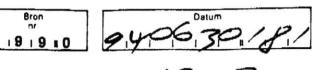
### INSTITUUT VIR EIETYDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat





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THE SAME TIME THE DEMAND IS MADE ENCED BY BLACKS IN COPING WITH THE THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS DEMANDS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION: AT BLAMED FOR THE PROBLEMS EXPERI FOR MORE BLACK PROFESSIONALS.

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HERE ARE now fewer than three hundred weeks to 1 January 2000 AD. If we are to match the challenges of the 21st century, that is about as much time as we have to resolve the basic problems of education in South Africa." By linking education to the turn of the mil-

ennium, John Samuels, ANC education leader, lends dramatic irgency to the task of the new government. What he leaves unsaid s that the interim government will also have run its course in hose three hundred weeks.

It is common knowledge that a cornerstone of apartheid was to feny blacks a full education. Hendrik Verwoerd's rationale

vas, since the work blacks would be imployed to do in white South Africa equired a minimal education, that is what hey would be given. The legacy of that is now being acutely felt in the small number of blacks who have been admitted into he professions.

The numbers fall pitifully short of reflecting the make-up of the population. And he numbers must be related mainly to the chite population historically privileged to equire their services. To give some perpective to the bias; in the USA there re 1.6 CPAs per 1 000 population; in south Africa there are 0.35. Egypt has 2.5 invers per 1000 population; our ratio is 0.25 per thousand. And, whereas Britain has about 0.25 consulting engineers per housand; we have a mere 0.06.

The solution is to use the full capacity of our nation to bring up the numbers. But now?

Samuels explains that if South Africe is o be prepared for the 21st century, it vill have to be provided with the domiant skills of that new era: primarily those slated to information and technology. The

real problem confronting South African educational policymakers is how to elevate the entire community to a unified and relevant educational standard. This is the realistic significance of those three hundred weeks, because solutions must be found, implemented and results achieved

before the country goes back to the polls for its second democratic election.

It will not be possible to correct the imbalances in such a short period. We have neither the teachers nor the schools, nor the money. Even if we were able to implement such a policy, it is unlikely that our largely deprived society would be able to employ the increased numbers of professionals the system would turn out. So what we have to do is prepare the ground for the demands of the future. The starting point will be at primary and secondary schooling level. The dismal legacy of the Department of Education and Training (for blacks) is the runting annual record of producing a mere 1 500 black matriculants with maths and science. Without these subjects they cannot go on to study subjects

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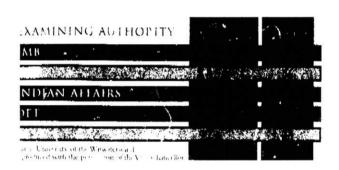
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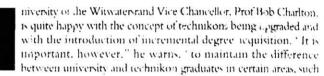




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- What Gerwel calls the "binary" position between universities and technikons must be broken down. He would like to see them becoming parcof a single system, both awarding degrees (technikons would award b7. ch degrees) and characterised by mobility, the movement of students and graduates b (ween the two).
- Alternative ways of regulating university entrance should be introduced. UC1 already applies entry tests and UOFS has introduced a system of process selection in which candidates undergo a pre-university year of study, including some university work to qualify for entry. There is, claims Gerwel, a growing insistence that people with other forms of competencies (ie work training) should be considered for places at universities.





as engineering, where the technikon graduate would gain credits towards a university degree but would lack cerrain basic disciplines in mathematics which would require further study."

A point of great contention in recent years has been the impact these changes are having, and will continue to have, on standards of education at universities. Both Wits and U.C.T experienced the pain of protest and discussion in the latter months of 1993.

From some quarters the universities are accused of accommodating the changes by dropping standards to help the disadrantaged; in others the

demand is made that more should be done. Charlton is in no doubt that the playing fields must be levelled and that account should be taken of previous disadvantage. But while his institution takes strenuous steps to assist those suffering from inferior schooling, he insists that exit qualifications from Wits must remain high.

"The numbers of students at university and university equivalent is ritutions per 1000 head of population, at 8,36, is less than half of that in the in histrialised countries with which we must

compete. The quantity must be increased, but not at the expense of quality. It is in nobody's interest for Wits to drop its standards."

For this to happen the country needs more university places, or alternative routes into the professions. Probably both. The decision taken by University of the Western Cape some years ago to remove the matriculation points system in order to admit all applicants with matric exemption could provide a precedent. It had the predictable effect of doubling the student population within a short space of time. But what about the quality of the degrees that these, more accessible universities, confer on their graduates?

Mashudu Romano is credited with bringing back to South Africa, after an absence of 35 years, the British accountancy quali leation ACCA (The Chartered Association of Certified Accountants). Romano, who heads his own management consultancy, Romano and Associates, was a member of the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa (ABASA) when they conducted an investigation into what was being done to bring more blacks into the profession. These were their main findings:

not recognised by the profession. Graduates had to go to a "white" university to supplement their qualifications before they would be accepted for articles or to write the exams of the Public Accountants' and Auditors' Board (PAAB). "There was no degree mobility and universities

# HAT EXIT QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD EMAIN HIGH IS WIDELY ACCEPTED.

a as accountancy, engineering, architecture and quantity surveying. This, ording to Jakes Gerwel. Rector of the University of the Western Cape, reason for blacks choosing the humanities as a course of study rather n science. Samuels believes short-term solutions can be found by ting high school maths compulsory, using innovative teaching methods, improving the environment in which the subject is taught.

he impact of this poor output is illustrated in first-year undergraduate formance at Wits University.

his clearly is the root cause of the shortage of blacks in the profess, a situation the ANC finds unacceptable. "I'm not sure," says Samuels, it we can continue running a country where one group outnumbers ther in such a distorted manner."

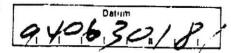
#### KES GERWEL MAKES THREE SUGGESTIONS:

The labour federation Cosatu, he suggests, will play an increasingly ortant role in the development of democratic education because of the between education and work. To place greater focus on work-related ration, the emphasis on matric exemption should be down-played. The should be to make alternative tertiary education choice, (such as techland technikon training) more acceptable. Matric exemption makes resity entrance the pinnacle of secondary schooling whereas vocatal or exemption described the should be seen to be seen the secondary schooling whereas to be consistent and the secondary schooling whereas to be consistent as the secondary schooling whereas to be consistent as the secondary schooling whereas the secondary school s

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Holders of the certificate of the Certified Institute of Management Accounts (CIMA) were told that they would have to obtain a BCom degree if they ished to become CAs and the same applied to those who had qualified as chnical accountants. Romano is very critical of this approach. "Our funds to highly limited in South Africa and we must make maximum use of that we have. It is wasteful not to recognise existing qualifications and expense." he complains. "At least the institutes should subject applicants to some run of test in order for them to slot into university courses, rather than reject em on what appear to be subjective grounds."

- Accountancy firm, fell short in their capacity to train candidate auditors.
- It was claimed that auditing was reserved for the CA (SA) because of e public interest, but his was probably an excuse to entrench existing positions. In defence of this accusation, Lucas van Vuuren, executive director of e PAAB, explains that the attest function is reserved for persons registered in the board in terms of the Public Accountants' and Auditors' Act. This issee from the judicial nature of the attest function. Persons who satisfy the aird's education and training requirements are eligible to register; they need it be CAs.

vlost important among these findings was that the quality of degree granted the "bush" colleges was not up to scratch. Currently, in the auditing prosion, this means that their BCom gives them entry into aspects of the prosion such CIMA, but denies them the chance of becoming CA (SA)s.

This," Romano argues, "is unacceptable. In the light of what it costs to go university, our people cannot afford it, and their secondary, chool educan does not provide them with adequate entry credits." Romano is quick to ik the point that standards must be maintained. "We must just be more flexe at the entry level. They must then rise up to the laid-down standards." The approach taken by the accountancy profession, probably spurred on by see findings and the re-entry of ACCA as an alternative to the CA, ould be instructive for other professions grappling with similar problems, e approach is set out in the recently published draft report on the Future

of Accounting Education in South Africa.

The essence of the proposal is that there will be four tiers to the profession. Entry is possible at any of these levels, which qualifies the holder to do certain accounting work. With practical training and the passing of the examinations of the regulatory body for the next tier, there is mobility between the various levels. It will no longer be essential for entrants to have university degrees – currently it is a graduate profession. If these proposals are accepted there will be five routes into the profession, which Van Vuuren lists as:

- University:
- Technikon;
- Technical College:
- Passing institute examinations; and
- Practical ::perience.



of everyone is happy with the implications. Notable among these is Professor Margo Steele, head of the department of accounting at Wits. Her concern is precisely the fact that accountants, who do not have tanversity degrees, will be permitted to conduct the attest function. "This makes me feel

very uncomfortable," she says, "The PAAB think they can evaluate everyone at the end of the line. Right now that's fine because they all have been to university. But," she asks, "how can they conduct appropriate examinations if some of the candidates have not been through a graduate programme? We must protect the value of the qualification."

This debate is not yet over. The struggle is between maintaining standards that will keep the country in global contention and a system that will quickly reduce the disparities in our educational system to allow blacks, and the less privileged, access to the professions. What is encouraging is that there is little deagreement: the real quarrel is how to achieve a workable and acceptable balance.

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