A year later, the National Education Policy Act of 1996 stated its goal of "the democratic transformation of the national system of education into one which serves the needs and interests of all of the people of South Africa and upholds their fundamental rights".

The South African Schools Act asserted that a new schooling system will "redress past injustices in schooling provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners, … advance the democratic transformation of society …(and) contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society". The Constitution and laws and policies direct us to realise wide-ranging imperatives and goals in, and through, education and schooling. It is hoped that their achievement will contribute to the transformation and development of education and society.

Today, however, there is a strong tendency to approach education and investments in education largely in terms of the promotion of economic growth. Frequent stories on the supposed lack of responsiveness of educational institutions to economic needs, the alleged mismatch between graduates and the needs of companies, and the demand for a greater focus on "skills" reflect this tendency. This reduces education to preparing students for the economy and to be productive workers.

Education must cultivate the knowledge, competencies and skills that enable graduates to contribute to economic growth, since such growth can contribute to greater social equality and development. However, reducing education to its value for economic growth dangerously strips education of its wider social value and functions. Education has great value as an

Opinion Editorials

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Education has great value as an engagement between dedicated teachers and students around humanity's intellectual, cultural and scientific heritage (in the form of books, art, pictures, music, artefacts), and around our understandings, views and beliefs about our natural and social worlds. Education is undertaken as part of what it means to be human. Education is also connected to democratic citizenship and to the cultivation of humanity. Three capacities, above all, are essential to

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A purposeful life

"Leaders," Badat recently told a group of student volunteers, "never forget or look away or 'get used to' our social structures and relations, which underpin the coexistence of the unbridled accumulation of wealth and desperate and grinding poverty; great privileges for a small minority of rich and huge deprivation for a large majority of poor; unbound economic and social opportunities for some and the denial of such opportunities for many others."

Indeed, in a world where 'bling' is increasingly revered, Badat overtly eschews what he terms the "culture of greed and crass materialism". So, if it's not about the money, what does motivate this no-frills man who works an average 80-hour week, walks to his many engagements and meetings, owns a run-of-the-mill car, flies economy class and stays at inexpensive accommodation when his work takes him abroad?

In 2006 when he assumed the mantle of VC, he startled a jaded South Africa by rejecting his large salary and donating a large portion of it and many of his perks to the establishment of a scholarship fund named after his mentor Jakes Gerwel. Most of his top management approved and slowly adopted his practices - a culture of frugality now prevails. "Imagine how much money we are saving by not flying business class and by not staying in five-star hotels."

Several of his top management staff now also donates a portion of their salaries or benefits to plump up the bursary fund. To date, Dr Badat alone has donated over R1.5m to the fund which benefits disadvantaged students who would otherwise not have been able to afford a university education. Badat's passion for community engagement started with his involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle. "That's where my most formative learning happened. There I learnt about democracy and how important it is to participate even if you are illiterate. That's where I learnt how to take complex theoretical issues confronting South Africa and, through the prism of what was happening in other societies around the world, was able to share that with workers, students and others. And through that I became, immeasurably, a far better teacher." While South Africa now has its democracy, the struggle is far from over. South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world in terms of wealth, income, opportunities and living conditions.

Badat finds the levels of inequality and income and opportunity differentials in South Africa and globally "deeply troubling" and it is here that he is determined to make a difference. He says most of Rhodes staff, especially its top researchers, lecturers and scientists, are not driven by money. "They are driven by a love of and passion for

science, for research and producing new knowledge."

And the 80 hours a week he puts in? "The hard work I am prepared to put in is because I believe in a certain kind ofproject and a certain kind of institution," he says.

Along with research and teaching, community engagement has become a core purpose at the University.

He wants Rhodes to be an institution that produces graduates that are concerned about people, social equity and justice. "The function of the University is not just to produce graduates to satisfy throughput rates - but rather to produce a particular kind of graduate," he says. With Dr Badat at the helm, Rhodes has become a university steeped in the idea of community engagement - which Badat believes goes a long way towards creating the type of student Rhodes would be proud of. Through community engagement students don't just acquire compassion and creativity but also knowledge, competencies and expertise not available in any lecture hall or laboratory.

Along with research and teaching, community engagement has become a core purpose at the University, with additional staff and funding. But Badat is adamant that community engagement can only become the third leg of a university if there is excellence in the university's primary roles of teaching and research.

"It is on the basis of teaching and research that we connect with and build mutually respectful partnerships. But as a university you cannot take on high quality community engagement without being a high quality institution. Learning, teaching and research endeavours have to be of a high quality or what exactly are you going to partner with communities around?

Communities deserve only the best and require knowledge, expertise, and long-term durable partnerships. Badat also warns that the University has to engage with the community in which it is embedded, for its own survival.

"We are 17 years into our democracy and certain very fundamental and structural things have not changed in Grahamstown. There must be a deep understanding in the University that our future is inextricably tied in with this town. We must support the town and engage it as far as socio-economic opportunities are concerned and around a whole lot of practical issues such as (municipal) services."

The University is also forging long-term relationships with rural schools in theregion, hoping to identify and cultivate talent early on.

"This must not be a democracy that benefits only the rich. We need to give ordinary people an opportunity to share in our democracy and have their children come to university too," and this is where the Jakes Gerwel Bursary Fund comes into play.

Perhaps idealistically, Badat believes that humans are not driven by selfish, envious, crass materialistic natures but rather find fulfilment in service to humanity. "That's why you exist on this earth - to create a better society in which everyone's intellect can flower instead of just wallowing in survival where they have to worry about where their next meal is coming from." •

Universities need a bigger role in public life

FOR THE SAKE OF DEMOCRACY, SCHOLARS MUST RETURN TO PAST PRACTICES
In today's article in our series, SALEEM BADAT, vice-chancellor of Rhodes University, argues that South African universities cannot be reduced to instruments of the economy.

Intellectuals, public officials, business and civil society leaders and political commentators have complained about the lack of visibility of our universities.

For some this is about the unresponsiveness of universities in addressing the myriad economic and social development challenges the country faces. It is certainly true that universities should advance the public good, and should use science and scholarship to contribute to economic and social progress, thereby making a difference to the lives of South Africa's people.

But negative comments on the contribution of universities to economic and social development are open to challenge. For one thing, critics are often poorly informed: unwarranted generalisations cloud judgements about the quality of research and teaching at most of our universities. For another, unrealistic expectations often hold out the hope that universities can transform society. Societal transformation demands political will, the force of a developmental state, and interventions in all areas of society. Faced with this, universities can only contribute to social transformation.

Often, negative views follow from a desire to redefine the role of the university. It is wrong and dangerous to force universities to serve purely utilitarian ends and to seek to reduce them to instruments of the economy, the labour market and skills production alone. The responsiveness of universities cannot only be economic in character; it has to be of a wider intellectual and social character.

> Rigorous scholarship whether it identifies wholly or in part with the social goals of the government, the state, political parties or other key social actors - must freely interrogate the thinking, priorities and policies of all these actors.

While for some the visibility of universities is about their responsiveness, for others it is about whether universities are engaging sufficiently and critically with vital social questions of the day and are

adequately serving as catalysts of public intellectual debate.

Prior to 1994, some universities were sites of critical scholarship on crucial aspects of South African society: disinterested, critical and rigorous, yet socially committed scholarship spanned various disciplines including history, sociology psychology, political studies, anthropology, philosophy, gender studies and education. Very often this work connected with the national liberation movements, mass organisations, workers and rural poor; it also found expression in popular publications.

Of course this scholarship was neither officially encouraged, nor promoted. It was also not mission driven: indeed, some critical scholars were often denied academic posts, subjected to repression, and had no opportunity to foster public debate through the mass media.

Some, like Rick Turner and David Webster, lost their lives.

Today a constitutional democracy and an admirable Bill of Rights protects free speech and yet, curiously, there is a dearth of critical and engaged scholarship.

The truth is this: if we are to protect our freedoms and so deepen our democracy, scholars must return to their past practice.

Rigorous scholarship whether it identifies wholly or in part with the social goals of the government, the state, political parties or other key social actors - must freely interrogate the thinking, priorities and policies of all these actors.

The late Harold Wolpe once wrote neither the theory nor the analysis can ever be regarded as settled.

So the goals of our society and the means to their achievement are never settled. It is the task of critical scholarship to investigate the theoretical foundations, and the empirical analyses that define the direction the country has taken. This work could well show that today's conventional wisdoms (and their associated policies) rest on shaky foundations, with possibly profound social consequences.

Wolpe also wrote that critical scholarship must treat the priorities and policies of political parties not as conclusions but as starting points for investigation. Put differently, no undue limits can be placed on critical scholarship. In Wolpes words: If the role of research and writing is to be restricted entirely to providing the materials for and confirmation of already defined policies, then this is to reduce research to a purely ideological function and to deny any autonomy or value to intellectual work and hence to the critical yet essential function of such work. Does this make it unscholarly

No, as the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci insisted, research must produce knowledge for politics, without cutting itself off from the objective and scientific investigation of the world.

Of course, there is no shortage of vital issues that should be investigated in this country. Consider these: the dynamics and character of South Africa's transition; the emerging economic and social structure; the changing dynamics of relations of race, class and gender, and their implications for poverty unemployment and income and other inequalities; the character of the emerging black bourgeoisie and growing black middle class, their relations to business and the state, and economic and political

trajectories; conceptions of development that inform economic and social development; the conceptions of democracy that inform and their implications for state-citizen, state political party, and state-civil society relations and democracy. Beyond these issues, there are, of course, other issues that university based scholars are well placed to address. These include the salience of race, culture, identity, diversity, citizenship, morality and ethics, language, sustainable development, environmental degradation and global climate change. Critical scholarship in these directions would be a major contribution to thinking and to public intellectual debate about contemporary South Africa.

At the same time, such scholarship could also significantly enhance the visibility of our universities within South African intellectual discourse and cultural life.

But, why, then, the relative obscurity of the universities in public intellectual life

This listing is suggestive, although a probably incomplete set of answers. The holding power of policy-relevant research has squeezed funding away from the critical end of enquiry; policy-oriented research is seen as the only relevant research the result is a lack of theoretical adventure; critical scholars have migrated from universities to other institutions and into consultancy policy-oriented research. And, finally, increase in teaching loads and contract research with a concomitant decline in critical scholarship.

The lack of visibility, which has so worried many critics, could also be explained by the emergence of another set of concerns, some of which are embedded in our troubled past. So, white scholars, who continue to predominate at universities, are fearful to publicly articulate critical views for fear of being labelled racist or reactionary. But other explanations are of a more recent vintage: many new academics are fearful of writing in the public domain.

In the light of our dark legacy and our constitutional imperatives, South Africans have to develop our economy, enhance social equity, extend and deepen economic, social and political rights, and consolidate democracy by-and-large simultaneously rather than sequentially.

There are also claims that government, the state, and the African National Congress are opposed to critical intellectual debate and that as a result there is limited public space for such debate. Perhaps some academics also fear internal sanctions, given the extent to which universities now rely on contract income from government, business and other sources.

So, to use Lenins famous phrase, what is to be done.

First, as a society we need to celebrate the value of rigorous, critical scholarship and public intellectual debate. It is especially important that the ANC exemplify its openness to such scholarship and debate, and to energetically create spaces and mechanisms for these to thrive.

Second, universities need to give attention to creative strategies and mechanisms that can promote and facilitate critical scholarship. Scholars should, for instance, be supported to develop their scholarship into other forms of public writing and to participate in public debate.

Third, the national public broadcasters and the mass media should commit to promoting critical intellectual debate on key social, economic and political issues. The SABC TV series, The Roundtable, sponsored by the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, was a good beginning. Many more such programmes are needed.

Fourth, the National Research Foundation must actively fund rigorous, critical scholarship by providing dedicated postgraduate scholarships and fellowships, and increasing funding in the humanities and social sciences. Similarly, the Human Sciences Research Council has to consider a complementary research programme on critical social issues that is undertaken in partnership with universities.

Finally, it is time for a rethink of the Ministry of Science and Technology's national system of innovation which has reduced the idea of science to the natural and biological sciences. More investment is needed in research chairs and centres of excellence in the arts, social sciences and humanities, which can undertake critical scholarship and publishing, and foster public debate on the critical issues of the day.

In the light of our dark legacy and our constitutional imperatives, South Africans have to develop our economy, enhance social equity, extend and deepen economic, social and political rights, and consolidate democracy by-and-large simultaneously rather than sequentially. This is a tremendous and largely unprecedented challenge.

The only way we can do this is to talk about it in an informed, open and honest way. To do this will require both the candour and responsibility that our constitution has given the country's universities it is for them to show how engaged and critical scholarship can be the handmaiden of our common future. •

Graduates have reponsibilities

It is the time of year when thousands of students will graduate from South Africa's universities.

Graduation ceremonies are special occasions for students, families and loved ones. Through them we recognise and celebrate our students, who have worked hard and long to acquire their higher qualifications. Theirs is a fantastic achievement in the context of a university system that still struggles to realise the talents and potential of all our students.

Their success is also a testimony to the contributions of the university staff, who all contribute to creating an intellectual, social and physical environment in which students can develop and acquire knowledge, expertise and skills and succeed.

In all too patriarchal, sexist and abusive society, the women and mothers who graduate are likely to have had to overcome additional burdens and obstacles.

And let us spare a thought for the valiant families and guardians of those who graduate. Many will have endured considerable hardships to enable their loved ones to receive a university education and to graduate.

Those who graduate from our universities will become part of a very small section of the South African population that enjoys many advantages and privileges in our society.

Those who graduate from our universities will become part of a very small section of the South African population that enjoys, many advantages and privileges in our society.

They will have much greater prospects of securing employment and will earn substantially higher incomes than most other South Africans. They will also enjoy higher standards of living, many more doors will be open and many more of life's pleasures will be available to them than to their fellow citizens. As one witty graduate remarked, "The future is so bright I need a pair of shades."

No one should begrudge our graduates their benefits or their successes in the years ahead; indeed, we should celebrate them. Still, this season of graduations is a good time to ask whether a person's university education and qualification, paid for in large part by public funds, is solely for her/his private benefit. Or must it also contribute

to the wider public good and have societal benefits?

In anyone's life a university graduation ceremony is a grand occasion.

But in Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho culture, a graduation ceremony, *Ukuthweswa isidanga, ho apara purapura, umyezane*, takes on especially profound significance.

With graduation, a graduate becomes a living symbol of hurdles overcome. S/he has made history, but is also on the threshold of making more history.

The wrapping in a blanket in the Xhosa initiation ceremony symbolises that the graduate now takes on a new identity and a new mantle. And with it s/he has to enter a new covenant with the South African community and assume new and greater responsibilities.

How equipped are our graduates to assume these greater responsibilities? And what should be our expectations of them?

The recent racist incidents at the University of Free State make clear that the core purposes of our universities must also include the formation of critical intellects, the forging of social cohesion and the promotion of democratic citizenship. And that the knowledge, skills and competencies produced by universities must, as a previous Minister of Education has argued, 'be embedded within the broad set of ethical and moral values and principles that give meaning to human existence'.

It is difficult to consider graduates to be highly educated if they fail to understand their responsibility to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the values of human dignity, and if they display no or little commitment to social justice and equality, the advancement of non-sexism and non-racialism, and the human rights and freedoms that the South African Constitution proclaims.

We must hope that our graduates will never look away, or get used to the coexistence of unbridled wealth and desperate and grinding poverty, great privileges and huge deprivation, unbound economic and social opportunities for some and the absence of opportunities for many others.

It is the responsibility of Universities to ensure that graduates leave not only with knowledge and professional expertise and skills, but also as enlightened, ethical, critical and compassionate citizens who are equipped to deal with our myriad challenges, including issues of race, gender, culture and identity.

The problem is not, as is often alleged, that we focus too much on race.

The truth is that we give insufficient attention to race, gender, culture and identity. Unless and until universities do that, and create critical yet safe and empathetic spaces for openly, passionately and knowledgeably confronting difficult issues, the rainbow nation, which some mistakenly believe we already are, will remain a tantalising but distant mirage.

And we will bequeath to our children and grandchildren challenging social issues that we should be boldly and creatively confronting now, in much the way we did to fashion our democracy.

In the *Algebra of Infinite Justice*, Arundathi Roy writes: 'The only dream worth having ... is to dream that you will live while you're alive and only die when you're dead'.

This, she says, means to love. To be loved. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and vulgar disparity of life around you. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away.

We must hope that our graduates will never look away, or get used to the coexistence of unbridled wealth and desperate and grinding poverty, great privileges and huge deprivation, unbound economic and social opportunities for some and the absence of opportunities for many others.

That, instead, our graduates will continuously ask: How do I: Contribute to ridding our country and continent of unemployment, poverty; hunger, inequality; the abuse of power, Aids and other diseases; Counter racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia and intolerance of all kinds, and promote tolerance, the value of diversity, and the oneness of humanity; Help create a caring and humane society, advance social justice, build a substantive democracy, assert a culture of human rights and ensure a vibrant civil society characterised by open, vigorous and critical public intellectual debate; Creatively and boldly make our young democracy and our economy and society so full of promise and potential, work for all South Africans.

A season to celebrate the achievements of our graduates; certainly. But also a season during which we must declare our expectation of them to put their immense capabilities to work in a way that all South Africans are able to enjoy full, decent, productive, rich and rewarding lives.

Saleem Badat is Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University. He writes in his personal capacity. •

Schooling: Failures, challenges

We continue to be plagued by stubborn realities that prevent the achievement of constitutionally and legally enshrined educational imperatives and goals. We need to honestly and openly acknowledge failings and shortcomings and what accounts for these, and creatively and courageously confront them.

Since 1994 there have been important economic and social gains. Yet South Africa continues to be a most unequal society in terms of wealth, income, opportunities and living conditions. The Gini coefficient, which is a measure of income inequality, increased from 0.665 in 1994 to 0.685 in 2006.

The income of the poorest 20 percent of our society has fallen since 1994 from 2.0 percent to 1.7 percent; the income of the richest 20 percent has risen from 72.0 percent to 72.5 percent. The per capita income of the richest 20 percent has risen much faster than that of the poorest 20 percent. A total of 43 percent of our fellow citizens continue to live on an annual income of less than R3000 per year.

There is a powerful link between income and equity of opportunity and achievement in schooling. Sixty percent of African children in South Africa are from families that earn less than R800 a month; 60 percent of white children are from families whose income is more than R6000 per month. The consequences are evident in school performance and achievement.

Without effective interventions by government to improve the economic and social conditions of the poor and the unemployed, restricted educational opportunities and poor outcomes will be largely borne by these social groups.

It is clear that we must remake our schools if we are to transform education and ensure that it contributes to individual and social development. Serious attention has to be given to various issues and systemic and long-term initiatives are required.

First, early childhood education has great educational and social benefits and must be a policy priority. The Nobel Prize-winner for economics, James Heckman, writes that "it is a rare public policy initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and at the same time promotes productivity in the economy and in society at large. Investing in disadvantaged young children is such a policy".

Second, while we have almost universal participation in schooling, there are major problems related to dropouts, retention, progression and successful completion. Two out of 10 students drop out after Grade 3; four out of 10 after Grade 9, six out of 10

after Grade 10 and 7.3 after Grade 11. A little more than a quarter of the students that begin Grade 1 complete Grade 12. "The simple reality is that enrolment is not the same as attendance and attendance does not imply learning."

One serious challenge is that in 2005 10 percent of our 7000 secondary schools - the independent and Model C schools - produced 60percent of all students who could attend university. Ten percent of the historically black schools produced a further 20 percent of such students. The remaining 80 percent of secondary schools, largely historically black, produced only 20 percent of students who could attend university.

Effective leadership and management is a key distinguishing feature between the 10percent of historically black schools that produced 20percent of the students who in 2005 could attend university and the other 80percent that produced only 20percent.

The key challenge is to improve the quality of education in schools. Finances for equitable access for poor students, targeted nutrition programmes, facilities, toilets and the adequate remuneration of educators are all important. However, they are not enough for effective schooling and education. There are also a number of other vital conditions.

One is a culture of effective learning and teaching, and to restore this where it is absent. Key here is courageous and effective educational leadership and management on the part of the national Department of Education, provincial ministries, district offices and especially school heads. Effective leadership and management is a key distinguishing feature between the 10 percent of historically black schools that produced 20 percent of the students who in 2005 could attend university and the other 80percent that produced only 20 percent.

A second condition is "qualified, motivated, and committed teachers", who are "the single most important determinant of effective learning". A third is high quality learning material and textbooks. "Effective assessment is also at the heart of ensuring that learning is effective", as is "developing robust monitoring and assessment systems to monitor student performance". Finally, "the more schools are held to be accountable the more effective they are", which raises the importance of school governing bodies.

If these are the key conditions for effective education and schooling, to what extent are they in place, and in what percentage of South Africa's schools? If they are not in place, why not?

The apartheid legacy in education and schooling is pervasive and pernicious. Yet, we cannot forever hold apartheid alone culpable. If we are not to permanently be its victims we have to take the initiative and also not avoid certain hard questions.

These questions include:

- Whether, as leaders, managers and educators, we fully understand the importance of knowledge and education,

and the serious intellectual, moral, political and organisational responsibilities associated with educating our people;

– Whether we fully grasp what is at stake and the implications of our choices, decisions, actions and non-actions for our society and current and future generations;

– Whether we have the values, policies and strategies to progressively realise our education goals. Are these goals substantive or largely symbolic - nice words and good intentions but with little commitment to effective interventions and practices!; and

– Whether we have at national, provincial and district levels an effective and efficient public service that possesses the educational expertise, and leadership, management and administrative capabilities to support schools.

Unless we address our problems we will continue to deny millions of South Africans an education that develops their capabilities and affirms and advances their human and social rights. We will also block a key avenue to social transformation and development.

"Although education cannot transform the world, the world cannot be transformed without education."

Dr Saleem Badat is vice-chancellor of Rhodes University. This is the first of two parts of an edited, recent address to the Annual Conference of the Headmasters of the Traditional State Boys' Schools of South Africa, at Queen's College, Queenstown. Tomorrow his topic is "We need rich ideas of education and development"•

Rich ideas for education needed

We inherited an education system powerfully shaped by race, class, gender, institutional, and geographical inequalities.

Recognising this, our Constitution declared the right of all "to a basic education". It also committed us to the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality, and the advancement of non-sexism and non-racialism and the human rights and freedoms that the Bill of Rights proclaims.

The 1995 White Paper on education and training entrusted the State to "advance and protect" citizens so that they "have the opportunity to develop their capabilities and potential". It also directed the State to "redress ... educational inequalities among those sections of our people who have suffered particular disadvantages" and the principle of "equity", so that all citizens have "the same quality of learning opportunities".

A year later, the National Education Policy Act of 1996 stated its goal of "the democratic transformation of the national system of education into one which serves the needs and interests of all of the people of South Africa and upholds their fundamental rights".

The South African Schools Act asserted that a new schooling system will "redress past injustices in schooling provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners, ... advance the democratic transformation of society ...(and) contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society".

The Constitution and laws and policies direct us to realise wide-ranging imperatives and goals in, and through, education and schooling. It is hoped that their achievement will contribute to the transformation and development of education and society.

Education has great value as an engagement between dedicated teachers and students around humanity's intellectual, cultural and scientific heritage (in the form of books, art, pictures, music, artefacts), and around our understandings, views and beliefs about our natural and social worlds.

Today, however, there is a strong tendency to approach education and investments in education largely in terms

of the promotion of economic growth. Frequent stories on the supposed lack of responsiveness of educational institutions to economic needs, the alleged mismatch between graduates and the needs of companies, and the demand for a greater focus on "skills" reflect this tendency. This reduces education to preparing students for the economy and to be productive workers.

Education must cultivate the knowledge, competencies and skills that enable graduates to contribute to economic growth, since such growth can contribute to greater social equality and development. However, reducing education to its value for economic growth dangerously strips education of its wider social value and functions.

Education has great value as an engagement between dedicated teachers and students around humanity's intellectual, cultural and scientific heritage (in the form of books, art, pictures, music, artefacts), and around our understandings, views and beliefs about our natural and social worlds. Education is undertaken as part of what it means to be human.

Education is also connected, as Martha Nussbaum argues, to democratic citizenship and to the cultivation of humanity. Nussbaum writes that "three capacities, above all, are essential to the cultivation of humanity".

"First is the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions. Training this capacity requires developing the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgement."

The "cultivation of humanity" also requires students to see themselves"as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern" - which requires knowledge and understanding of different cultures and "of differences of gender, race, and sexuality".

Today, there is a strong tendency to approach education and investments in education largely in terms of the promotion of economic growth.

It is, however, more than "factual knowledge" that is required. Also needed is "the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have".

If we seek to be true to our Constitution, laws and policies, and also advance educational and social transformation and development, we have to reject the idea that education's only or even main role is to develop "skills" and promote economic growth. We must protect and promote a much richer viewer of education that allows it to play its citizenship and humanising roles.

There is a similar challenge related to our ideas of "development". There are what we can call "thin" and "thick" concepts of development.

"Thin" concepts are mainly economistic, and reduce development to economic growth and better economic performance,

as measured by various indicators. Reducing development to economic growth gives rise to policies and actions that focus primarily on promoting growth and reducing obstacles to growth.

"Thick" concepts of development value economic growth but are also concerned with wider economic issues as well as social, cultural and political issues. The concern is with policies and actions that bring about structural economic change and widen ownership; eliminate or reduce income inequality, unemployment and poverty; promote greater social equality, and create equity and redress for socially disadvantaged groups.

The concern also extends to expanding human, economic and social rights; deepening political and citizenship participation, building democracy and a vibrant civil society, and enriching intellectual and cultural life.

The economics Nobel Prize winner, Amartya Sen, is a strong advocate of a "thick" concept of development. He writes that "development is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. Focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as growth of gross national product, or technological advance".

Again, as with the need for a rich and "thick" view of education, we have to choose a "thick" concept of development if we wish to achieve both educational and social transformation and development.

Without a "thick" concept of development, we will not eliminate the economic and social legacies of apartheid, redress inequalities in wealth and ownership and transform economic and social relations. It will also be very difficult to meet the basic needs of people and democratise the State and society.

Only rich and thick concepts of education and development can bring about development in South Africa that is economic and also intellectual, cultural, social and political.

Dr Saleem Badat is vice-chancellor of Rhodes University. This is the second part of an edited, recent address to the Annual Conference of the Headmasters of the Traditional State Boys' Schools of South Africa, at Queen's College, Queenstown. •

Saso, mass Black organisation committed to liberation

In both scholarly and popular literature, black students in South Africa have tended to be treated in two ways: simply as victims of apartheid in appalling education conditions, or as catalysts of educational and political struggle through their campaigns. Yet their role as activists has seldom been analysed.

In his book, Black Man You Are On Your Own, Saleem Badat attempts to rectify the relative silence by examining the South African Students' Organisation, formed in 1968 and popularly associated with the person of Steve Biko. In particular, Saso gave birth to the Black Consciousness movement, was the leading formation within it, and did much to revitalise black opposition politics during the 1970s before being banned in 1977.

If we were to summarise the character of the South African Students' Organisation (Saso) in a single sentence, we would say that it was a mass, black, revolutionary, national, tertiary, student political organisation. While this doesn't exhaust all the key features, it does convey the gist of what Saso was.

Let me sketch the points one by one.

Saso membership was restricted to students in tertiary institutions and it was located first and foremost on those campuses. Yet it did also operate through off-campus local branches as a way of catering for correspondence students and circumventing the repressive actions of higher education authorities.

Since the literature on student politics has tended to blur categories such as "student movement", "student organisation" and "student body", I repeat that Saso was a student organisation, not a student movement.

A student movement is not reducible to a single organisation, or an extension of one or even many student organisations. But it is often the case that a student organisation stands in a particular relationship to the student movement, enjoys a certain status within it, and plays a certain role in it.

Saso was politically and organisationally dominant within the black higher education student movement of its period: it stood at its head and provided political direction and leadership to the student body and to other student organisations. Saso was a political student formation.

To employ Burawoy's definition of "politics", Saso was engaged in "struggles

over ... relations of structured domination, struggles that take as their objective the quantitative or qualitative change of those relations". Through its concerns with student rights and the democratisation and transformation of educational institutions Saso was involved in education politics and in struggles around relations in education.

And, as a consequence of its concerns on citizenship, human and political rights for the black oppressed, and national liberation and social transformation in South Africa, it was also involved in state politics and in struggles on social and political relations in South Africa.

Saso membership was restricted to students in tertiary institutions and it was located first and foremost on those campuses.

Saso was also political in holding distinct ideological and political positions, and the basis of affiliation to it was essentially political. It was revolutionary and national too: it formulated the doctrine of Black Consciousness, defining "race" and racial oppression as the primary problem. In these terms, united political action by "blacks" (African, Indian and coloured South Africans) was to be the means for ending apartheid.

Its goals were the psychological and physical liberation of black South Africans and the creation of a non-racial society.

Saso paid little attention to the issues of class and capitalism, and left vague the content and class character of the non-racial society to which it was committed. To the extent that capitalism in South Africa was inextricably linked with white political domination and Saso's object was to end this domination, and that through its actions it made a significant contribution to eroding white political control, it is entirely appropriate to call it a revolutionary formation.

The questions of class and capitalism were not entirely absent in Saso. They arose towards the end its existence and radicalised Saso's attack still further (a gravitation towards a Marxist analysis of South African realities then led to the accusation that Saso was going "red").

A key characteristic of Saso was its exclusively black membership. They said this was a strategy rather than a principle. Black exclusivity became a basic tenet of Black Consciousness be-cause of a rejection of what was perceived to be white domination in the definition of the goals and strategies' of anti-apartheid resistance politics.

As a result, relations with white anti-apartheid organisations were strongly discouraged. But with Saso there, black students would no longer be onlookers and on the side lines of anti-apartheid politics and would "do things for themselves and all by themselves".

Saso was a national body even though it was composed mainly of students at the black universities and its presence was largely restricted to the areas called "white" South Africa. The geographical and institutional spread was determined by historical conditions.

During Saso's existence, there were very few black students at the white English-

language universities, only one university in the bantustans and no technikons (although there were colleges of advanced technical education, their tertiary enrolment was very small).

But as an organisation it had national, regional and local structures and officials, and its chief purposes were truly national in spirit, as we have seen, Saso being fully committed to national transformation and liberation.

Lastly, Saso was a mass organisation.

If by "mass" we mean the vast majority of black students as members, Saso would not qualify at all; it was made up essentially of politically committed activists and formally en-rolled only a very small percentage of the student body. Most students were just supporters and sympathisers. But it enjoyed widespread support among black tertiary students and was able to mobilise and engage the bulk of them in collective action.

Dr Saleem Badat is vice-chancellor of Rhodes University. *Black Man You Are On Your Own*, from STE Publishers, is available from bookstores nationwide. •

EC official's reply flawed, dangerous

Open letter to the Legislature's Mzoleli Mrara from Rhodes University VC Saleem Badat.

Dear Honourable Mr Mzoleli Mrara, ANC member of the Eastern Cape Legislature and chairperson of the education portfolio committee

I respond to the comments attributed to you in *Die Burger* of January 19. I was extremely puzzled, astonished and saddened by your comments. It is clear that you are very angry at my comments at the Student Sponsorship Programme function in East London on Saturday, January 15, which were reported in the *Daily Dispatch* on Monday, January 17.

Indisputably, the key challenge is to improve the quality of education in schools.

In a nutshell, my argument was as follows:

In so far as schooling in South Africa is concerned, we continue to be plagued by conditions and realities that thwart the achievement of constitutionally and legally enshrined educational imperatives and goals.

We need to honestly and openly acknowledge the failings and shortcomings of our schools and what accounts for these, and creatively and courageously confront them.

Unless, and until, we do this we will continue to deny millions of South Africans an education that develops their capabilities and affirms and advances their human and social rights. We will also block a key avenue to social transformation and development.

"Although education cannot transform the world, the world cannot be transformed without education."

Indisputably, the key challenge is to improve the quality of education in schools. Finances for equitable access for poor students, targeted nutrition programmes, facilities, toilets and the adequate remuneration of educators are all important.

However, all these are not enough for effective schooling and education. We also need to restore in many of our schools a culture of effective learning and teaching.

We require effective educational leadership and management on the part of the national Department of Education, provincial ministries, district offices and especially school heads. Motivated and committed teachers who are supported with high quality learning material and textbooks,

effective assessment and monitoring of student performance, and holding schools accountable are all also vitally important.

In the face of incontrovertible evidence on the tragic shortcomings of our schooling system, I am most puzzled by your angry response.

What is it that you dispute about my description of the realities of our schooling? By all means respond vigorously if you wish to paint a different picture of our schooling system.

Yet, to my astonishment and great sadness, you don't contest my description of the tragedy, indeed, scandal, of much of our schooling. Instead, you mount an attack on Rhodes University and me that is as intemperate and dangerous as it is misinformed.

It is dangerous because you say that for certain reasons, which I address below, I "have no right to criticise the current education system". Why? Because in your view I must satisfy certain conditions before I can express my views. You are wrong.

To critique is my constitutional right as a citizen. Indeed, it is my obligation to speak truth to power.

In any event you seek to deny my right to criticism on grounds that are extremely dubious. I cannot criticise because, according to you, "Rhodes University is largely a university for foreigners".

Moreover, you assert that "most Rhodes students are not even South African citizens, they come from other countries". This is a long-standing myth, which you, regrettably, seem to wish to perpetuate.

The reality is that when I became Vice-Chancellor in 2006, international students made up 24 percent of Rhodes University; today, they make up 20 percent. The percentage of international students has been deliberately reduced in order to make space for more South African students and especially black students from the Eastern Cape.

The percentage of international students has been deliberately reduced in order to make space for more South African students, and especially black students from the Eastern Cape.

It should be noted that 15 percent of the students at Fort Hare are international students and, at 18 percent, UCT has a much larger number of internationals students than Rhodes.

There are many good reasons why we must have international students at our universities. South Africa also has international agreements on this - for example the SADC Protocol.

According to you a second reason I cannot criticise the schooling system is because "most South Africans are not even given admission to (Rhodes) university". This is simply untrue.

Eighty percent of Rhodes' students are South African. Pertinent to equity, in 2006 51 percent were black students and now 57 percent are black. In 2006 62 percent of the black students were South African; today it is 70 percent. In 2007, for the first time in the history of Rhodes, black students

predominated in the first-year intake. Now almost 65 percent of the new intake is black students.

It is all too easy to play the person rather than engage with argument. Thus, you state that "I don't think Badat can pretend to know he was here when the rest of the South Africans took part in the struggle". Once again you make a claim that is groundless.

For your information, during the apartheid period I occupied leadership positions in local and national student political organisations. I was active in national educational and political formations and was editor of a community newspaper and involved in the anti-apartheid alternative press.

I spent various periods in political detention and was thereafter restricted and prohibited from entering any educational or media institution. As a result of torture while in detention, I was deemed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to have had my human rights violated under apartheid and to qualify for reparations.

But I really should not have to set out my "struggle credentials" to criticise our schooling system or any other unacceptable aspect of our social reality. The right to freely express one's views and to criticise is a constitutional right.

To seek to restrict criticism to only those who participated in the struggle for national liberation and democracy is dangerous and untenable. You effectively, then, deny millions of citizens, including all those born after 1994, any right to criticism.

This makes a mockery of our noble Constitution. Honourable Mrara, it is neither just nor helpful to throw insults at critics or to try and silence critics using dubious means and ill-informed claims. We have a schooling system to urgently remake.

The quicker we grasp this fact and courageously and determinedly do so the better we will serve our youth and country.

Yours in the struggle for a quality schooling system that effectively educates all our people, Saleem Badat, Vice-Chancellor, Rhodes University. •

Education failing to ensure shift from subject to citizen

Reflection on how far we have come requires us to clarify our notions of "subject" and "citizen" and subjecthood and citizenship.

First, as with notions such as democracy and development, there are "thick" and "thin', notions of citizenship - notions that reduce citizenship to the formal, legal and primarily political dimensions versus those that also encompass wider economic and social dimensions.

Second, the question of movement from subject to citizen has to be sensitive to the nature of our society: "how far we have come" cannot be broached only at the level of the population in general.

It has to also be considered in relation to the social class, race and gender dimensions of our society, the divides of urban and rural, employed and unemployed, and those who wield authority and power within our society and those who are at a distance from such power.

Third, between the poles of "subject" and "citizen" there are a range of conditions such as semi-subjecthood and semi-citizenship and the like.

Finally, historical development is hardly ever the relentless triumphant march on all fronts of citizenship over subjecthood.

Some actions may expand citizen rights in certain areas, while others may create subjecthood in other domains. So clarity on the terms "subject" and "citizen" is vitally important for discussion of how far we have progressed in South Africa.

1994, without doubt was, politically, a revolutionary breakthrough. From being a racially exclusive capitalist democracy with strong authoritarian characteristics, we became a capitalist democracy in which, for the first time, almost all inhabitants became citizens.

Critical here was a commendable Constitution, including a Bill of Rights, which held out the promise of an extensive range of rights that did not exist for all, or at all.

As a society, as social groups and individuals we, and especially black South Africans, made a significant transition and advance in 1994 from "subjects" to "citizens".

Still, a number of current realities compromise our Constitution and the promise of a substantive citizenship that the Constitution holds out. Indeed, they

condemn many of our people, black and white, women and men, young and not so young to conditions that are more associated with being subjects and subjecthood.

> As a society, as social groups and individuals we, and especially black South Africans, made a significant transition and advance in 1994 from "subjects" to "citizens".

We have the dubious honour of being the most unequal society on earth. During the past 16 years income inequality has increased, as has inequality within "races".

The percentage of income of the poorest 20 percent of our society has fallen since 1994 from 2.0 percent to 1.7 percent. Conversely, the percentage of income of the richest 20 percent of our society has risen since 1994 from 72.0 percent to 72.5 percent.

At the same time, the per capita income of the richest 20 percent has risen much faster than that of the poorest 20 percent. A total of 43 percent of our fellow citizens continue to live on an annual income of less than R3 000 per year.

The divides of "race", class, gender and geography are still very evident.

Hunger and disease, poverty and unemployment continue to blight our democracy. Millions of citizens are mired in desperate daily routines of survival while, alongside, crass materialism, tender-preneurship and unbridled accumulation run rampant. Numerous morbid ills destroy innumerable lives and wreak havoc in our country.

What, then, does citizenship mean for those who are poor, unemployed and struggle to survive?

Large parts of our schooling system continue to compromise the provision of high quality education to children and youth and thwart the realisation of their potential. Our schools have major problems of drop outs, retention, progression and successful completion. The simple reality is that enrolment is not the same as attendance and attendance does not imply learning.

Of our secondary schools, 10 percent produce 60 percent of the students who are eligible to attend university, and 20 percent of these schools produce 80 percent of the students.

Almost 2.8 million or 41.6 percent of people between the ages of 18-24 are neither in education nor in training or employment. This is not only "an educational problem, but constitutes a social and economic disaster".

Yet education is strongly connected to the idea of democratic citizenship, to the cultivation of a humane society and the defence, assertion and pursuit of citizen and human rights and active democratic participation.

Our schools by and large fail dismally to develop the critical capacities that are essential for functioning as democratic citizens, not to mention the basic literacies citizens require to function effectively in a complex and changing society.

What are the consequences of the educational failures of our schooling and what does this means for the kind and

quality of citizenship that can be exercised by those that have been failed by our schools?

Of course, it must also be asked whether our universities are contributing to forging critical and democratic citizenship through their purposes of producing knowledge, learning-teaching and community engagement.

Our responsibility is to produce graduates who are not only capable professionals, but also intellectuals and critical citizens. Yet, the trend is to approach higher education largely in terms of promoting economic growth and preparing students as skilled workers.

Is there adequate engagement by our universities to support intellectual and cultural development of a critical citizenry? But do not our shortcomings have their roots in our apartheid past? Perhaps!

What, then, about laws and policies being enacted in relation to traditional rural authorities, which make rural people the subjects of unelected traditional leaders?

There are considerable implications for the citizen rights of rural black people, for their participation at local level and for accountability. There are especially major consequences for women and girls, which are already being felt in highly adverse ways.

In some quarters it is argued that democracy and meaningful citizenship is impossible without particular levels of economic development. This suggests that we have to wait for economic development to ensure democracy and meaningful citizenship. I don't accept this.

On the final page of *Long Walk to Freedom*, *Tatamkulu* Mandela writes: "The truth is that we are not yet free; we have merely achieved the freedom to be free, the right not to be oppressed. For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. The true test of our devotion to freedom is just beginning."

He adds: "I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended."

"The truth is that" in 2011: We are citizens, but our citizenship is inadequately developed and we are yet to "live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others";

"Our devotion" in practice to a thick idea of citizenship is debatable and must continue to be struggled for; and the idea that "with freedom (and citizenship) comes responsibilities" has all too quickly been forgotten or has to still be fully grasped in many quarters in South Africa.

Saleem Badat is Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University. This is an edited version of an address at the National Arts Festival Thinkfest panel on 'From Subject to Citizen: How far have we come?' Our schools by and large fail dismally to develop the critical capacities that are essential for functioning as democratic citizens, not to mention the basic literacies that citizens require to function effectively in a complex and changing society. •

We are not free, only free to start

If we are our race before our nationality we create a new apartheid. And if we chain ourselves to materialism and others to poverty we are all slaves of a kind, writes Saleem Badat.

FREE TO CARE: "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others', writes Mandela in *Long Walk to Freedom*.

THE VISION: 'We must never lose sight of the fact that the goal is to establish a non-racial society,' says Albie Sachs.

THE YEAR 1994 was, politically, a revolutionary breakthrough. Racial oligarchy, arid brutal 414 years of oppression and repression finally gave way to a democracy in which all South Africans became citizens and were accorded full citizenship rights.

Certain realities, however, seriously compromise our constitutional ideal of full citizenship rights for all.

Critical to this development was the imagination and courage that we displayed to rid ourselves of tyranny and to forge a constitution and Bill of Rights which held out the promise of far-reaching political, economic and social rights that did not exist for all, or at all, prior to 1994.

Having been "subjects," millions of us made the significant advance to becoming "citizens". We looked forward to the promise of the progressive realisation of hard-won citizenship rights so that we could live productive, rich, rewarding and secure lives.

Certain realities, however, seriously compromise our constitutional ideal of full citizenship rights for all. Indeed, they could condemn large numbers of us to conditions that are more akin to being subjects.

In *South Africa Pushed to the Limit*, Hein Marais warns of the danger of the "recourse to rousing affirmations of identity and entitlement" and to populist discourses of "authenticity" - "who is a real South African, who is a real African, who is black, what is a man, what is the role of women."

These utterances are accompanied by ever more "narrow and exacting" interpretations of culture and tradition.

Marais' comments put into perspective recent events: the crass utterances of chief government communicator Jimmy Manyi on "race"; the repugnant tabloid chatter of Kuli Roberts on so-called coloureds; and Minister Trevor Manuel's amazing outburst that Manyi has "the same mind that operated

under apartheid".

Given the apartheid legacy, there can be no quarrel with redress and social equity for disadvantaged poor, black and female South Africans. As Albie Sachs notes, pervasive inequities "cannot be wished away by invoking constitutional idealism".

Still, we find ourselves in the grip of a profound paradox: the use of "race" to promote redress and to advance social equity. In Sachs' words, we are making "conscious use of racial distinctions in order to create a non-racial society".

Such an approach has many dangers. For one, employing solely "race" for redress purposes could benefit only or primarily the black political and economic elites, and simply reproduce the severe class inequalities that we already have.

The conspicuous consumption of sushi-loving elites and the rapid ascendancy of politically-connected elites into wealthy businesspersons make no difference to eliminating the massive inequalities in our society.

For another, using "race" to advance redress and social equity could ossify racial categorisations and ensure that we continue to construct identities primarily along the lines of "race".

Surely our goal must be to ensure that our identities are rich, multiple, fluid and dynamic rather than frozen along "race" lines.

In Sachs' words we must "never lose sight of the fact that the goal is to establish a non-racial society in which social and cultural diversity is celebrated and seen as a source of vitality and in which race as such ultimately has no political or economic significance".

In the fabulous and inspiring track called *Say Africa*, Vusi Mahlasela croons: "I may be walking in the streets of London. But the dust on my boots and the rhythm of my feet and my heart say Africa, say Africa." This is the case for most of us who live in South Africa.

We must confront the charlatans among us who stridently seek to give ever more "narrow and exacting" answers to the questions of "who is a real South African". These self-serving answers could reduce millions of us to subjects and lay the basis for the chauvinism that leads to the killing fields of Sabra and Shatila and Rwanda and fertilise our own disgraceful manifestations of xenophobia.

We must loudly proclaim that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity". We must insist, for all the reasons that were given at the "I am an African" speech at the launch of our constitution, that we are all Africans.

At the same time, we must jettison glib formulations like "forget the past and embrace the future" and also not confuse aspiration with realities, as in the "rainbow nation".

We have a long road still to travel before inequality, racism and sexism and prejudice and intolerance are defeated.

As Njabulo Ndebele notes, "the fact that racism may still exist in the actions of young students suggests that racism continues to be fed by institutions such as families, schools and churches" and we need to give attention to how "we bring up our children".

Issues of race, culture, identity language and many kinds of hurt remain to be confronted. We will only be free and equals

when we begin to tackle these issues with sensitivity, honesty and courage. We shy away from honest engagement with these difficult, complex and emotive issues at our own peril.

Our institutions of democracy and justice and our media remain robust and vibrant, as do voices that seek to safeguard constitutional values and ideals and a just society.

Already a perversely unequal society in 1994, during the past seventeen years income inequality has increased in general and within so-called "racial" groups. The percentage of income of the poorest 20 percent of South Africa has fallen since 1994, while that of the richest 20 percent has risen. The poorest 20 percent earn 1.7 percent of income; the richest 20 percent take home 72.5 percent.

In fact, 43 percent of citizens eke out an existence on little more than R8 a day Hunger and disease, poverty and unemployment continue to blight our democracy. Millions of citizens are mired in desperate daily routines of survival while crass materialism, corruption, tenderpre-neurship and unbridled accumulation run rampant.

What does citizenship mean for those who are poor, unemployed, and struggle to survive or live in fear of violent crime?

South Africa is an infinitely better place today than it was before 1994. There have been many positive social developments since 1994. Our institutions of democracy and justice and our media remain robust I and vibrant, as do voices that seek to safeguard constitutional values and ideals and a just society.

On the final page of *Long Walk to Freedom*, Madiba writes: "The truth is that we are not yet free; we have merely achieved the freedom to be free, the right not to be oppressed. For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. The true test of our devotion to freedom is just beginning".

He adds: "I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended".

The truth is that we may be citizens, but our citizenship remains to be fully developed. We are yet to "live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others". The idea that "with freedom comes responsibilities" is lost on too many in positions of riches and power.

Indeed, the "long walk" to full citizenship rights for all in a just, non-racial, non-sexist, and democratic society "is not yet ended". "We dare not linger" too long in in our walk to freedom for all, for there will be grave costs if we do so.

We simply must re-imagine our future, forge new ways of conducting our affairs, and build new identities that are freed from the obsession with "race" and focus instead on social justice and human dignity

Badat is vice-chancellor of Rhodes University. This is an edited version of a speech at recent Rhodes graduation ceremonies. He writes in his personal capacity. •

VC Badat cuts to the heart of darkness — and asks us to re-imagine

Saleem Badat, Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University gave a magnificent graduation speech (many times over) to thousands of Rhodes graduates, friends and family recently.

I heard it once while attending the graduation of Nolundi Ntshakaza, a humble, church-going, hard-working Grahamstown township woman, who, despite mothering a clutch of children on behalf of other family members, spent a decade improving her lot. She went from a typical black working class suburban domestic to become headmistress of a proud community pre-school. That was thanks to Rhodes, especially Di Hornby who pioneered the process.

That speech of Badat's resonated and I've wanted to read the full text. Unfortunately, the VC does not write short speeches. Nor does he make them simple. These are rich, intellectually complex but exciting social contributions. That's what they are – incredible social commentary on Rhodes, Grahamstown, the Eastern Cape and South Africa.

I was delighted to open the Dispatch leader page today and see an edited version of that speech. My hope is that the VC himself had a hand in cutting it to the central issues.

I'm going to try and make it even easier for the rest of us and hack it down even further and give you my reading /opinion/ comment. Believe me, he never said in so many words what I'm going to write, but after 28 years of journalism, this is what I was hearing and understanding between the lines.

> "We simply must re-imagine our future, forge new ways of conducting our affairs, and build new identities that are freed from the obsession with race and focus instead on social justice and human dignity."

South Africa is caught in a racist trap. Since 1994 rich black political and economic elites have seized power and ensured that we have become the "most unequal society on earth".

The poorest 20 percent among us earn 1.7% of income, the richest 20% earn 72.5%

of income. A startling 43% "eke out an existence of less than R3000 a year — R8.22 a day".

That is horrendous.

I remember when activists used to bandy these kinds of statistics about to castigate the worst excesses of apartheid. They would be lambasting the devastation and loss of life of babies, children, women and the elderly at places like Thornhill, Glenmore and Dimbaza. Places just over those eastern hills you see outside your window.

Badat writes one of the most potent paragraphs of condemnation that I have heard in the post-apartheid /new SA period: "Hunger and disease, poverty and unemployment continue to blight our democracy. Millions are mired in desperate daily routines of survival while alongside, crass materialism, corruption, tender-preneurship and unabridled accumulation run rampant."

I'd like to see this quote slapped on the back of a T-shirt worn by those noisy government-lackey unionists, especially those vrot-useless teachers we see so often prancing around in free tees emblazoned with unreadable and mindless "Forward to a … blah blah" slogans.

Much of Badat's speech was about race or racism.

Government "communicator" Jimmy Manyi leads the pack with his "crass utterances" which Badat labels (through Manuel's words) as being the same old "apartheid" mindset.

Race — blackness — has been used in the scramble for power and money in post-1994 SA, not by Madiba, but by the others who circled around him like sharks in a frenzy, and then of course, the Mbeki and now Zuma eras.

The lust of these "black political and economic elites" served to "simply re-produce the severe class inequalities we already have".

This is illustrated with tabloid vividness by the "conspicuous consumption of our off-the-body sushi-loving elites" whom Badat links in the same sentence with "the rapid assendancy of politically-connected elites into wealthy business-persons".

Badat says these new elites "make no difference to eliminating the massive inequalities in our society".

What he's really saying, if you take the speech in context, that these self-same elites are actually creating those inqualities — and by logical extention, poverty.

Racism, racial classification, or as he delicately puts it, "using race to advance redress and social equity" "could ossify racial categorisations" and so South Africa returns to apartheid. He won't say it; but he does say we shall "continue to construct identities along the lines of race".

You choose.

So, in my understanding, we have government propagandists, lustful, callous elites, political cronies and crass fat cats — all inhabiting a new social space filled with strident and "repugnant tabloid chatter".

His final epithet for these people is to call them "charlatans", but I'm hearing racist confidence tricksters. People who are providing the social spin, the umbrella of lies if you wish, which provides the camouflage for the grotesque and continued subjugation of millions of South Africans who continue to struggle for basic

citizenship and civil rights.

This sounds incredible given all the fabulous policy and Constitutional gains South Africa has made since 1994, but this is what I'm hearing in the VC's speech.

Enough of the depressing stuff. Let's look at the hopes and aspirations he speaks of.

Badat says it's time to free ourselves of this race "obsession" and to start a new struggle. It begins in the imagination: "We simply must re-imagine our future, forge new ways of conducting our affairs, and build new identities that are freed from the obsession with race and focus instead on social justice and human dignity."

Social justice and human dignity.

Demand for these rights tend to heighten when there has been violence, and here the VC delivers a chilling analogy of where all the corruption and reppression finally ends up — in massacres at places like Sabra, Shatila, Rwanda, and our very own addition to this gruesome pile of mass murder, South African xenophobia.

Heavy stuff, and courageous given that speech is delivered at the university's most jubilant moment — our own royal wedding which we celebrate every year! But he never holds back. You can sense his passion in addressing his graduates. And he always tempers his speeches with hope and fun.

So what is he calling for? He says we are all looking for the "progressive realisation of hard-won citizenship rights so that we (can) live productive, rich, rewarding and secure lives".

Our Constitution sets up the "ideal of full citizenship rights for all".

We must seek to erode and dissolve racism and "establish a non-racial society in which social and cultural diversity is celebrated and (are) seen as a source of vitality" in which racism has no political or economic significance.

We must seek to erode and dissolve racism and "establish a non-racial society in which social and cultural diversity is celebrated and (are) seen as a source of vitality" in which racism has no political or economic significance.

We need to construct identities for ourselves which are "rich, multiple, fluid, and dynamic rather than frozen along race lines".

This is beautiful stuff mense. Worthy of memorising.

We are going to battle for this, but the final goal is a "non-racial society" where we will all feel free to acknowledge our African roots. Here the VC invokes the lovely lyrics from Pholokwane muso Vusi Mahlasela. He sings: "I may be walking in London. But the dust on my boots and the rhythm of my feet and my heart say Africa, say Africa".

Now don't get all mushy on me; the VC is tough taskmaster. He's hard on people who too easily try and completely ignore the apartheid past. This is a man who took the blows of the security police thugs.

That's hard to forget. But he is essentially a rigorous and fair intellectual. Rainbows will not blind him to reality.

He knows we have a ways to go before South Africa does something about rampant inequality, sexual violence against women, crime and racial hatred. And he warns that some institutions — family, school and church — continue to promote racism.

Our way through this mess — and to achieve a measure of freedom and happiness — is to approach the ugly, complex and difficult and emotive issues "with sensitivity, honesty and courage".

If we don't, we are so screwed.

It's lovely to hear him invoke Madiba's message of finding freedom by adopting our responsibilities — and these are to ensure full citizenship rights for all South Africans living in a just, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society.

These are struggle ideas which are today "lost" on "too many in position of riches and power".

So there you go girlfriends; another corker of a speech from Grahamstown's most powerful academic leader.

I'd up that to one of South Africa's most influential thinkers.

And now I must off to see why the residents of Hoeggenoeg have barricaded the road.

Information Bill changes welcome but more needed

Rhodes University welcomes the changes agreed upon by the ANC on June 24 in deliberations by an ad-hoc committee of Parliament regarding the Protection of Information Bill.

We especially appreciate the committee's commitment to move away from a culture of secrecy in the state and to prevent abuses of the bill to cover up bad governance and even corruption.

Academic freedom is constitutionally protected in South Africa, and this freedom would be impossible to achieve without freedom of information. This freedom is necessary for academics to generate knowledge, which in turn helps in developing good public policy.

The university had serious concerns about the bill as it threatened to cloak the state in a shroud of secrecy, and could have made academic enquiry on many aspects of the state's operations impossible.

Universities have a duty to secure the necessary conditions for their own intellectual work in society, but they also have a broader duty to secure conditions for the practice of democratic citizenship in society.

We were particularly concerned that if universities were included in the scope of the bill's application, then they would be required to classify documents, which could have led to the very culture of secrecy that many feared creeping into government, creeping into universities as well.

We also feared the bureaucratic burden that classification would place on universities. We welcome the ANC's agreement that the the bill's scope of application will be limited to organs of state security, with an opt-in clause for other organs of state.

Universities have a duty to secure the necessary conditions for their own intellectual work in society; but they also have a broader duty to secure conditions for the practice of democratic citizenship in society.

The university also welcomes the fact that minimum mandatory sentences in the bill's penalty clauses have been dropped, with the exception of sentences that apply to espionage offences.

We agree with the ANC that the principle of proportionality must be recognised in relation to penalties.

Other welcome changes are establishing an independent appeal mechanism for individuals who wish to appeal a classification decisions, and an independent classification review panel to conduct oversight of the classification process.

> Failure to include public interest and public domain clauses will mean that academic research on matters relating to the organs of state security could be criminalised.

However, we still feel that the current bill limits the right of access to information in a manner that is not reasonable and justifiable in a democracy based on openness and transparency.

First, there are no public-interest and public-domain defence clauses. If researchers come into the possession of classified documents, they will be guilty of a crime even if possession of such information is in the public interest. If documents find their way into the public domain, those who access them in the public domain will also be guilty of an offence, which we consider inappropriate in a democracy.

At the very least, the bill should incorporate a harms test, which should allow researchers to argue that the harm to national security was offset by the public interest in disclosure.

Second is the over-broad definition of what constitutes national security and over-broad grounds for classification. In terms of the bill, classification exists to protect national security, which is defined so broadly that huge swathes of documents could be classified. This will make research on these aspects of the state difficult, if not impossible, which means that universities will be unable to make a contribution to knowledge production on these vital areas of government.

Third is the "double-blind provision". A researcher could request the organ of state concerned to declassify certain documents, which the bill allows "in furtherance of a genuine research interest or a legitimate public interest".

Also, a researcher can apply for classified documents in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, which would trigger an enquiry into whether the document should be declassified.

But the organ of state concerned has the right even to deny the existence of the documents, which can easily be misused by the authorities to conceal information that is in the public interest.

This means that in order to pursue the matter, the researcher would have to expose his or her knowledge of the documents' existence, which would invite a security investigation into whether he or she already had access to the documents.

In addition, government decides what constitutes a genuine research interest, which conflicts with a fundamental tenet of academic freedom. Admittedly, though, this risk is mitigated somewhat by the new review and appeal procedures.

Fourth is the inconsistency in time frames between the Promotion of Access to Information Act and the bill for requests

for classified information, which will affect researchers using the act to access classified documents.

Fifth, the fact that the organs of state security do not have to justify why particular documents are being classified is a recipe for abuse. This clause, which was included in the 2008 version of the bill, should be reinserted.

> The government decides what constitutes a genuine research interest, which conflicts with a fundamental tenet of academic freedom, namely the freedom to decide what to research and how.

Finally, there is inadequate protection for whistleblowers and access to information.

All these problems mean that the bill still favours secrecy above transparency in the organs of state security in a manner that threatens academic freedom.

South Africa has a sorry history of abuse of state security apparatuses, and universities have a key role to play to ensure that such abuses are not repeated.

Researchers need access to documents that expose the inner workings of the security cluster, and its interface with society. Otherwise, research that is of considerable public importance will be extremely difficult to undertake.

The university calls on the ad-hoc committee to address these remaining problems when it reconvenes later this month.

Badat is the vice-chancellor of Rhodes University. This is an edited version of a document released by Rhodes with the support of the university's senate and council •.

Everyone has the potential to be a leader

Rhodes University Vice-Chancellor Dr Saleem Badat says people need to move away from the 'big man' syndrome and begin to question their leadership.

Addressing graduands at Rhodes University on Saturday, Dr Badat said given the pressing challenges of poverty and unemployment, hunger and disease, social equity and justice, people had a task to cultivate, grow and institutionalise ethical, responsible and accountable leadership across society.

"In building leadership we must take history, culture and context seriously. We need to develop a situated leadership appropriate to our conditions; and we need to forge leadership that is distributed institutionally, rather than centred on the 'big man' and usually it is the big man," he said.

He made reference to the emergence of a strange breed of leaders whose moral quotient was degenerating and raised concern about the extent to which people had an accountable democracy.

Dr Badat, citing Nedbank chairperson Dr Reuel Khoza, said people had a duty to call to book the putative leaders who could not lead.

"Leadership is people acting for 'positive change;' is pioneering in both thought and action; is willingness 'to take action to address the challenges' we see around us, is to use knowledge, expertise, skills and network to 'change society for the better' in whatever arena we find ourselves," he said.

> Dr Badat said without integrity, there could be no principled conduct; no prospect of winning trust and inspiring and uniting people around a vision; no effective communication, no ethical and responsible leadership.

Dr Badat said there was need to draw inspiration from people like Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Amina Cachalia, among others.

"Down to earth, fallible people with good values and *isthunzi* (presence); mindful of people's aspirations, anguish and needs; with the courage to challenge the status quo and the passion to pursue change; committed to service and perseverance to overcome obstacles; knowing that to lead means doing what is right rather than what is popular among followers," he said.

"We can also take inspiration from an emerging generation, the youth of our country - not the pompous, verbose, self-aggrandising lot who regularly amuse and bemuse us, but those who humble us by their imagination and positive outlook, and by their quiet, committed, and determined striving through numerous projects to secure social justice for all, deepen our democracy, and protect our planet."

Leadership must be earned through ethical conduct, impeccable integrity, visionary endeavour, selfless public service, perseverance and commitment to people and responsibilities.

Citing Prof Paul Maylam, Dr Badat said luminous and respected leaders cherished some key fundamental values such as believing in innate worth and dignity of all human beings, unwavering commitment to democracy and human rights and leaders who take learning, education and knowledge seriously.

"They refuse to be paralysed by our history, legacy and contemporary problems. Instead, they inspire us by reminding us of our remarkable ingenuity and courage in fashioning fabulous constitution and winning our democracy; they call on us to draw on these to confront our challenges. At the heart of ethical, responsible and accountable leadership is, of course, integrity and honesty. Ethical leaders, in the words of the great African leader, Amilcar Cabral, 'tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories'."

Dr Badat said without integrity, there could be no principled conduct; no prospect of winning trust and inspiring and uniting people around a vision; no effective communication, no ethical and responsible leadership.

He said like Taoist philosopher Lao Tzu, the leader was best when people were hardly aware of his existence.

"Of course, leaders need committed yet critical supporters, who also act as agents of change, strong institutions and a strong civil society. Leadership then becomes everyone's task and responsibility. This is the real meaning of the slogan, 'power to the people.' If not this, we will continue under the yoke of the big men brand of leadership, with all its deficiencies," he said.

Dr Badat said everyone had the potential to be a leader, for leaders were not born with some magic infallible tool kit but were produced by environments, opportunities, life journeys and experiences.

"Leadership is not inherited or bestowed through patronage, or a function of material wealth, high office, status, or a degree. It must be earned through ethical conduct, impeccable integrity, visionary endeavour, selfless public service, perseverance and commitment to people and responsibilities," he said.

Dr Badat said the graduands had the honour of studying at a very special and distinctive university, one that deservedly commanded an enviable academic reputation. •

It's up to us all to see we get the leaders we need

Reuel Khoza of Nedbank recently remarked on the "emergence of a strange breed of leaders" whose "moral quotient is degenerating". He raised the concern whether we have an "accountable democracy" and said that "we have a duty to call to book leaders who cannot lead".

If this is so, the new Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics at Rhodes University, whose slogan is *Where Leaders Learn*, is timely.

Too many in positions of power and entrusted with leadership of key institutions are sorely wanting in values and conduct in tune with ethical, responsible and accountable leadership.

Witness the flagrant abuse of power for self-enrichment, as shown in corruption, fraud and dubious tenderpreunerial activities, in antidemocratic practices, and women's oppression in the name of culture.

Witness, too, the failures on the part of those entrusted with leading to grasp fully their profound constitutional, moral and social responsibilities in a society that proclaims a commitment to human dignity, social equity and justice.

Recall how a futile debate on the cause of Aids prevented leadership from dealing with the pandemic, and how the tardy response resulted in unnecessary delays in treatment and the tragic loss of lives.

Recall, too, that we were promised an innovative "public service that will provide an excellent quality of service", be the "servant of the people (and be) accessible, transparent, accountable, efficient and free of corruption".

Too many in positions of power and entrusted with leadership of key institutions are sorely wanting in values and conduct in tune with ethical, responsible and accountable leadership.

Batho Pele was to be the watchword of our public service. Instead, in many areas, there is a culture of disdainful conduct and service, sheer indifference to the needs of, people, and a sore lack of ethical and accountable leadership.

The elites have recourse to private and Model C schools, private hospitals and private cars. The poor, on the other hand, depend hugely on public services for their basic needs and for improving their lives.

The lack of leadership and poor public services undermine the dignity of the poor, retard the educational development of

millions of children and youth, thwart the realisation of constitutional goals and violate human and social rights.

Our schools cry out for courageous and effective educational leadership from state departments and school heads. A key distinguishing feature between well-performing and poorly performing schools is effective leadership.

Caroline Southey writes that "a depressing realisation is setting in that we are in danger not only from those in civilian clothes - there is an increasing trend for our criminals to sport police uniforms". She contends that the tremendous increase in assault investigations and murder cases involving the police is "symptomatic of a police force that is sans leadership, devoid of a moral compass and feels accountable to no one".

Our fragile environment, too, continues to suffer because of timid leadership. We pursue relentlessly, without effective regulation, "progress" and "development", irrespective of the massive degradation of the environment and the hazards of global climate change.

The shenanigans of various business people, politicians and bureaucrats make for riveting, if depressing, reading. We are regularly shocked and awed by the brazen sense of entitlement, the glib emphasis on the legal instead of the ethical, and by the impunity with which so-called leaders redeploy resources for private gain.

Perhaps we have been numbed us into silence. Perhaps we think that our citizen duty is limited to voting every five years. Or perhaps, shocked and awed, or thoroughly discouraged, we cannot conceive how we can become agents of change.

Silence is not an option. It leaves the door wide open for irresponsible and unaccountable leadership, and a culture of impunity, greed and crass materialism in which self-interest, material wealth, profits, and performance bonuses become the new gods.

We need a situated leadership appropriate to our conditions; and we need to forge leadership that is distributed institutionally, rather than centred on the big man - and, usually, it is the big man.

We have to also avoid cynicism and despair Madiba writes that "there were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death." Instead, we must remain optimistic, keep our "head pointed towards the sun, (our) feet moving forward".

The task of the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics is to understand what constitutes ethical and responsible leadership, to promote such leadership in diverse contexts, and to educate towards such leadership. There is no off-the-shelf or customised, shrink-wrapped, perfect leadership model.

Leadership cannot also be simply taught, and theory alone or building skills are not enough. Leadership is pioneering in thought and action, being willing to take action to

address the challenges we see around us, and using wisdom to change society for the better wherever we find ourselves.

To build leadership we must take history, culture and context seriously. We need a situated leadership appropriate to our conditions; and we need to forge leadership that is distributed institutionally, rather than centred on the big man - and, usually, it is the big man.

Given our various challenges, our task is to cultivate, grow and institutionalise ethical, responsible and accountable leadership across our society. We can draw inspiration from wonderful people who provided selfless leadership and paved the path to our democracy - Luthuli, Mandela, Tutu, Hani, Lillian Ngoyi, Amina Cachalia, Helen Joseph, Beyers Naude and many others.

Down-to-earth, fallible people with good values and *isthunzi*; mindful of people's aspirations and anguish; with the courage to challenge the status quo and the passion to pursue change; committed to service and perseverance to overcome obstacles; knowing that leading means doing what is right rather than what may be popular among followers.

We can also take inspiration from the youth of our country - not the pompous, verbose, self-aggrandising lot who regularly bemuse us, but those who use their imagination and time to advance social justice for all, deepen our democracy and protect our planet.

Paul Maylam's new book, *Enlightened Rule: Portraits of Six Exceptional Twentieth Century Leaders*, says that respected leaders cherish "some key fundamental values". They believe in the "innate worth and dignity of all human beings" and that leaders "bear the responsibility to create conditions in which all humans can realise their potential".

> Without integrity there can be no principled conduct, no prospect of winning trust and inspiring and uniting people around a vision; there can be no effective communication, no ethical and responsible leadership.

They have "an unwavering commitment to democracy and human rights", including "popular participation" and "proper access of all to education, health care, personal security" and "social and economic justice". They also have a "generosity of spirit, an egalitarian spirit and a sense of obligation to further the common good".

Ethical leaders also possess certain key qualities.

They take learning, education and knowledge seriously. They know that these are vital for understanding our world, for insight into our problems and challenges, and for finding solutions.

They have an unwavering commitment to non-racism, non-sexism and great respect for difference and diversity whether related to race, gender, nationality sexual orientation, language or culture. They refuse to be paralysed by our history, legacy and contemporary problems.

Instead, they remind us of our ingenuity and courage in fashioning a fabulous constitution and winning our democracy;

they call on us to draw on these to confront our challenges. At the heart of leadership are integrity and honesty.

Ethical leaders tell no lies. They expose lies whenever they are told; they mask no difficulties, mistakes or failures and claim no easy victories.

Leadership, then, becomes everyone's task and responsibility.

Without integrity there can be no principled conduct, no prospect of winning trust and inspiring and uniting people around a vision; there can be no effective communication, no ethical and responsible leadership.

But leaders look beyond themselves. They see potential all around them; they seek to hind new generations of leaders who will be better than them, create opportunities for developing people, provide experiences and space to learn lessons, and teach by living the core values associated with leadership.

The leader is best when people are hardly aware of his existence. When his work is done, his aim fulfilled the people say, "We did it ourselves". So writes the Taoist philosopher Lao Tzu.

Of course, leaders need committed but critical supporters, who also act as agents of change, strong institutions and a strong civil society. Leadership, then, becomes everyone's task and responsibility. This is the real meaning of the slogan' "power to the people". If not this, we will continue to suffocate under the yoke of the bigmen brand of leadership, with all its problems.

Saleem Badat is vice-chancellor of Rhodes University. This is an edited version of a speech at recent Rhodes graduation ceremonies. He writes in his personal capacity. •

We've lost one of our best

I deal with grief, shame and anger in the quiet of my study, in solitude and with words.

for Lelona Thembakazi Fufu. Born: Christmas Day, 1988. Died: April 12 2012. Age: 23.

Usually, remembrance of a student is through the pleasure of supporting a scholarship or job application. In the case of Lelona, biography and achievements would have combined to make remembrance especially joyous, fulfilling and pleasurable.

Today, however, these words of remembrance are coated with heartache, remorse, shame and anger. An intelligent and academically outstanding young woman slain in the prime of her life. A promising life brutally cut short. A tragedy, whichever way you look at it.

From Mbalala Street, Motherwell, Port Elizabeth, Lelona did not get direct admission to the BSc degree programme at Rhodes University.

She attended Masiphathisane Senior Secondary, but did not obtain the required admission points for Rhodes. She was considered underprepared for the rigours of a Rhodes degree. And so, Lelona entered the Rhodes BSc extended studies programme in 2007.

When I met her on February 22 2007, I told her she had made an excellent choice in choosing Rhodes, as we were committed to producing high quality graduates who were equipped to change South Africa, Africa and the world.

I emphasised we had also chosen her - because we recognised that she possessed the intellect, potential and talent to succeed. I reminded her that her choosing Rhodes, and us choosing her, meant there was between us a partnership of mutual commitment to learning, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Usually, remembrance of a student is through the pleasure of supporting a scholarship or job application.

I pledged we would provide her with a stimulating and enabling environment that developed her intellect, and supported lute her to graduate as a knowledgeable and skilled professional, a critical intellectual, and a caring and compassionate person.

Her responsibility, in turn, was to seize the opportunities that Rhodes would provide, and to develop her talents and

promise to the full. She took the message to heart. And she blossomed.

She completed her extended studies BSc degree in the minimum four years and graduated at the end of 2010. Majoring in mathematics and mathematical statistics. More than 70% in mathematics!

> Tonight is your night, to remember, to celebrate and cherish. You have earned it and I wish you a wonderful and joyful celebration of your achievement and your future promise.

Last April, on a bright Saturday afternoon, we posed together for a photo on the Drostdy lawn. It was a happy day, of celebration of her success, of the promise still to come. In 2011 she read for a joint honours degree in mathematics and mathematical statistics. She obtained 72%.

She could have continued with a masters degree in mathematics. Instead, she applied for and was accepted for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. She did not register at Rhodes this year, choosing to take a job in Durban.

Lelona returned to Port Elizabeth to attend her graduation ceremony last Thursday evening.

There is no efficient public transport between Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown. The train service was shut down long ago. There is actually not even a reliable and affordable taxi service between the two cities.

I learnt during a "Conversations with the VC" lunch session with students in the Archbishop Tutu Hall that Lelona did what some Rhodes students who travel between Port Elizabeth, East London and elsewhere in the Eastern Cape and Grahamstown do: she tried to hitch-hike to Grahamstown and her graduation ceremony.

Only she never got to Grahamstown, never got to her graduation, never got to walk, probably in carefully and beautifully chosen attire (bright high, high heel shoes were the rage this year), across the stage at the Monument.

"Lelona werr rrrr you?" tweeted Muanda b.Dombaxi at 4.17, an hour and 43 minutes before the start of the science faculty graduation ceremony. No response. Lelona never got to hear the loud and appreciative applause of the packed audience of proud parents and families. Her own parents among them, wondering about her absence with growing alarm.

From her previous graduation, she would have known that the audience is greatly appreciative of honours and other postgraduate students. That it is especially appreciative of students who excel in mathematics.

She never got to experience the appreciation, and the joyous and inspirational evening of acknowledgement and celebration of her dedicated endeavour, her wonderful achievements.

Had she been at her graduation she would have heard me say that she was among the best and brightest of our society.

That we looked to people like her to exercise leadership, to re-imagine and reshape our future, to forge new ways of conducting our affairs, to make people and

justice the vital centre of all our actions. That in the years ahead we looked forward to applauding her successes and achievements as an Old Rhodian.

I concluded: "Tonight is your night, to remember, to celebrate and cherish. No doubt the parties will extend long into the night and there will be much merriment. You have earned it and I wish you a wonderful and joyful celebration of your achievement and your future promise."

Lelona will not be able to lead and we will not be able to applaud her achievements. And we are the poorer for this. She was not able to cherish the night, to party, be merry to joyfully celebrate her achievements and great promise.

Lelona had her life, and all the things she could look forward to, stolen from her. The Fukus have had a daughter, sister, niece, granddaughter stolen from them. One of our brightest and best has been stolen from us. In another senseless act of violence. In another display of our culture of impunity and the lack of respect for human life.

Lelona should not have had to hitch-hike. Shame on us! The cities and towns of our land need to be connected - with safe, reliable and affordable public transport.

In the meantime, we will investigate why our students hitch-hike, how we can discourage them, assist those who rely on public transport, and ensure they travel safely to and from Rhodes. So that there is not another tragedy like that of Lelona.

Perhaps whatever scheme we devise can be a memorial to Lelona so that the death of Lelona Thembakazi Fufu is not entirely in vain.

Dr Saleem Badat is vice chancellor of Rhodes University. •

Crime stealing best academic minds

The article by Rhodes University vice-chancellor Saleem Badat touched me ("We've lost one of our best", April 23) and not only the article itself, but also the person about whom the article was written, the late Lelona Thembakazi Fufu.

This is a story of a typical township student. Firstly, many excellent township students fail to excel as the environment in many township schools could hardly be considered to be conducive for effective learning and studying. However, once given an opportunity to study at university where the environment is different, the same students flourish.

How does one explain a case of a student who was considered underprepared to go straight to a BSc, who goes on to attain a 72% pass in her honours degree studies? How many students from more privileged schools in her class managed to achieve that mark? A lot needs to be done to bring township schools on a par with former Model C schools. The government needs to ensure much effort is put in to correct this discrepancy in human and physical resources.

Secondly, I understand, Badat's anger at the non-availability of reliable and safe public transport between Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown. However, what happened to ubuntu among family members and residents who live in the vicinity of Fufu's home? Was there no family member, relative, professional, businessman or community member who could ensure that this pride of the community had transport to the graduation? What happened to the saying "it takes a village to raise a child"? I cannot blame her parents for not having private transport, because despite their limited means, they raised an achiever like her.

> We as a community must be able to help each other.

We, as a community, must be able to help each other. This reminded me of an incident when I was a student in England. I struggled to get transport from Kwazakhele township to the Port Elizabeth Airport. Once I nearly missed my flight. My history is exactly the same as that of Fufu. I did not get an A symbol for mathematics, but went on to obtain a first class honours degree in mathematical studies from the University of London, England and a masters degree in pure mathematics from Louisiana State University in the United States.

Fufu is a shining example of what a student from an underprivileged township school can do when put in an environment

that is enabling. Hence my belief that an affirmative action admission criteria and extended studies programmes should be used by all universities in South Africa to afford students like Fufu and I am fighting chance at getting an academic qualification. Mathematics is scarce skill. A loss of one mathematics practitioner is a huge loss for the country. Crime in this country is robbing us of our best brains. I commend Badat, who seems to have such a warm connection and a parental touch with his student constituency.

May Lelona Thembakazi Fufu's soul rest in peace. What a tragedy! What a loss! What a shame on us! Delite Ngcezula, chief executive officer, Ubutyebi Trust, Fulbright scholar and British undergraduate student in mathematics Lelona Fufu. •

A year later, the National Education Policy Act of 1996 stated its goal of "the democratic transformation of the national system of education into one which serves the needs and interests of all of the people of South Africa and upholds their fundamental rights".

The South African Schools Act asserted that a new schooling system will "redress past injustices in schooling provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners, … advance the democratic transformation of society …(and) contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society". The Constitution and laws and policies direct us to realise wide-ranging imperatives and goals in, and through, education and schooling. It is hoped that their achievement will contribute to the transformation and development of education and society.

Today, however, there is a strong tendency to approach education and investments in education largely in terms of the promotion of economic growth. Frequent stories on the supposed lack of responsiveness of educational institutions to economic needs, the alleged mismatch between graduates and the needs of companies, and the demand for a greater focus on "skills" reflect this tendency. This reduces education to preparing students for the economy and to be productive workers.

Education must cultivate the knowledge, competencies and skills that enable graduates to contribute to economic growth, since such growth can contribute to greater social equality and development. However, reducing education to its value for economic growth dangerously strips education of its wider social value and functions. Education has great value as an

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Growth can contribute to greater social equality and development. However, reducing education to its value for economic growth dangerously strips education of its wider social value and functions.

Education has great value as an engagement between dedicated teachers and students around humanity's intellectual, cultural and scientific heritage (in the form of books, art, pictures, music, artefacts), and around our understandings, views and beliefs about our natural and social worlds. Education is undertaken as part of what it means to be human. Education is also connected to democratic citizenship and to the cultivation of humanity. Three capacities, above all, are essential to