

**Welcoming new students and their  
parents to Stellenbosch University**  
Coetzenburg, 18:00, 19 January 2017  
**By Prof Wim de Villiers,  
Rector and Vice-Chancellor**

*Verwelkoming van nuwelingstude-  
nte en hul ouers tot die Universiteit Stellenbosch*  
*Coetzenburg, 18:00, 19 Januarie 2017*  
*Deur prof Wim de Villiers,  
Rector en Visekanselier*

Thank you, Dr [Phumzile] Mmope [Senior Director: Corporate Communication, programme director of the event]. Good evening everyone! *Molweni. Goeienaand, en baie welkom.* In the interest of effective communication, I will be speaking mainly in English tonight, repeating key concepts in Afrikaans for emphasis.

It's great to see all of you here! You look splendid in your Matie T-shirts ... a sea of maroon! Thank you for everyone who has made this initiative possible, especially the sponsors, Steinhoff, for their continued support.

There's significant symbolic meaning in your Matie T-shirt (also sponsored by the Office of the Rector). Just as we all have the same colour blood flowing in our veins as human beings, so we are all maroon as Maties. Whether we are black or white, English or Afrikaans or isiXhosa, urban or rural, rich or poor, a South African or an international student or staff member ... we are all members of the Stellenbosch University community. We all bleed maroon!

And we strive to be **INCLUSIVE**. We respect each other. We appreciate each other – regardless of our differences. In fact, we celebrate our diversity because it makes us stronger. We treat everybody with dignity, irrespective of skin colour or language or gender or sexual orientation or religious beliefs or political views.

*Dis wat ons bedoel as ons sê dat ons 'n "INKLUSIEWE" universiteit is – hier is almal welkom.*

*Wamkelikile!* Welcome to all! Our vision of inclusivity is reflected in your Matie T-shirt. You might be in a specific residence or PSO or cluster, but first and foremost, you are all now members of the Stellenbosch University family.

*Maar wat beteken dit? Waarvoor staan hierdie Universiteit?* The five values of Stellenbosch University are printed on the back of your Matie T-shirt. *Kyk sommer op die rugkant van die persoon wat voor jou sit se T-hemp vir ons vyf waardes.*

*Die eerste een waarop ek wil fokus, is EMPATIE.* This is about putting yourself in someone else's position, in their shoes, in their skin. To have **EMPATHY** is to understand where others are coming from. This is even more important in the current so-called "post-truth" era. Social media have made it easier than ever before to share information and express opinions – this could either be good or bad, if not managed carefully.

Folks, you are embarking on the greatest journey of your life ... becoming a critical thinker. That's what a university education is all about – not memorising a bunch of facts, but learning how to think, learning to think critically. However, don't confuse this with being critical just for the sake of it. Yes, examine all things and interrogate everything, but always keep an open mind, always remain open to persuasion.

We certainly live in interesting times. Like the wind is blowing here tonight, the winds of change are blowing through society – sometimes at gale force! This is very noticeable in the higher-education sector. The past two years, we have seen student protests on university campuses nationwide, including here.

Now, students – as citizens – have the right to lawful and peaceful protest. But such protest should respect the rights of others. Neither academic nor administrative activities should be disrupted. We have a responsibility to protect our institution and its people, property and activities – because this University is a national asset. *Ons erken die reg van studente om te protesteer – dis 'n geleentheid om uit ons gemaksones te kom en ernstig met mekaar te praat oor moeilike kwessies. Aktivisme mag egter nie ander studente se reg om te kan studeer en hul vryhede aantas nie, of eiendom beskadig nie of ander se veiligheid bedreig nie.*

*Dit bring my by ons volgende waarde waarop ek wil fokus: MEDE-VERANTWOORDBAARHEID.* The next value is **SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY**. All of us are responsible for our own actions, yes, but at the same time, we should be accountable to each other. That's what makes a society work. *So, jou medestudent is jou maat en ook jou vennoot, en saam neem ons verantwoordelikheid vir ons Universiteit, ons dorp, ons land, ons vasteland, ons planeet.*

Talking about the planet and protecting the environment, as you know, there is a serious water shortage in the Western Cape. In this water-scarce region of ours, the dams are running empty. I want to assure you, Stellenbosch University has a range of sustainable water-saving initiatives in place. For instance, we plant indigenous plants that don't need a lot of water in our gardens, and we irrigate them using non-potable water. Also, all over campus, we are installing water-saving showerheads and toilets. But it is not only the institution's responsibility to save water. Shared accountability means it's up to all of us to use water wisely. So, please do your bit. And remember, when it comes to waste, practice the Three "R"s ... not the traditional "Reading, writing and arithmetic", but "Reduce, Re-use and Recycle".

Now, let me quickly tell you a story to illustrate the next value, **EXCELLENCE**. It's the story of Yvonne Dyum, who was born in a small town in the Eastern Cape 24 years ago. When she was still an infant, her parents came to Stellenbosch to work at Muratie Wine Estate as general farmworkers. And they made sure she went to school, and they supported her in pursuing her dream of becoming a doctor.

In 2009, Yvonne matriculated from Cloeteville High here in town, but her results were not good enough to gain admission to medical school. However, she didn't give up. She came to Maties and enrolled in SciMathUS. It's a yearlong bridging programme to help matriculants improve their marks in science and mathematics.

And that she did! At the end of the year, she qualified to study Medicine at Maties. And six years later – just last month – she received her degree and became Dr Yvonne Dyum. We are very proud of her, as we are of each and every one of the 5 395 Maties who graduated last month.

That's the transformative power of education in action. It changes lives. And there's no doubt, you've come to the right place for your life-changing experience.

*Hier is 'n paar feite oor die UITNEMENDHEID wat ons nastreef.* The success rate of students at Stellenbosch University is consistently around 84%, a full 10% above the average performance of students at other universities across the country. And our retention rate is even better, at 17% above average. Last year, 87% of Stellenbosch students who registered for the first time in 2016 passed and will this year start their 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Compare that to the national average of 70%.

These achievements start with student support. Universities the world over have become supportive places because they want their students to be successful. But in South Africa, Stellenbosch takes the lead in having a strongly supportive and developmental approach to student success.

The best way to describe it is in terms of an ecosystem of support. It's an integrated arrangement, with everyone working together – students and staff, student leaders and professors, house committees and administration, cluster convenors and management. Like we see here today, our academics, deans and students are aligned and share the responsibility for a successful academic and social environment

Our learning-and-teaching model is one of the most advanced, engaged and personalised in the country. And our professors and researchers are among the most productive on the continent. All of which produces the kind of high-calibre graduates that our country and continent need so dearly.

Little wonder, then, that the employment rate of Stellenbosch graduates is so high. The CHEC Graduate Destination Survey on the 2010 graduate cohort found that the employment rate for SU graduates in 2012 was 94%. Clearly, a degree from Stellenbosch opens the door to employment for the vast majority of our graduates, and we hope that you will be among them in a few years' time.

What we expect of you is that you take your academic, personal and social life at Maties very seriously. That you bring agency and initiative to your time here. Motivation and focus on your academic purpose. And active participation in the many opportunities for living out your other passions, whether cultural or sporting or both.

We want to ensure that you develop into a responsible and responsive graduate who will contribute towards making the world a better place. That's why the next of our values is **LEADERSHIP IN SERVICE OF OTHERS**. By virtue of being here, all of you are leaders. You have excelled to get to university, and at Stellenbosch, you will get every opportunity to further develop your leadership abilities.

*Wanneer jy oor 'n paar jaar gradueer, gaan jy toegerus wees om 'n leiersrol in die samelewing te speel. En onthou – Maties lei met nederigheid, met verantwoordelikheid en met begrip vir ander mense. Dit is wat **DIENSBARE LEIERSKAP** behels.*

Our fifth and final value is **INNOVATION**. It means that we think and act in new and different ways. As a 21st-century institution, we must make better choices and decisions, not only for ourselves but for each other and society in general.

Listen up folks – I am proud to announce a brand new initiative, which we will be piloting this year. We will be rolling out cutting-edge live video streaming and recording in some of our modules. Now wait, before you get too excited and think that you don't have to go to class anymore, that you can just follow lectures live on your laptop or tablet or smartphone ... remember, it's still a pilot with limited scope. It will only apply to some modules. But if you happen to be in one of the classes selected for the pilot, please consider using this facility. We need your feedback.

*Ons gaan baie op julle staatmaak vir **INNOVASIE**. Julle is die nuwe generasie Maties. Julle moet ons help nuut en vars dink en doen. Die regstreekse aanlynvideouitsendings en -opnames waarmee ons vanjaar op 'n proefgrondslag begin, is deel van 'n breë strategie van die Universiteit om tegnologie sinvol in leer- en onderrigaktiwiteite te integreer.*

Like you, this University is on a journey. If you look at the front of your T-shirt, you will see a depiction of Maties as **a world-class university firmly rooted in Africa**. That's the future we desire – to be a leading higher-education institution with local relevance, regional impact and global competitiveness ... a new African university, a new South African university.

Exactly what that will entail, is an open question. But you get the opportunity now to help us look for answers. *Om die toekoms te help bepaal – nie net jou eie toekoms nie, maar die toekoms van hierdie ou universiteit wat volgende jaar in 2018 sy eeufees vier – is ’n historiese geleentheid. Maak die meeste daarvan.*

Please make the most of this wonderful opportunity. Welcome again, and we look forward to sharing your journey with you. Thank you.

**Let me now introduce members of our management team to you:**

- Prof Leopoldt van Huyssteen, Chief Operating Officer / *Bedryfshoof*
- Prof Arnold Schoonwinkel, Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching / *Viserektor: Leer en Onderrig*
- Prof Eugene Cloete, *Viserektor: Navorsing, Innovasie & Nagraadse Studies* / Vice-Rector: Research, Innovation & Postgraduate Studies
- Prof Hester Klopper, Vice-Rector: Strategic Initiatives and Internationalisation / *Viserektor: Strategiese Inisiatiewe en Internasionalisering*
- Prof Stan du Plessis, COO Designate, *Aangewese Bedryfshoof*
- Dr Ronel Retief: *Registrateur* / Registrar

**We also have Faculty management represented here:**

- Prof Jimmy Volmink, Dean of Medicine & Health Sciences / *Dekaan van Geneeskunde & Gesondheidswetenskappe*
- Prof Samuel Tshehla, Dean of Military Science / *Dekaan van Krygskunde*
- Prof Maureen Robinson, Dean of Education / *Dekaan van Opvoedkunde*
- Prof Sonia Human, *Dekaan van Regsgeleerdheid* / Dean of Law
- Prof Hansie Knoetze, Dean of Engineering / *Dekaan Ingenieurswese*
- Prof Louise Warnich, *Dekaan Natuurwetenskappe* / Dean of Science
- Prof Danie Brink, *Waarnemende Dekaan Agriwetenskappe* / Acting Dean AgriSciences
- Prof Hendrik Bosman, Acting Dean of Theology / *Waarnemende Dekaan Teologie*
- Prof Anthony Leysens, *Waarnemende Dekaan Lettere & Sosiale Wetenskappe* / Acting Dean of Arts & Social Sciences
- And Prof Johan Malan, Acting Dean of Economic & Management Sciences / *Waarnemende Dekaan Ekonomiese & Bestuurswetenskappe*
- And also with us Dr Phumzile Mmope, Senior Director: Corporate Communication... and programme director this evening. Thank you, Colleagues.

Back to you Dr Mmope.