

# What does the **FUTURE** hold?

USB is celebrating its 50th anniversary – a time to reminisce and a time to look ahead. What should USB be doing over the next five decades to ensure its continued success? **Amanda Matthee** asked some of our faculty members and managers for their thoughts ...

## PROF EON SMIT

Professor at USB, member of the USB's management team

### Quality ingrained into our genetic structure

International accreditation, as an outcome of quality management, has become part of the USB's genetic structure. The older members of faculty, who have been the drivers of the quest for quality, are gradually becoming fewer. This means the next generation of academics and support staff must now become the custodians of our accreditation activities.

Accreditation and quality improvement will remain a challenge, as can be seen by the small proportion of international schools that have successfully gone this route and also by the ones that are losing their accredited status. In this regard, the availability of resources – financial and intellectual – will be of critical importance. It will be expected of schools to grow in all dimensions of their operations, including intellectual deepening, greatly stressing the current model of resource provision.

I have no doubt that the innovative spirit of the USB will allow the School to deal with these challenges. At least the country and continent in which we operate provide a limitless demand for the quality services the School has to offer.

## DR MARLIZE TERBLANCHE-SMIT

Programme Head: MBA

### The MBA as a transformative experience

I believe USB's MBA will continue to equip students to meet complex challenges in the South African, African and global business environment. As such, it will

continue to be a significant investment for individuals and businesses.

Our MBA will keep on providing a transformative experience, but it will probably slant more towards qualitative skills through integration with disciplines such as sociology and philosophy. The pressure to develop responsible leaders in terms of environmental, social and governance issues will become even stronger. Soft skills such as communication skills, adaptability, flexibility and self-awareness will remain important across a myriad of professional environments. Management tools and techniques will still play an important role, but with a focus shift towards data analytics.

The USB MBA will increasingly differentiate itself through partnerships with international business schools and cross-curriculum. Other development themes may include specialised MBAs, other formats and online offerings. This will help to ensure that our MBA remains relevant.

## GRETCHEN ARANGIES

Head: BPC Management Services

### High-quality management and the ability to spot opportunities

For USB to grow amidst a tsunami of change will require the continuous alignment of our work with our strategic objectives, and the ongoing creation of new knowledge and skills. As always, our success will be tied to our ability to identify opportunities, plan ahead and rapidly respond to challenges. Engagement with the business sector to identify its primary needs will be crucial – this will improve our offering and lead to rising student numbers.

This will help to ensure our sustainability. I firmly believe that high-quality management and connections with the business education sector will play an integral part in USB's future.

## CHARLES ADJASI

Programme Head: Development Finance Programmes

### The key role of development finance in Africa's growth

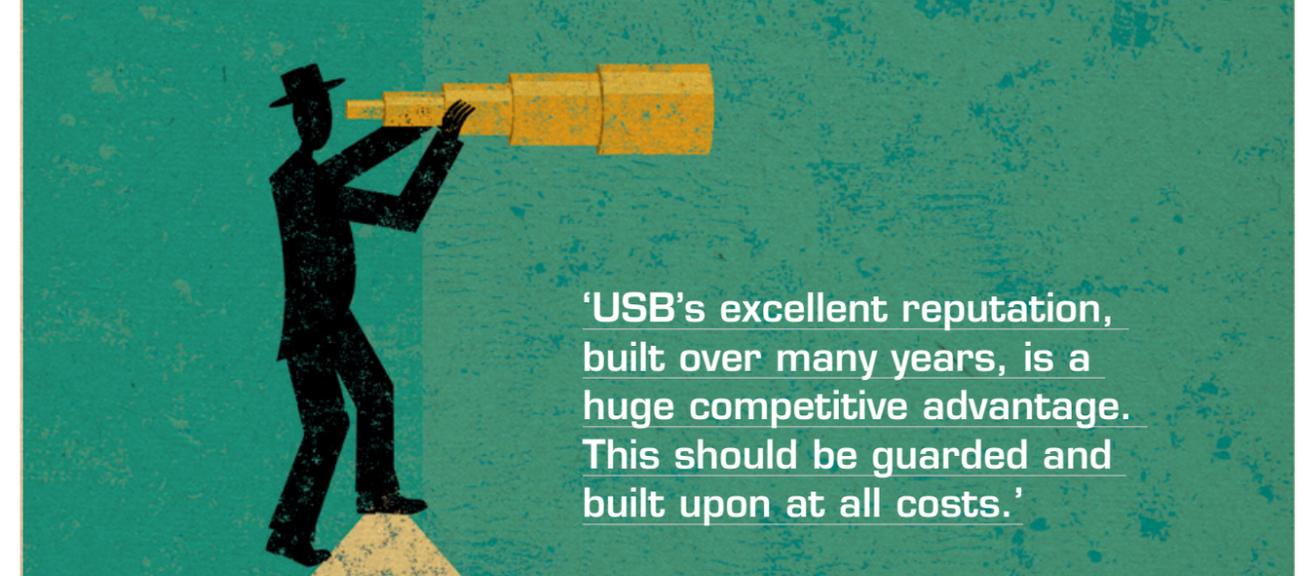
USB will undoubtedly continue to have a massive impact on providing critical skills in Development Finance within Africa, being the first African university to offer an MPhil in Development Finance (since 2003). USB will also continue to play a leading role in catering for the needs of development finance institutions, micro finance companies, policy makers and regulators. Because of the complexity of development challenges in Africa, the crucial role of financial resources and financial institutions deserves greater attention. The introduction of our Postgraduate Diploma and PhD in Development Finance – with an overwhelmingly large number of students enrolling for both – will continue to play a critical role in financing socioeconomic development in Africa. I believe this PhD will also enhance USB's research impact in terms of Development Finance.

## WIM GEVERS

USB professor, member of USB's management team

### New programmes, new technology, new markets

I anticipate that the MBA will continue to be USB's flagship product. However, it will



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be supported by a portfolio of related management qualifications. We have already initiated this, adding programmes focusing on Development Finance and Management Coaching, for example. We will also continue to add Postgraduate Diplomas leading to MPhil and even PhD degrees within subject areas.

I would like to see a structured MPhil in Global Business aimed at preparing students for international careers. This will open up opportunities for cooperation with European partner schools and student exchanges. I also hope that we can enter the market for undergraduate but post-experience qualifications together with USB-ED.

Looking into the crystal ball, I believe that learning and interacting will change drastically for students and academics. Technology will allow people to learn what they want to and when it suits them. The challenge will be to successfully open up existing and new markets with technology-enabled learning, which will also challenge faculty!

## MARIETJIE WEPENER

Deputy Director (Business Development, Marketing & Communication)

### Earning our reputation every single day

Over the past five years, USB's competitive landscape has changed dramatically. We see foreign business schools, mainly from Europe, opening up offices and promoting their programmes in our country and in Africa. USB will have to treat its markets in Africa with respect to win people's trust and to be regarded as a serious role-player.

We see a market asking for quicker and more convenient solutions such as online delivery. We need to gear ourselves for this

change. Our close relationship with business will guide us as to how they want us to shape their talent.

USB's excellent reputation, built over many years, is a huge competitive advantage. This should be guarded and built upon at all costs. However, reputation is earned every single day when big and small things are done correctly, and when stakeholder groups such as clients (students) experience USB as exceptional. Students need to experience that their MBAs or other qualifications advance their careers and that we are playing a major role in making this happen. Personal attention – as we are doing on the Leadership Module on the MBA – and extraordinary client service at the various touch points will become essential.

## FRIK LANDMAN

CEO, USB Executive Development Ltd

### Education and development for managers

USB's future has a particular context, namely Africa. The challenges facing the globe are also impacting Africa. However, USB has always had a pioneering spirit and I see this as a driver of its future in Africa.

Viewing Africa systemically, the quantity and quality of its managers have an enormous impact on the sustainable success of the continent. USB with its highly regarded international accreditations has convening power and the ability to bring core role-players together in spaces of learning where leading minds can be educated and skilled in managing their organisations as institutions of change to transform Africa. Here, I see USB, with its strategic partners, creating a significant footprint in Africa.

USB's expanding development activities in Africa will be leading inputs to create a

stable macroeconomic environment where peace, rule of law and stability in society are required. Managers with competence, character and maturity are required to sculpt such a society, and USB can help to produce such managers.

## PIERRE ROSSOUW

Assistant Registrar, Bellville Park Campus

### It's all about service

I believe our clients – and our students in particular – determine whether our service is good or not. The way we treat individual clients will determine whether they are going to stay with us. The road ahead in terms of client service is to use innovative processes and systems to support students' success, and to continually improve on these. With a positive and responsible attitude towards our clients, we will reap the benefit of our efforts.

## LE ROUX FRANKEN

Deputy Director (Information and Communication Technology)

### Leading with technology

USB has always embraced technology in teaching, research and business processes, and will continue to do so. One of the key success factors of USB is the personal touch the school adds to everything it does. Therefore, one of the challenges for technology would be seamless integration into teaching in such a way that the personalisation of the learning experience is enhanced. This will give students the opportunity to adapt their studies based on their own needs, time and abilities. Although not USB's core business, technology does play a critical role in USB's path towards excellence. ■