

The Role of the Modern University in Socio-Economic Transformation

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This presentation will focus on the pivotal role that a modern, dynamic university can play as a key contributor to a nation's economic and social wellbeing through the quality and creative mindset of its graduates, through innovative research outputs and through strategic engagement with selected partners. In this context, I will outline 4 key Design Principles for a modern university: Transformation, Enterprise, Translation, and Engagement. A university should have a transformational impact on the lives of young people by unleashing the personal potential in all students and by imbuing in them the necessary generic attributes to contribute to society.

It is also important to encourage creativity and a spirit of enterprise throughout the learning process. The modern university that believes in the mission of economic impact should also embrace a deep engagement with the enterprise sector and engage in continuous dialogue with it. Moreover, a focus on translational research implies a direct engagement with grand challenges of societal relevance – issues such as health, the environment, energy needs, the ageing population, and water supply. In the 21st century, a modern university cannot be an ivory tower. Creating knowledge for society and educating our future generations requires engagement with all facets of the world, both locally and globally. Through implementation of the 4 Principles highlighted above, the modern university can contribute significantly to the building of a smart, sustainable and inclusive society.