

# Stakeholder Summit on Higher Education Transformation

Commission 2

Academics Experience

# Commission 2

- No universities without academics but a view that academic profession “fading into oblivion”
- Academics don’t feel valued and not well-regarded (unlike perceived situation in other countries like Brazil, India, China)
- Academics appear to have lost their voice (no longer controlling their own destiny). Seeking a place at the table.

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- Discrimination persists and pervades the structure of academic work and life
- Particular obstacles are faced by black women academics, but acknowledge gains
- Cannot absorb more and more under-prepared students, but consensus that must deal with current reality
- Levels of preparedness of students – must address key funding and resourcing implications, including training of staff, workloads, etc
- Support for schooling: emphasised the need to give priority to quality of education graduates and research into school and college sectors

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- Notwithstanding challenges and the need to address the immediate, we must imagine the future and work towards a 10/20 year vision of the university and the academic profession

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## **Revitalisation of the academic profession**

Pipeline into academia - coordinated and funded plan to increase the number of masters and doctoral graduates; - improving qualifications of existing staff (Brazil –minimum qualification PhD)

Retention of academics - review of the salaries and conditions of service (including retirement age)

- retaining graduates from other countries
- career pathways for academics
- promotion policies

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Review the Degree Structure

Key to strengthening pipeline

Current models not working for the majority of students

Urgently address 4 year undergraduate degree

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## Revitalisation of the Curriculum

Identify and address barriers to the revitalisation of the curriculum

Criteria by which academics measured

- Incentives for both teaching and research (books)
- Role of the NRF, DST in research funding
- Identify and disseminate good practice (look to the global South)
- Epistemological access
- Community engagement

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- Academics must develop forums at institutional, regional and national level
- Encourage engagement within professional bodies and societies
- Out of these engagements, a formal “representative” body of academics might emerge

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Universities must create enabling environments for academic work

- Discrimination persists & pervasive

Need to address barriers at all levels:

- Role of middle managers
- Building culture of respect
- Nurturing and valuing talent

Responsibilities for promoting change lies with leadership at different levels

Modalities need to be developed

