KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND INNOVATION IN THE HUMANITIES

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Seminar Report

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CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A	Answer
ASSAf	Academy of Science for South Africa
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DST	Department of Science and Technology
HSD	Human and Social Dynamics
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HUMA	Institute for Humanities
LLB	Bachelor of Laws
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NIHSS	National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSI	National System of Innovation
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Q & A	Questions and Answers
Q	Question
SSH	Social Sciences and Humanities
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
WISER	Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the June 2014 Academy of Science for South Africa (ASSAf) Humanities Conference, the Minister of Science and Technology requested the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to convene a seminar to discuss how the relevant DST Science Councils have responded to the ASSAf *Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa*(2011). The seminar took place in Pretoria on 17 September 2014 and was attended by representatives of ASSAf, several universities, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

The presentations during the seminar summarised the *ASSAf Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa* and the Department of Higher Education and Training's *Charter for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Further perspectives were provided by extracts from a response on these two documents prepared for the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) by the HSRC[1] and a position paper entitled *Making the Case for the Humanities* which was prepared as one of the background papers for the ASSAf Consensus Study.

The ASSAf report made ten "game-breaking" recommendations which call for closer examination. These recommendations are: the importance of the humanities needs to be promoted; strategic disciplines, including African Languages, Philosophy, History and the Creative and Performing Arts, must continue to be funded; a Government White Paper on the Humanities is needed; funding of advanced degrees must be restructured; Research Chairs and Centres of Excellence in the humanities must be established; a National Fund for Humanities Research must be set up; ASSAf must increase its humanities representation; humanities subjects must be promoted within the Basic Education system; all university students should be exposed to humanities subjects; and efforts should be made to promote the humanities through national (televised) lectures and achievements recognised by national awards.

One of the challenges identified was how to re-package academic discourse in a way that maximises its potential use by policy makers. The suggestion was made that a 'policymakers' booklet' is a useful tool but there was disagreement over who is best placed to produce such a document. Some felt it was a task for government while others argued that it could be done by ASSAf. After some discussion, it was agreed that ASSAf would produce the policymakers' booklet.

The *Humanities and Social Sciences Final Report and Charter* produced by DHET came in for some criticism. The Charter does not appear to have fully analysed the university curriculum nor is collaboration properly considered. Moreover, it does not give sufficient consideration to important role players such as the Science Councils.

Several speakers highlighted the merits of a broader education which implies less of a divide between Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines and the humanities so that all students have some exposure to all disciplines. Scientists must become literate in the humanities sense so that they can interpret the human situation, and it is equally important for humanities students to be able to interpret numerical data.

The seminar endorsed the Minister of Science and Technology's concern about potential duplication of effort caused by the establishment of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences with a mandate that overlaps aspects of both the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the HSRC. This matter requires further discussion among the parties involved.

The HSRC's own report on the Humanities calls for ring-fenced funding to help kick-start strategic research projects and longitudinal studies with a humanities focus to help promote the humanities in the long term. In the medium term, there need to be more focused efforts to recruit qualified humanities staff.

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[1]HSRC *Submission to DHET task team (re. Final Report: Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences)*, HSRC unpublished.

The notion that we can create a better society purely through science and technology was challenged because there is mass illiteracy and social and racial divisions in society. It is the Humanities and Social Sciences that are best placed to address these issues. Following international trends and allowing a decline in humanities' scholarship may result in South Africa being unable to define its problems in ways that are appropriate to the context in which South Africans live.

The seminar acknowledged that the current DST funding model for humanities research tends to force people to focus on policy-relevant research questions and quick solutions. What is needed, in addition, is funding of people and time to do more in depth analysis.

Some delegates felt that the 'crisis in the humanities' may be overstated since there has been an increase in the number of humanities graduates in recent years and yet the proportion of graduates who remain unemployed is said to be quite low in an international context. However, despite some debate about the extent of the 'crisis' there was agreement that current funding policies favour STEM disciplines to such an extent that there may be a decline in numbers of *postgraduate* humanities scholars. This in turn may weaken humanities scholarship as members of the current academic population age and retire. The current definition of 'innovation' was also identified as problematic since it is seen as only relating to activities that result in economic advantage whereas the ASSAf report's authors argue that social innovation is just as important.

A pertinent remark by one of the speakers was that while there may be some who believe that science and technology is a *sufficient* condition for development, most of the participants in the seminar would agree that science is *necessary* but not *sufficient;* the humanities have a great deal to add.

Questions that need to be answered in order to chart the way forward include:
1) Where are we now?
2) Where do we want to be with regards to the humanities in the future?
3) How are we going to get there?
4) How will we know when we have arrived?

Answering these questions will help to determine how we can leverage the necessary resources for the journey. A key component will be getting other players such as policy makers, those involved in higher education, and civil society, to join the conversation.

Given the number of unresolved questions and a need to include a broader range of stakeholders it was concluded that this seminar should be the first of three workshops. A second meeting was proposed at which other DST entities such as the CSIR and NRF could be consulted. A third meeting including Research Chairs and representatives of Centres of Excellence could be used to develop a more refined government consensus document which would chart the way forward for Humanities in South Africa, rather than for a particular department or institution. At the same time there is scope for parallel discussions with the government's Social Cluster, possibly some Chapter Nine Institutions, and civil society.

KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND INNOVATION IN THE HUMANITIES

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF DST RESEARCH SEMINARS

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) Human and Social Dynamics (HSD) Research Seminar Series are designed to: (i) showcase research and knowledge production in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) which is generated by the National System of Innovation (NSI); (ii) serve as vehicles for disseminating research evidence to wider and diverse audiences; (iii) operate as platforms for the sharing of local and international expertise and experience; and (iv) promote research and knowledge production in the SSH that benefits and enhances the NSI.

The HSD Research Seminar Series aim to:
- Disseminate scientific research findings and transmit a body of new knowledge (through an interactive process of critical dialogue and collegial critique) to the SSH research community and other interested actors in the NSI;
- Provide an avenue for rated and other researchers, including researchers from rural-based universities to engage in knowledge dialogues across faculties and with other interested actors in the NSI;
- Present and discuss new and ongoing research, identify research gaps, and suggest new research agendas in SSH with a view to forging closer links between the research communities in these fields;
- Reinforce the visibility of SSH research to the higher education and science council sector;
- Enhance wider public understanding of the SSH, including the value and status of both individual and team-based research; and
- Strategically promote, develop, and coordinate collaborative and interdisciplinary research within and between Higher Education Institutions and Science Councils.

RECENT BACKGROUND TO THE KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND INNOVATION IN THE HUMANITIES

SEMINAR

The broad scope of the "human sciences" (encompassing social sciences *and* the humanities), the DST's strategic approach to the concept of science and technology, and the location of the humanities is to be understood in the context of three important interrelated paradigms:

- The transition toward a knowledge-based economy;
- Investment in development as a self-sustained Knowledge Society; and
- Greater emphasis on building human capital.

At the June 2014 Academy of Science for South Africa (ASSAf) Humanities Conference, the Minister of Science and Technology (in her opening address) requested the DST to convene a seminar with the HSRC, National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Academy of Science for South Africa (ASSAf) to discuss how the relevant DST Science Councils have responded to the ASSAf Humanities Report. As such, this seminar began a process to critically engage the ASSAf *Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa: Status, Prospects and Strategies* (ASSAf, 2011). Perspectives from ASSAf, the HSRC, and other relevant voices were used to inform the seminar.

BROADER AND SPECIFIC CONTEXT

In light of international concerns over the diminishing role of the humanities in academia and the wider knowledge sphere, a number of countries have launched initiatives to investigate the severity of the issue and to recommend ways to enhance and defend the field (ASSAf 2011: 19). While the concern over the fate of the humanities is indeed global, their issues and shortcomings in funding, support and utilization are varied. As such, the initiatives to address the 'crisis' in the humanities must be undertaken on a local level. In South Africa, the focus on the humanities is premised on how we

can be reconciled (or not) in the context of our historic polarization (race, class, gender, ethnicity, geography, disability and histories) to shape a new, inclusive and socially cohesive society. This requires innovation and public engagement.

This seminar engaged a few important documents – the *Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa: Status, prospects and strategies* (ASSAf, 2011); the *Final Report: Charter for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (DHET, 2011a and 2011b)*;* and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) *Institutional Review of 2010* (HSRC, 2011) – against the context of the HSRC's mission, vision, focus and strategic plan surrounding the social sciences and the humanities, as well as the role of the HSRC as a Statutory Research Council in the field of Social and Human Science Research.

The 'humanities' in South Africa (as elsewhere) face a crisis of credibility as a result of the shift towards a vocational, career-oriented view of university education. There is vigorous debate addressing the need for the humanities to articulate a more dedicated social and educational purpose so that its value is recognised beyond academia. The urgency to revitalise a humanities-driven research theme is also underpinned by the HSRC mission statements, namely (1) the "promotion of research in the field of human sciences to improve understanding of social conditions and the process of social change"; (2) "to promote human science research of the highest quality"; (3) "to engage with colleagues elsewhere in Africa and the rest of the world through networks and joint programmes of research on pressing social issues relevant to human welfare and prosperity" and finally, (4) to "delivering *human* science that makes a difference".

With the view that the humanities are indispensable in terms of providing a knowledge-base and analytical skills through study, the Academy of Science of South Africa's Consensus Study (released in August 2011) aimed to get to the heart of the 'crisis' in the field, and outlines recommendations to rectify this growing problem. While the Charter (Department of Higher Education &Training, 2011a and 2011b) focuses strictly on the Social Sciences and Humanities in education to the exclusion of related factors (i.e. policy, interdisciplinarity, etc.), the Consensus Study is a broad examination of how to both defend and rebuild the field in several arenas. Note that for the purposes of this Study, the social sciences are placed under the umbrella of the humanities. It names several findings in terms of the state of the humanities, and then goes on to make ten "game-changing" recommendations.

The Consensus Study first outlines that the 'crisis' in the humanities stems from decreasing government funding and declining student enrolments coupled with decreasing graduation rates. The declining enrolments are partially resulting from market signals (and possibly also perceptions), which hint that one cannot get a job with a BA. Contrary to popular perception, this Study ascertained that the majority of humanities graduates are, in fact, employed. Because of this misconception, it is clear that merely increasing funding to the humanities is not enough to solve the problem. At the same time the report indicates that the funding formula in higher education has tended to favour science and technology subjects over the humanities and this perhaps explains the trend of declining student enrolments in the humanities. While science and technology subjects are key drivers of economic development in societies in transition, it is the humanities that have tended to take up the problems that science and technology throws at society. The problems of industrialisation, poor working conditions, communicable diseases, women and worker rights, urbanization, population growth, and changing structure of the family, were, and continue to be addressed by the social sciences and humanities through research that results in the development of appropriate social policies.

Declining enrolments and graduation rates also have an effect on the scholarly workforce, and ASSAf asserts that the most significant threat to future scholarship in the humanities is the ageing academic makeup of the field. Further, the post-apartheid governmental structure is ultimately designed to benefit the science and technology sectors. The Consensus Study agrees with the Charter Report in that the accreditation structure for humanities publications needs to be reformatted in favour of the humanities in order to increase viable and internationally recognized knowledge-production in this area. Additionally, the Study asserts that the majority of scholarship reflects racial inequalities of knowledge-production. Finally, the Consensus Study notes that since both the prospects and the performance of the humanities vary so widely across fields of study, it is imperative to tailor different

interventions to suit these variations; in other words, there is no 'one size fits all' solution that will address all the problems.

There has been a recommendation to establish a Humanities Council with statutory standing which will advise the government on how to improve the standing and status of the humanities in the country (a new National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences has been established). The ASSAf report also proposes that government funding allocations to the humanities should be reviewed and refined (2011: 133) with specific funding in critical areas (such as philosophy, history, African Languages, and the creative and performing arts). There is a commitment to developing a Government White Paper which will help integrate humanities into government policy. The idea of developing a White Policy paper which will integrate the humanities (and social sciences) into government policy is a good one. Society will benefit from humanities graduates who understand the tapestry of laws and policies relevant to their planned careers and that will include the primary sectors in which they are likely to find jobs and collaborating sectors. For example, a paediatrician should understand both the Health Act and the Children's Act.

For the purpose of rekindling the humanities, the White paper should further seek to integrate tertiary teaching, policy making and research. This approach will improve South Africa's situation on policy implementation (and monitoring and evaluation). Given the skills weaknesses in some of the local governments, engagement among research, teaching departments and government is desirable. Researchers can translate some high-level conceptualisation in policy instruments for other bureaucrats and leaders who sometimes ignore the implementation of some areas of policy because of limited skills.

A good example of this kind of synergy has been experienced with the White Paper for Social Welfare (SA Government 1997). The policy stimulated change in teaching departments. Many shifted from a high dose of clinical social work to a more progressive 'community development' approach following the development of the White Paper. We would like to see a similar kind of influence happening with regard to the Children's Act, Chapter 8 on Prevention and Early Interventions. The translation of this law into concrete interventions is delayed and in some quarters, planners completely misinterpret what these interventions would require to put in place, i.e. research-based evidence.

Additionally, restructuring humanities funding for advanced degrees is recommended, and also establishing a dedicated National Fund for Humanities Research (including both private and governmental funding). Speeding up the establishment of DST funded Centres of Excellence and Research Chairs in order to build capacity for future humanities scholars is noted as important, as is the restructuring of ASSAf to display a stronger commitment to the humanities. Adaptations to schooling in the humanities are suggested, including both boosting humanities basic education and advancing the humanities curriculum in undergraduate programmes. Finally, ASSAf recommends the promotion of the value of humanities in broader society, using such strategies as major awards, an annual televised National Humanities Lecture, and a national medal for the humanities.

The importance of the humanities lies in their ability to strategically explore the risks and opportunities presented by technological change. Through the use of tools and methods developed in the humanities, society is able to evaluate local and global priorities, critically engage with the ethical dilemmas that confront contemporary society and devise contextually relevant solutions. The SSH have a role to play in addressing the multi-faceted challenges wrought by technological development locally and globally. In this regard the humanities will continue to be relevant and the proposed White Paper is indeed timely.

Both the *Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa: Status, prospects and strategies* (ASSAf, 2011) and the *Final Report: Charter for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (DHET, 2011a and 2011b) have generated much debate and discussion since their publication; offering renewed engagement with the meaning and purpose of the humanities. This seminar engaged perspectives from relevant stakeholders to identify additional pathways to concretize innovative and collaborative work in the humanities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

- *Offer perspectives on the ASSAf Consensus Study;*
- *Provide insights into what might be next steps in revitalising science and technology interventions in short, medium to long-term policy in the humanities;*
- *Initiate and mobilise ideas to concretize planning to build, sustain and promote collaborations and shared approaches to the humanities in the development of human capital in a knowledge-based society;*
- *Promote the value in the human meaning of public policy in evidence-based research;*
- *Produce a report which captures the critical talking points emanating from the presentations and discussions for consideration by Minister Naledi Pandor.*

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THE PARTICIPANTS

This seminar brought together researchers and role players from academic institutions and government. There was an intentional effort to bring together some of those who had participated in recent efforts to interrogate the status of the humanities in South Africa and to use the meeting as a starting point in a process to take current debates forward. Participants included representatives from the Department for Science and Technology; the Academy of Science for South Africa; and the Human Sciences Research Council. The National Research Foundation (NRF) was invited to participate but unfortunately was unable to participate because of a strategic planning meeting at Sutherland coinciding with the DST Humanities Seminar. There were 34 participants (see Appendix 4 for details).

THE SEMINAR

Please refer to Appendix 4 for PowerPoint slides used in the presentations.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde, Deputy Director General, Research Development & Support, Department of Science and Technology

In his introduction Dr Auf der Heyde explained that the seminar had its origins in a comment made by the Minister of Science & Technology, the honourable Naledi Pandor, at the June 2014 ASSAfHumanities Conference.[2] The Minister expressed concern that the DST and its entities had not yet made a collective response to the ASSAf*Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa* which was published in 2011.

The objectives of the seminar had been explained in the circular distributed in advance (see Introduction above) but Dr Auf der Heyde felt that the key objectives of the meeting could be simplified to the following:

1. The seminar had a "compliance requirement" in that the Minister expects a response to the ASSAf report by relevant stakeholders and DST needs for to be involved in this; and
2. The Minister requires a report that captures critical talking points on the future of the humanities.

The ASSAfreport raises many substantive issues which pose considerable challenges and this meeting is to be seen as the start of a process which may take some time to reach its conclusion. Despite a concern that several important stakeholders were not present, the initial meeting was intended to start the process by allowing two substantive position papers on the so-called 'crisis in the humanities' and some in-depth analysis of the ASSAf report to be shared with a wider audience.

PROGRESS MADE SINCE PUBLICATION OF THE ASSAF HUMANITIES REPORT, INCLUDING THE STATUS UPDATE, CHALLENGES, AND SUCCESSES.

Prof. Peter Vale, Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg & ASSAf

Prof Vale began his presentation by thanking the Minister and the organisers for recognising the need to discuss the ASSAf Humanities report and pointed out that although the report was tabled in 2011 the issues are still just as relevant today. It is important to be clear about definitions and in the case of ASSAf there were deliberate inclusions and exclusions. Social science was included in the Humanities Report but Economics and Business Studies were excluded. This was largely because Economics and Business Studies mainly operate quite independently of the humanities in South Africa. However, for the way forward we need to be flexible about who or what we include and exclude. There is excellent work being done, for example, by economists on poverty.

One of the issues that needs to be better understood is the terminology used in governance of the humanities. The term innovation is particularly problematic in that it is largely seen as directly relating to economic outcomes. Convincing people about the importance of social innovation is much harder.

As part of the recommended pre-reading for this meeting a paper entitled *Innovation: The government was crucial after all* by Jeff Madrick (2014)[3] was circulated. This paper contains some

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[2] ASSAf Humanities Conference, *Living the world, Reading the World, understanding the World: The Humanities reach Out,* 26-27 June 2014, Pretoria.

[3] Madrick, J, 2014. *Innovation: The government was crucial after all.* The New York Review of Books April 2014. http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/apr/24/innovation-government-was-crucial-after-all/

important truths about how governments have had much more to do with innovation than they receive credit for. From the evidence cited by Madrick (2014) the state has clearly played a significant role in innovation.

The underlying rationale for the ASSAf study was the premise that there is a 'crisis' in the humanities. Reasons for this include the governmental emphasis on science and technology; the political emphasis on the economically-grounded idea of "developmentalism;" the shift of values among youth (and their parents) towards practical employment and financial gain; and that the challenges faced by our society are so urgent and immediate that the reflective and critical modes of thinking favoured in the humanities seem unaffordable luxuries. The social climate, moreover, is one which favours immediate action and practical answers. The pervasive political and policy discourses emphasize science and technology in isolation of the social sciences and the humanities as the drivers of the knowledge economy.

The great changes in South Africa came about through our understanding of the humanities but since 1994 we seem to have gone off in another direction. There is nothing in the Financial Mail about the humanities these days – it is all science and economics with little or nothing on political issues.

The humanities and social sciences should *not* be managed the same as other subjects. Yet currently, performance is viewed through a lens defined by the sciences. As a result, public and private funding heavily favours the natural science disciplines with direct implications for the quality, depth and sustainability of social research. On the margins of the academy powerful voices are beginning to make the case for the humanities, not as isolated from or in competition with science and technology disciplines, but as vital and complementary parts of the same developmental challenges.

The ASSAf report made 10 "game-breaking" recommendations. These are:

Recommendation 1: Establish with statutory status a Council for the humanities to advise …on how to improve the status and standing of the humanities in South Africa.
> *This recommendation seeks to influence the "public mind".*

Recommendation 2: Review and refine government funding allocations to the humanities with substantive earmarked funding in critical areas, such as African Languages, Philosophy, History and the Creative and Performing Arts.
> *This recommendation aims to help save "strategic disciplines". In this context, the advancement of books by the academy and the funding of books by government could significantly enhance the book as a cultural and human asset in both the scholarly and public mind. Books should be given greater prominence than journals since scholarly books take years to write. There needs to be funding to support those who are writing books. This has the potential to play to the Human and Social Sciences strengths since the book is the gold standard for the humanities.*

Recommendation 3: Commit to the development of a Government White Paper on the Humanities that establishes in the public mind and in government policy a renewed emphasis on the humanities, and its full integration into national science policy.
> *This again addresses the public mind and engages government directly.*

Recommendation 4: Restructure funding for advanced degrees (doctorates in particular) through national funding agencies such as the NRF to enable full-time study for top candidates in the humanities who make the choice of academic careers.
> *This recommendation is designed to 'build the future'.*

Recommendation 5: Accelerate the establishment of prestigious Research Chairs and Centres of Excellence in the humanities, appointing leading professors of the humanities with two clear missions: the pursuit of excellence in humanities research and the building of capacity for next-generation humanities scholars.
> *This recommendation aims to develop 'real' excellence, relevance and diversity.*

Recommendation 6: Inaugurate a dedicated National Fund for Humanities Research which combines earmarked government funding with national and international private and philanthropic funding that fuels top-quality humanities research in and outside South African universities.

> *Secure funding is essential to promote the best research.*

Recommendation 7: Transform the organisation and design of the Academy of Science of South Africa so that a more emphatic statement of its commitment to the humanities becomes self-evident, e.g. the re-naming of the Academy, the investigation of a second premier academy journal specifically for the humanities, the constitution of 50 per cent humanities appointments to Council, and other signalling measures for the only recognised Academy in South Africa.

> *This calls for the creation of equitable space and time for the humanities and some critical housekeeping within ASSAf.*

Recommendation 8: Initiate, through the leadership of the Department of Basic Education, considered measures to boost knowledge of, and positive choices for the humanities, throughout the twelve years of schooling - including progressive ways of privileging the Arts, History and Languages in the school curriculum through Grade 12.

> *This aims to foster the future, make the humanities matter and help build democracy.*

Recommendation 9: Advance the idea of a broad-based humanities curriculum, ideally in an interdisciplinary core study programme for undergraduates, which exposes all university students to some study of the humanities.

> *This aims to graduate better workers, create better citizens and produce more literate democrats. This is rather like a return to the old liberal arts type of education. Graduates need to be adept at critical reading and thinking which is just as important as producing accountants. Law professors in some universities have already done away with the undergraduate LLB in favour of allowing students with a general degree in any discipline to then pursue a postgraduate LLB. The narrow specialised degree is very limiting both in terms of employment opportunities and enabling critical thinking.*

Recommendation 10: Promote in the broader society the value of the humanities and humanities scholarship and practice through prestigious awards that draw national and international attention to the humanities among scholars, university students and intellectuals broadly.

An Annual National Humanities Lecture which is televised and linked to a National Medal in the Humanities would do much to signal the importance of the humanities in the public sphere.

> *This contributes to building the humanities in the public mind and the NRF has agreed to support a National Humanities Lecture.*

Challenges

There are, however, challenges to implementing these recommendations. In the past there has been a tendency to refer important decisions to panels of experts which, depending on circumstances may be far from ideal (see cartoon)[4] but Vale argued that it is far better to consult broadly among people who are actually involved in the humanities. He pointed out that the South African Journal of Science has dedicated Associate Editors allocated to many different scientific disciplines but only one for the whole of humanities. Old attitudes die hard and the

"Thank God! A panel of experts!"

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[4]Mankoff, R. 2004. *The Complete Cartoons of The New Yorker*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, p. 438

dominant science, mathematics and economics mind set tends to ignore the importance of the humanities. After a recent series of public humanities lectures in Grahamstown a senior government official said: "I have heard nothing here that will fit into my medium-term budget framework…" Clearly there is a need for greater efforts to enlighten stakeholders and potential users of humanities research about the important contributions that the humanities can make.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)

Q: Sagren Moodley, DST. In the current climate of fiscal constraint what we need is less passion and more pragmatism. Dr Moodley asked who the intended audience is for the ASSAf report since it was not clear whether it was intended for academics or decision makers or both. The defensive, polemical mode has not served the humanities well since it does little to persuade detractors. This is unfortunate, at a time when we need a more tempered, reflective and pragmatic response given the need to influence important decision-makers (primarily National Treasury). He argued that recent evidence does not necessarily support the extravagant claim of a 'crisis in the humanities'. There has been an increase in enrolment in humanities and more PhDs have been produced. The SSH disciplines continue to publish (39% of total research output) at a high rate relative to staff complement (35% of the overall staff complement). More than eighty percent of books are attributed to the humanities and social sciences: so where is this crisis? However, he conceded that the 'traditional' humanities (languages, literature, philosophy, history, art history, cultural studies, religious studies, and the classics) may be at risk. The challenge lies with institutional and societal culture which may not be supportive and nurturing of the 'traditional' humanities.

There are systemic challenges – weak policy coordination and differing interpretations of SSH - for setting priorities for research and funding. A different set of strategic principles may be needed and the ASSAf Humanities Report might not be an ideal tool for informing and influencing decision-makers. A measured, nuanced policymakers' booklet may do a better job and the book by Helen Small (2013) on *The Value of the Humanities*[5] is a good example of a more suitable approach for dealing with sceptics and number-crunchers. Fiscal resources for making desirable investments to advance the SSH are likely to be constrained in the near to medium term by broad fiscal pressures on all government funding agencies. As such, the hard reality of limited resources in the science system must be carefully considered.

Q: Charles Hongoro, HSRC. What was the reason for excluding economics? Is it because of the dominant issues in economics or is it conceptual?

A: Peter Vale. A book for policy makers is a very good idea but this is not something that ASSAf would normally do and should probably be addressed by the ministries concerned. ASSAf's job is to put the report's suggestions in the public domain. Humanities and social sciences are included in the report although it was never the intention to leave out other disciplines such as political science or sociology. The view on economics was that mainstream economics is a mathematical discipline which is far removed from human and social science. There are, of course, some economists doing historical analysis but they are not the mainstream.

A: Dr Auf der Heyde recalled a recent discussion in which it was stated that maths has become the key sensory tool to describe natural phenomena that we cannot see, taste, hear or feel. But when we can no longer adequately describe phenomena we should not just resort to maths. Economists may use maths to describe complex socio-political phenomena but this is insufficient on its own.

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[5] Small, H, 2013. *The Value of the Humanities.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

THE ASSAF (2011) CONSENSUS STUDY ON THE STATE OF THE HUMANITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA & THE DHET CHARTER (2011): PERSPECTIVES AND COMMENTS

Prof. Vasu Reddy, Executive Director: Human and Social Development (HSD), HSRC

This presentation was based on a report submitted to the Department for Higher Education and Training by the HSRC in response to the *ASSAf Consensus Study on the Humanities in South Africa* (2011) and the Department for Higher Education and Training's *Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences* (2011). [6]

The broader context of this initiative is about creating new narratives for South Africa. Some of the critical issues facing the country include: creating jobs and livelihoods; expanding infrastructure; transitioning to a low-carbon economy; transforming urban and rural spaces; improving education and training; providing quality health care; building a capable state; fighting corruption and enhancing accountability; transforming society and uniting the nation. All of these relate to improvement of social life with social and human(e) consequences. They have policy and programmatic implications and are also knowledge-driven, but they also tell us that it is not merely policy concerns that matter.

In examining the HSRC's vision it is apparent that this is about 'human and social development' but this phrase needs to be unpacked to understand what it actually means. The work goes beyond applied research and includes both policy development and blue skies research. Human and social development is about expanding the choices we have to lead lives that we value to improve the human condition (drawing on Sen; Nussbaum). Development is to be understood in its multi-dimensionality as a process of deepening our democracy and fostering nation building. The process includes predetermined objectives and democratic participation, growth and advancement (a process of expanding the real freedoms people should enjoy) and more than simply sustaining life. Human-centred development prioritizes the development of the underdeveloped and allows real freedoms to arise in political action. Social cohesiveness is an ongoing project contingent upon discussion, debate and action and part of the activity of world building.

The humanities have been defined by various authors as a field that attempts to "understand the complexity of the human condition" (Bolton, 2010); "identify a realistic conception of the world as created by human beings (Jacobs, 2009); and "construct 'logical discursive frameworks'" (Blythe & Croft, 2010). A 2010 Royal Academy Report defined it in this way: "The humanities explore what it means to be human: the words, ideas, narratives and the art and artefacts that help us make sense of our lives and the world we live in; how we have created it, and are created by it". Reddy concluded that the humanities are the study of the human condition and an attempt to come to grips with human life and its meaning through analytical, reflexive, critical, qualitative and creative methods. The areas of study include literature, language, linguistics, philosophy, history, religion and the arts.

The ASSAf report opts for inclusivity but perceptions prevail about distinctions and social sciences and the humanities are perceived as different but with an area of overlap which explores and contextualises human experience (Figure 1)

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[6] Department of Higher Education and Training (2011). *Final Report: Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences*. 30 June 2011. 1-69.
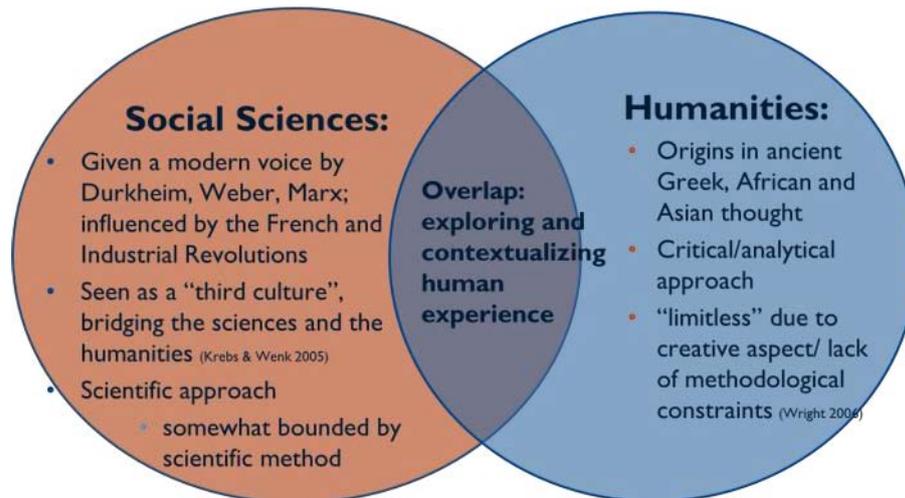
Figure 1 Social Sciences and Humanities: differences and overlap

There are a number of contributing factors to the supposed 'crisis' within the humanities. Universities are said to be corporatizing higher education with the emphasis being on vocations and the training of experts. The global financial crisis has had an impact on funding, especially for subjects that are seen as more esoteric and training in the humanities is thought to not guarantee jobs. At the same time, methodologies used in the humanities often require more time for processing outcomes and the qualitative nature of humanities research is seen by some as ineffectual when compared to 'hard science'. Policy makers are perhaps reluctant to accept outcomes of qualitative research because the outcomes cannot be subjected to rigorous quality control.

However, three major contributions of the humanities are widely agreed upon, namely:
1. Engaging in a narrative to describe lived experience;
2. Helping to foster human understanding and perspective; and
3. Enabling us to have a realistic conception of the world around us.

The humanities also offer the advantage of interdisciplinary approaches where two or more academic disciplines are combined crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries and methods. Humanities also offer opportunities to connect different ways of thinking in pursuit of a common academic goal thereby achieving the synthesis and integration of knowledge. For example, 'gender' may be conceptualised through multiple lenses such as, but not limited to, political science, in terms of power; philosophy, in terms of meaning; sociology, in terms of context; psychology, in terms of mental or emotional aspects; economics, in terms of economic impact; history, in terms of past conflicts or conceptualizations and so on. Ultimately, such approaches can create collaborative, holistic solutions which are better suited to modern problems, where a unidirectional approach would be insufficient.

In the context of debates around the merits of humanities and social sciences the DST "Grand Challenges" put forward in the Department's Ten year Innovation Plan are important. One of these is to: "Increase our ability to anticipate the complex consequences of change; to better understand the dynamics of human and social behaviour at all levels; to better understand the cognitive and social structures that create and define change; and to help people and organizations better manage profound or rapid change" (DST, 2010: 7). Further, the DST concept paper and strategic framework for the Grand Challenge defines 'human and social dynamics' as: "humanity's behaviour and development in the face of continuous change" (DST, 2010:12), including people's interaction, adaptation, and decision making processes. It is because human and social dynamics allow us a deeper understanding of social processes that research in this area should be supported and deepened. The DST paper goes on to say that the value of the social sciences and humanities…is not well understood by society and that there is the necessity for a long-term perspective about the

'social dynamic' and its relation to 'civil action' – 'a point that is not always appreciated in policy development' (DST, 2010: 18).

The DST Concept paper identifies four focus areas, namely, science, technology and society; the dynamics of human and social behaviour; social cohesion and identity; and societal change and the evolution of modern society. Within these focus areas, there is intent to bring together "researchers, scholars, funders, policy makers and decision-makers to promote authoritative research in the social sciences and humanities…through effective collaboration" (2010: 14). This will enhance the production of research and support "effective decision-making and policy dialogue" (ibid). The slide below (Figure 2) summarises how some of these focus areas are put into practice within the HSRC.

Finally, turning to the *Humanities and Social Sciences Final Report and Charter* produced by the Department of Higher Education and Training. This document identifies six interventions in two phases between 2012 and 2018 to 'dynamize' the fields of the Human and Social Sciences. They include a broad historiography and idealism which needs to be addressed. The university curriculum has not been fully analysed and the theme of collaboration is not emphasized in this document. Neither has engagement with research institutions such as the HSRC been examined. While this document purports to addresses the 'crisis' within the humanities, it does little to push it beyond established boundaries and frankly seems insular in its approach. We are left with a tension conceptually between utility and implementation.

The ASSAf Consensus study makes some solid and powerful recommendations about rebuilding the humanities in several areas and finds the humanities in higher education institutions to be in a process of stagnation. The report cites declining enrolments and graduations in humanities with a concomitant effect on the workforce. The current funding formula favours science and technology subjects and the accreditation structure for humanities publications needs to be revised because publications in humanities lack international standing and reputation. Another issue identified is the ageing academic and research workforce alongside a decline in doctoral graduands which will ultimately affect capacity. Scholarship also reflects racial inequalities of knowledge production and there is uneven terrain in respect of performance across disciplines and across higher education institutions.

Figure 2 Examples of how the focus areas of the DST Grand Challenge Plan are addressed within the HSRC

As mentioned in Prof Vale's presentation, the ASSAf report makes a series of sound recommendations (listed above) but what appears to be missing is practical detail of the strategies for addressing these challenges.

The DHET Charter for Humanities and Social Science focuses on strengthening the humanities and promoting an ethical citizenship which is sensitive to the immediate and long-term development goals of the Global South. It also contains a number of recommendations, firstly the formation of a *National*

Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), which has already been done.[7] The initial focus of the Institute is to develop an African Renaissance Programme and this is based on six 'Catalytic Projects' designed to animate the field.

The Institute will also review the funding and rewards structure for the field; develop MOUs between government, the university system and the HSRC; and help ensure that 20 per cent of knowledge-linked state expenditure is spent on partnerships with the HSRC (and HSRC and universities). However, it is unclear how this figure of 20 per cent was arrived at.

Within the HSRC, efforts have been made to position the humanities more prominently. On a 'generic level' efforts are being made to:

- mobilise HSRC research capacities in humanities to address issues related to the development of human capital in a knowledge-based society;
- cultivate, develop and structure the humanities in a way that exploits opportunities for researching solutions to existing and emerging social problems;
- promote the value in the human meaning of public policy in evidence-based research; and
- understand the relationships between citizens, and between citizens and institutions.

More specifically this includes:

- assessing how processes of development and social change, as well as public policies, shape fundamental aspects of South African society through a variety of differences;
- directing attention to the complexity of re-shaping differences in a transforming and diverse society;
- showing how such identifications evolve over time; and
- challenging closed and bounded identities in relation to understanding both our past, our heritage and our future in a transforming and developing state.

Current activities include: a distinguished lecture series; programmatic research Initiatives and publications; use of innovative methodologies (e.g. photo-voice, life narratives, visual methodologies, detailed ethnographies); projects on liberation studies; schools' sport and social cohesion; justice and constitutionality.

The HSRC's 2010 Review recommended that 20 per cent of all project proposals should address humanities-driven research but this is not yet fully achieved. Some of the problems and gaps that remain include the following. The HSRC is strong in the social sciences but less so in the humanities and one of the problems is that there is no common understanding among research programmes about mainstreaming the humanities. The HSRC needs to decide whether there should be individual and/or institutional champions. There is a lack of capacity in current staff with humanities qualifications and current funding does not allow mainstreaming of the humanities. Alignment of a planned African Studies focus to the humanities also needs greater conceptual clarity; including the remit of the Africa Institute of South Africa which was recently incorporated in the HSRC.
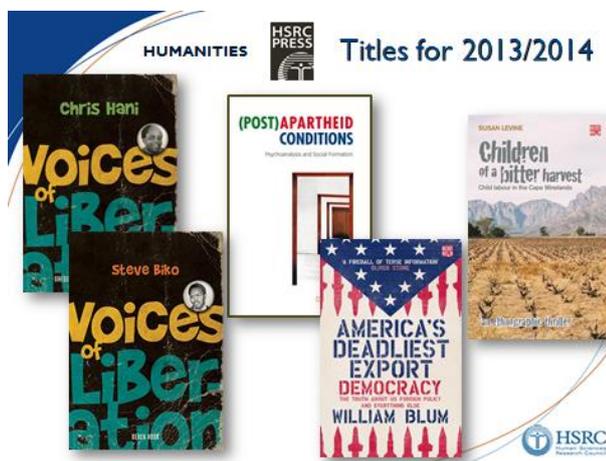
A number of initiatives are proposed for strengthening the humanities in the short, medium and long term. There needs to be ring-fenced funding to kick-start some strategic research projects at a pilot level and longitudinal studies with a humanities focus will help promote the humanities in the long term. In the medium and long term there need to be more focused efforts to recruit qualified

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[7] National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Johannesburg. http://www.hssi.org.za

humanities staff. There is a case to be made for a dedicated Research Programme/Unit focused purely on humanities-focused work. There is scope for greater collaboration on humanities work with other Research Councils and research bodies (e.g. NRF and ASSAf) and the new Institute for Humanities; as well as with Centres for Humanities in higher education Institutions. Some initiatives are under way but these are not enough. There are also opportunities for joint fundraising.

Internal HSRC discussions identified the need for engagement with strategic partners such as government departments including Science & Technology, Arts & Culture, Higher Education & Training, plus ASSAf and the NRF. This workshop is a first step but there is scope for a National Science Councils' led Colloquium on the humanities which could address both policy priority and blue skies questions in the short to medium term. A more focused internal discussion on humanities methodologies (including strong conceptual frameworks) can be mainstreamed into current work (short to medium term). The HSRC Press could also prioritize a humanities series (medium to long term).

When considering the road ahead Prof Reddy identified some key questions:

- Literacy, citizenship and quality of life in the nation are important (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2013), but what role do humanities projects have in this relationship?
- How do we continue to learn from the intended and unintended consequences of our times? And how do we anticipate and sufficiently allow for the human factor and the human condition in all of this?
- How do we ensure that we invigorate the humanities in the "knowledge chain"? (ASSAf, 2011: 14)
- How do we actively ensure deep intellectual diversity in our educational and research activity?
- How do we achieve this via collaboration and partnerships?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)

Q: Sagren Moodley, DST. Prof Reddy mentioned the critical analytical skills that are acquired by social scientists and humanists. I would argue that there is also an appreciation of ideas, creativity and speculative thinking in the Natural Sciences. I am alluding here to the public good of a university degree irrespective of discipline. The way people interpret the ASSAf report seems to focus primarily on the traditional humanities and not the humanities *and* the social sciences. Conflating all of the social sciences under the rubric of the humanities could be problematic given the diversity of disciplines – not to mention modes of enquiry, approaches and methodologies within disciplines - lumped together. The disciplines within the humanities and social sciences need to be dealt with a much more fine grained analysis in order to avoid inferences/recommendations based on sweeping generalisations of a monolithic 'humanities'. For example, there is much talk about the qualitative nature of the humanities yet there are some very quantitative social science disciplines such as psychology.

In the call for greater collaboration between research entities it seems that the HSRC might be well placed to facilitate the research networks that you propose. How does the HSRC envision its role in this space?

A: Vasu Reddy, HSRC I am not implying that natural scientists do not have analytical skills but that the methods of the humanities can add to them. It is not about one or the other but a more holistic approach. As for the broader HSRC mandate and facilitating greater collaboration, there are several other HSRC staff who can speak to this and we can return to this later.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

– Discussants Vasu Reddy and Peter Vale

Comment: Thomas Auf der Heyde, DST
DST has a reputation for being responsive to its stakeholders and it is a characteristic of the department to want to do everything quickly but this can prevent critical reflection. We cannot expect to achieve action plans and responses in this meeting but this does not make this discussion any less important. There are other agencies such as the NRF and CSIR which need to be involved and we should host a follow-up seminar to allow them to present their views on this report .

Second, without circumscribing comments still to come, whether there is a crisis in the humanities and social sciences or not is less important than identifying and agreeing on the challenges that exist, their sources and what can be done about them.

Comment: John Higgins -Author of background paper *Making the Case for the Humanities* for the ASSAf Consensus Study
The background paper *Making the Case for the Humanities*[8] prepared as part of the ASSAf consensus study was circulated to delegates before the meeting and this contains more detail than is in the ASSAf report.

Every choice of a particular focus inevitably marginalises something else. One of the things we found is that a focus on applied knowledge marginalises basic knowledge and basic research. This is common to both the Natural Sciences and Human and Social Sciences.

What perspective do we need to take when discussing these issues? Higher education seeks to produce graduates and one of the aims of scholarly research is therefore to ensure that the current state of the art is passed on to future generations. Without being at the cutting edge of research you don't know how knowledge is improving and by only looking at applied research you miss basic research and may be "starting out on the wrong foot." More specifically, regarding the Human and Social Sciences, it is important to see what is implied by certain emphases and what these tend to marginalise.

The key quality of 'graduateness' across disciplines is 'advanced forms of literacy' or the ability to analyse, process and interpret concepts. Primary literacy is a problem in South Africa and just as much so is advanced literacy. We should not ignore the undergirding of the questions in human identity. There is a sense that we can generate a utopian vision of excelling through science and technology but this prefers to forget the hard reality of mass illiteracy and social and racial divisions that pervade our society. It is the Human and Social Sciences that tend to deal with these marginalised areas. One contribution is by producing evidentiary knowledge and another is inner transformation, personal growth and better social communication which lie in education itself. Marginalising the humanities is not doing the country any good. In some ways this crisis in humanities is about focusing on some things while marginalising others. It is important to observe that some of the premier humanities institutions in the country such as the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) and the Institute for Humanities (HUMA) are not funded by South Africa but overseas funders. So we have to think about the health of the higher education system as a whole and we cannot do this when there is an exclusionary consensus which ignores some issues and promotes others. This is the legacy of following international templates which are bitterly contested across the globe and should be contested here.

Comment: Shireen Hassim, Wits
There is a bias that has real financial and structural implications for universities in the way in which funds are directed for research and post graduate students which has a marginalising effect. If funding continues to follow the same path we will reproduce the profound inequalities of the global system of

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[8] Higgins, J, 2013. Making a Case for the Humanities. In: Higgins, J, *Academic Freedom in a Democratic South Africa.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press

knowledge production. We are in danger of creating a situation where within two generations of scholarship we will no longer be able to define *our* problems in *our* ways, for *ourselves*, to address the context in which *we* live. For example, if we look at funding for PhD students. In the US, once you have a place in doctoral programme the university covers your costs. Here we use the science model which assumes that there is a senior scholar who defines the research agenda and the PhD students operate as apprentices who are expected to work under a 'master' and complete the PhD within three years. In the humanities, our focus is much more on the ability of the candidate to set a question and define a way of addressing that question. Most humanities professors would not consider publishing with their doctoral scholars because the students must develop their own voice. The funding system is geared towards rapid publications. Some say the Grand Challenges are broad and anyone can apply for funding under these grants. But the research question is often pre-defined and certain institutions are therefore effectively pre-selected.

Comment: Narnia Bohler-Muller, HSRC
There have been two interventions that focused on higher education so perhaps it is appropriate to add something form a science council. As Prof Reddy has said, the HSRC has tried to mainstream the humanities in its programmes but there are challenges. We have not mainstreamed humanities as much as we would like and this is in part due to an assumption by some that there really isn't a crisis. However, there is a sense that without specific funding the humanities cannot grow.

Another issue to consider is the Minister of Higher Education and Training's commitment to the humanities and social sciences with the creation of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), which appears to be something of an 'elephant in the room.' The Minister created this institution and has committed to fund some posts for postgraduate students; perhaps this should be discussed.

Response: Thomas Auf der Heyde, DST
With regard to the NIHSS, Minister Pandor communicated her view to DHET saying that the Institute created a risk of duplication of effort and investment between DST and DHET. The Draft NIHSS Bill received comment from DST and the department insisted that formal agreements would be needed between NIHSS and both HSRC and NRF. This is because the NIHSS is both a research *performer* and a *funder* and as such has functions that overlap with both the HSRC and NRF. The NIHSS is only just being formed but further discussion definitely needs to take place.

Comment: Claudia Hirtenfelder, HSRC/Africa Institute of South Africa
Apart from the institutional resistance caused by funding issues, emerging scholars experience subtle resistance to pursuing careers in the humanities. People are pushed towards applied science and the humanities are often seen as being 'soft' or 'wishy washy'. Even within the humanities there are various views and emerging scholars suffer because of this.

Questions: Daniel Plaatjies, HSRC
I have some questions to ask about the future of the humanities. 1) Where do we want to be with regards to the humanities? 2) How are we going to get there? 3) How will we know when we are there? and 4) How are we doing now? If we don't know what we want the future to look like it will be hard to influence it, especially when there are other choices on the table. Our own institutional settings govern how we think about humanities and social sciences and these interests invariably override an openness to different ways of crafting of the future. 'How we are doing now?' is the easy part but the difficult question is 'Where do we want to be in the long term?' and to systematically define the institutions that we need to get there. We also need to consider how we can leverage the necessary resources for the journey.

Comment: Sagren Moodley, DST
Mode one (curiosity-driven research) and mode two (applied) research are not diametrically opposed to one another – there are mutually reinforcing feedback loops. But if applied research is privileged over basic research this not only marginalises basic research but also leads to highly derivative research and, by implication, inferior research outputs. As such, both basic and applied research is important, and should be supported – it is not a question of one or the other.

Comment: CasPrinsloo, HSRC

I fully concur with statements about the importance of the literacy component of humanities. There is a theory of change that if you do not master the skills of knowledge early enough, by 15, you cannot progress further. This is a universal requirement for all disciplines and we must remember that scientists must be good thinkers too. There must be champions getting the right skills across in early education to ultimately help create graduates who have the right skills and competencies. This will determine the quality of the graduates and their suitability for becoming citizenship- and democracy-aware individuals.

Response: PeterVale, University of Johannesburg

It is vital to recognise that literacy runs in all directions and it is a source of worry that we produce graduates in the humanities who cannot read a number set. This means that we must look at the undergraduate curriculum because there are lots of things that need to be addressed. We need to teach scientists literacy in the humanities sense, i.e. to read the human situation, and we need to teach humanities students to understand numbers.

The 'elephant in the room' is that we are all on the same side – the worst outcome of this meeting would be to provoke people's awareness about the deficits in the humanities and then create new divisions. It is encouraging to hear that there will be protocols developed for communication between the different ministries.

The current funding and management model for postgraduate research is not appropriate for the humanities and the question of who formulates the question, supervisor or student, is key. There are places where the present funding model can work but it is inappropriate for the humanities. If we are to make progress this needs to be addressed. However, it does appear that the Charter is implying funding for students who come up with their own questions.

Another kind of government support we should call for is that we need people in authority to help us project our voice. Minister Pandor and her staff need to back the humanities and not just repeat the mantra of Science and Technology above all. There has to be a space to recognise the importance of the humanities. There is a tendency to take a reductionist view and propose that we merely "put it on an App" but this misses the crucial depth of analysis which the humanities can and should offer. We need more space for students to identify questions which, even though they may be obscure and specialised, should not be rejected by a Dean who suggests they do something else because "this will not get you a job".

Response: Vasu Reddy, HSRC

There is no easy solution to these challenges but we assume there is a passion for the work that is being proposed. We need to take these diverse opinions and perspectives forward. Role models who are public intellectuals and not necessarily just academics should be drawn into the debate and asked to help make this a more public discussion. How do these issues resonate with the 'people out there'? Why were some issues popular in the 1980s but no longer - for example beautiful struggle poetry.

Many of the issues about the curriculum at university are not new. The bigger question is how to get people to engage at a level that encourages the other players such as policy makers, those involved in higher education, and civil society, to join the conversation. Ultimately we want a recognition that humanities play an important role in what we do. It is not just about funding but about the kind of investments we make.

Comment: Shireen Hassim, HSRC Board Member

We should not overlook that in the HSRC there is a problem supporting the type of research that Vasu is talking about and the HSRC Board is concerned about this. There is a struggle to make space in the funding model for humanities research and not just policy applied research questions. Essentially this relates to funding people and time and not imposing on those people a set of other demands to respond rapidly to policy relevant questions. The HSRC's Human and Social Development Directorate

is making important suggestions that we need to listen to. However, when we look at the budget and try to change the targets this is not always possible with the funding model that comes from DST.

Response: Thomas Auf der Heyde, DST
Many comments that have been made today are aimed at government in a generic sense and it may be useful to give some input from the departmental perspective. The question of mandate applies here; DST has a specific mandate and there are things we must do and things we may not do. DHET and DST have different mandates and we struggle with the demarcation for the national research system. In general, DST has almost nothing to do with undergraduate training and only deals with postgraduate training at Masters and Doctoral level. There is some support for Honours and a few below that for strategic initiatives. DST will not be responsible for monitoring or promoting pedagogic aspects of postgraduate training; DST provides equipment, travel etc. It is an artificial divide but helps us to manage our portfolios.

To some extent the issue of crisis or challenges may conflate a perceived crisis at macro or socio-political level. For example, the concept of innovation has been ideologically co-opted. It does not mean that there is a crisis in understanding innovation in social sciences.

Those who have been exposed to research and research training across the different disciplines might agree that generally the pedagogic and intellectual expectations of students are not that different. There is a stereotyping in the hard sciences that students on the other side are not taught rational and linear thought – although this is patently not true. We need to keep on reflecting on this. In government and universities there may be individuals who believe that science and technology is a *sufficient* condition for development but most of us would agree that it is *necessary* but not *sufficient*. The humanities can add a great deal.

Questions: Daniel Plaatjies, HSRC
How do we craft public interest and public value for investing in the humanities? I am searching for the sub-text of the conversation. You cannot ask the politicians or officials in government agencies to be a voice for humanities if you don't know what that voice needs to say. Where do we want to be? What are we articulating as the future of the humanities? It would be more helpful to interrogate the public value of humanities.

Comment: Daya Reddy, Chairperson of ASSAf Council
In the presentations and discussion we have heard about the notion of humanities and social science definitions and who is in or out. We need to be careful not to become victims of compartmentalisation. Economics may fall between two stools. Where do Business Studies and organisational psychology fit in? The main issues are deductive reasoning and the lines are becoming more and more blurred. Another example is epidemiology which includes public health, maths, and sociology. There are increasing levels of engagement between areas of the humanities and other levels of knowledge. We need each other to flourish.

With regard to the place of scholarship, society encourages students to follow the STEM route for a good career and prosperous life. Material success is the only measure of success that is recognised. Scholarship in society has no particular value other than what it may contribute in technology. Learning to read is important in school but at university advanced literacy should be part of the training. Not all training leads to critical thinking if the approach is merely to provide a bag of recipes. Our graduates in natural science must emerge with degrees that cover essential skills in analysis and critical thinking.

Finally, to return to what ASSAf should be doing. The mandate of ASSAf is to provide scientific advice to policy makers and its Standing Committees include one on humanities (Chaired by Peter Vale). ASSAf should do more to ensure that humanities has its place in the Academy. We would benefit from some degree of unbundling of the collective term humanities and need to do more to promote them. The policymakers' booklet could be addressed by ASSAf and this type of work is being done. As for changing the name of the Academy to be more inclusive, Council is engaging with this issue. Likewise

the SA Journal of Science needs to be looked at and its editorial board could include more humanities representatives.

Question/Comment: Claudia Hirtenfelder, HSRC/AISA
HSRC should look at getting its researchers into platforms such as blogging. Why isn't the HSRC review distributed more widely to the general public? Institutional constraints are such that people do not have time to think and do the very in-depth work that is being called for.

Comment: Thomas Auf der Heyde, DST
A Science Engagement Strategy is currently being developed which will build the concept of communication of science and technology. This will go some way to addressing some of the concerns about raising public awareness of science and technology raised by previous speakers.

Comment: Vasu Reddy, HSRC
There are several Chapter Nine institutions that are doing relevant work (e.g. the Pan South African Language Board) and DST should consider including other bodies that may help inform the debate such as the National Department of Arts and Culture.

Comment: Temba Masilela, HSRC
Temba Masilela (HSRC) pointed out that DST has previously supported another modality of engagement with the Social Cluster in government in addition to the research community and it may be appropriate to facilitate several types of discussion running in parallel. The first would be what has been discussed in this seminar, namely conversations within the mandate of DST and its own institutions; the second would involve the government's Social Cluster and perhaps Chapter Nine institutions; and the third, which maybe more controversial, would seek to explore the public mind and engage with civil society in the context of science communication, possibly with the Department of Communications. This should broaden the discussion and could help create pressures for additional resource allocation.

Comment: Thomas Auf der Heyde, DST
I will strive to keep the discussion within the institutions that we in DST have some control over. Institutions can operate across boundaries but it is harder for government departments to do this. We need to think about a Charter which is a government document and not just a DHET one. Although this audience apparently feels that this crisis has not been properly codified or addressed, those who have worked on this issue in DHET may disagree. We need to think more about profiling Human and Social Sciences in national development but we may need to focus on our own sphere and think about a project that can be initiated.

Question: John Higgins, UCT
Is there a place for these future events to have some humanist scholars speak? Time and again we use the term humanities in the traditional way and at others we mean the social sciences. We may get some insights from leading humanities scholars.

THE WAY FORWARD

Questions that need to be answered in order to chart the way forward include:
> 1) Where are we now?
> 2) Where do we want to be with regards to the humanities in the future?
> 3) How are we going to get there?
> 4) How will we know when we have arrived?

If we do not know what we want the future to look like it will be hard to influence it, especially when there are other choices on the table. Answering these questions will help to determine how we can leverage the necessary resources for the journey. A key component will be getting other players such as policy makers, those involved in higher education, and civil society, to join the conversation.

Thomas Auf der Heyde (DST) proposed that this meeting should be the <u>first of three workshops</u>. The other DST entities (NRF and CSIR) should be invited to a <u>second meeting</u>[9] to comment on the ASSAf report and the first workshop's presentations and discussion (as summarised in this report). The other entities should be given more time to respond and it will be important to hear their views since some assumptions made during this first meeting may prove to be incorrect. A <u>third meeting,</u> which should include Research Chairs and people from the Centres of Excellence, can be used to develop a more refined consensus document and chart the way forward for Humanities in South Africa.

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[9] A 2nd ASSAf Humanities Consensus Report seminar is scheduled to take place on 9 December 2014

APPENDIX 1: PROGRAMME

Rapporteur: *Prof. John Seager, Freelancer*

Chair: Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde, Deputy Director General: Research Development Support, Department of Science and Technology (DST)

08:00 - 09:00	Registration, Tea & Coffee

09:00 - 09:10	Introduction

09:00-09:10	**Welcome & Background**
	Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde, DDG: RDS, DST

09:10 – 10:00	Session 1

09:10 - 09:40	**Progress made since publication of the ASSAf Humanities Report, including the status update, challenges, and successes.**
	Prof. Peter Vale, Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg & ASSAf
09:40 -10:00	**Q&A**

10:00 – 10:45	Session 2

10:00 – 10:30	**HSRC response to the Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa: Status, prospects and strategies (ASSAf, 2011)**
	Prof. Vasu Reddy, Executive Director: Human and Social Development (HSD), HSRC
10:30 – 10:45	**Q&A**

10:45 -11:00	Tea break

11:40 - 12:40	Session 3

11:00 – 12:15	**Round Table Discussion – Discussants Vasu Reddy and Peter Vale**
12:15 – 12:45	**Potential next steps**
	Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde, DDG: RDS, DST
12:45	**Closure**

13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH

∞∞Departure∞∞

APPENDIX 2: BIOSKETCHES

Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde

Currently Deputy Director-General (Human Capital & Knowledge Systems at the South African National Department of Science & Technology (DST). Prior to joining the DST Dr Auf der Heyde held the post of Professor and Executive Director for Research and Innovation at the University of Johannesburg. In 2009 he was appointed as an Extraordinary Professor in the Centre for Research on Science and Technology at the University of Stellenbosch.

Dr Temba Masilela

Temba Sipho B. Masilela is the Deputy CEO of Research at the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), South Africa. His wide-ranging research interests include social policy, public management reform, social innovation, research communication, the research-policy nexus, and stakeholder engagement. He was the founding director of the Policy Analysis Unit at the HSRC and was previously the executive director of the Policy Analysis and Capacity Enhancement cross-cutting programme at the HSRC.

Prof. Vasu Reddy

Vasu Reddy is Executive director of the Human and Social Development Programme at the Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa, and honorary professor and research fellow in the School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. He also Chairs the HSRC Humanities sub-committee. Prior to joining the HSRC, he taught for 13 years in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Natal, later University of KwaZulu-Natal. His research interests and focus of work are in human development and identity-marker issues (gender, sexuality, HIV, and diversity) and the humanities that also address policy dimensions. Some of his recent book-length publications are From Social Silence to Social Science: Gender, Same-Sex Sexuality and HIV/AIDS in South Africa (2009; lead editor), The Country We Want to Live In: Hate Crimes and Homophobia in the Lives of Black Lesbian South Africans (2010; co-authored); South African Women as Champions of Change: A Civil Society programme of action for the African women's decade (2014; co-authored) and Care in Context: Transnational Gender Perspectives (2014; lead editor).

Prof. John Seager

Prof. Seager is a freelance research consultant with over 30 years public health research experience in Africa. His research has covered AIDS and development, tuberculosis, diabetes care, urban health systems, and social determinants of health. He holds a BSc (Hons) in Zoology and a PhD in Ecology and Population Dynamics at the University of Wales and has completed advanced training in Epidemiology and Public Health in the US, UK and South Africa. He is an Extraordinary Professor in the School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape and an Extraordinary Professor at the University of Stellenbosch, where he is a member of the Transdisciplinary Sustainability Analysis Modelling and Assessment Hub.

His main research interest is social determinants of health among the poor in developing countries. Recent work includes health systems evaluation, HIV and AIDS, homeless populations and social aspects of climate change. Prof. Seager serves on the editorial advisory board of Development Southern Africa and is a reviewer for local and international journals. His publication record spans the authoring and co-authoring of more than 60 journal articles, 50 research reports and 100 presentations at scientific meetings.

Prof. Peter Vale

Peter Vale is Professor of Humanities at the University of Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Professor of Politics Emeritus, Rhodes University. He Chairs the Academy Advisory Board of STIAS (The Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study). His research interests included social thought, intellectual traditions in South Africa, critical theory, the future of universities, and the origins of the study of International Relations in South Africa.

Among a range of visiting appointments, he has been UNESCO Professor of African Studies at Utrecht University, Fellow at the International Centre for Advanced Studies, New York University, and Professor of Politics, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

His most recent publications are: Ideas. Institutions, Individuals: Intellectual traditions in South Africa, (2014) (edited with Lawrence Hamilton and Estelle H Prinsloo); Political Science in South Africa: The Last Forty Years. (2014) Taylor & Francis; The 'new' South Africa at Twenty. Critical Perspectives (2014) (edited with Estelle H. Prinsloo), UKZN Press

APPENDIX 3: ATTENDANCE

No.	Title	Name	Surname	Position/Department	Organisation	Telephone/Cell	E-mail address
1	Dr	Thomas	Auf der Heyde	Deputy Director General: Research Development and Support.	Department of Science and Technology (DST)	0823355847	BusiMthethwa [Busi.Mthethwa@dst.gov.za]; Thomas.AufderHeyde@dst.gov.za
2	Prof.	Narnia	Bohler-Muller	Deputy Executive Director	DGSD	012 302 2502, 823713367	nbohlermuller@hsrc.ac.za
3	Prof	Roseanne	Diab		ASSAF	012 349 6622	roseanne@assaf.org.za; 'lebo@assaf.org.za'
4	Ms	Valerie	Fichardt	PAN website	HSRC		vfichadt@hsrc.ac.za
5	Ms	Safiyya	Goga		HSRC		Sgoga@hsrc.ac.za
6	Ms	Arlene	Grossberg	Organisational staff	HSRC	Ext 2811	ACGrossberg@hsrc.ac.za
7	Dr	Gerard	Hagg	DGSD	HSRC	012 3022626	Ghagg@hsrc.ac.za
8	Ms	Thandeka	Halles		DST	0726398152	ThandekaHalles [Thandeka.Halles@dst.gov.za]
9	Prof.	Shireen	Hassim		Wits	011 717 4364	shireen.hassim@wits.ac.za
10	Prof.	John	Higgins		UCT	021 650 2836/5472	John.Higgins@uct.ac.za
11	Mrs	Claudia	Hirtenfelder		HSRC/AISA	012 316 9717	chirtenfelder@hsrc.ac.za
12	Dr	Charles	Hongoro	PHHSI	HSRC	012 302 2250, 072 016 4605	Chongoro@hsrc.ac.za
13	Dr	Gregory	Houston	Chief Research Specialist, DGSD		021 466 7884, 739622638	Ghouston@hsrc.ac.za
14	Dr	Temba	Masilela		HSRC	Ext 2348	Tmasilela@hsrc.ac.za
15	Dr	Neo	Molotja		HSRC	Ext 7818	Nmolotja@hsrc.ac.za
16	Dr	Sagren	Moodley	Director: Humanities and Social Sciences	DST	012 843 6421/082 398 3884	sagren.moodley@dst.gov.za
17	Dr	Benita	Moolman	HSD	HSRC		Bmoolman@hsrc.ac.za
18	Ms	Zuki	Mpiyakhe		ASSAf		
19	Dr	Catherine	Ndinda	Chief Research Specialist, ESD	HSRC	012 302 2505/2341	CNdinda@hsrc.ac.za

No.	Title	Name	Surname	Position/Department	Organisation	Telephone/Cell	E-mail address
20	Prof	D	Plaatjies	Executive Director, DGSD	HSRC	021 466 7851	dplaatjies@hsrc.ac.za
21	Dr	Cas	Prinsloo	Chief Researcher, ESD	HSRC	0123022307, 0823392225	chprinsloo@hsrc.ac.za
22	Ms	Estelle H.	Prinsloo		UJ		estelle.prinsloo950@gmail.com
23	Mr	Thabo	Radebe		DST	0820401078	thabo.radebe@dst.gov.za
24	Dr	Rushil	Ranchod		ESD	Ext 8092, 0762744702	rranchod@hsrc.ac.za
25	Prof.	Daya	Reddy	President and Chairperson of ASSAf Council	ASSAf Council	021 650-3787	daya.reddy@uct.ac.za
26	Prof	Vasu	Reddy	ED, HSD	HSRC	012 3022206, 083 7849198	vasureddy@hsrc.ac.za
27	Prof.	John	Seager		Freelancer	082 443 0553	johnrseager@yahoo.co.uk
28	Prof.	Alinah Kelo	Segobye	DED RIA	HSRC		Asegobye@hsrc.ac.za
29	Prof.	Goeff	Setswe		HSRC		Gsetswe@hsrc.ac.za
30	Ms	Happy	Solomon	Organisational staff	HSRC		hsoslomon@hsrc.ac.za
31	Mr	Thabo	Stamper	Organisational staff	HSRC		Tstamper@hsrc.ac.za
32	Ms	Marise	Taljaard	Corporate Communications	HSRC		Mtaljaard@hsrc.ac.za
33	Prof.	Peter	Vale	Humanities	University of Johannesburg	011 559 4252, 0848018019	pvale@uj.ac.za
34	Ms	Ina	Van der Linde	Media	HSRC		IvdLinde@hsrc.ac.za

APPENDIX 4: PRESENTATIONS
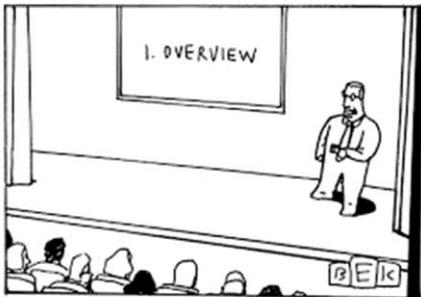

ASSAf Humanities Consensus Study

Follow-up & other ways forward?

Peter Vale

TWO BARBARIANS AND A PROFESSOR OF BARBARIAN STUDIES

Source: Mankoff, R. 2004. *The Complete Cartoons of The New Yorker.* New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, p. 641

1. OVERVIEW

"First, I want to give you an overview of what I will tell you over and over again during the entire presentation."

"First, I want to give you an overview of what I will tell you over and over again during the entire presentation."

RATIONALE

...the Humanities is judged by many to be in "crisis." ...reasons for this, ..include the governmental emphasis on science and technology; the political emphasis on the economically-grounded idea of "developmentalism;" the shift of values among youth (and their parents) towards practical employment and financial gain;... that the challenges faced by our society are so urgent and immediate that the reflective and critical modes of thinking favoured in the Humanities seem ...unaffordable luxuries. The social climate, moreover, is one which favors immediate action and practical answers rather is the pervasive political and policy discourses that emphasize science and technology in isolation of the social and the human sciences as the drivers of the knowledge economy.

Innovation: The Government Was Crucial After All

Humanities and the Natural Sciences

Game played, with an inflated ball.
by more than ten men on a grass field

NOW, TO

ASSAF's Ten Recommendations… -

South Africa's education system is 'economistic, business-oriented…
competitive…[and]…individualistic' in nature ….

Recommendation 1: Establish with statutory status a Council for the Humanities to advise …on how to improve the status and standing of the Humanities in South Africa – **PUBLIC MIND**

Recommendation 2: Review and refine government funding allocations to the Humanities with substantive earmarked funding in critical areas, such as African Languages, Philosophy, History and the Creative and Performing Arts – **SAVE STRATEGIC DISCIPLINES**

In this context, the advancement of books by the academy and the funding of books by government could significantly enhance the book as a cultural and human asset in both the scholarly and public mind. – **PLAY TO HSS STRENGTHS**

Source, Alexander, N. 2014. in Vale, P & Prinsloo, E.H. The New South Africa at Twenty. Critical Perspectives. Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press.

As a result…

Public as well as private funding …weigh heavily in favour of the natural science disciplines with direct implications for the quality, depth and sustainability of social research.

…on the margins of the academy that powerful voices are beginning to make the case for the Humanities not as isolated from or in competition with science and technology disciplines, but as vital and complementary parts of the same developmental challenges.

Recommendation 3: Commit to the development of a Government White Paper on the Humanities that establishes in the public mind and in government policy a renewed emphasis on the Humanities, and its full integration into national science policy. – **PUBLIC MIND, ENGAGE GOVERNMENT**

Recommendation 4: Restructure funding for advanced degrees (doctorates in particular) through national funding agencies such as the NRF that enables full-time study for top candidates in the Humanities who make the choice of academic careers. – **BUILD THE FUTURE**

Recommendation 5: Accelerate the establishment of prestigious Research Chairs and Centres of Excellence in the Humanities, appointing leading professors of the Humanities with two clear missions: the pursuit of excellence in Humanities research and the building of capacity for next-generation Humanities scholars. – DEVELOP "REAL" EXCELLENCE, RELEVANCE, DIVERSITY

–

Recommendation 6: Inaugurate a dedicated National Fund for Humanities Research which combines earmarked government funding with national and international private and philanthropic funding that fuels top-quality Humanities research in and outside South African universities. - SECURE FUNDING

Recommendation 9: Advance the idea of a broad-based Humanities curriculum, ideally in an interdisciplinary core study programme for undergraduates, which exposes all university students to some study of the Humanities. – GRADUATE BETTER WORKERS, CITIZENS, MORE LITERATE DEMOCRACTS

Recommendation 7: Transform the organisation and design of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) so that a more emphatic statement of its commitment to the Humanities becomes self-evident, e.g. the re-naming of the Academy, the investigation of a second premier academy journal specifically for the Humanities, the constitution of 50% Humanities appointments to Council, and other signaling measures for the only recognised Academy in South Africa. – CREATE EQUITABLE SPACE, TIME FOR HUMANITIES, HOUSEKEEPING

Recommendation 10: Promote in the broader society the value of the Humanities and Humanities scholarship and practice through prestigious awards that draw national and international attention to the Humanities among school students, university students, scholars, and intellectuals broadly.

An Annual National Humanities Lecture which is televised and linked to a National Medal in the Humanities would do much to signal the importance of the Humanities in the public sphere. – BUILD THE HUMANITIES IN THE PUBLIC MIND

Recommendation 8: Initiate, through the leadership of the Department of Basic Education, considered measures to boost knowledge of, and positive choices for the Humanities, throughout the twelve years of schooling - including progressive ways of privileging the Arts, History and Languages in the school curriculum through Grade 12. – FOSTER THE FUTURE, MAKE THE HUMANITIES MATTER, HELP BUILD DEMOCRACY

"Thank God! A panel of experts!"

Source: Mankoff, R. 2004. *The Complete Cartoons of The New Yorker.* New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, p. 438

18

THE ASSAF (2011) CONSENSUS STUDY ON THE STATE OF THE HUMANITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA & THE DHET CHARTER (2011): PERSPECTIVES AND COMMENTS

Prof. Vasu Reddy

Executive Director & Chair of the Humanities Sub-Committee of the HSRC

Presentation to DST Seminar :
16 September 2014

Aims of this Presentation:

- To *offer* a brief context to the HSRC Response
- To *explain* interpretations of the Humanities and its importance
- To *advance* a perspective on the crisis within the field
- To *explicate* the value and meaning of the Humanities
- To *elucidate* the role of the humanities in South Africa
- To *give* a perspective on the Social Science *vs* the Humanities distinction
- To *illuminate* the DST Framework (the "Grand Challenge" Plan) & Recent Policy and Research Developments relevant to this debate
- To *provide* some summary points on the ASSaf Consensus Study and The Charter
- To *spell out* some theory to action: HSRC Perspectives on re-envisioning the Humanities' prospects (including some initiatives; some problems and gaps and some ideas for discussion)

HSRC Response (based on a detailed submission to the DHET)

"*I have heard nothing here that will fit into my medium-term budget framework...*"

HUMANITIES SUBCOMITTEE MEMBERS

- Dr Temba Masilela (DCEO: Research)
- Prof Vasu Reddy
- Dr Cas Prinsloo
- Dr Greg Houston
- Dr Catherine Ndinda
- Dr Yu Ke
- Dr Nadia Sanger
- Mr Michael Cosser
- Prof Narnia Böhler-Muller

The Mask and Wig Club of The University of Pennsylvania presents its 121st Annual Production:

OH, THE HUMANITIES!

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MONA...

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council
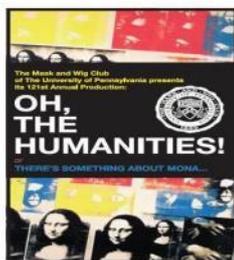
CREATING NEW NARRATIVES FOR SOUTH AFRICA
Is it only the good, or also the bad and the ugly stories that matter?

- Creating jobs and livelihoods
- Expanding infrastructure
- Transitioning to a low-carbon economy
- Transforming urban and rural spaces
- Improving education and training
- Providing quality health care
- Building a capable state
- Fighting corruption and enhancing accountability
- Transforming society and uniting the nation

All of the above is about improvement of social life with social and human (e) consequences → they have policy and programmatic implications and are also knowledge-driven, but they also tell us that it is not merely policy concerns that matter. Are there other possibilities too?

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

HSRC Response Outline
Our response is abbreviated in this presentation

- The Value of the Humanities
- HSRC Work on the Humanities: A Historical Review
- HSRC Response to Nation Building and Legacy Projects
- The Charter for the Humanities & Social Sciences
- The ASSaF Consensus Study
- The DST Grand Challenge and the National System of Innovation

- How can the Humanities Invigorate the National System of Innovation
- The HSRC Institutional Review
- The Formation of an Academy or Institute
- Post-Secondary and Beyond
- Funding and Rewards Structure
- Expanding Areas of Study
- Implications and Areas of Study

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

IF THE HSRC VISION IS ABOUT HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, THEN WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THIS?

- About *expanding* the choices we have to lead lives that we value to improve the human condition (drawing on Sen; Nussbaum)
- Development is to be understood in its *multi-dimensionality*
- *Deepening* our democracy and fostering nation building
- Process, predetermined objectives and democratic *participation*
- Growth and *advancement* (a process of expanding the real freedoms people should enjoy)
- *More* than simply sustaining life
- Human *capabilities* (human-centered development) that prioritizes the development of the underdeveloped
- *Real* freedoms arise in political *action*
- Social cohesiveness is an *ongoing* project contingent upon discussion, debate and action
- Activity of world *building*

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

Vision and Mission

The HSRC intends to serves as a knowledge hub for research-based solutions to inform human and social development in South Africa, the Africa continent and the rest of the world.

Mission

The mission of the HSRC is to be a research organisation that advances social sciences and humanities for public use.

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

Joint policy development by evidence-based data as well as curiosity-driven and basic research (with a strong conceptual and theorising edge and innovative methodologies)

OUR WORK GOES *BEYOND* APPLIED RESEARCH?

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

What are the Humanities?

A field that attempts to:

- Understand the complexity of the human condition (Bolton 2010)
- Identify a realistic conception of the world as created by human beings (Jacobs 2009)
- Construct "logical discursive frameworks" (Blythe & Croft 2010)

"The humanities explore what it means to be human: the words, ideas, narratives and the art and artefacts that help us make sense of our lives and the world we live in; how we have created it, and are created by it"

Royal Academy Report, 2010: 12

HSRC

The Supposed 'Crisis' Within the Humanities

Universities moving toward corporatisation of higher education (emphasis now on vocations: training of experts)

(Donoghue 2010; Smoot 2011; Stevenson 2001; Wright 2006)

Global financial crisis: impact on funding
(Donoghue 2010)

Competition for resources
(NHAWG 2008)

Training in the humanities does not guarantee jobs
Rowe (2009)

The qualitative nature of the humanities is seen by some as being ineffectual in the face of 'hard science' research; Policy-makers are perhaps reluctant to accept outcomes of qualitative research as "un-authoritative"

Humanities methodologies require time for processing outcomes

(Krebs & Wenk 2005)

HSRC

What are the Humanities (cont'd)?

- The study of the human condition – to come to grips with human life and its meaning:
  - analytical, reflexive, critical, qualitative, creative
- Areas of study:
  - literature, language, linguistics, philosophy, history, religion and the arts
- Driven by the desire to know and understand the meaning of being human, and how humans relate to one another (Leebron 2007)

HSRC
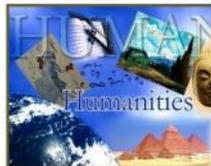
The Supposed 'Crisis' Continued: South Africa

- Decline in critical thinking in South Africa (post-apartheid); emphasis switched to economic policy – knowledge-based economy (Vale & Jacklin 2009)
- Under-funding for the humanities in HE and Research Institutions
- Value of humanities and social sciences called into question because of their seeming lack of direct contribution to employment or participation in capitalist economy (Krebs & Wenk 2005)
- Result: the humanities are suffering from an element of erasure/lack of emphasis, also within HSRC and this is being addressed

HSRC

Social Sciences and Humanities
The ASSAF report opts for inclusivity. Perceptions prevail about distinctions

Social Sciences:
- Given a modern voice by Durkheim, Weber, Marx; influenced by the French and Industrial Revolutions
- Seen as a "third culture", bridging the sciences and the humanities (Krebs & Wenk 2005)
- Scientific approach
  - somewhat bounded by scientific method

Overlap: exploring and contextualizing human experience

Humanities:
- Origins in ancient Greek, African and Asian thought
- Critical/analytical approach
- "limitless" due to creative aspect/ lack of methodological constraints (Wright 2006)

HSRC

The Value and Contributions of the Humanities

- Three major contributions that are widely agreed upon:
  1. Engaging in a narrative to describe lived experience
  2. Helping to foster human understanding and perspective
  3. Enabling us to have a realistic conception of the world around us

(Jacobs 2009; Parker 2007; Simpson 2007; Wright 2006)

WHO AM I?
THE QUESTION OF GENTILE IDENTITY

Specifically...

HSRC

Describing Lived Experience

- UK senior humanities scholars assert that the study of the humanities "palpably increases the student's powers of expression and conceptualization, and their awareness of the world; it promotes a transformative humanism, and it demonstrably promotes effective communications skills" (Parker 2007: 126).
- Humanities are said to 'envoice' citizens, to assist with both formation and expression of identity – to give a voice to lived experiences.
  - This allows complex narratives to be developed and utilised in different academic arenas.

HSRC

Interdisciplinarity – not a new kid on the block?

- Combining two or more academic disciplines into one area by crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries and methodologies
- Connecting different ways of thinking in pursuit of a common academic goal; the synthesis and integration of knowledge
- Creating collaborative, holistic solutions which are better suited to modern problems, whereby a unidirectional approach would be insufficient

- Concretely: to accurately conceptualize 'gender', for example one could examine it through multiple lenses, by no means limited to:

- Political Science, in terms of POWER
- Philosophy, in terms of MEANING
- Sociology, in terms of CONTEXT
- Psychology, in terms of MENTAL or EMOTIONAL aspects
- Economics, in terms of ECONOMIC IMPACT
- History, in terms of PAST conflicts or conceptualizations
- Etc.

HSRC

Fostering Human Understanding and Perspective

- Philosophers, linguists, and scientists agree: contextual humanistic understanding can benefit business, science, technology and medicine (Blythe & Croft 2010; Bolton 2008; Leebron 2007; Stevenson 2001; etc.).
- In 'literature and medicine', writing and critical reflection can allow a clinician to develop and awareness of multiple perspectives and gain new insights into problems (Bolton 2008).
- Promoting international understanding: research in the humanities and social sciences "are all able to contribute to the two vital goals of promoting better insight into other societies and cultures, and fostering policies based on evidence" (British Academy 2010: 49). Insight includes avoiding stereotypes, acknowledging cultural identity issues, and examining the role of religions in public life.

HSRC

The Link between the Humanities and the Hard Sciences

- There is an assumption that the hard sciences propel us forward, and lay claims to greater truth and validity, while the humanities have no forward motion; rather they present no evidence of progress
- As science and technology have an effect on (and subsequent reception by) human beings, there is an inextricable link between the humanities and the sciences
- "The greatest challenges for…society – globalization, inclusion, and the impact of science on society – are all ones in which the arts and humanities and science and technology need each other, and are needed in public discourse" (British Academy 2010: 42).

HSRC
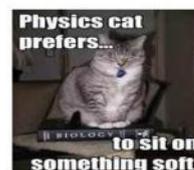
Providing a Realistic Conception of the World

- From a philosophical standpoint, the humanities allow us to understand and recognize 'valuative realism'
- This allows us to enquire into "significance, meaning and value" (Jacobs 2009: 27) and create our own reality based on this enquiry; in other words, we can develop a system of values by which individuals can create their own realities.
  - Without humanities influence, values may be created in isolation, and produce a "private moral outlook ill-equipped to engage fruitfully with…contemporary society…the result is necessarily a society very much…alienated and fragmented" (Wright 2006: 68-69).
- The humanities enable us to 'see' normative significance by allowing us to reflect on the past and learn from it. We can then ascribe cultural continuity or commonalities to what we understand
- This realistic conception of the world can then be applied across disciplines to promote meaningful interdisciplinary understanding

HSRC

DST "Grand Challenge" Science Plan

One of the "Grand Challenges" put forth in the Department of Science and Technology's Ten Year Innovation Plan is to:

- "Increase our ability to anticipate the complex consequences of change; to better understand the dynamics of human and social behaviour at all levels; to better understand the cognitive and social structures that create and define change; and to help people and organizations better manage profound or rapid change" (DST 2010: 7)

HSRC

"Grand Challenge" Concept Paper and Strategic Framework

- Defines 'human and social dynamics' as: "humanity's behaviour and development in the face of continuous change" (2010:12), including people's interaction, adaptation, and decision making processes.
- Because human and social dynamics allow us a deeper understanding of social processes, research in this area should be supported and deepened.
- "The value of the social sciences and humanities…is not well understood by society; the necessity for a long-term perspective about the 'social dynamic' and its relation to 'civil action' – 'a point that is not always appreciated in policy development', and need for the researcher, policy-maker and institutional and social partnerships envisaged by the DST" (2010: 18).

HSRC

The Humanities and Social Sciences Final Report/Charter (DHET)

- Six interventions in two phases between 2012 and 2018 to 'dynamize' the fields of the HSS
- Include a broad historiography
- Idealism which needs to be addressed
- University curriculum has not been fully analysed to examine what they are really doing
- Going forward, theme of collaboration not emphasized
- Engagement with research institutions such as the HSRC *not* examined
- While this document addresses the 'crisis' within the humanities, it does little to push it beyond established boundaries (seems insular in its approach)
- Utility vs. implementation

HSRC

Concept Paper: Four Focus Areas

- **Science, technology and society**
- **The dynamics of human and social behaviour**
- **Social cohesion and identity**
- **Societal change and the evolution of modern society**

- Within these focus areas, there is intent to bring together "researchers, scholars, funders, policy makers and decision-makers to promote authoritative research in the social sciences and humanities…through effective collaboration" (2010: 14).
- This will enhance the production of research and support "effective decision-making and policy dialogue" (Ibid).

HSRC

ASSAF Consensus Study
Makes some solid and powerful recommendations

- About rebuilding the Humanities in several areas and identifies Humanities in HE institutions to be in a process of stagnation
- Declining enrolments and graduation in Humanities (effect on workforce) – irony human scientists do get jobs
- Funding formula favours Science and Technology subjects
- Accreditation structure for Humanities publications need to be reformatted
- Publications in humanities lack international standing and reputation (SAPSE journals prioritised)
- Ageing academic and research workforce alongside decline in doctoral graduands impacts capacity
- Scholarship reflects racial inequalities of knowledge production
- Uneven terrain in respect of performance across disciplines (and across HE institutions)
- Recommends: (1) A Council with Statutory standing to advise government on how to improve Humanities; (2) Review of funding formula for Humanities and earmark funding for African languages, Philosophy, History, Creative and Performing Arts; (3) Development of a White Paper to help State integrate humanities into government policy (teaching, policy, research); (4) Restructuring funding for advanced Humanities degree proposed; (5) National Fund for the Humanities Research; (6) Centres of Excellence and Research Chairs; (7) Televised National Humanities Lecture; (8) National Medal for the Humanities; (8) Transdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary research
- Missing: Practical details of the strategies for addressing these challenges

HSRC

Within the HSRC, for example

How do we translate the focus areas of the Grand Challenge Plan into practice in some of our work?

| Science, Technology and Society:	Dynamics of Human and Social Behaviour:
The reality of virtual communities?	How does migration affect family ties and values?
Social Cohesion and Identity:	**Societal Change and the Evolution of Modern Society:**
Given our divided history, what does it mean to be South African?	How do people experience climate change?

HSRC

CHARTER FOR HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

- Charter focuses on strengthening Humanities, ethical citizenship, sensitive to immediate & long-term goals of Global South development.
- Recommendation: (1) Formation of an Academy or Institute of the Humanities & Social Sciences (through it, the development of an African Renaissance Programme); (2) Six Catalytic Projects to animate the field; (3) Review funding and rewards structure for the field; (4) MOUs between Government, university system and the HSRC; (5) 20 % of knowledge-linked state expenditure be spent on partnerships with the HSRC (and HSRC and universities)
- Where does the figure of 20 % come from?

Focus on catalytic projects

HSRC
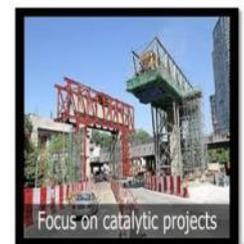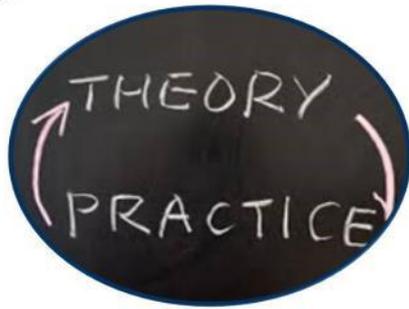
THEORY TO ACTION

SOME **RESEARCH POJECTS** WITHIN **PROGRAMES**

- Social Attitudes surveys: impact on social cohesion (xenophobia, confidence in government institutions, etc.); relevant to the achievement of a national identity (DGSD)
- The impact of the decisions of the constitutional Court and Supreme Court of Appeal on the Transformation of Society with the University of Fort Hare (DGSD)
- Music and Youth Identities in South Africa (HSD)
- Race and Emancipation and Access amongst HE students (HSD)
- Language and Literacy (linguistic) studies focused on acquisition and development in classroom observation (ESD)
- The changing role of the university in inclusive innovation (ESD)
- Rapid Assessment and Response (RAR) approaches to understand the HIV vulnerability of Black African women (aged 15-34) and men aged (25-49) living in urban informal townships in three provinces of South Africa (HAST)
- A RAR study of transgender people living in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg to explore their specific vulnerabilities to HIV infection (HAST)

POSITIONING THE HUMANITIES WITHIN THE HSRC

GENERICALLY:
- To mobilise HSRC research capacities in humanities to address issues related to the development of human capital in a knowledge-based society
- To cultivate, develop and structure the Humanities in such a way to fully exploit opportunities for researching solutions to existing and emerging social problems
- To promote the value in the human meaning of public policy in evidence-based research
- To understand the relationships between citizens, and between citizens and institutions

SPECIFICALLY:
- To assess how processes of development and social change, as well as public policies, shape fundamental aspects of South African society through a variety of differences
- To direct attention to the complexity of re-shaping differences in a transforming and diverse society.
- To show how such identifications evolve over time
- To challenge closed and bounded identities in relation to understanding both our past, our heritage and our future in a transforming and developing State

SOME ONGOING **PROBLEMS** AND GAPS

HSRC is strong in the *social sciences which makes a difference* but less so in the Humanities; and we are slowly working on closing this gap
- No common understanding among research programmes about mainstreaming the Humanities
- Should there be individual and/or institutional champions?
- Lack of funding
- Lack of capacity of current staff with humanities qualifications
- Current funding does not allow mainstreaming of the Humanities
- Alignment of a planned African Studies focus to the Humanities also needs greater conceptual clarity; including the remit of the Africa Institute of South Africa (recent incorporation)

CURRENT INITIATIVES/METHODS AT A GLANCE
Supported in part by a Humanities Sub-Committee

- Distinguished Lecture Series (annual)
- Programmatic Research Initiatives (*reps from programmes will comment during discussion*)
- Institutional and Individual Publications
- African Knowledge Producers Series (e.g. Ben Magubane at 80)
- Use of innovative and new methodologies for research (Photovoice; life narratives; visual methodologies; detailed ethnographies)
- Projects on: Liberation Studies; Schools Sport and Social Cohesion; Justice and Constitutionality (media analysis)
- 80/20 Split recommended by IR valid. 20 % of (100 %) of all Project Proposals going out should be targeted and focused in relation to Humanities-driven research (this is not fully achieved)
- Other Institutional Events (seminars; colloquia)
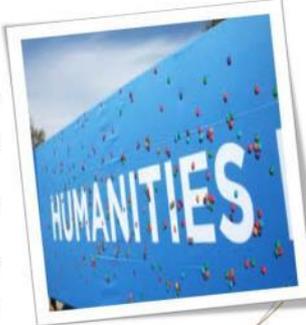
WHAT IS **NEEDED?**
Short, Medium and Long Term

- Ring-fenced funding to kick-start some strategic research projects at a pilot level (short term).
- Longitudinal Studies with a Humanities focus (long term in the MTEF).
- More focused efforts in recruitment of qualified Humanities staff (medium to long term).
- Reinstate a dedicated Research Programme/Unit focused on purely Humanities-focused work.
- Greater collaboration on humanities work with other Councils (NRF; Assaf for example) and the new Institute for Humanities; as well as with Centres for Humanities/Institutes at HE Institutions (some initiatives underway but not enough).
- Joint fundraising.
- A DST/DAC/DHET/ASSaf/NRF/HE Cluster Workshop with strategic partners (with policy priority and blue skies questions) (short to medium term) (meeting today is in part a first step)
- National Science Councils' led Colloquium on the Humanities (medium-term)
- A more focused internal discussion on Humanities methodologies (including strong conceptual frameworks) can be mainstreamed into current work (short to medium term)
- Greater efforts by the HSRC Press to prioritize a Humanities series (medium to long term) and there is evidence here of an increased footprint in the Humanities.

AFRICA | GLOBAL SOUTH — HSRC PRESS — Titles for 2013/2014

HUMANITIES — HSRC PRESS — Titles for 2013/2014

THE ROAD AHEAD?

- Literacy, citizenship and quality of life in the nation are important (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2013) and what role do Humanities projects have in this relationship?
- How do we continue to learn from the intended and unintended consequences of our times? And how do we anticipate and sufficiently allow for the human factor and the human condition in all of this?
- How do we ensure we invigorate the Humanities in the "knowledge chain"? (Assaf, 2011:14)
- How do we actively ensure deep intellectual diversity in our educational and research activity?
- How do we achieve this via collaboration and partnerships?

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