



**POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA**

**SPEECH**

**BY**

**MRS EVELYN BREWER  
ACTING CHAIRMAN OF POLYTECHNIC COUNCIL**

**AT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF  
POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA'S  
ACADEMIC YEAR**

**ON**

**WEDNESDAY, 05 FEBRUARY 2012**

**WINDHOEK**

Director of Ceremonies

Rector of the Polytechnic of Namibia, Prof Tjama Tjivikua

Minister of Education, Honourable Dr David Namwandi

Members of Council

Senior Management and all Members of Staff

Distinguished Invited Guests

New and Returning Students

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning!

Every year, early in the year, we come together here in front of EHaus as the Polytechnic community to mark the beginning of a new academic year. Today is one such special occasion. This occasion is a special one for me too, because as the Acting Chairperson of Council, it is the first time that I am addressing the Polytechnic community at the official opening of an academic year. Besides, it is not very often that we as Members of Council get an opportunity to interact with the entire Polytechnic community. Therefore, I am particularly honoured and privileged to have been asked to make some brief remarks at this auspicious occasion.

Let me recognise our Honourable Minister of Education, Dr David Namwandi, who is with us this morning and will later deliver the keynote address. Honourable Minister, we are indeed honoured by your presence here and all of us are eagerly awaiting the wisdom you will share with us today.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the new and returning students of the Polytechnic of Namibia. The students, are the lifeblood of the institution, and therefore we have an obligation to go the extra mile to ensure that you feel at home at the Polytechnic. A special word of welcome goes to the cohort of approximately 3 500 new students who have registered with our institution this year. Since its inception in 1996, the Polytechnic has grown immensely in terms of student enrolment, with about 13 000 students registered in 2013. It is expected that we will exceed this number this year indicating that the institution is on a sustainable growth path.

Let me hasten to say that the growth in student enrolment is not just an indicator of the growing demand for higher education in Namibia, but more importantly, it reflects the confidence our communities have in the Polytechnic largely because of its excellent services and offerings. Over the years, the Polytechnic's portfolio of programmes grew from the initial 35 in 1996 to about 100 in 2013. This is also indicative of how responsive the institution is to the high level human resource demands of our country, as well as to adapting to the rapidly changing needs of Namibia and the world.

Director of Ceremonies, allow me also to extend a word of welcome to the returning staff of the Polytechnic as well as those who have recently joined the institution. I trust that you have returned from your festive break well rested, energised and ready to run. Today on behalf of the Council of the Polytechnic, I would like to publicly acknowledge the enormous contribution you have made and continue to make to the success of this institution. You are the engine that drives our core business. Your hard work and



commitment have built the reputation of this institution under which we all bask. To the new staff members - I believe that 42 academic and 21 administrative staff members have joined us since the beginning of last year,-I would like to welcome you to the Polytechnic. I recognise that you bring with you a wealth of critical skills that we are in dire need of as well as the advantages the networks that you have developed over the years. I have no doubt that you will be welcomed to your work stations and be given space to develop your expertise to the fullest.I wish you a productive stay at the Polytechnic.

Ladies and gentlemen

Following government announcement in 2012 that the Polytechnic would be renamed the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), the news was received with great excitement. However, at that point, we were not mindful of the deeper implications of what we initially accepted as a simple name change. For every one at the Polytechnic 2013,has been indeed a remarkable period because as we began to unpack the implications of the name change, it became clear what a daunting task was facing the institution – so much needed to be done in such a short period. We all had to roll up our sleeves and get to work, and hence this morning I am particularly proud about what we have achieved as an institution thus far.

Director of Ceremonies

We reconstituted the Council of the institution, the Polytechnic Act was revised, and the new bill of the NUST is in the parliamentary process, and we are hopeful that it will be promulgated in the coming session of parliament. When that day comes, I have no doubt Mr Rector that the institution will have a big celebration. The name change also coincided with the coming to an end of the span of the Strategic Plan of the institution, PSP3 in 2013. Consequently we needed to embark on developing a new

Polytechnic's Strategic Plan (PSP4). In view of the changing status of the institution there was wisdom in making PSP4 the strategic transformation plan of the institution.

Therefore PSP4 is a special plan that will guide us towards ensuring that the institution is aligned to its new mandate which requires that we focus on science, engineering and technology (SET), i.e. increasing the fields, programmes and student enrolments in SET. It was just wonderful to watch the stakeholders of the institution involved in rigorous deliberations and trying to reach consensus on the key elements necessary for mapping the road to the new institution we envisage.

Today, I need to inform you with great pride that in the last meeting in November the Council happily approved the PSP4 document. We were all convinced that the institution had produced a fantastic plan for the future and therefore I would like to congratulate all the stakeholders for work well done.

In the next five years the Polytechnic will be focusing on the five strategic goals which are: excellence in teaching, research and service; student centredness; good governance and management; strong collaboration; and contribution to national development. We have also identified the critical enablers that will facilitate achieving the goals we have set ourselves, and these are building and sourcing highly talented and committed staff; securing adequate funding and being able to develop adequate physical infrastructure and IT infrastructure. We will need to work hard and collaboratively with all our stakeholders, especially government, to ensure that the enabler platform, on which the institution will drive the key strategic goals, is in place. I have no doubt that the Polytechnic has put together a sound plan which, when implemented fully, should deliver quality education, and empower Namibians with knowledge, skills and attributes that will make



them productive citizens who will participate in the socio-political and economic development of our country.

Director of Ceremonies,

it is not unusual that when an institution is involved in an intense planning process as that Polytechnic was undertaking, then the institution tends to lose focus on its core business. I just want to assure you that throughout the planning process, the Polytechnic continued to keep its eye on the ball. Evidence to this effect comes from the fact last year we were able to prepare for introducing ten new programmes. Of historic significance, is that for the first time the institution it will be offering a doctoral programme in Information Technology. It is also significant that in the autumn and spring graduations, the institution conferred 2942 certificates, diplomas and degrees. It is, therefore, no wonder that the excellent achievements of the institution were recognised for the fifth successive year when it received a PMR Diamond Arrow Award, in lieu of being the best higher education institution in Namibia. I have no doubt that even as the NUST, the institution will continue to accumulate these accolades.

With these few words, I want to wish all staff and students an enriching academic experience in 2014 and also wish the institution great success in the transition to NUST.

I thank you.