

MEDIA STATEMENT

09 March 2015

Dr Albert van Jaarsveld Installed as UKZN's Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Dr Albert van Jaarsveld was sworn in as the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) new Vice-Chancellor and Principal, at an official Installation ceremony held at the University's Westville Campus in Durban, on the 07th of March 2015. Dr van Jaarsveld takes the baton from UKZN's founding Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, who served the University since its inception in 2004. UKZN was formed as part of a merger between the former historical University of Natal and University of Durban-Westville.

The auspicious event was well-attended and saw Cabinet Ministers, MECs, Director-Generals, Members of the Diplomatic Corp, Members of the judiciary, Vice-Chancellors and senior members of other South African Universities, as well as senior representatives from the business fraternity and University stakeholders making up the dignitary list. The UKZN leadership, academics, staff and students also came in their numbers to witness the Installation of their new Vice-Chancellor, alongside the media.

Chair of Council, Dr Phumla Mnganga, delivered the welcome address and said, "the ceremonial act of Installing the Vice-Chancellor is our way of not only welcoming him to the Institution but entrusting him with more than 100 years of academic achievement on which he can make his mark."

As part of the ceremony, Dr van Jaarsveld took a solemn oath to serve the University, was robed in a traditional gown made especially for him and was capped by Chancellor, Dr Zweli Mkhize.

A heartfelt address was delivered by the newly installed Vice-Chancellor which reflected on the achievements of the Institution and expressed his commitment to furthering the University's aspirations of advancing Excellence and Transformation.

"...Possibly because of the Institution's extraordinary and rich history, buried deep inside its belly, there burns a sense of urgency and excitement; a passion that is straining to be unleashed on the African continent; an innate desire that can transform this country and KwaZulu-Natal into an ever more important powerhouse. I am proud to have been afforded the honour to assist and nurture this inherent passion to its full potential."

Some key points spoken fervently by van Jaarsveld included the national challenge of providing tuition loans for the many students who cannot afford it. He described the challenge as a "pressure point" that will remain. Inspired by systems implemented in the UK and US, van Jaarsveld proposed alternative mechanisms that included providing possible tax incentives to individuals, corporates and financial institutions, to complement the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). On the

trajectory to advance Transformation and Excellence, van Jaarsveld spoke of the aggressive post-doctorate recruitment programme that is aimed at increasing the number of African and especially African women scholars in academia. He indicated a particular interest in “growing young academic stars”, and “the explicit focus on growing young talent that will increasingly become the distinguishing characteristic of UKZN.”

The KZN Premier, Mr Senzo Mchunu, delivered the keynote address, where he welcomed Dr van Jaarsveld to the Province and commended him for getting to this milestone in his career. Mchunu also spoke of the challenge of strengthening collegiality among staff at all levels and asked that the Vice-Chancellor “find a creative way to ensure that there is high moral among staff and students”.

Minister Naledi Pandor of the Department of Science and Technology, Deputy-Minister Mduzuzi Comfort Manana from the Department of Higher Education and Training, as well as the Chair of Higher Education South Africa (HESA), Professor Adam Habib, formed the eminent list of speakers who congratulated the Installed leader and delivered their messages of support to Dr van Jaarsveld.

In her message of support, Minister Pandor praised Dr van Jaarsveld for being the first Zoologist and the first former CEO of the National Research Foundation to become a Vice-Chancellor. Pandor added that his understanding of our national facilities and his insight into the training of a new generation of scientists in South Africa would go a long way in benefiting UKZN.

Deputy-Minister Manana called upon the new Vice-Chancellor to focus his attention on furthering the national policy objectives for transformation and increasing the number of doctoral graduates. He indicated great strides having been made to improve the past, however, it remains a concern and these imbalances need to be addressed.

In his role as Chair of HESA, Professor Habib commented on some of the major Higher Education challenges in South Africa, including the leadership realm. In this context, the qualities of a leader who is empathetic but strategic, managerially nuanced but also academically ensconced, politically wise but rigorously independent were deliberated upon.

Dr van Jaarsveld’s exceptional experience in research, teaching and leadership spans two local universities and multiple local and international institutions, as well as local and international industry committees. In that light, the new Vice-Chancellor of UKZN brings with him a wealth of experience and new ideas on how to keep the University on an upward trajectory, building on its record of excellence through transformation. Furthermore, his expertise in the driving seat of his former employer not only provided him with the functional knowledge of research systems at macro level but also with the necessary experience to function at the highest level. The University congratulates its new Vice-Chancellor and trust that through his leadership, UKZN will build a lasting legacy.

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Notes to Editors: For more information on UKZN, please visit www.ukzn.ac.za; or to arrange any media interviews, please contact Sejal Desai, Media Liaison Officer on 031 260 7829/083 284 9333 or at desaisej@ukzn.ac.za