

NEW CHAIR OF HESA: PROF IHRON RENSBURG

Press Release: 5 August 2010

Higher Education South Africa held its AGM on 29 July 2010. One of the important outcomes of that meeting was that Prof Ihron Rensburg was elected as the Chairperson of HESA.

Prof Rensburg is currently the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Prior to taking over leadership at UJ he was the Chief Executive: Strategic Corporate Services at the SABC. Up until 2001 he was the Deputy Director General at the Department of Education where he assisted in shaping policies and legislation for the post-apartheid schooling, further and higher education sub-sectors.

It is a depth of experience that he will bring to HESA during his period as Chair. "After the policy fury that led to the mergers beginning in 2004, there was the belief, among many of us in the sector, that a long period of calm would follow. How wrong we were," says Rensburg.

"In important ways, higher education presently has to make its way through greater turbulence than that brought about by the mergers. The incorporation of Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges, SETAs and the universities under one umbrella – under the Department of Higher Education and Training – is positive yet has brought with it a certain amount of challenge about the shape and role of the post-school sector for which HESA is gearing itself to offer critical comment and advice.

"It is crucial for HESA to do whatever it can to make sure that this new configuration achieves internal alignment. It is not enough that universities, FET colleges and SETAs operate within the same regulatory and institutional space, what matters is that there is articulation between and within these sub-sectors in order to provide for access and success, as well as the requisite number and quality of skills and knowledge for our country".

Prof Duma Malaza, the CEO of HESA, agrees. "There's a lot on the university plate right now. From a need to bolster the infrastructure at our universities, ongoing transformation initiatives and improving graduate throughput. But I am also sure that collectively, and with the guidance of Prof Rensburg and his Executive team, there is more than enough wisdom and strategic insight for universities to play an enormous role in shaping an optimal higher education".

Directors: M.S. Badat; M.M. Balintulo; R.Botman; C. de la Rey; T. Eloff; J.D. Jansen; M.R. Kgaphola
M.W. Makgoba; F. Mazibuko; L.V. Mazwi Tanga; P. Mbatlana; N.M. Mokgalong; I. Moutlana (Deputy Chairperson);
T.Z. Mthembu; G.L. Nongxa; B.P. O'Connell; N.B. Pityana; M. Price; I.L. Rensburg (Chairperson); D.I. Swartz;
M. Tom;

“We are expecting many and difficult challenges, but more importantly we are looking forward to the opportunities for contributing to the creation of a valuable post-school education system that will play its part in nurturing a more inclusive development path for our nation,” concludes Rensburg.

About Higher Education South Africa

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) is the leadership body that represents the 23 public universities. Led by the Vice-Chancellors of our universities, HESA acts to support and advance the higher education sector in South Africa.

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