

South Africa links with 15 US varsities

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Cape Town - A new partnership, which Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande has entered into with 15 universities in the US, is set to open doors for aspiring academics from historically disadvantaged universities in South Africa.

The partnership was announced this week after a recent meeting between Nzimande and the president of the University of the District of Columbia, Ronald Mason jr, as well as representatives of other US universities including Kansas, Hampton, Morgan State University, Stevenson, Old Dominion, Howard and George Washington.

Khaye Nkwanyana, a spokesman for the Department of Higher Education and Training, said the partnership would include exchange opportunities for students as well as lecturers.

He said the department was leading a programme to regenerate the academic profession and, as part of the new partnership, there would be a special focus on providing opportunities for PhD students and other aspiring young academics at the country's historically disadvantaged tertiary institutions to go to institutions in the US.

The partnership would also provide for research collaborations between universities in the two countries."This could be of great benefit for researchers and presents a wonderful opportunity for students who aspire to be academics."

He said the students selected to go to the US would sign a contract aimed at ensuring they returned to South Africa to share their knowledge and skills upon completion of their studies.

Nkwanyana said applications would soon be invited, adding that similar partnerships between South Africa and other parts of the world, including the UK, had already been put in place. Last year the minister announced two programmes to accelerate academic transformation in the country.

Through the Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework and the New Generation of Academics Programme, 102 posts had been filled by black academics, and Nzimande said a further 100 would be appointed in the coming months.

Source: IOL

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