



POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

SPEECH BY
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RECTOR

AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
17th ANNUAL CAREER FAIR

19 APRIL 2011, 09:00

POLYTECHNIC CAMPUS

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Director of Ceremonies

Mr Robin Sherbourne, *Independent Economist* and

Keynote Speaker

Distinguished Industry Partners

Distinguished Invited Guests, including Teachers and

Pupils from the various High Schools

Esteemed Colleagues and Students

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is always a pleasure being in the company of the youth, because the youth represent our hope and inspiration for the future. With exception where some people work for themselves only (like in a case of corruption), people generally work not only for themselves but for the youth. The youth all over the world have the same basic needs and aspirations: to be care for, to be nurtured and to be educated to become independent persons and leaders of their communities and the world.

Universities have been created to provide the universal platform to educate and nurture the citizen to higher levels of competence. In fact it is a

requirement in any school system to provide the basic competences required at higher levels of society even without a specific career in mind. But we are aware of the shortcomings in our education system and opportunities such as career guidance and career fairs are not adequately provided.

Thus in the multi-faceted place that the university is, there has to be processes and mechanisms to cultivate the knowledge and skills required in the workplace and society in general, and also to provide networking opportunities such as career fairs. It is for these reasons that our career fairs are specifically open to the job market - represented by companies in our economy, open to all our students as well as pupils from all over Namibia.

Consequently it is necessary for a student to acquire tacit knowledge, which is practical, applied knowledge, and soft skills such as communication through formal courses of study and also through interaction. Employers are always seeking the best

performers and your skills set must be high, appropriate and balanced.

Thus a career fair presents everyone involved with multiple opportunities such as the following:

- a) for employers to seek potential employees amongst junior and senior students – in fact about 45 percent of our students are attaining their qualifications while employed, which in itself is a huge advantage for the student and employer;**
- b) for employers, students and pupils to explore new qualifications on offer;**
- c) for students to explore the market and attain a better understanding of job opportunities and requirements; and**
- d) specifically for graduating students to market themselves and ‘seal the deals’.**

I'm therefore thankful to all the support we receive from all the participants. We are very pleased that annually we host about forty companies in various sectors of our economy and between two and three thousand participants in the 2-day event. This year 38 companies are participating while seven others who wanted to participate cannot due to lack of space in the designated venue.

At this juncture I must appeal to the government to reconsider the funding to the Polytechnic so as to provide a proper university infrastructure, otherwise we are continuing to perpetuate the history which we are at the same time trying to correct! How else does Namibia produce world-class graduates?

While we are exploring what is on offer, let us also urge the government to expand the economy in new fields of technology, manufacturing and services so as to absorb more skills. We at the Polytechnic are producing competent graduates in diverse fields and shall be happy to produce more in emerging or future economic segments. Here I'm referring to disciplines

and activities such as manufacturing, bio-energy, biotechnology, logistics maritime, and outsourced services (e.g. call centres).

Finally, so much work and logistics have gone into this career fair. I want to thank my colleagues who organised this event, especially Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services, and welcome all the sponsors and companies on display here, all the students, the teachers and pupils who are giving so much of their time, and the media for always informing society of positive developments. And of course, I want to extend a warm welcome to the keynote speaker, Mr Robin Sherbourne, an economist of note.

To the students and pupils, I want to leave you with a few words of advice. Take advantage of what's on offer: inquire with the curiosity of a child; present yourself professionally; follow up on acquaintances and prospects; and aim to excel in whatever you do. We are inspired to do more and better and in that way we as leaders of a university will take our economic

skills to the next level. And learn the following lessons:

- a) the timeless value of hard work;**
- b) to move from ambition to achievement; and**
- c) to remember that destiny doesn't cause disasters; mistakes do.**

We look forward to an informative fair over the next two days, filled with pleasant surprises and fun. I thank you for your kind attention.

- Ends.