



WATERFORD KAMHLABA

United World College of Southern Africa

12th February 2010

Letter 3/2010

Dear Parents

Thank you to everyone associated with WK for affording me the opportunity to go on sabbatical for five months, starting in September 2009. I returned to WK on Tuesday afternoon, both refreshed and recharged for the work that lies ahead in continuing to be part of a team that tries to interpret the UWC ideals into the education of our children. My particular thanks are extended to Bruce Wells who served so strongly as Acting Principal in my absence, and to Anna Marsden, who as Director of Studies gave so much support.

Much of my time on sabbatical was spent in the context of UWC: I was based at UWC-USA, visited Pearson College and UWC Costa Rica, and attended both the UWC International Council and European National Committee meetings. As part of a 'branding' process, UWC is re-examining how it makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. We are thinking aloud as to whether the threats to peace are primarily nation-based, or whether these arise more in the context of tensions within society as a whole, for instance tensions between liberal, conservative and fundamentalist worldviews, between historic population groups and more recent immigrants. In many parts of the world (including in southern Africa) we see tensions between those who the economy (and government service delivery) has left behind, and those who have done well economically. How does redefining the threats to peace affect our selection of students, a selection that traditionally has been based on national grounds (or, in southern Africa, on including students and staff of different racial backgrounds)? How does it inform the programmes, conversations and social/residential arrangements within the colleges?

I was fortunate to conclude my sabbatical with a fellowship at Klingenstein Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. This gave me access to professors and colleague heads, and opportunity to read more widely on strategies that help schools build inclusive communities, communities that do not simply seek to improve the academic improvement of its students from their different backgrounds (necessary as this is). UWCs have been at the forefront of creating environments in which students can embrace the idea that opening both hearts and minds to people of different backgrounds will have a positive impact not only on the students but, in time, on the global community. Despite our pioneering role, we would be fools to cut ourselves off from the experiences and insights of others.

Yesterday was the 20th anniversary of the release of (UWC Honorary International President) Nelson Mandela from prison. His closing address to the judge in the Rivonia Trial, while facing the prospect of the death sentence, has been repeated several times in the media: "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." Nelson Mandela repeated these words at the Cape Town City Hall the afternoon of his release from prison. WK and other UWCs play a strong role in building the type of harmony that Nelson Mandela envisaged, but at Wednesday's assembly I questioned whether we are committed to building equal opportunities. Students at WK have access to so many more opportunities than even outstanding students at most schools in these parts. We can only claim alignment with Nelson Mandela's ideals if we and our graduates remain committed to working for the public good, not simply for our private good. Then the skills and attitudes we have gained while at WK can be seen to be contributing to a society in which all people live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. Many of WK's earlier graduates have met this measure of contributing enormously to the public good; the remainder of us cannot rest on their commitment and contribution.



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Valentine's Social

The full-school social is scheduled for this Saturday evening (13th). School transport will be available for day students, departing from Cinelux at 6.30pm. (There will not be school transport from other places.) Because of the relative danger of younger students finding themselves stranded in town in the late evening, WK does not provide transport back to Mbabane at the close of the social. Day students in Forms 1 to 3 must be fetched from the main WK gate at 10pm, day students in the higher forms at 11pm.

PSA 'Fun Auction'

The PSA would be grateful to receive any donations of prizes for their 'Fun Auction' on the 6th March. All donations, big, small or unusual are welcome! We are hoping to raise enough money to install energy-saving flat screen monitors in the IT Centre and possibly some more air conditioning! Please contact Laurie Gulaid on 6443201, Jenni Hammond on 6023093 or Sally Greaves Brown on 6041421. Thank you for your support.

Leadership Development Club

Mr Chikwanda and Mr Mwenda are facilitating a Leadership Development Club, which will meet at 6.15pm on Thursdays in Emhlabeni. The purpose of this club will be to look at leadership for sustainable development, in line with the UWC Mission. They plan to study various leaders around the world, to analyse their leadership styles and the impact these leaders make on sustainable development.

Further Weekend Activities

- The Linking Group, responsible for student ties with other colleges, leaves this afternoon on retreat at Hawane.
- Senior students have organized an indoor soccer tournament this evening, in the NT Multipurpose Hall.
- Theatre Arts students are showing the movie '2012' tonight in the Michael Stern Assembly Hall, to raise funds for their annual visit to the South African National Arts Festival.
- The boys' and girls' senior basketball teams depart at 6.45am on Saturday for a tournament at the Boscoe Centre.

There are several new activities and services in 2010. Over the next few weeks I hope to be able to introduce you to these.

Jefferson Scholars Foundation

I am pleased to announce that Karoline Komolafe has been invited to the final selection for the highly prestigious merit-based Jefferson Scholarship at Virginia University. This is the first time that a WK graduate has been short-listed for this scholarship. Congratulations to Karoline.

Yours sincerely

Laurence Nodder
Principal