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## MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, 6 April 2011

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#### UKZN TO HONOUR LEADING SOUTH AFRICANS

The University of KwaZulu-Natal will honour four leading South Africans, amongst them, a Nobel Laureate, for their outstanding contributions in the scientific, arts, human rights, political, and academic sectors and through their innovation, expertise and intellect in their respective fields, have changed the lives of people both in South Africa and globally. The degrees will be awarded at the University's graduation ceremonies which will be held over seven days commencing on Monday April 11, and ending on Tuesday April 19. Two honorary degrees will be awarded posthumously.

Approximately **7471** graduands at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, of which **4572 (61.2percent)** are women, will receive their degrees which will be conferred at the 19 ceremonies that will be held on the Pietermaritzburg and Westville campuses.

Approximately **1641 degrees** will be conferred in the **Faculty of Education; 440 degrees** in the **Faculty of Engineering; 462** in the **Faculty of Health Sciences; 1898** in the **Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences; 283** in the **Faculty of Law; 1380** in the **Faculty of Management Studies; 401** in the **Faculty of Medicine** and **966** in the **Faculty of Science and Agriculture**.

A total of 155 doctoral degrees will be conferred. An impressive 321 graduands will graduate cum laude and summa cum laude respectively.

Three academics will receive the University's Distinguished Teachers' Award for teaching excellence. Dr Helen Watson of the School of Environmental Studies, Mr Mark Tufts in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Professor Fatima Suleman, Head of the School of Pharmacy and Pharmacology will be honoured for teaching excellence. The University's prestigious Fellowship for distinguished academic achievement will be presented to the Dean of the Medical School Professor Umesh Laloo.

Prominent guest speakers are: leading sociologist and educationalist Professor Crain Soudien; public health expert Professor Welile Shasha; Dr Oswald Franks Chief Executive Officer of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA); Professor Aslam

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#### Founding Campuses:

-  Edgewood
-  Howard College
-  Medical School
-  Pietermaritzburg
-  Westville

Fataar head of Education Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University; head of the Consumer Education Department at the Financial Services Board Ms Olivia Davids; and speaker of the uMsunduzi Municipality Mr Babu Baijoo.

**Honorary doctorates will be conferred on:**

**Professor Sydney Brenner DSc (honoris causa)** A pioneer in molecular biology, author, and Nobel laureate Professor Sydney Brenner is a remarkable human being. “Known for his penetrating scientific insight and acerbic wit”, Professor Brenner has had a long and impressive scientific career which spans six decades. At Cambridge he collaborated to decipher the nature of the genetic code and other elements of gene function. Professor Brenner, together with scientists Robert Horvitz and John Sulston, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology for their groundbreaking studies in understanding the complexities of molecular organisms. He played a critical role in Britain’s involvement in the Human Genome project. Today in his ‘80s, Brenner remains an energetic provocateur of new ideas and avenues in biological research throughout the world.

**Ms Busi Mhlongo DMus (honoris causa) posthumous** her music earned international acclaim. Known as “The queen of modern Zulu music”, the late Ms Busi Mhlongo turned the *Maskanda* guitar music of migrant Zulu mine workers into a worldwide phenomenon. The international singer, composer and dancer’s infectious music and singing style had a universal appeal mesmerizing audiences around the globe. Described as ‘one of the most phenomenal and exciting musicians to have ever emerged from South Africa’, her lyrics carried powerful and poignant messages.

**Professor Lewis Nkosi DLitt (honoris causa) posthumous** a son of KwaZulu-Natal, and Durban in particular, the late Professor Lewis Nkosi, was one of South Africa’s foremost intellectuals, whose influence as both a writer and critic has been profound. He is the embodiment of African Scholarship. A renowned writer and essayist Lewis Nkosi was described by the Sunday Times as a ‘sharp and gifted writer with an irreverent take on life’. He was fearless and through his work criticized the harsh and senseless apartheid regime.

**Judge Zakeria Mohamed Yacoob LLD (honoris causa)** is recognized as one of South Africa’s sharpest and highly respected legal minds. A widely respected Constitutional law expert Yacoob’s personal journey is one of courage, fortitude and resilience. In 1998 he was appointed to the bench by President Nelson Mandela. Zac Yacoob as he is fondly known lost his sight at the tender age of 16 months after contracting meningitis. But the disability together with political and social impediments did not deter him from reaching the pinnacle of success in his career.

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