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UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

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3 April 1992

Dr G A Mbeki

P O Box 23120

PORT ELIZABETH

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Dear Dr Mbeki

I have discussed with the Rector, the idea of the establishment of the Dr G A Mbeki Fellowship at the University of Fort Hare. He is very supportive of the initiative. In line with this, I have done a draft proposal for the project. Please let me have your comments and suggestions as soon as possible.

I have also drafted a research proposal for the first piece of work to be conducted by such a programme. I hope that it is in line with what you are proposing to do. The idea is that you use the fellowship programme to line up well placed and senior researchers to assist you. The research will be done over a shorter period and would be less strenuous.

I am therefore enclosing both documents for your comments. You will notice in the research proposal that I have not done a questionnaire as you have requested. I have a feeling that this involves more work than I can handle in my present situation. Instead

I have posed a series of research questions which highlight the scale of the background work that need to be conducted before a serious questionnaire can be drawn. I would suggest that you include that as part of the task of your research assistants.

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There is some urgency about this project. The University of Amsterdam and the Govan Mbeki Fellowship there, have made plans for a linkage programme with the University of Fort Hare. If things work well, we are hoping to submit this as one of the projects that they can either fund or identify possible donors for. Mr G N Zide, our Registrar Administration will be meeting with the University of Amsterdam to seal a deal on his way to the United States in mid-April. We want to make sure that the necessary documentation is with the University of Amsterdam before he goes there.

On the other hand, I would suggest that we approach other potential donors to secure funding for your project and for the Fellowship.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you. I plan to be in Port Elizabeth during the Easter Weekend for my mother's birthday, I hope to see you then.

Yours sincerely

SIPHO PITYANA

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE RECTOR

cc : The Rector

Registrar (Academic)

SP/ydm

gmeki.let

DR GOVAN ARCHIBALD MBEKI FELLOWSHIP

The University of Fort Hare is one of the oldest established tertiary educational institutions. From its very Inception, it was intended to serve the African Community. It continues, as a legacy of that past to draw students from that community. Unlike many of its counterparts, it has been denied many basic resources that are characteristic of a modern university. One of these is the presence of a strong research base.

A combination of a student community drawn mainly from a disadvantaged background, teaching staff overburdened by disproportionately large number of students to supervise, a repressive bantustan and university authority and lack of material resources; all in various ways contributed to a systematic under development of a culture of research. These distortions have significantly disarticulated the intellectual development of the potential African intelligentsia. Consequently, this social strata of our society, is under-

represented in the research body and intellectual discourse in general. The need to correct this is overwhelming. The under representation of such an important social strata from research extends to their exclusion in policy formulation and therefore implementation.

The University of Fort Hare is well placed to play its role in contributing towards correcting and altering this legacy. Firstly, because it attracts the kind of student who should be encouraged to take interest in participating in research. Secondly, it is well located in isolated conditions conducive to conducting research and yet is connected to other libraries through an inter-library loan system. It also enjoys the legitimacy previously unassociated with it. It is also steeped in service link with community needs.

WHY NAME IT G A MBEKI FELLOWSHIP?

Govan Mbeki has had a long history struggle for socio-political and economic justice. He engaged in this mission with gallantry, selflessness and conviction that attracted a lot of admirers. He is an educationist who was trained at the University of Fort Hare as his biographical sketch (below) will demonstrate. His intellectual and scholarly work is

inspirational. We remain convinced that his agreement that his name be associated with such a crucial programme will underscore the importance of scholarly work, among many dying to have the opportunity to engage in it.

The following is his brief biographical sketch which further emphasises the correctness of choosing him for such a project.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Govan Archibald Mbeki was born on 8 July 1910 in Ngqamakwe. He was the youngest of five children of Chief SIKELEWU MBEKI who was deposed by Government.

EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

He attended various mission schools including Healdtown in Fort Beaufort and studied at the University of Fort Hare where he obtained a BA degree in 1937, and later completed a diploma in education.

He taught at several schools after leaving the University of Fort Hare until he was dismissed for his political activities. In 1940 he obtained a BCom degree in Social Studies from UNISA. Between 1938 and 1944, he edited the territorial newspaper. In 1943 he served as a Director of the Guardian Newspaper.

In the early 1950s, he returned to teaching only to be dismissed once again for his political activities. In 1955 he was appointed Editor of the New Age, a local newspaper based in Port Elizabeth. During this time, he maintained close ties with students at Fort Hare. He remained a prominent figure among the University's graduates and served as a Convocation representative on its Council between 1944 and 1946. In 1958, he was elected President of the Old Fort Harlan Association.

He campaigned, wrote and published several articles in opposition to both the Bantu Authorities Act and the Bantu Education Act. L

In 1964, while serving a life sentence on Robbin Island, his book "The peasantsi Revolt", an analysis of the campaign against the Bantu Authorities Act, was published in Britain. In 1970, he completed his BA Honours degree in Economics. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in Social Science in 1977 by the University of Amsterdam for his book. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the Western Cape in 1988.

Following his release from prison in 1987, he published his prison essays which were widely read by prisoners for political discussions.

In April 1992, he launched his latest book, an historical survey of the struggle for freedom covering the period from 1850 to date. He is presently researching on the political sociology of the 1980s or struggle against apartheid.

COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL PROFILE

Govan Mbeki first joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1935 whilst a student of the University of Fort Hare. He later joined the South African Communist Party in 1961. In 1941 he was Secretary of the Transkei African Votersi Association which was formed to restore Africans to the common votersi role. He was elected in 1943 for a four year term, to the Transkeian Bunga representing Idutywa.

In 1943 he was part of the ANC leadership which discussed the Atlantic Charter which later became the United Nations Charter. In 1960, he was detained without trial for five months in terms of the State of Emergency regulations. He was arrested in 1963, together with Nelson Mandela and others in Rivonia and were all sentenced to life imprisonment for engaging in armed struggle against the government.

He was released from imprisonment in November 1987. He was later placed under a restriction order in terms of the State of Emergency regulations. This was later lifted. He is presently a member of the governing Council of the University of Fort Hare.

AIMS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

' To provide resources and opportunities to people with demonstrable research skills to undertake such work as will contribute to scholarship and social and economic development of South Africa.

To expose the university community to international scholarships by providing fellowship to researchers and academics from other institutions abroad.

To assist with the process of developing research skills of people from disadvantaged backgrounds by undertaking training programmes and internships for junior fellows sponsored by the programme.

To contribute to national policy and development by publishing and distributing in the best way possible the reports of the research conducted by the fellows.

. t' To inculcate a culture of research in the University by convening seminars and workshops on topical and other themes in which members of the university community will be invited.

The fellowship will focus on social science research including that on such issues as the economy, development, gender, race and ethnicity, politics of transformation, rural development and many other related themes. These are in line with the work of Govan Mbeki in whose name the fellowship is called.

The fellowship will be an inter-disciplinary programme. It will therefore draw candidates from various disciplines and will relate to more than one faculty and department.

However it will be located in the Faculty of Arts.

A Board of Trustees or Management which will include the Rector will draw representatives from faculties of the university that would be affected by the fellowship

. It would also include carefully selected members of the community. Among these will .be scholars with an outstanding reputation. The Board will be serviced by a Director whom it will employ to co-ordinate the activities of the fellowship and to provide it with

regular reports.

The Director of the fellowship, with the support of the administrative staff, will be responsible for all aspects of management of the fellowship. The Director will report to the Rector and shall be a member of Senate. In this manner, the University's highest authority will be regularly informed about the activities of the programmes and especially

its impact on developing research culture in the university.

FORM OF THE FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship will take three specific forms, designed with the needs and limitation of the University and the community it wishes to serve, central in our mind.

1. Research

The University has very poor history as a researching institution unlike many of its white counterparts. There is a dying need to promote a culture of research in the University in order to promote its importance among the students.

This situation has not only denied the University contextual and contemporaneous reference material for its academic and especially teaching programmes; but) (has also deprived the local community of such a project that could service their needs.

Fellowships would therefore be offered to experienced researchers and other academics from disadvantaged backgrounds to conduct research on themes and topics of either their choice or those identified by the Fellowship programme or community.

The purpose of this would be to provide resources to such people and encourage their development and contribution to academic scholarship and community service. Through their work and interaction with the rest of the student and university academic community, they would help develop a culture of research.

Visiting Lectureship

Although the University of Fort Hare is overwhelmingly African in its student composition, its leadership remains White. Out of an academic staff of about 360, only about 55 are Black. Out of seven faculties, only two are headed by Blacks. Of the approximately 43 Associate and full Professors, only six are Black and none are women. We therefore have a distorted gender and racial balance of the University leadership.

A staff development programme has been initiated as one of the measures to cultivate Black leadership. A number of international Universities have shown interest in exchange programmes that will enable the University of Fort Hare to send staff on research fellowships, Masters and Doctoral programmes. In some instances these opportunities are lost because no temporary replacements are found.

This aspect of the fellowship would help solve such a problem. The University would not only seek to recruit, but those of the calibre that would enrich its teaching aspect of academic work. This could be done by offering fellowships to specialist and well placed academics in their field of competence) to run a half option course or full option course. These would be drawn in such a way as to

coincide wherever possible with the period of absence of a member of staff and staff Development Programme.

This aspect of the fellowship would help us enrich the quality of our teaching. It will also expose our teaching staff to their counterparts from different parts of the country and the world at large.

3. Junior Fellowship

As part of developing a culture of research, the perspective is not only to motivate people to take research seriously, but also encourage them that it is important enough to take part in it. The two programmes referred to above relate to people who are already in the academic profession. This addresses that group of people who may have displayed through their degree training, not only a potential to engage in research, but also an interest.

These should be encouraged by providing a supportive base with the necessary resources to engage in research. These would entail providing a research grant, a senior researcher to advise their work. This programme will also be targetted at students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

During their time as fellows, they will be given the opportunity to engage in research on themes and topics of their own choice or those identified by the Fellowship programme or community.

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