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The last 100 days in the office of the SAIMM presidency.: President's Corner: The last 100 days in the office of the SAIMM presidency.

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The last 100 days in the office of the SAIMM Presidency



When presidents or leaders are elected, it is often customary to expect them to deliver a speech when they attain their first 100 days in office. Barack Hussein Obama was inaugurated on 20 January 2009 as the 44th President of the United States, and gave a speech on his first 100 days in office on 29 April 2009. As is normal, his speech met with mixed reactions. Critics felt it was as vague as his campaign message, while supporters believed he was delivering on his campaign promises. It is during their first 100 days in office that presidents are scrutinized and watched particularly closely. Fortunately, in the SAIMM we have a rich tradition of leadership succession. Before one becomes President, one must have served at least two years on the SAIMM Council, followed by a year of co-option as an Office Bearer before successively becoming Junior Vice-President, Senior Vice-President, President-Elect, and President; After the term as President, one becomes Immediate Past-President and finally retires back onto Council as a Past President. There are therefore no campaign promises you need to make, as you become accustomed early on to the SAIMM's strategic direction, which you then continue to drive during your one-year Presidential term. I therefore found it prudent to write on my last 100 days in office.

The past 100 days have been quite busy, but I also had time to pause and reflect. The SAIMM has weathered the prevailing tough economic times, closely watching our revenue and expenditure streams to ensure that we survive the short-term. However, our long-term strategy remains a robust one of making the Institute a great Institute that we, the members, can all continue to be proud of. For example, support for the Young Professionals Council (YPC) and regional branches has been maintained, because these are critical for growing our membership base into the future. We have managed to grow our membership base to just above the 5000 mark.

However, despite the progress we have made, we cannot afford to be complacent because we are not out of the woods yet. The tough economic times are still upon us. My last 100 days have instilled confidence in me that the SAIMM will be around for a very long time to come, but we still need to do more. We still need to organize many viable quality conferences. We need to draw more into our membership ranks. We still need to continue to publish a quality *Journal*. We still need to continue to encourage each other in volunteering to serve on committees that drive the key activities of the SAIMM. We still need to continually motivate and support our office staff, who carry out the back-office work that ensures we can deliver the quality services that our membership mandates us to provide. There are many in our rank-and-file who can help, and they are encouraged to come forward to keep the wheels turning.

The past 100 days have also been an opportunity for me to look back at my experiences as President and share these with future presidents. My broad advice resonates with that of Jeff Immelt, former CEO of General Electric, when he stepped down after 16 years of service and handed over the leadership baton to John Flannery. Jeff said that in his advice to John 'I gave him maybe the most important advice for incoming CEOs, and that is: every job looks easy when you're not the one doing it.' My advice is that it is going to be tough being President, but it is always gratifying when you give of your best. Leadership is about building a strong team. What I have learnt is this: a good leader humbles himself, asks the right questions, listens to advice, is of service to others, and above all, is willing to learn. My last 100 days have taught me to be a better person and I am grateful to the SAIMM for the opportunity of serving you as President. I leave office with a great sense of hope for the future of the SAIMM.

C. Musingwini
President, SAIMM