

SEFAKO MAKGATHO HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

DONATION OF TABLES AND CHAIRS: VUWANI SCHOOLS

Thank you Programme Director for the introduction.

Honourable MEC of Education, Mr Ishmael Kgetjepe, honourable Khosikhulu Vho-Toni Mphephu Ramabulana and Traditional Leaders, honourable Executive Major for Vhembe District, Councillor Florence Radzilani, the Acting Head of the Department of Education, Ms Beauty Mutheiwana, colleagues from the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, honourable guests and ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for allowing us the opportunity to be part of this ceremony marking the official launch of the 2016 Grade 12 Examination Countdown.

Contextualised against the recent experience of the Vuwani Community, this event must be valued as a landmark occasion. A countdown always announces and identifies something special, which will have a significant impact and which requires thorough preparation and commitment. The 2016 Grade 12 Examination is without any doubt such an occasion for thousands of young people from this community. A joint effort from government, local leaders, parents and the entire education community is not too much to ask, when the future of young people and in fact our nation is at stake. We should all be grateful to those who worked tirelessly to achieve this day, full of promise for a successful 2016 Grade 12 Examination.

Dear Learners, to be able to fly forcefully into the future, like a wild bird released from its cage, you must be successful in the 2016 Grade 12 Examination. Kindly note, though, that this future is unknown, and you will be exposed to the experiences and uncertainties of the world at large. It will require from you to be committed to optimise every opportunity presented to you, and to outgrow and heal from the scars afflicted by circumstance.

We know that you will be well equipped to survive and to find your rightful place among peers. We wish to encourage you to draw richly and unashamedly from your past experiences and to continuously embrace and recognise your formative years.

You may well ask what this has to do with the SMU.

The SMU was established in 2014 as one of three new universities. The others are the University of Mpumalanga in Mbombela and the Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley. The SMU incorporated the Medunsa Campus of the University of Limpopo in January 2015, and is the only university in South Africa with an exclusive health sciences focus.

It is common cause that the country is seriously challenged by the shortage of health professionals and wishes to implement the long awaited National Health Insurance

System. The SMU is present here today to call upon you to aspire to be part of our exciting journey, as we wish to deliver on our mandate to provide the human resources needed to deliver on our national priorities, especially in the health domain.

As an education community, we agree that you should be optimally prepared to benefit from the post school learning opportunities available in our country, and that we collectively carry the responsibility to mitigate circumstances that could have disadvantaged you. The SMU learned of the special circumstances that prevailed in this district for a while and we wish to visibly make a difference. We are here today to deliver to the Vuwani School Community a number of tables and chairs that we believe could be used to facilitate an environment conducive to learning.

We humbly request you to receive this in the spirit of securing the future of our country by empowering our youth with knowledge and skills.

Prof Chris de Beer
Interim Vice-Chancellor
Date: 4 October 2016