

[Finale konsep: onderhewig aan wysiging tydens lewering; onder embargo tot dan]

**Universiteit Stellenbosch,
Derde gradeplegtigheid, Maart 2018**

2018/03/20, 17:00, Coetzenburg Sentrum/Centre

**Fakulteite: (1) Agriwetenskappe;
asook (2) Geneeskunde en
Gesondheidswetenskappe
Verwelkoming deur die voorsittende
beampte, prof Wim de Villiers,
Rektor en Visekanselier**

[Final draft; Embargoed until delivery; Subject to change during delivery]

**Stellenbosch University,
Third graduation ceremony, March 2018**

**Faculties: (1) AgriSciences;
as well as
(2) Medicine and Health Sciences
Welcoming by the presiding officer,
Prof Wim de Villiers,
Rector and Vice-Chancellor**

Ladies and gentlemen, what a pleasure it is to preside over this graduation ceremony taking place in our Centenary year, which makes it a truly historic occasion.

Standing side by side with the town's sturdy old oak trees for the past hundred years, Stellenbosch University has grown into one of Africa's leading higher-education institutions.

Met ons Eeufees herdenk ons groot prestasies en baanbrekeruitvindings die afgelope honderd jaar. Ons gee erkenning aan almal wat die US help vorm het. Terselfdertyd het die Universiteit sy bydrae tot die ongeregtighede van die verlede erken en hom tot regstelling en ontwikkeling verbind.

Against the background of valuable lessons from our complex history, our Centenary signifies a new beginning for Stellenbosch University. We strive to be a relevant institution playing a key role in the development of our nation, and our continent. And we are committed to contribute to a society of dignity, healing, justice, freedom and equality for all.

[Sien ook rektor se boodskap in Gradeprogram: "Jy is deel van 'n uitgelese groep, want ons gedenk vanjaar ons eeuwording as universiteit. Die US het in 1918 met vier fakulteite, 503 studente en 40 dosente begin. Vandag spog ons met tien fakulteite en 'n dinamiese gemeenskap van meer as 30 000 studente en 3 000 personeellede op vyf kampusse in die streek."

Also see Rector's message in Graduation Programme: "We thank everyone who has helped to mould this institution and cement its reputation as a world-class academic institution. At the same time, SU acknowledges its contribution towards the injustices of the past. For this we have deep regret. We apologise unreservedly to those who were excluded from the historical privileges that SU enjoyed. We also honour the critical Matie voices of that time who would not be silenced despite being ostracised. And in responsibility towards the present and future generations, SU commits itself to the ideal of an inclusive, world-class university in and for Africa."]

Ons jongste groep graduandi versinnebeeld dit waarvoor hierdie Universiteit staan – inklusiwiteit, uitnemendheid en sosiale impak.

By the end of this week's graduation ceremonies, and following those of December 2017, we will again have awarded a record number of qualifications for a single academic year – 9 032 qualifications in total, including 1 620 master's degrees and 305 PhDs. These are phenomenal numbers! Clearly, Stellenbosch University is making an invaluable contribution as a national asset.

Al ons nuwe graduandi by hierdie plegtigheid kom uit twee fakulteite Agriwetenskappe, asook Geneeskunde en Gesondheidswetenskappe. Agriwetenskappe is een van vier fakulteite waarmee die Universiteit in 1918 begin het, en wat Geneeskunde en Gesondheidswetenskappe betref is dit natuurlik my ou Fakulteit...

Now, I always tell people that Stellenbosch today is a much better university than when I obtained my MBChB here in 1983, followed by an MMed in 1991. There are three main reasons for this: We are more research intensive, we are becoming ever more diverse while at the same time achieving a module pass rate above 85%, which is among the highest in the country, in line with our aim of broadening access with success. And we have a greater international outlook.

This we also see reflected in AgriSciences, one of the University's four founding faculties. Held in high regard globally, they occupy the No. 1 position in Africa on the *QS World University Rankings by Subject* for both agriculture and forestry.

Dames en here, 'n aansienlike persentasie van ons studente sou glad nie universiteit toe kon gekom het as hulle nie 'n beurs ontvang het nie, en baie studente het bykomde geldelike hulp nodig om hul studies te voltooi.

So, we welcome the recent announcement by the state that “fully subsidised, free higher education and training for poor and working-class South Africans” will be phased in. But we also know that the need is so great that additional bursary support will still be required. I therefore want to thank all donors helping us to provide opportunities to the next generation of talented students making an impact globally.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will this week be awarding more honorary degrees than usual, a total of 13 spread over six graduation ceremonies. We are doing this especially to mark our Centenary year. The recipients are all esteemed local and international thought leaders. Please read more about all of them on the University's website, www.sun.ac.za

I would like to extend a very special welcome to our honorary doctorate recipients for this ceremony. All three have all travelled from the United States to be here today. They are:

- **Prof Peter Jones**, eminent cancer researcher, leading medical scientist in the field of epigenetics, and distinguished academic
- **Prof Andre Nel**, internasionaal-gerekende mediese wetenskaplike navorser op die gebied van die nanogeneeskunde; and
- **Dr Imtiaz Sooliman**, internationally respected humanitarian and founder of Gift of the Givers

A warm welcome also to their spouses, colleagues, family and friends who have joined us to honour them for their work and contribution to the world we live in.

Ons eregraduandi vergestalt nie net die kenmerke van die gegradueerde wat ons by ons studente wil inskerp nie, maar ook die eienskappe waarmee ons instelling graag die toekoms wil aanpak nou dat ons die US se tweede eeu as 'n toonaangewende universiteit betree.

Ons gaan nou saam vorentoe ... masiye phambili ... forward together!

CONCLUSION:

Aan al ons graduati, wil ek 'n hartlike woord van gelukwense rig met die verwerwing van julle kwalifikasies. Ons hoop dat dié kwalifikasie na verdere studie sal lei, na suksesvolle en vervullende loopbane, of 'n versterking van 'n bestaande loopbaan. Bly in verbinding met jou alma mater deur die alumniwebblad sodat jy uitnodigings na alumnibyeenkomste, elektroniese nuusbriewe en Matieland kan ontvang.

I also wish to congratulate parents, spouses, family and friends with the achievement of your graduate. In many an instance support probably went hand in hand with sacrifice, but we trust that the reason for your presence here today made it all worth while. Thank you.