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23 January 2014

Dear Matie Parent / Matie Guardian

## **WELCOME TO MATIELAND**

For some of you, today is your first meeting with Stellenbosch University (SU); for alumni or parents with other Matie children, it is a homecoming. I would like to welcome all of you to Matieland! We are geared to support your child.

At SU we are inclusive, innovative and future-focused. Therefore we create space for a variety of people, ideas and viewpoints. Along with other universities worldwide SU is in transformation mode to enable us to serve more students even better despite limited infrastructure and funds. We would like to contribute positively to the future of our country – and therefore also will equip your child to play a leading role.

Here at SU we think innovatively about student communities. Clusters promote good interaction between residence and private students and in line with international trends, our facilities link academic and social spaces. We create a home from home such as the amaMaties hub for our day students. Please encourage your new student to attend every relevant event in this welcoming period and to ensure that he/she familiarises himself/herself with all our student-focused facilities.

In 2013 we again featured among the best universities and we are especially proud of our average first-year retention rate of 87% over the past seven years. Compared to the national figure of 50%, SU is performing very well. One of the biggest contributing factors is our First-Year Academy. Please take note of the role of this initiative in your child's first year of study, as well as many other support structures in the Welcoming booklet at [www.sun.ac.za/welcome](http://www.sun.ac.za/welcome); [www.mymaties.com](http://www.mymaties.com) or the Student Affairs division at 021 808-2848.

The delays in the construction of additional student accommodation were caused by factors beyond our control, but we would like to apologise nonetheless for any inconvenience. Work is continuing around the clock and will be completed shortly. Our students will derive benefit from these improvements.

If you are wondering about “initiation” or the so-called “doop” – that was scrapped ages ago! In its place, we offer a welcoming programme – with the emphasis on WELCOME. New students should not feel obligated to take part in any activity that they feel violates their dignity or infringes on their human rights. We function within a value system of mutual respect.

If your child works hard and makes use of support options, he/she should pass well and complete his/her programme in the minimum time. We provide the infrastructure for successful studies, social and leadership development, community interaction and safety on campus. However, it remains the student's responsibility – as a young adult – to obtain the relevant information and to make the most of all opportunities.

Once again, welcome and thank you for trusting us to help your child prepare for his/her chosen career.

Kind regards

Prof H Russel Botman  
Rector and Vice-Chancellor