

# R934m to be spent on university capacity development

Higher Education and Training Minister Naledi Pandor says the department will spend R934 million on the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) to improve student development and decolonise the curriculum.



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The Minister on Thursday briefed the media ahead of tabling the department's Budget Vote speech in Parliament.

"The R934 million University Capacity Development Programme for all 26 universities focuses on three key development areas: student development towards enhancing student access; staff development, particularly in regards to teaching, research and leadership, and management and curriculum development," she said.

Dr Diane Parker, the Deputy Director-General for University Education at the department, said as part of the programme, each university will have its own programme.

"The first one is around student success and that entails quite a large focus on aspects such as data analytics to understand how students are doing in the various programmes and then to create interventions where students who aren't doing well can be picked up.

“It also focuses on areas such as first year programmes that are focused on young people coming into university systems, who may have come from various types of backgrounds who aren’t used to working at that kind of level,” she said.

The programme also focuses on student advice services, mentoring support, psycho-social support and tutoring support.

Parker said under the staff development programme, much focus is on staff, teaching and research development.

“That is quite an extensive programme that covers a number of areas - from identifying young people who have potential at being academics through to supporting academics in the system,” she said.

Parker said there is a drive to unearth a new generation of academics with much focus being placed on black women in academia.

## **Multi-sectoral task team to assess readiness for 4th industrial revolution**

Pandor will soon set up a multi-sectoral task team to investigate the higher education and training sector’s readiness for the fourth industrial revolution.

She said it is vital for the department to devote dedicated attention to these changes and their implications for the country’s universities, colleges and community education and training.

“I intend to set up a multi-sectoral task team to investigate what is being done in research, teaching and outreach and how emerging technologies are being used to enhance our capabilities in our sector.

“I am aware that several universities have invested in research areas that explore boundaries beyond our current understanding of a range of processes and technologies. Significant investments have been made in nanotechnology, new approaches to agricultural technology, bioinformatics and other fields.

“We must ensure we build on these early developments and provide the necessary support in terms of skills and research funding,” she said.

Outlining some highlights that will be part of this year’s budget vote speech, Pandor said community colleges will focus on the development of a national policy for lecturer development.

She said the National Skills Fund will provide funding to train personnel at community education and training colleges in terms of IT infrastructure, governance and financial management.

“The project led by SAICA is expected to run over three years and has a budget of R149 million,” she said.

The Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education Programme, meanwhile, has been piloted and is now being scaled up this financial year.