

The following matter forms part of the Environmental Scan for February 2019:

Department of Higher Education (DHET)

- 1) Minister Pandor briefs media on meeting outcomes with SAUS and SRC Presidents, on 15 Feb regarding their call for the shutdown of institution of higher learning and training.

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-pandor-responds-students-demands-15-feb-2019-0000>

- 2) Invitation to register on the National Institute for the humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) Supplier Database

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/kzn-government-meet-stakeholders-institutions-higher-learning-5-feb-2019-0000>

“The role of the NIHSS is to broadly enhance and support the HSS in South Africa and beyond and advise government and civil society on HSS related matters”.

- 3) National Youth Development Agency calls on speedy resolution on universities shutdown

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/national-youth-development-agency-calls-speedy-resolution-universities-shutdown-11-feb-2019>

“The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) has noted the total shut down across universities in South Africa. Ongoing student’s mass action carry a potential to impact negatively on the academic year. Nevertheless, we stand by the students for their demands remain genuine and reasonable. The continued attacks on students by private security personnel undermine the foundations of basic human rights and the right to protest”.

- 4) Premier Sihle Zikalala meets with stakeholders in institutions of higher learning

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/kzn-government-meet-stakeholders-institutions-higher-learning-5-feb-2019-0000>

“As the Acting Premier of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal Sihle Zikalala and a task team of MECs prepares to meet with stakeholders in the institutions of higher learning, he has called for maximum restraint”.

He remarked: “It is warped logic that for students’ protests to have an impact, one must destroy already existing education infrastructure required to prepare young people to be the drivers of socio-economic development in their country.”

"The burning of vehicles and buildings yesterday leaves a bitter taste and should be condemned by all the people of KwaZulu-Natal. We wish to state categorically that we fully understand and sympathise with the plight of poor students who find it impossible to meet rising education costs."

5) Promotion of Access to Information Act

https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201901/42206m.pdf

Section 14: Manual 2018 Edition

Included in the manual is the DHET organogram

6) Premier Job Mokgoro addresses North West University MBA students

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/ethical-leadership-key-public-service-transformation-premier-mokgoro-told-nwu-mba-students%C2%A0>

The Premier challenged the "...students and lecturers to emphasise, in their learning and teaching, the nature of challenges the public service is facing, saying the current environment which is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, requires management and leadership approach that appreciates that the public service environment is no longer predictable". He added that "We need to encourage the spirit of collective learning and collective leadership, so that we can ultimately move towards revolution". He also "challenged the MBA students to become agents of transformation".

7) Social Development hosts Anti-Substance Abuse Campaign exhibitions at tertiary institutions, 28 to 30 Jan

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/social-development-hosts-anti-substance-abuse-campaign-exhibitions-tertiary-institutions-28>

"The Department of Social Development addresses challenges faced by students in tertiary institutions".

"As a response to the plea of the students and as part of the Anti-Substance Abuse Campaign, which was launched in December 2018, the Department of Social Development has undertaken to dedicate more efforts towards the implementation of anti-substance abuse prevention through awareness campaigns and education as the first levels of intervention".

Council on Higher Education (CHE)

1) *Keynote at Launching of African Humanities Programme books, February 1, 2019, University of Dar es Salaam.*

<https://sautiyaujamaa.wordpress.com/2019/02/03/prof-issa-shivji-social-responsibility-of-intellectuals-in-building-counter->

[hegemonies/?fbclid=IwAR1D8j6G6f5j1uZedHJ8SDqb9adFEaSiX4R4OUUq7PuTt7aw5gVauYoQ2Z8](https://www.facebook.com/1000000000000000/?fbclid=IwAR1D8j6G6f5j1uZedHJ8SDqb9adFEaSiX4R4OUUq7PuTt7aw5gVauYoQ2Z8)

"In a capitalist society divided into classes you have broadly two types of intellectuals. There are those who produce rationalizations, justifications and mystifications to maintain and reproduce the *status quo* of inequality and inequity in favour of capital. These are the producers and purveyors of what we call hegemonic ideologies. Then there are those who question and challenge dominant knowledge and try to demystify and debunk hegemonic forms of knowledge and ideologies. Some go further to produce and articulate alternative forms of knowledge and ideologies to propel the struggle of the ruled, the oppressed and the downtrodden. They are involved in constructing counter-hegemonies. Thus there is a battle of ideas. One of the foremost sites of the battle of ideas is the University. Battle of ideas precedes battle at the barricades".

"..it is squarely the social responsibility of intellectuals to construct a counter-hegemonic project that would resonate with the lives of the vast majority".

"...I'd like to suggest for our consideration that any counter-hegemonic project must be based on four building blocks. These are: *popular livelihoods, popular participation, popular power and popular rights and freedoms*".

"...I'm eternally hopeful – that this type of discourses will morph us from the *state of unthinking* to the *state of thinking*".

2) Fulbright student and Fulbright specialist programmes

<https://www.che.ac.za/announcements/fulbright-student-and-fulbright-specialist-programs>

Applications are open for the 2020-2012 Fulbright Foreign Student programme in the USA. The Criteria are:

- South African Citizenship/permanent residence
- For the Master's programme – 4-year BTech/3-year Bachelors and Honours
- For Doctoral programme –Master's degree, Excellent Academic Record and be highly motivated

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

1) Standardisation of National Examination Results

<http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/brochures/2019/Standardisation%201.11.pdf>

Infographic on the Standardisation process and principles

- 2) SAQA Alert – De-registration of qualifications offered at the Oval International Computer Education (Pty) Ltd
<http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/webcontent/2019/The%20Oval%20case%20demonstrates%20the%20importance%20of%20quality%20qualifications.pdf>

News24

- 1) On decolonisation: We are black first before we become students
<https://www.news24.com/Columnists/GuestColumn/on-decolonisation-we-are-black-first-before-we-become-students-20190124>
“It seems to me that students have somehow convinced themselves that they are an exception and that their struggles are unique and perhaps even more important than that of the rest of society. This is not true and any attempt to fight for decolonisation without locating it within the broader society will be meaningless and unsustainable”.

“It is important to note that the freedom of a certain sector of society is meaningless if the majority of the people is still shackled”.

Mcebo Dlamini is a former Wits SRC president and student activist. He writes in his personal capacity.

UWN

- 1) Minister defends HE fee policy against World bank report
<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190204122500562>
“Minister Naledi Pandor had an opportunity to defend the government’s fee-free policy for poor students against recent suggestions by the World Bank that, while attractive, the policy will strain the fiscus and is “ultimately unsustainable”.
- “Pandor said the government has an obligation to ensure the new plan is sustainable and that it “will not reverse its decision of providing support to the poor”. She said the education system needs regulation of fees, especially by universities”.
- “For Pandor, in partnerships between government and private education institutions, government should determine what courses should be offered, based on the country’s scarce skills needs.
- “Furthermore, distance education is failing South Africa in the use of technology, and more open access is needed, she said”.
- 2) University language policy exposes societal fractures
<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190201152805780>

“Criticism by a senior government minister of the adoption this year by one of South Africa's top, formerly Afrikaans universities of English as the language of teaching and learning for all first-year students has re-stoked debate on a highly emotive issue, exposing identity-based fractures that persist in the post-apartheid society”.

“Finance Minister Tito Mboweni said he “publicly and in his personal capacity DISAGREED” with the phasing out of Afrikaans as a medium of teaching at the University of Pretoria”. He also “..tweeted a link to a 2016 article by language practitioner Khethiwe Marais which argued in its closing lines that Afrikaans should be used as a resource for the development of multilingualism as promoted by the South African Constitution, which gives equal status to the country's 11 languages”.

3) Finding a sustainable future for student mobility

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190205110138464>

“The rise of nationalism and the increasing cost of tuition present a threat to the aspirations of internationalisation of higher education. The realisation of these aspirations requires reinvesting fees into the student experience and access as well as immigration policies that provide pathways for international students”.

4) So why did MOOCs fail to live up to the hype?

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190207110446568>

“The 21st century's second decade gave us the massive open online courses or MOOCs. They were hyped to the tertiary education community as a breakthrough technology that would transform teaching and learning. A few elite institutions would offer the best of their courses, taught by top instructors at little or no charge. Worldwide, tertiary education would be immeasurably improved. Both students and institutions would surely benefit”.

“MOOCs would employ a low-cost business plan, allowing broad student access to free or low-cost high-quality education, countering the impact of ever-increasing tuition fees”.

The following statistics were revealed:

Firstly “..MOOC completion rates have consistently remained distressingly low. Only 6% of MOOC students completed their course(s) in 2014-15. By 2017-18 the course completion rate dropped to 3.13%”.

“Secondly, the percentage of first-time MOOC users who subsequently enrolled on a MOOC the following year has fallen every year since 2012-

13, from a high of 38% that year to 7% in 2016-17”.

“Thirdly, the vast majority of students initially enrolling on their first MOOC reside in developed countries. The promise that MOOCs’ high quality and low-cost delivery would rapidly enhance tertiary education opportunities in developing countries has yet to be realised”.

“The MOOC’s future will depend on improved instructor preparation and pre-registration screening, coupled with a business plan designed to at least break even”.

5) A changing view of the benefits of HE internationalisation

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190128144240325>

“Until recently, internationalisation of higher education was largely considered an end in itself. In the past few years, however, the conversation has changed considerably, and internationalisation is framed as a means of improving the quality of education and research as well as serving larger social goals”.

“In 2018, the International Association of Universities (IAU) conducted its fifth global survey, an online survey about higher education internationalisation whose first edition was conducted in 2003”.

“Looking at the respondents’ first, second and third choices together underscores that ‘enhanced international cooperation and capacity building’ and ‘improved quality of teaching and learning’ are considered the two most important benefits”.

The article discusses the possible interpretations of the survey results.