Recommended Book for all HETN Members

Barbarism In Higher Education – Once Upon A Time In A University – by Prof Nhlanhla Maake (Published by Ekaam Books, 2011)

Prof Nhlanhla Maake’s Barbarism In Higher Education, published in 2011 charts a real-life account about what happened to him when he decided to take on the powers of the University of North West University (NWU).

When this book was published, Prof Maake was the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at NWU – a period during which he learned about the disappointing shenanigans and plots that happen at institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

When the then Minister of Higher Education approved the Higher Education Amendment Act 54 of 2000, this resulted in university mergers taking place between the then Potchefstroom University and the then University of Bophuthatswana (UNIBO).

According to Prof Maake, the merger of North West University exposed a rift between the institutions it was meant to unite down to interpersonal relations between staff, resulting in student protests, academics resorting to underhanded collusion, racism, corruption, nepotism, patronage, outright paternalism, victimisations and ultimately the loss of competent black professors and the steady erosion of institutional capacity at the former University of Bophuthatswana in Mafikeng.

Behind the proud achievement record of transformation lurks a furtive world with an utter disregard and a contemptuous cynicism that goes against the grain of meaningful progress. What gives this memoir credence is its extensive documentation of correspondence between protagonists and antagonists, and its references to contravened policies and professional improprieties.

The HETN notes with concern how victimisations persists and how within a period of less than five years, no less than two successive esteemed lecturers and serving Chairpersons of the NWU Mafikeng Staff Association have been dismissed for one reason or the other over the years, an indicator of ongoing victimisation of black staff at the university.

Barbarism In Higher Education – Once Upon A Time In A University by Nhlanhla Maake (Ekaam Books) is available from R210 at CAN outlets. ISBN: 139780620477741, EAN Number: 9780620477741