

## **Speech – Acceptance of Honorary Doctorate in Accounting Science Walter Sisulu University - Terence Nombembe CA(SA)**

Esteemed Chancellor of Walter Sisulu University, Dr Brigalia Bam,

Vice-Chancellor of Walter Sisulu University, Professor Khaya Mfenyana

Members of the Walter Sisulu University Council

Members of the Institutional Management Committee

Chairperson of Convocation Ms Nomnikelo Puzi

Student Representative Council Presidents

Staff of Walter Sisulu University

Government Dignitaries from National, Provincial and Local Government

Invited Guests from the business sector and the many communities of Walter Sisulu University

Grandaunts and your families and friends

Firstly, allow me to express my appreciation for the invitation and honor to receive this honorary Doctorate from Walter Sisulu University. I am humbled and thrilled to receive this conferral of an Honorary Doctorate in Accounting Science – an award which ignites abundant respect and renewed affection for Walter Sisulu University, an institution of which I am a proud alumnus.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today and I am pleased that this event is being held specifically at this place which holds precious memories not only for me personally as it is right here where my career was born – an institute which has played a significant role in shaping my future.

It is with gratitude that I receive this honor and the opportunity to share a few words thoughts with the University, more specifically the graduants of this university and our families. I am pleased that I am in company of numerous students that have and will be capped at this year's graduation ceremonies to be held by the University's campuses in Buffalo City, Butterworth and today - here at the Mthatha campus.

Not only is it an honour for me to stand here and to be honoured by means of an Honorary Doctorate , but what makes this occasion so much more remarkable to me is that it coincides with South Africa's celebration of 20 years of democracy. Some of you may be wondering what this has to do with today's graduation. Well, I would like to bring it to our attention that the effort we all need to exert towards transformation and skills development is a reality we are all faced with in support of the role played by the Universities in this regard.

Catering for a sizeable number of students, Walter Sisulu University is clearly playing a crucial role in closing up the skills gap in this country as well as uplifting the community around it. The University has undeniably become a beacon for transformation in education in South Africa. Not only are male students graduating in numbers, but most notably, and even greater volume of female students are making a loud statement through their success rate and capping year after year in this institution. This is a significant achievement towards closing the gender imbalance among university graduates in this country, thus drawing from the best of what our country has to offer and working towards an outcome that will deliver ongoing talent, as well as economic prosperity.

We ought to dedicate such commendable progress by Walter Sisulu University to the foresight of the Ministry to see it fit to support the University morally and financially as well the dedication and hard work, optimism and commitment from all staff including students of the university.

Ladies and Gentlemen, particularly fellow graduants, when our fore fathers and pioneers like Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela single out education as the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world - let not these affirmations become merely a cliché, but something we all commit to live up to. As we leave this university to go to our various work places and communities – let us, in our individual and collective capacity, also do something purposeful to change our own part of the world – SOUTH AFRICA.

Yes, South Africa and the world at large needs educated people but I strongly believe that in addition, it needs responsible leaders. We need responsible leaders who will go beyond the call of duty to positively contribute faithfully towards the building of the nation. Nation building requires of us to acquire and possess certain

critical attributes. I am more than confident that this university is producing such leaders.

As parents and family, we need to encourage these graduates, love them and support them unconditionally. That is the only way we will be propelled to face the challenges associated with nation building. Let me at this juncture turn to the language parents understand best, the scriptures. King David in referring to the “Gifts for Building the Temple” recognized that his son Solomon, the one whom God had chosen, was young and inexperienced. He then provided him with all the support and material necessary to build the temple of the Lord God. (Gold, Silver, Bronze, Iron, Wood, Stones, Marbles etc, all these in large quantities. Above all the devoted large quantities of his personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of God. He even inspired the leaders of families and tribes to also give generously towards the building of the temple of God.

At the end, “The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly” (1 Chronicles 29:1-9)

What is it that parents, family and the community can give freely and wholeheartedly to these graduates to build a South African temple and a capable state? Simply, it is a character that is RESPECTFUL, QUICK TO LISTEN, SLOW TO TALK, SLOW TO ANGER, PATIENT, and CALM. When they are hurled and encounter insults, they must not retaliate; when they suffer, they must be emotionally mature enough not to make threats. They must advocate for peace harmony while maintaining an assertive not aggressive posture. Above all, as parents we can freely and wholeheartedly nurture these graduates to assume a high moral ground in society through INTEGRITY and ETHICAL conduct.

Gladly, none of these attributes require heavy monetary outflow. We don't need to encounter such basic attributes of humanity through highly priced business school programs, or even emotionally pricy rehabilitation programs of the Justice system.

Let me now talk about the Honary Doctorate in Accounting science – the main reason I am here. As a Chartered accountant myself, I strongly believe that chartered accountants play a vital and indispensable role in contributing to

sustainable economic development in emerging markets, particularly in financial capacity by building as well as encouraging foreign direct investment for developing nations. As a developing country, South Africa needs accountants to drive its economic growth.

To conclude, I would like to announce publicly that I will avail myself (this I will do at a personal level, as a symbol of reciprocity) for the honor you have bestowed on me, to support the accounting faculty of WSU to a point where I will see to it that we:

(1) sustains the accreditation of the graduate programme; (2) move on further to attain and sustain the accreditation for the post graduate programme; and (3) finally to host the offering of the Thuthuka Bursary Fund programme, all of which are strategic programmes of SAICA to grow and transform the accounting space in South Africa. This region also deserves to be counted as a worthy contributor to this noble cause in our country. We will need to think creatively to nurture and sustain a vibrant human capital and viable financial capital to make these dreams come true. This is the minimum I can do with you to experience in our lifetime the environment where we can, like King David at the end “REJOICE GREATLY”

Having said this, let me take this opportunity to congratulate those of you who have obtained your degrees today, as well as your relatives and particularly your parents, for your achievement by obtaining a degree at this esteemed university. I encourage you to go out there and make the best of all the opportunities that will come your way, but most of the time, you will need to create and take these opportunities yourself.

Finally, it is with great humility that I accept this Honorary Doctorate in Accounting Science. On behalf of my family and the chartered accountancy profession, I would like to thank you Madam Chancellor for this opportunity to receive this esteemed honour.

I wish Walter Sisulu University every success for the future.