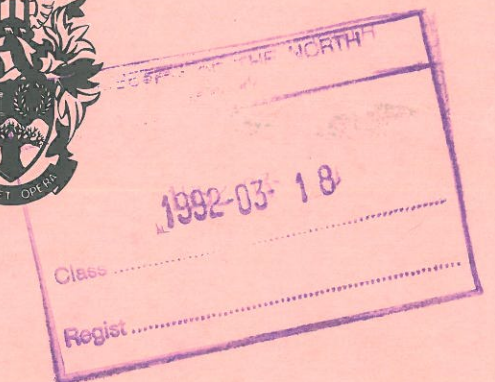


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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TRAINING FOR DEVELOPMENT



BRIAN PHILIP BOTHA

INAUGURAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHAIR IN
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH ON
WEDNESDAY, 26 AUGUST 1981

PIETERSBURG

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Mr Vice-Chancellor, Honoured Guests, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen -

1. INTRODUCTION

In public institutions activities are governed by acts, rules and regulations. The University of the North, being a state institution, is no exception. An inaugural address at the University is governed by general rules which *inter alia* state that in delivering an inaugural address the subject chosen by the professor should not be highly specialized and only be of interest to his colleagues in his own discipline, but should be a suitable theme either giving a general overview of his subject, explaining recent developments in the discipline, identifying problems that have to be solved, explaining what research he is planning to undertake, and finally explaining what contribution the department can make in solving identified problems.

True to the nature of a trained public administrator, the general rules were consulted and this inaugural address has been prepared within the said rules. Therefore I am going to address you in general terms on the approach of the department to Public Administration training specifically for the development process.

When I took up a position at the University of the North as a teacher in Public Administration I soon realized that the National States, being clients of the University, are faced with a critical shortage of trained manpower in all categories of work. Administration is one of these categories. For the purpose of this address I have identified as important the training of administrative personnel to cope with the demands of the development process. Before outlining the training policy of the department I briefly want to explain my view of the concept *Development* and the discipline *Public Administration*.

2. DEVELOPMENT

Development is a concept that has been receiving attention throughout the world since the "decolonization" process started in what is today known as the "Third World". Numerous definitions of, and approaches to development exist with the result that it is a misconception to assume that those engaging in development work and development studies agree upon the meaning of development. Everyone want development — but what does it mean? Development, of course, reaches and penetrates every aspect related to improving community life. After consulting numerous publications on development I am convinced that if the academic jargon is reduced to its essentials, each and every exponent of development is actually saying:

Development is a process of planned change in which environmental factors play a determining role.

These environmental factors are physical, political, economical, social and cultural. When explaining my approach to Public Administration I will once again refer to these environments.

The above exposition of development has two important phrases, the first being "planned" and the second "change". These phrases are present in every component constituting development, e.g. in politics, in economics, in social values and culture. In order to achieve beneficial *change* development programmes have to be carefully *planned*. In order to plan beneficial developments, numerous tools are required. One of these tools is a sound and effective public service. This implies that the public service has to be manned by suitably trained public officials in the vast number of specialized fields that constitute government today, and which are necessary to create an environment in which citizens can enjoy a healthy, safe and full life. One of these fields is Public Administration.

3. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

In order to present a training course in Public Administration it is necessary for any Department of Public Administration to formulate a philosophy concerning its training programmes. The University of the North's Department of Public Administration has as clients students who, after completing their studies, will be involved in the development of Black communities. The Department's major objective should therefore be the training of public officials for predominantly developmental situations.

Before explaining the different training programmes undertaken by the Department, I would like to explain my approach to Public Administration as this approach forms the basis for the training programmes undertaken by the Department.

I accept the process view as the basis for training. This implies that I view Public Administration as consisting of six enabling processes necessary in every group effort to achieve any public objective for academic purposes. These processes can be categorized as policy-making, financing, organization, personnel provision and utilization, determination of work procedures and control. Other constituting components of Public Administration are the *functional activities* undertaken by functional staff on a day-to-day basis in the different government institutions, e.g. health services as well as the *auxiliary services* undertaken to assist the administrator and the functional specialist in performing his job in a more expedient and effective manner, for example the use of the computer, organization and methods studies, cost benefit analysis and many other techniques.

Because Public Administration, as we are teaching it, is directed at development, it is furthermore accepted that public administration takes place within certain environments. These environments, also mentioned above, are:

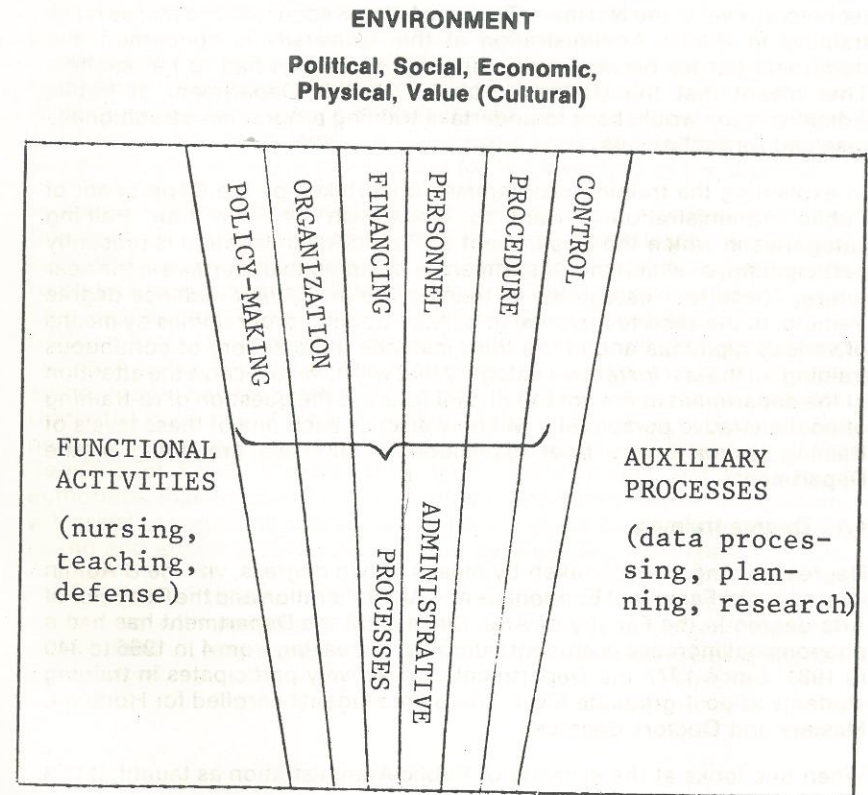
- a physical environment
- a social environment
- an economic environment
- a political environment
- a value environment

Figure 1 schematically depicts my approach to the nature of public administration for development purposes.

I firmly believe that cognizance should be taken of the environment when determining the nature and the extent of public administration of developing communities. Also in the teaching of Public Administration for Development these environmental factors have to receive attention.

Since every community or society is unique, the environment of public administration will differ although the six enabling processes of public administration will remain generic to any administrative situation. The environment will therefore have a determining influence on the nature and the extent of public administration for a specific community. With this I am implying that it is possible to have public administration for Venda, public administration for Bophuthatswana, public administration for the United States of America and public administration for the Republic of South Africa.

Figure 1



These environmental factors mentioned above will determine what the nature and extent of public administration for a specific community is going to be. Successful training programmes will therefore have to emphasize the importance of environmental scanning in determining administrative systems for development. I am categorically saying that: Nowhere in any developing country (the so-called Third World) has administrative system transplants been successful. Just as administrative system transplants have failed in the Third World, the transplantation of Public Administration training programmes from large Western orientated universities throughout the world will also fail. Training programmes have to take into consideration the environment in which the Public Administration being taught, is going to be practised. The emphasis of the environment will prepare students as practitioners to advise the political office bearer of this important aspect of Public Administration.

4. TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The University of the North serves two categories of students, viz. those from black states situated in the northern part of the country and those from urban areas, e.g. Soweto. Because of the lack of tertiary training on technicon level in the Northern Transvaal, it was soon realized that as far as training in Public Administration at this University is concerned, the traditional barrier between university and technicon had to be reached. That meant that the University of the North's Department of Public Administration would have to undertake training programmes traditionally reserved for technicians.

In explaining the training programmes undertaken by the Department of Public Administration I want to distinguish between four training categories in which the Department of Public Administration is presently participating, or which the Department is planning to undertake in the near future. These four categories of training are in the *first instance* degree training, in the *second instance* in-service training programmes by means of various diplomas and in the *third instance* the category of continuous training. In the *last instance* a category that will have to receive the attention of the department in the not too distant future is the question of re-training of administrative personnel. I will now discuss each one of these levels of training giving a very brief exposition of what we are doing in the Department.

4.1 Degree training

Degree training is undertaken by means of two degrees, viz. the B Admin degree in the Faculty of Economics and Administration and the Bachelor of Arts degree in the Faculty of Arts. Since 1966 the Department has had a phenomenal increase in student numbers, increasing from 4 in 1966 to 340 in 1981. Since 1977 the Department also actively participates in training students at post-graduate level. There are students enrolled for Honours, Masters and Doctors degrees.

When one looks at the syllabus of Public Administration as taught at this

University, it might give the impression that it is similar to that presented at any other university in the Republic. The content of the material taught, and the context in which it is taught, however, is where the difference lies. The Department is geared towards presenting its degree training with development as the major objective.

4.2 In-service training programmes

After realizing that it would be impossible to satisfy the need for public administrators for the developing communities by means of degree training alone, the Department initiated the introduction of diplomas to assist in the training of public officials. The first group will receive their diplomas at the end of 1981. The Department presently provides for four diplomas, viz.:

- Diploma in Public Administration
- Diploma in Municipal Administration
- Diploma in State Finance
- Diploma in Municipal Finance

These diplomas are in-service training diplomas and are attended by public officials who are nominated by various National States to attend either one of the four diplomas. The diplomas are three-year diploma courses based on the sandwich-course system: i.e. students attend University for six months per year returning to their work situations for six months. The Department is endeavouring to introduce an internship system where a student, under the guidance of his lecturers and practitioners, will receive practical on-the-job training. The successful completion of this internship will eventually become a prerequisite for the awarding of the diploma.

In specific fields of training, especially in Municipal Administration, the Department is endeavouring to obtain the co-operation of white local authorities to assist the newly formed Community Councils as well as the National States in the practical training of officials on an internship basis. This implies that the public officials sent by a Community Council or National State for Municipal Administration training will, after completing his six months training at the University, be placed with a white local authority who has accepted to participate in this very important endeavour. Under the guidance of his lecturer and the practitioner, he will receive the necessary practical training. I believe that with the co-operation of the Republic of South Africa's Government Departments and white local authorities, making use of an internship to supplement theoretical training, will assist in supplying public administrators of the quality required for the sound and effective public service that development requires.

I furthermore believe that Public Administration theory, being so interwoven with practice, necessitates the introduction of an internship requirement of any category of Public Administration training on the tertiary level.

4.3 Continuing training

The importance of continuing education as a category of training in practice-orientated subjects cannot be disputed. Universities world wide have established units for continuing education and will continue to do so. I believe that the University of the North will soon also be faced with the reality of establishing such a unit. As far as I am concerned continuing education should have greater priority at universities serving developing areas. Is it not true that training programmes other than formal tertiary education will have a greater impact in a development situation? For the purpose of this address I unfortunately cannot elaborate on the question as I would have liked to. I, however, believe this to be true. The Department has in a small way embarked on a continuing training programme by introducing a one-year part-time Proficiency Certificate in Public Administration. Admission is limited to the more senior Government officials. As in any new venture, many problems have developed and the programme has not been as successful as one would have hoped. The Department has, however, accepted the challenge coupled with this category of training and should have the programme functioning with the minimum of problems with the next intake of trainees.

4.4 Re-training programmes

The rapid development of disciplines in today's rapidly changing world is not solely reserved for the natural sciences and technology. Rapid developments are also taking place in social sciences. In a discipline like Public Administration which trains candidates for practice, an academic department has to accept the responsibility of re-training public officials on all levels of the administrative hierarchy. Although the Department has not yet embarked on this important venture, it is in an advanced stage of planning. The retraining programmes the Department envisages will bring the official back to the class-room to participate in short courses, symposia and conferences on new developments in Public Administration.

4.5 Research

In conclusion the Department accepts as an important component of its activities its responsibility for research. In co-operation with the University of Pretoria's Department of Public Administration all members of the Department participated in a research project in Lebowa. Various research projects resulting from the Lebowa project will receive the attention of the Department in the near future.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, with this address I accept the chair in Public Administration and pledge to continuously only give my best and undivided loyal support to the task we are busy with in assisting in the development of our beautiful country — SOUTH AFRICA.

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