



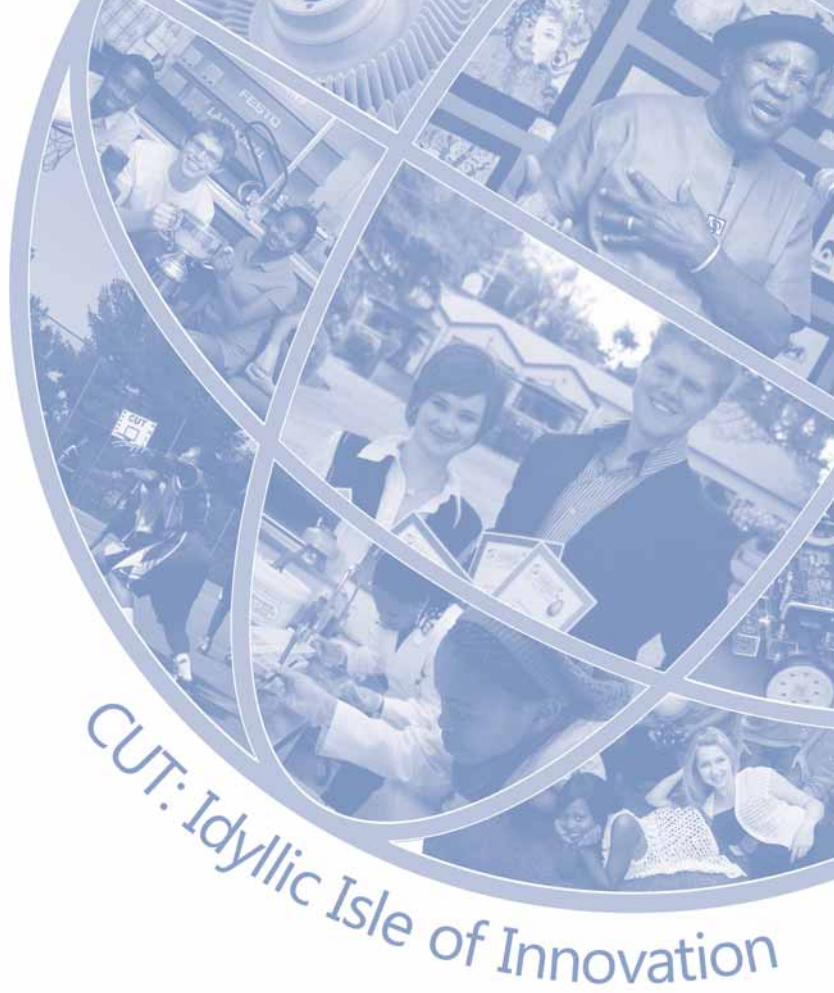
CUT: Idyllic Isle of Innovation



Central University of
Technology, Free State

2013

Thinking Beyond



CUT: Idyllic Isle of Innovation

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Introduction

State-of-The-University Address: 2013

*"While some may see them (the ones who see things differently) as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do."*¹

Indeed, people who are crazy enough to think they can change the face of higher education, as CUT is doing, are the ones that can actually make that happen.

I must acknowledge the valued presence this morning of our Chancellor, Dr Boet Troskie...and this in the Boet Troskie Hall...by paraphrasing some of the words of wisdom he always takes the time to share with me as I lead this university on his behalf as Vice-Chancellor:

"Thandwa, when we encounter challenges we completely exaggerate their enormity and we downplay the power of our brains, innovation, and our good God's will to surmount those challenges. The challenge you face today will be your triumph tomorrow, if you exert yourself unstintingly."

"Over 80% of what you worry will happen, never actually does."

Just this Wednesday, in the tranquillity of the early morning breeze, I heard the following pearls of wisdom from a traditional Eastern spiritual leader on the SAFM radio station:

"Worry is like a rocking chair: It keeps you busy, but gets you nowhere."

¹ Apple's "Think Different" advertising campaign, 1997-2002

*Education is
the premise
of progress,
in every
society, in
every family*

With the Chancellor like ours, is there any need to buckle under the weight of whatever challenges may come our way? Thank you, Dr Troskie, for your wise counsel. You know as well as anyone that the job of Vice-Chancellor is a challenging one, and certainly not the globe-trotting, thrill-a-minute joyride that some newspapers and other sources would have us believe!

To the Council members who have graciously joined us here today, I would like to say thank you for being the overseers of our governance and operations. Council is truly a pillar of strength as CUT navigates the treacherous path of politics and higher education.

Everything that CUT is and everything we have accomplished would not have been possible without the dedication and loyalty of Senate, the Institutional Forum, the SRC, our academic and support services staff, and our entire student body. You are a source of great pride and inspiration.

And so it gives me great pleasure to deliver this state-of-the-university address to you, our CUT family: Our stakeholders; our students and their parents, guardians and sponsors; business leaders and government; members of staff; and everyone else who came out to support us on this grand occasion of the official opening of the Central University of Technology, Free State for the 2013 academic year.

As the first major event on our institutional calendar, this address serves as a public recommitment to the provision of first-rate education that nurtures various tangible and intangible talents, imparts high-level skills, and enhances the intellectual capabilities of our youth. It is not only the students and their families that will benefit from our efforts – indeed, our communities, our region, our country, and ultimately the world, are depending on educational institutions like CUT to produce the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.

The concept of a state-of-the-university address is a CUT innovation launched in 2012. We expect others to follow our lead in this regard – demonstrating once again that we are truly “a CUT above the rest”! This occasion is not simply the official opening, but a demonstration of public accountability to our students and their families, our staff, stakeholders and partners. It is a fallacy that public accountability is limited to government and state institutions.

A special word of welcome must go to our new first-year students. Did you know that only 17% of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 years are university students? That certainly makes you special, but it also makes you privileged. The future of knowledge generation, innovation and wealth creation in this country is now on your shoulders, so use this opportunity wisely and with the proper sense of responsibility.

But the statistics go beyond even that, because while 17% of youth between 18 and 24 are university students, only 3% are students at a university of technology! Skills in the realm of technology are becoming increasingly important globally, and university of technology graduates are highly sought-after by a world with a growing demand for innovative people with high-level skills and the drive to take humanity forward.

On behalf of CUT, I assure you that we are ready to support your educational endeavours. In CUT you will have a committed partner that is properly equipped and positioned to provide you with the

necessary tools and an enabling environment in which you can flourish and achieve your own intellectual vision and career path.

As with any partnership or joint venture, both parties (that means you and CUT) must do their part. We expect our students to be determined, self-disciplined and diligent. We expect you to work not only hard, but smart. If you are committed and responsible, you are guaranteed to master your art and build a successful career and future for yourself.

I am reminded of quotes by two inspirational global icons: Our beloved former President Nelson Mandela, and Kofi Annan, the first person from Sub-Saharan Africa to head the United Nations:

Madiba once said that “education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.”² And in the words of Kofi Annan: “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.”³

Indeed, seated here today are our future leaders. Whether at local, regional, national or international level, you will be the ones to lead society to a better future in terms of government, business, innovation, and socio-economic welfare.

University education combines intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, emotional and physical health. In other words, a university is multifaceted in terms of its function, role and character. A university has a duty to produce graduates who will be an asset to society; who will serve their fellow human beings; who will protect the environment and all its species and natural resources; who will fight for what is just and right; who will use their knowledge and skills not only for their own benefit, but for the good of society; who will use their gifts to bring about transformation, to improve the lives of others, and to create a better future for generations to come.

Some of these qualities are acquired outside the classroom – in discussions with fellow students, in debating clubs, during sporting activities and social events, and through the work many students do in their communities. A whole new world awaits you here...grab it with both hands and never let it go!

*“education
is the most
powerful
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world.”*

Nelson Mandela

2 Quote sourced from http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/n/nelson_mandela.html

3 Quote sourced from http://thinkexist.com/quotation/knowledge_is_power-information_is_liberating/151771.html



Ms Sindy Mabe, co-anchor of E-tv morning news programme: Sunrise, and Prof. Thandwa Mthembu during the Vision 2020 unveiling on 17 May 2012.

Realising Our Vision: 2020

Before addressing what lies ahead for CUT in 2013, it is important to reflect on our performance thus far in respect of Vision 2020.

4Ps of Our Vision

This report is based on four key imperatives that we have named the 4Ps: Inspiring **PEOPLE** to excel in discharging their responsibilities; executing our robust **PLANS**; sharpening our **PRODUCTS**; and utilizing our **PENNIES** (or financial resources) wisely to deliver first-rate education.

Let me be the first to acknowledge that 2012 was a particularly challenging year in the history of our university. You are likely aware that the difficulties we faced last year emanated from an anonymous letter sent to the Department of Higher Education and Training in February 2011, containing baseless allegations of financial mismanagement and maladministration at this university.

As a result, the Department attempted to place the university under administration – an ill-informed and ill-considered decision that was overturned by the Bloemfontein High Court⁴ in support of CUT. The

⁴ To quote Judge Johann Daffue's judgement, pages 65-66: "The Council filed a 71 page report and three lever arch files of documents consisting of over 1000 pages in support of its submissions in reply to Prof Smith's report. Neither in coming to his conclusions nor in any of the affidavits before me were averments made on behalf of the CUT challenged in any manner save for the issues I shall deal with infra. In fact, an impressive report was tendered to the assessor's report and I would have expected the Minister to deal with these allegations and documentary proof provided prior to making his decision or at the very least in his opposition to the Council's application." "As a direct consequence of the vagueness in the Minister's affidavits, Mr Kennedy, in his written heads of argument as well as in oral argument was equally vague in this regard."

footnote contains some relevant excerpts from the honourable judge's ruling, to clarify his expert legal opinion on the matter. Can there be any doubt that the allegations made against our institution are nothing more than the baseless fabrications of a few embittered individuals with nefarious intentions and a misguided vendetta against a flourishing, dynamic and successful university with a bright future and a solid reputation?

One good thing did come out of this distasteful situation, and that is the overwhelming loyalty, dedication and work ethic demonstrated by the vast majority of the CUT community. This is testimony to the quality of our people and their commitment to our vision and purpose. We are all on the same page here. We have proven to the world that CUT and its people are a force to be reckoned with. So to anyone seeking to bring us down, we say ... BRING IT ON!

People

Moving on now to our 4Ps, I would like to start with **PEOPLE**, and in particular the outcomes we were able to accomplish and the impact we made in 2012.

Our main focus was on ensuring that our People Participate Productively by contributing their "crazy ideas"⁵ on how to achieve Vision 2020.

"Our people are our greatest asset" might sound like a cliché, but not in our case. We can say these words with sincerity and conviction, because we are truly dedicated to nurturing our people, their talents, skills and commitment to the education of young minds.

One of our notable PEOPLE-related achievements in 2012 was the development of a policy on attracting and retaining talent. Two executive orders have been instituted to guide talent management

Page 72: "One does not use a sledgehammer to kill a mosquito. The reasonable decision-maker would have expected clear evidence of financial and other maladministration of a serious nature and/or serious undermining of the effective functioning of the CUT before a drastic decision such as in casu is taken. No such proof was placed before the Minister. I find therefore that no reasonable decision-maker could have come to the decision arrived at by the Minister. The jurisdictional facts of section 41A have not been met. In my view he pre-judged the issue, as he made it clear, even before the CUT response was received, that CUT should be stabilized."

5 Apple's "Think Different" advertising campaign, previously cited.



and the attraction and retention of scarce skills, and these are being further refined into long-term university policy and procedure. We have dedicated 2013 to implementing such policy and procedure in view of the desired outcomes and impact.

In line with Vision 2020, a number of exciting strategies and programmes aimed at empowering our people have been launched, supported by a multi-year rolling budget of about R16.4 million. Of this, approximately R9.7 million has been dedicated to relevant initiatives in 2013.

A number of programmes are based on the twin challenge of equity and excellence, including Stars of Academe and Research (SoAR), which nurtures young aspiring academics, and Leaders in Education and Development (LEAD) for our staff and others with leadership skills in the Free State. Other programmes aimed at upgrading the skills of staff members, namely the Scarce Skills Internship Programme and the Mentorship Programme for New Staff, accommodated 137 staff members in 2012.

The SoAR programme is our in-house “grow-your-own-timber” strategy that has thus far ensured a stream of highly qualified talent into our academic and research corps. This year, our academic division gains the talents of four individuals who completed their master’s degrees in 2012, while two master’s and three PhD students scheduled to complete their studies this year will join the ranks in 2014.

We are convinced that organisational performance is directly related to the performance of people as individuals and in teams. Since our people’s performance is our highest dividend, our investment in those people is our top priority. As such, we are focused on the ongoing implementation of our performance management system across all levels of staff. Currently the system applies to all staff up to Peromnes grade 7, but the intention is to incorporate the entire staff establishment by the end of 2013 in view of improving our human capital and ultimately our product (i.e. quality education).

In 2012, this meant that over and above an average 7% salary increase, qualifying staff earned performance awards and bonuses to the value of 2.9% of our total annual salary budget. This means that a top-performing member of staff could have been paid approximately 10% more than in 2011 – a figure that far exceeds the earning potential at any other university in the country. So keeping in mind issues of affordability and sustainability, double-digit earnings are a real possibility for those who perform.

It deserves mention that all this has been possible without the need for bank loans or the depletion of our reserves (which, it should be noted, have more than trebled since 2006). Our financial management approach I clearly the right one, and as of December 2012 we have succeeded in capping our salary budget at 61% of the total government grant and tuition fee allocation, down from the almost 75% of 2007. There is no doubt that 2013 will be another year of sound financial management on our part.

Over the years, CUT management has built up a relationship of mutual respect, trust and co-operation with staff. In fact, since 2007 when I assumed the leadership of this institution, not a single workday has been lost to strike action. Like any organisation, we cannot avoid the reality of disgruntled staff and clients – but these are in the minority. Disciplinary action, and in some cases dismissal, is bound to create resentment, even though it is only ever used as a last resort when all other interventions and

options offered by CUT have failed or been rejected by the affected employee. In these difficult economic times, retrenchment is an unfortunate reality, and our organisational restructuring process of 2010 resulted in the unavoidable loss of less than 1% of our permanent employees (approximately seven out of 850 employees).

The fact of the matter is that without restructuring, we would not have been able to reduce our salary budget from almost 75% in 2007 to the current 61%, and we would not have been able to create at least 57 new academic posts between 2009 and 2011 as part of our renewed investment in academia, favoured over the support services portfolio by an adjusted salary budget ratio of 60:40.

These are but a few of our financial management innovations and successes thus far, and we have every intention of maintaining these positive ratios and our overall financial discipline.

This does not mean that we are immune to labour issues, but what sets us apart is our unwritten “social contract” that encourages “deliberative democracy” and respect for the rule of law in internal disciplinary matters and cases of differences of opinion requiring external intervention. I believe that this is why even at the height of our problems last year in terms of the court case, not a single day of work or teaching was lost. We can depend on our staff and students to understand and respect the legal processes that are in place to resolve any disputes, including any issues that may arise between Council and the Minister of Higher Education and Training. This is the level of maturity we expect from our people ... and something we can only hope other organisations will emulate.

At CUT, we consider our students to be PEOPLE and not products or commodities. They are the co-creators of our products in terms of research, innovation and elsewhere. We are grateful to the Department of Higher Education and Training for sharing this viewpoint and allocating loans to the value of approximately R112 million in 2012 through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. To this, CUT added R13.1 million in university funding towards bursaries and scholarships for our top students based purely on academic performance and irrespective of race, gender or any social bias. A portion of this amount was also earmarked for leadership and sport bursaries, work-study programmes, and even financial exemptions for the most deserving students.

What sets us apart is our unwritten “social contract”



The Free State Provincial Government, which is to be commended for going above and beyond most other provincial governments in this regard, contributed a very generous amount of R30 million in support of young people from the province who wish to study at CUT. We are also pleased to announce that for 2013, Council has approved an increase in university-funded student bursaries and scholarships from R13.1 million to R14.1 million.

Any student who maintains an excellent academic record never has to worry about exclusion on financial grounds. If a student “walks the talk”, CUT will “put its money where its mouth is”! In this regard, I can proudly state that overall, our SRC members are known for being not only effective leaders, but also academic achievers with several distinctions amongst them. Most recently we witnessed the graduation of 10 members of the 2012 SRC – eight from the Bloemfontein campus and two from the Welkom campus.

Our students excelled in other areas besides academics in 2012. The most publicised achievements are undoubtedly in the field of sport, but our students excelled in numerous other areas. Not only was our Bloemfontein campus choir selected by the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation to perform with the Bloemfontein Chinese Orchestra and the Taiwan Orchestra, but they also secured first place in the prestigious Sedibeng Choir Festival. Our cricket team won the Cricket Super League for the second year in a row in 2012, which qualified them to represent the Free State Province at the National Cricket Club Championships. I prefer not to dwell on how Wits University robbed our rugby team of its rightful win in the Varsity Shield, thus relegating us to second place – still a noteworthy achievement, I might add! I may be a proud graduate of Wits, but as our CUT team’s biggest fan I have a friendly warning for Wits: Enjoy that trophy while you can, because you won’t have it for much longer!

Following the series of Vision 2020 roadshows last year, our students came up with several “crazy” ideas that we could implement in 2013 in an effort to create a caring, responsible and community-oriented

university culture. These ideas included a fundraising dance activity known as the "Student Mob", an open market week, a charity walk, and the traditional carnival week.

It is not only students who are our PEOPLE, but also our staff – those hard-working people dedicated to teaching and learning, research and innovation. Along with students, they are our greatest resource. The lifeblood of any university is the selfless professionals who remain committed to their calling and firm in their belief that they are doing something that matters and that they can make a difference in the lives of others.

I am pleased to report that the number of PhD holders on our teaching and research staff increased from 58 to 70 in 2012, which is a 17% improvement, while the number of staff with master's degrees increased by 15%, from 88 to 104. This translates into a total of 23% of academic staff with PhDs and 36% with master's degrees – a reflection of our commitment to quality teaching and our determination to continually improve in this area in 2013 and beyond.

We subscribe to the principle of "failing to plan is planning to fail"⁶, and believe that "if you don't have a clear vision, no strategy will save you"⁷. As such we made a concerted effort in 2012 to ensure that all stakeholders internalise and take ownership of our Vision 2020 and associated plans, which lay the foundations and pillars of our drive to be the best we can be.

Our Vision 2020 is very specific in its goals and objectives:

By 2020, Central University of Technology, Free State shall be an engaged university that focuses on producing quality social and technological innovations for socio-economic development, primarily in the central region of South Africa.

This vision and its associated plans constitute our master plan and roadmap, launched in 2010 with the objective of making our university a first-rate institution, well-equipped to play a robust role in the

This vision and its associated plans constitute our master plan and roadmap, launched in 2010

6 Widely attributed to Alan Lakein, well-known author on time management.

7 Michael Hyatt: <http://michaelhyatt.com/why-vision-is-more-important-than-strategy.html>.



socio-economic development of our region and the country by providing excellent education focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Despite this focus on technology, we would never consider abandoning the Humanities, since our vision also calls for social innovation. As an example, we have recently introduced and refined two innovative programmes in Design and Studio Art and in Education.

It is in this context that our most enthusiastic stakeholders, among them professors, managers, academic and support staff and students, have become proud members of what is known as the A-Team. This team is made up of people who love to dream up creative and innovative ideas...“crazy” ideas...of how to support and accelerate our pursuit of Vision 2020. As of 2013, the A-Team is now fully engaged in supporting the implementation of vision-related strategies by working in six clusters, namely talent management, policy development, research, overall management, aesthetics, and vision. Many of their “crazy” ideas have been shared and implemented thus far, while there are lofty plans in place to turn several other exciting ideas into reality in 2013 and beyond.

The year 2012 saw us refining our planning process to ensure that our priorities, starting with academic imperatives, will henceforth be presented well in advance of the scheduled implementation.

Our planning cycle starts in November each year when we design, plan and budget for the next year’s objectives. In January of the following year we revisit the priorities and initiate implementation, while in June we undertake a mid-year review of our performance thus far and make any necessary adjustments.

September is a time for considering our performance over the past year and preparing for the next planning cycle to start in November.

This planning process is starting to bear fruit – enabling the effective and efficient utilisation of our human, financial and material resources in view of delivering excellent education.

Another critical area reviewed in the effort to improve our planning process was decision-making. We acknowledge that simply having a vision and some plans is not enough – another vital element is decision-making, which if neglected, renders any vision and plans redundant. We therefore examined various ways of instituting smart decision-making by, among other things, streamlining our structures, enhancing our focus, and exploring new ways of collecting and evaluating the vital information that will allow us to choose the best course of action at every level. We intend to consolidate these innovations in 2013 and make them part of our everyday leadership and managerial processes.

Pennies

This brings me to the third P, namely PENNIES (or financial resources), and our past and future performance in this area.

Most people are familiar with the saying “A penny saved is a penny earned” – wise words first uttered by Benjamin Franklin many years ago. According to our preliminary financial results for 2012, not only did we operate within the expenditure guidelines set by Council, but we were also in the fortunate position to set aside additional funds for strategic development. This fund was initiated in 2008/9 when the restructuring process left us with about R20 million in salary budget savings, which translated into 12.5% of our 2007 salary bill.

This salary bill was a source of great concern to us in years past, but we have since succeeded in stabilising it to the point where over the past three years, it has remained within the 58% to 62% range stipulated by DHET guidelines on grants and tuition fees. Our objective is to maintain this stability, keeping the 2013 salary bill at just under 62%.

In light of recent concerns about less-than-satisfactory audit reports on municipalities around the country, we are proud to announce that CUT has received an unqualified external audit

“A penny saved is a penny earned”

Benjamin Franklin

report every financial year over the past decade. Notably, 2012 was no different despite the potentially damaging allegations of financial mismanagement. In other words, not only have we consistently met and exceeded the requirements of the Higher Education Act in terms of our financial position and performance, but we are in full compliance with the International Financial Reporting Standards.

I have already mentioned the status of NSFAS loans, which have dwindled in value by about R4 million for 2013, while CUT's contribution to student bursaries has actually increased. We are in the process of engaging the DHET and NSFAS in this regard, and I am pleased to announce that in 2012, CUT was recognised as the most-improved institution with regard to the administration of NSFAS student loans.

This brings me to the importance committing the necessary resources to achieve Vision 2020.

For 2012, 24% of our total income was allocated to strategic priorities, based on a rolling multi-year budget consisting of accumulated and additional funds. For 2013, we have earmarked R104 million towards our strategic priorities, which amounts to 20% of our total income for the year. We will have to ensure that as our revenue grows, this amount never drops below 20%, but preferably reaches 25%, of our annual revenue. I hasten to add that this amount is not necessarily depleted within the space of one year, since a number of our Vision 2020 projects are multi-year projects. Also, this amount is over and above the normal remuneration, operational and capital expenditure funded by the headline budget.

As such, our headline and strategic development budget allocations for 2013 are as follows:

- At R31.4 million for 2013, our general capital expenditure (excluding our new buildings and basic equipment) has finally reached the target of 6% of our revenue, up from just 4.8% in 2012.
- At R125 million for 2013, our operating expenditure sits at 24.6% of our main revenue, just below our target of 25%.
- R46.5 million in strategic budget funds has been allocated to making CUT a “smart” campus, properly equipped and fit for the name “university of technology”. This translates into wireless internet access for students and staff, online or paperless systems and processes to improve efficiency and support a green environment, integrated security systems, and advanced academic and financial management processes.
- R9.7 million has been earmarked for programmes built around equity and excellence, designed to “grow our own timber” and nurture our future leaders and managers. Several fellows of this programme are CUT alumni who are currently achieving excellent results in their postgraduate studies at some of the best-known universities in the country,
- R12.6 million has been allocated to various academic and research-related projects such as innovation funding, curriculum development, learner-centeredness, continuing education for working adults, schools advancement, interventions in terms of feeder schools at primary and high-school level, and work-integrated learning.
- R460 000 has been allocated to initiatives aimed at improving our environment and making our campus conducive to learning.

- R4 million towards national and international engagements will allow us to engage in mutual strategic partnerships aimed at enhancing the global versatility of our academics and students in terms of knowledge acquisition, research collaboration and career development,
- R25.7 million will go towards the support of strategic partnerships with the private sector, government and international institutions – all aimed at elevating the stature, visibility and role of CUT in the international market. There are a number of exciting projects underway, such as the Free State IT Hub, which employs several of our IT graduates in the field of software development. This Hub has already developed a reputation for state-of-the-art innovation, attracting the attention of a number of international IT companies seeking to partner with us in this exciting endeavour.
- The Free State Province has long been known as a centre of agricultural revenue generation, although there are currently some sustainability issues in this regard. CUT offers a number of exciting programmes in the field of agriculture, and as part of our effort to enhance experimental activities and work-integrated learning for students, we have set aside funds to purchase a university farm in 2013.

As an innovative institution, we are always seeking ways to better manage and utilise our PENNIES. Complacency is never an option. Instead, we thrive on the pursuit of outcomes and impact.

One of the ways in which we are improving value-for-money is our Resource Allocation Model (RAM), which was developed in 2012 and is scheduled for full testing in 2013. This model will strengthen the link between planning and budgeting – one sure way of achieving better results in everything we do. The development process entailed extensive university-wide consultation, widely welcomed across the board. We are certain that this new instrument will raise the stakes in terms of accountability, ultimately relating to the efficient and effective utilisation of our PENNIES.

In the area of procurement management, 2012 saw us progress towards a clearer, faster and more robust electronic process that ensures high-quality scrutiny and oversight admired in the public sector. Notwithstanding our achievements in this regard, our



procurement process remains time-consuming and a hindrance to our institutional efficiency and effectiveness. We have therefore sought the assistance of experts in instituting another review of our procurement policy and procedure – the results of which are eagerly awaited.

Remember that our PENNIES are essentially used to serve the academe. Our reason for being is to provide opportunities for knowledge acquisition and generation, hence our commitment to world-class infrastructure and academic resources.

Over the past three years, and with generous contributions from Council and DHET, approximately R250 million has been invested in various key facilities for our students, including six state-of-the-art academic facilities (four of which are on the Bloemfontein campus and two on the Welkom campus), valued at R60 million in total. Anyone who has not been to visit our premises within the past four to five years would probably not recognise it due to all the changes and developments that have taken place recently.

Our Welkom campus has been neglected for far too long, with the last infrastructural development taking place 17 years ago with the construction of the library in 1996. This campus can finally look forward to some decent, state-of-the-art facilities – with more to come in 2013.

With generous contributions from Council and the DHET, a further R314 million has been set aside for investment in the academic infrastructure in the period 2012 to 2015.

- **R151.9 million will go towards academic and residential buildings and bulk infrastructure on the Welkom campus, while the Bloemfontein campus will benefit from an investment of R154.6 million.**
- **Of the total R154.6 million earmarked for the Bloemfontein campus, R110.9 million will go towards academic infrastructure in the fields of Engineering, Health and Environmental Sciences, and Teacher Education.**
- **R3 million has been allocated to an infrastructure audit, while an amount of R4 million has been set aside for the appointment of experts to assist in the development processes.**
- The Welkom campus will gain student residences to the value of R73.4 million, whilst R43.7 million has been set aside for residences on the Bloemfontein campus.
- After going so long without a single residence, the Welkom campus will now be able to comfortably accommodate 500 students and boost its accommodation rate to 25% of the overall student population. The Bloemfontein campus will soon be able to accommodate an additional 250 students – a 36% increase that will improve the accommodation availability rate from about 6% to just below 10%.
- **Through the public-private partnerships we have already managed to secure, we intend to increase our accommodation capacity far beyond its current state.**

Despite the DHET's general reluctance to fund infrastructure in certain areas, such as the Humanities and especially Management Sciences, we have nonetheless managed to establish an excellent Hotel School, considered to be among the best in the country and recognised internationally for the quality of its training.

In order to maintain and ideally advance the Hotel School's coveted position as a first-class training facility, we have already embarked on a process of collaborating with suitable partners in business and industry on some exciting projects in this regard.

Product

And so I come to the fourth and final P: PRODUCT. As a university of technology, our core responsibility and commitment is to provide a combination of education and knowledge, coupled with tangible and intangible attributes that together demonstrate our students' readiness for the world of work. These attributes come in the form of creativity and innovation, entrepreneurship, career preparedness and many others.

Our PRODUCTS are designed to meet three intertwined needs:

The first is the need to pursue knowledge and search for truth. Related to this is the second need that stems from a quest for high-level knowledge, coupled with social and technological innovation in business, industry, government and society. The third need relates to our determination to see our quest for knowledge and innovation have a positive outcome and impact in terms of the development of the central region of our country as a leading contributor to our nation's wealth.

Meeting these needs requires the provision of 'innovative, relevant, quality and user-focused education' to our students – an imperative for which we have invested significant amounts of energy and money as we have revolutionised our curriculum over the past two years. If we are to live up to the expectations of our country and the world, it is vital that we constantly evolve and innovate in terms of our education, training and research.

Academic Highlight for the Year 2012

But before sharing with you the results of our continuing efforts to refine our **PRODUCTS**, it is important to highlight the past year's academic achievements, especially in our priority STEM area, but never losing sight of the Humanities as an essential core of social innovation, as underpinned by Vision 2020.



Johan Niemann, MTech in Electrical Engineering – one of the team members of the 2012 Siemens Cyber Junkyard Competition in CUT's Evolvable Manufacturing Systems (RGEMS) laboratory. The team won first place in the national competition for their development of cutting-edge innovative engineering designs.

In 2012, our student headcount stood at 12 675, of which 5 548 were in STEM fields. This means that 44% of our total student headcount in 2012 was in our priority area of STEM – an accomplishment that few universities can claim.

The enrolment figure for STEM programmes was nearly double that of Business and Management Sciences, which stood at 26%. This was followed by Education and other programmes in the field of Humanities, both at approximately 15%. **Our ultimate target for STEM enrolment is 50% within the next few years.**

With the final graduate statistics for 2012 not yet available, I can report that in 2011 we produced 2 805 graduates, with 1 147 or 41% holding STEM qualifications – a 3% improvement from 2010.

Our students also excelled outside the classroom in 2012. A team from the School of Electrical and Computer Systems Engineering achieved first place in the Siemens Cyber Junkyard Competition in the category of cutting-edge innovative engineering design. This is truly an achievement to be proud of, since this national competition attracts entries from the leading universities in South Africa. We have proven yet again that we have earned our rightful place among the top universities in the country, and that our well-deserved reputation is built on solid proof of quality and excellence.

A number of our students in Jewellery Design and Manufacturing won awards in the national Thuthuka Jewellery Development Project Competition in Pretoria, while some of our Graphic Design students reached the finals of the Eskom Efficient Lighting Design Competition. Reaching the finals of the Sasol New Signature Competition was another opportunity for our Engineering students to show what they are made of.

One of our students, George Krapohl, was one of the three finalists in the prestigious CAR Engineering Challenge 2012, sponsored by Isuzu Motors. With the other two finalists hailing from the prestigious universities of Stellenbosch and Pretoria, we have shown that we can hold our own amongst the best of the best.

The cornerstone of our efforts to transform the curriculum and equip students with expertise and know-how to excel in the world of work is the project known as Strategic Transformation of Educational Programmes and Structures (STEPS).

STEPS is perfectly poised to give us the competitive edge in terms of developing courses that are relevant and able to meet the needs of our country and the world. Our efforts were recognised by government in 2012 when the DHET approved an array of proposed new academic programmes for implementation in 2014:

- Diploma in Sustainable Energy
- Higher Certificate in Renewable Energy Technologies
- Advanced Diploma in Logistics and Transport Management
- Advanced Diploma in Agricultural Extension
- Bachelor of Sciences in Hydrology and Water Management
- Diploma in Design and Studio Art
- Bachelor of Education in Senior Phase and FET Teaching
- Advanced Diploma in Health Management
- Higher Certificate in Community Development Work

STEPS is so much more than curriculum reform – it is also a strategy for more effective and efficient academic management, aimed at improving the delivery of our PRODUCT. In this respect, STEPS has given us a more streamlined academic structure, with a two-layer system of deans and heads of department as opposed to the past system that was weighed down by four layers, namely deans, heads of department, directors of schools and programme heads. Following approval of this new system by Senate and Council, implementation commenced in November 2012.

Part of the STEPS outcomes is our commitment to incorporating work-integrated learning and associated initiatives like service learning in every new programme introduced at CUT, which along with the newly-established Vision 2020 Innovation Fund will enhance entrepreneurial skills amongst our students.





2012 team building session for the students in Somatology.

Newly-introduced Vision 2020 Innovation Fund

Another important milestone in 2012 was the launch of the new facilities and equipment in the Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM). This multipurpose centre provides specialised support to Mechanical Engineering students, as well as the manufacturing industry and statutory research bodies in terms of the production of prototypes, production moulds and final products through additive manufacturing technologies. R7 million has been spent on new 3-D printers alone, in addition to the R25.9 million worth of machinery already in use.

The CRPM boasts the widest range of additive manufacturing technologies in Africa today, involving materials ranging from titanium and stainless steel to plastic, nylon and sand.

As testimony to our leadership in this field, the National Research Foundation saw fit to award CUT a chair in additive manufacturing (medical product development) to the value of R2.5 million over a period of five years. This came shortly after the Medical Research Council's decision to make CUT part of the National Medical Device Platform in 2010, and the Department of Science and Technology's announcement that CUT joins the ranks of top universities involved in the Titanium Centre of Competence, along with the University of Cape Town, University of Pretoria, University of the Witwatersrand and Stellenbosch University.

Funded by the Technology Innovation Agency, our Product Development Technology Station assisted hundreds of SMMEs during 2012 to become globally competitive by providing them with the necessary technological support to design and manufacture innovative new products. As the host of the first FabLab in the Free State, we enable our people and members of the

public to use our specialised manufacturing technology to develop prototypes from their own innovative ideas. Start-up companies also benefit from our incubator, which allows them to start functioning in a protected business environment.

In 2010 the Small Enterprise Development Agency established the Agricultural and Mining Tooling Incubator on CUT premises. As a Section 21 company, it collaborates closely with both CRPM and PDTS in the support of regional manufacturing enterprises. The Free State IT Hub, a software engineering endeavour, stems from a collaboration initiative between CUT and the Free State Provincial Government, producing world-class software systems such as a Municipality Monitoring and Evaluation system to be used by the auditor-general in monitoring and evaluating municipal processes, a mobile Education Monitoring and Information application for parents; and an Events Social Networking web application that can be used to register attendance and swap business information, to mention a few.

Our students stand to benefit immensely from the CUT Schools Advancement Academy (CUT-SAA), which was launched in 2012 in an effort to enhance basic SET skills amongst learners and to improve the teaching skills of educators, and we are grateful for the support of the Telkom Foundation, Standard Bank and Free State Department of Education as our partners in this rewarding initiative. The Saturday School Project, which operates within CUT-SAA, has delivered spectacular results over the years, with participating learners consistently achieving a 100% pass rate and an ever-increasing number of distinctions.

As I come to the end of this address, I remember standing in this same spot, on the same occasion, and mentioning the fact that our university had reached a tipping point. We had arrived at a point of no return when it came to propelling our university towards Vision 2020 and cementing our place as a key role player in the development of our region and our country, and indeed the world.

Today I can reaffirm what I said last year. I can confidently reassure our stakeholders, our business and government partners, our staff and our students that 2013 is our year. This is the time to remain focused and keep our eye on the prize. Together we will build a great university of technology – greater than any one-dimensional generic university could ever hope to be!

For us, a great university could never be anything less than an intellectually stimulating, vibrant and supportive educational environment that lays a practical and hands-on foundation for students to not only pursue their own personal and professional aspirations, but to also uplift their fellow man and create a better world and a better life for all.

Our greatness stems from the unique ISLE OF INNOVATION on which CUT is seated, and which serves as the base for our tireless pursuit of knowledge and truth through quality education, research, community engagement, and value-adding strategic partnerships.

We urge everyone – especially our new students – to join us in our shared purpose of generating knowledge and honing people's natural creative talent so as to achieve a level of greatness beyond what was ever thought possible.

In closing, I would like to say that as a father myself, I understand the very real concerns that the parents and guardians of our students might have in respect of security on campus. Let me assure you that the safety of our students is paramount, and we are constantly finding ways to upgrade and improve our current systems to ensure that no student, staff member or visitor need ever fear for the safety of themselves or their property while on CUT premises.

Although used as an accusation of some sorts by certain elements of our society, I see no shame in being called a "Bible-bashing Christian". I will never deny my faith or compromise my beliefs, and my family's Christian heritage has been passed on through multiple generations. In the late 1800s, my great-great uncle became the first black Anglican priest in Zululand, and his calling as a clergyman was passed on to my grandfather in the early 1900s and then my father in the late 1960s. And I am honoured that both my elder brother and my nephew are now the proud bearers of our family's legacy of service to the church.

I feel it is no coincidence that CUT, with its foundation built on Christian principles, finds itself flanked to the east by two churches – one Anglican and the other Catholic. So whether by "religious association" or simple proximity, we are surely in the realm of sacredness, if we go by the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of the term "sacred" as "made holy by religious association".

To the immediate west of this campus is the Park Road police station, with which we have a good working relationship based on mutual respect and co-operation. To the north are the magistrate's court and the high court, with the fire station close by, while to the south is the Free State Psychiatric Hospital Complex. Watching over us are the dignified spirits of a number of our former state presidents, who are laid to rest in a historical cemetery to the south-east of us, while the very name of the street in which we are situated, namely President Brand Street, is testimony to our proud history as an important local landmark and a reflection of our country's rich heritage.

With so many things going for us, we expect nothing less than absolute success and a guaranteed future as a world-renowned university of excellence and innovation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your time and attention.



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