

From the VC's Desk

Highlights | Thought Leadership

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NEWS

SMU Executives off to Harvard



There is no doubt that SMU operates in a volatile and competitive environment within the higher education sector. The downward spiral of funding for universities elevates the funding risk, requiring SMU and other universities to navigate through the uncertainty and ambiguity towards growth and financial sustainability. Therefore, to remain relevant, and a market leader in such a competitive market, SMU's Management Team is compelled to come up with new and innovative ways that would

place the University at a positive competitive advantage amongst its competitors. The higher education sector is evolving with tremendous speed and investment in employees who can tackle and respond to these demands is not optional!

Over the years, the University has invested in the development of its employees, including its management cohort. This has led to the concept of a Focused Leadership development approach which has been

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bearing fruit for the University in supporting the growth and development of the leadership cohort.

This approach commenced when more than eighty (80) leaders were trained on the Transformational Leadership Programme in partnership with the WITS Business School over the period 2019 to 2023. Through this program leaders were exposed to a set of competencies that have contributed to the shift in the University's culture and climate. Following the success of this programme the University took the Focused Leadership development to the next level when it introduced the Middle Management Programme in 2023, and which is also running in 2024. The intention is to have one hundred (100) Middle Managers trained in the SMU Middle Management Programme. This will

In 2024, under the banner of its Focused Leadership development plan the University has partnered with the ETDP-SETA to deliver the Strategy: Building and Sustaining Competitive Advantage Certificate Programme through the Harvard Business School. Accordingly, three (3) delegates from the Executive Management Committee (EMC) namely: Prof Tandi Matsha-Erasmus: DVC: Academic and Research; Mr Eminos Manyawi: CFO, and Ms Odette Ramsingh: SD HR were nominated to attend the Strategy: Building and Sustaining Competitive Advantage Certificate Programme scheduled to take place in Boston in June this year. The delegates were chosen carefully with regard to the alignment between their strategic roles and the content of the executive programme and against the background of the current trajectory of the University as it rolls out the New Business Model.

bolster the quality of management at this supervisory level.

The Strategy: Building and Sustaining Competitive Advantage is a Certificate of Management Excellence (CME), and which forms part of the Executive Management Programmes of Harvard Business School. The programme will kick start with a six-day contact session scheduled to take place from 02 June to 07 June 2024. Participants are expected to complete three selected topics for them to be awarded the Internationally Recognized Certificate.

The international programme is expected to amplify the Focused Leadership development plan and position the University in a favorable state towards the attainment of its strategic objectives. The SMU executive team will greatly benefit from a visit to Harvard University, given the new 5-year strategic plan in place, and where they are expected to acquire knowledge of novel strategies and devise preventative and innovative measures that are advantageous to the institution. Having gained insights from global industry leaders, they are expected to return to the SMU community with more refined strategies and to impart their newly acquired knowledge. Long-term, the move is anticipated to be advantageous for both the executive members and the SMU.

All this has been made possible by a discretionary grant from ETDP-SETA. Should this programme prove successful and should the University be able to convince the ETDP-SETA to continue to fund the programme the University looks forward to sending more executives and members of the Senior Management Committee (SMC) to Harvard Business School.

The nominated delegates will travel out of the country on 29 May 2024. The University wishes Prof Matsha-Erasmus, Mr Manyawi and Ms Ramsingh well in the programme and is sure that they will make the University proud as they actively participate and excel in this programme.