policies, procedures and decisions support such a wonderful belief in their everyday work life. In our work places, the vast majority of people who add value must be regarded by the leaders as investments, and not as an expenditure. We value our people, because our value comes from them!

People really matter. Organisational results stem from high performance. People only perform well when they operate within a culture that nurtures and supports them, and assists them to work towards the achievement of their ambitions. Therefore, a further focus is to enhance our institutional and teamwork culture. The culture of an organisation is the typical way of doing things in the organisation. It particularly relates to patterns of behaviour and relationships. The culture of an organisation develops over time. It is created by the people who work for the organisation – i.e. its managers and workforce. What the organisation stands for (its values), and the dreams that it seeks to turn into reality (its vision), are fundamental in creating a dynamic culture. A 'high-performance culture' exists when everyone in the organisation shares the same vision, and when everyone trusts and values one another's contribution.

WHAT WILL WE DO?

Our Human Project must be focused on a strong visionary impulse - to build a new equal society in South Africa on the ruins of apartheid. This will be the aspirational principle of all strategic steps in the action plans, and will be linked to the Ubuntu - '*A person is a person through other people - humanity to others - I am what I am because of who we all are.*' This will clearly indicate how we will make an impact and change lives of employees in ensuring that CUT benefits. We want to instil a culture of caring for our employees, as it became clear from the Staff Survey recently conducted that this is one of the major concerns of staff. Furthermore, we want to build a high-performance culture by improving the performance of each individual to enhance the productivity and efficiency of the university.

We, as a CUT Team, will collectively embrace the importance of our people, and their development, empowerment and recognition, by implementing various actions, which will include, *inter alia*, the following:

- ❖ It is important to note that everyone – every staff member and student at CUT – has talent. The focus should be on applying talent management for all staff, to be guided by the Talent Management Policy. This is also linked to sensible and critically needed succession planning at strategic levels in the University.
- ❖ Secondly, any HR Practitioner will tell you that the most frequently mentioned problem in most organisations is communication. Communication flow throughout an organisation is essential. Communication channels must be utilised optimally, at all levels of the University, in a professional manner (no abusive e-mail messages should be circulated! Furthermore, a bulk SMS service for staff will be implemented in January 2017.
- ❖ The Stars of Academia and Research (SoAR) Programme will be revised and re-implemented under the Strategic Fund. The programme will focus mainly on the most underrepresented group at all managerial levels, namely Black female staff members.
- ❖ Continuing to embrace innovation across the University. Innovation is vitally and critically dependent on good people who are passionate about, fully engaged in, and committed to innovation.
- ❖ Empowering all employees at all post levels. Allowing staff to take risks, and to make mistakes, but to learn from those mistakes, and to improve on what they are doing. It also means giving them responsibility, so that they know they are trusted.
- ❖ It is important to involve people in non-managerial positions in strategic decisions.
- ❖ Expanding the annual Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards for academic staff to include categories of professional support services staff, administrative staff and support services staff.
- ❖ Expanding the policy on sabbatical leave for academic staff to include support services and administrative staff who could qualify for such leave, towards improving their qualifications at master's degree and doctorate levels.
- ❖ Establishing the Unit for Constructive Dialogue and Transformation to enhance the transformation process at the University. This Unit will facilitate a number of interventions related to diversity, institutional culture, racism, sexism, forgiveness, responsible citizenship, gender transformation, etc.

- ❖ Re-activating the Whistle-blowing and Ethics Hotline for staff and students.
- ❖ Enhancing the feeding scheme for poor students at both campuses.
- ❖ Investigating the establishment of a crèche for staff members' children at CUT.

CONCLUSION

Management's vision for the people at CUT is to motivate them, to enhance a team spirit, to enhance students' success in their studies, and to guide staff to achieve their full potential. Finally, it is our vision to enhance an institutional culture where people are valued, and where all forms of unfair discrimination are uprooted, whilst promoting a culture that embraces diversity, non-racialism, non-sexism and human dignity for all.

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