INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest moments we value in life is the day of one’s graduation. This ceremony is the official culmination of learning, and as a proof the graduands receive with honours their degrees or diplomas, certifying them as professionals.

Families play an important role in the child’s academic success, in fact life skills are imparted from parents/guardians during upbringing process. Parental presence, and involvement in a child’s learning, later at primary and subsequently at high school, results in good academic performance. Children from supportive families are more likely to attain more years of schooling and accomplishing their tertiary education. It is within families that children learn the following values: caring; respect; sharing; compassion; team-work; loyalty; commitment; hard-work and honesty which are the tenets of professionalism and a high standard of work ethic.

TOPIC: IMPACT OF CHANGE ON FAMILY

Oxford dictionary defines change as "the act or result of becoming different". I have believed that, ‘everything must change’, from my youth, after matriculating I was a private teacher at a local primary school, whilst planning on what profession to follow. I then decided to follow nursing as a profession. My school mates tried to dissuade me from that decision, because being a nurse meant that I would attain general diploma and midwifery only, and nothing more. I told them that that was going to change in the near future; nursing diploma and degree programmes would be offered at a university. Because of this innate interest in change, I became interested in books written by Futurists like Alvin Toffler, scenario planners like Clem Sunter and many strategic planners like Tienie Ehlers and Kobus.

The vision of CPUT, “To be the heart of technology education and innovation” also motivated the choice of my topic.

I will illustrate change according to Alvin Toffler’s Theory of Waves in describing stages of development of society and production and how it impacts on the family. In his book Future Shock, 1960, future shock is defined as "too much change in too short period".

FIRST STAGE/WAVE

During this stage/wave, people depended on Agriculture for their survival, the family was the producer and consumer. The extended family was the unit of the society, communities were close-nit because the members were related. Children participated in all activities of agriculture and house chores, they upheld high moral values taught by their families.
SECOND STAGE/WAVE
This is a period of Industrialization, which started in England, people invented machines, steam engine and many agricultural implements. This was the beginning of movement of people from the agricultural homes to towns to seek employment, farming was also improved with the new implements used. The family structure was beginning to change.

THIRD STAGE/POST INDUSTRIALIZATION
People invented automatic production, robots and computers, this was during half of 20th century.

During this period, people experienced an increasing rapidity, while people were losing familiarity that old institutions, for example, religion, family, national identity and professions, once provided. There was a great movement from rural to the towns and cities, characterized by the service sector exceeding 50%, and people occupied in agriculture not exceeding 15%.

The extended family shrank to nuclear family, becoming more consumers than producers as the people moved to towns and cities in pursuit of the ‘so called’ civilization. This was the beginning of family disintegration, where either a mother or father leaves the family to seek better employment resulting in family values being eroded. This led to professionals following transient employment, brain drain, for example, from developing countries to developed countries and visa-versa. As a result relationships become superficial and family values are lost.

THIRD STAGE/WAVE: 1980s
This is a period of democratization in the late 20th century, which is a transition from industrial age society to Information age society. To some degree in this era, people's lives are modified to serve technology, serving the net, tweeting, receiving emails, listening to music etc. resulting in communication between family members lacking.

This period is characterized by:
- relationships between people and political, and economic structures are detrimentally altered by the impact of technology
- the rolling back of the Industrial Era Creed of standardization as exemplified by the one-size-fits-all approach, typical of institutions of this era for example, Education System, factories, governments, mass media, high volume mass production and distribution etc, many a time, at the expense of quality.
- history accelerating to a point where all of the past would catch up with the present- the advent of internet.

FOURTH STAGE/WAVE
This stage is characterized by Knowledge, Wealth and Violence, edge of 21st century. Toffler argues that while headlines focus on shift of power at the global level, equally significant shifts are taking place in our every-day world- super markets, hospitals, banks, television and politics, he further identifies that far important world division will arise, between the "fast' and the "slow'.

Knowledge, not violence, not money is the essence of power in the information age. Information wars are raging in such areas as computers, High definition TV, electronic networks and industrial espionage and the fight for control of customer data by retailers, manufacturers, banks and credit card issues. This period is problematic as it also facilitates emergence of Global Actors like Drug cartels.
MESSAGE TO THE GRADUANDS

South Africa is experiencing the effects of this Fourth Stage in an alarming manner. The media, politicians, academics are all concerned about violence erupting all over including xenophobic attacks, corruption, part of the society living in abundance yet requesting for more money, more power, more fun, more and more, thus the gap between the rich and the poor becoming wider and wider. Moral decay, poor work ethic, negative attitudes of care givers at all levels of social interaction, have become the order of the day.

The question is, where are you when all people seem to be helpless, when what we see and hear is just talk not underpinned by action. This is a challenge to you graduands, young and knowledgeable, know your strengths and weaknesses. Use your strengths to bring change for public good, by bringing back family values and work ethic. Be involved in research and development in your areas of expertise, not forgetting the impact of change in the society at large. Update your professional knowledge by Continuing Professional development, through reading journals, attending workshops and conferences. Do not theorize about UBUNTU, humanness, a philosophy of the African people, but put it into practice in your professional work, “motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe”. Change can be brought by each individual, “LETS GET TO WORK AND STOP TALKING”.

I THANK YOU!!!