

Stellenbosch University information session for
prospective students and their parents

*Universiteit Stellenbosch-inligtingsessie vir
voornemende studente en hul ouers*

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SU Rector & Vice-Chancellor **Prof Wim de Villiers** *Rektor en Visekanselier, US*

“Top university for top students”

“Top-universiteit vir top-studente”

Naand, almal! Good evening, everyone! Great to be here with all of you.

These are exciting times – the world is changing fast, so it is important to get a good education. By going to university and becoming a doctor or engineer or entrepreneur – and we even have careers we don’t know the names of yet – you will be making a vital contribution to society. But you will also be investing in your own future. Research shows that someone with a master’s or doctoral degree will earn up to four and a half times more during their lifetime than someone who only has matric.

Dit maak dit die moeite werd om te kom studeer ... en aan te hou studeer. Julle het bewys julle kan suksesvol wees. Ek wil julle aanmoedig om sommer nou al te besluit dat die graad wat jy oor drie of vier jaar hier gaan verwerf net jou eerste graad gaan wees! OK, now I know it can be quite tough to decide where to study. So, I want to tell you a bit more about Stellenbosch University.

Ek praat ook graag met die ouers hier. Ek weet u kind se toekoms is vir u belangrik. Ek is self ’n ouer van drie kinders, en mens wonder altyd, gaan my kind inpas en aanpas? Gaan my kind by hierdie plek die regte kwalifikasie kan verwerf? Ons hoop om vanaand al u vrae te beantwoord. Kom gesels gerus na die tyd ook met ons fakulteite en ander afdelings.

My theme is simple: “A top university for top students.” Stellenbosch is an excellent choice, for mainly two reasons: Here you will get a top education for a successful career one day; and you will also get a rounded student experience as you embark on this very exciting stage of your life’s journey.

I was a student here myself. And I was in the fortunate position that the foundation I got here took me all the way to Oxford for my PhD, and to America, where I worked for 18 years as a physician/scientist. Now I’m back, and I must tell you, I’ve been blown away to see that Stellenbosch is really up there with the best in the world.

Maties verskyn op verskeie ranglyste van die top-universiteite ter wêreld (Times Higher Education 276/401; QS 390/800; Shanghai 401–500/500; CWTS Leiden 481/750). Wêreldwyd is daar meer as 17 000 universiteit, en ons tel onder die top 2%. Werkgewers weet hulle kan staatmaak op ons kwalifikasies. By coming to Stellenbosch, you will be getting a qualification which is globally recognised and respected.

Now, there’s a worrying statistic in South Africa. Nationally, only 50% of new students make it to their second year, but our 1st-year retention rate at Stellenbosch is consistently 86% and above. How do we manage this? Two things: by focussing on excellence; and offering good support.

Let's talk about EXCELLENCE first. We recruit the best students – that's why you are here tonight. And we offer the best teaching by the best professors – you will get the opportunity to meet some of them tonight.

I mentioned world rankings earlier. The Department ranks South African universities in terms of their weighted per capita research output and knowledge generation. And guess what? Since 2008 Stellenbosch has been No. 1 in the country. Why should you care about research output? Because your professors – the ones who will be teaching you – will be up to date with the latest developments in their field.

That's why you should come to Stellenbosch ... because it is a **top university for top students**.

Kom ons kyk nou bietjie na wat dit beteken om 'n "top-student" te wees. Julle doen almal op skool, reg? Maar dit beteken nie universiteit gaan maklik wees nie. Jy gaan baie hard moet werk ... en anders werk. Hier toets ons nie net jou kennis nie. Ons stimuleer jou ook om te dink – vir jouself te dink, krities te dink, ondersoekend te dink, skeppende oplossings uit te dink.

Want ons het hierdie oplossings nodig vir die komplekse probleme van die samelewing, die sg. "wicked problems" of verwickelde, ineengestremde probleme met klomp oorsake – armoede, werkloosheid, ongelykheid. Om die vermoë te ontwikkel om sulke komplekse probleme aan te spreek, is wat jou gaan help sukses behaal in die lewe – nie net om die periodieke tabel te ken nie, maar om 'n kernoorlog te voorkom; nie net om plantbiologie en grondsamestelling te ken nie, maar hongersnood te verhoed; nie net om die reg te ken nie, maar om geregtigheid te laat geskied.

Dis groot doelwitte hierdie, dis groot kwessies, maar elk van julle het groot potensiaal, en dis ons missie om jou te help om jou volle potensiaal te verwesenlik. Jy sal vind ons bied goeie STEUN aan ons studente. That's the second reason for our good results. Besides recruiting excellent students and staff, we also offer good SUPPORT.

Sommer vroeg in die jaar skryf jy al jou eerste toetse, sodat ons betyds kan bepaal waar daar probleme is en ondersteuning gebied moet word. En daardie ondersteuning sal jy regdeur die stelsels kry – by die senior student wat jy as mentor kan kry (of jy nou in die koshuis is, of privaat bly); by die tutors wat klasondersteuning in kleiner groepies aanbied; by die lektore wat klasse doseer en die dekane wat fakulteite lei; by ons Afdeling Studentesake, waar jy enige tyd kan gaan aanklop; en by ons talle administratiewe en steunafdelings. So, op verskeie vlakke.

So, jy sal nie net op jouself aangewese wees nie ... maar – baie belangrik – op die oueinde is jy self verantwoordelik vir jou eie vordering. Dis hoe die lewe werk, en die Universiteit sal hierin ook vir jou 'n goeie leerskool wees.

Every year, before classes start, we have a Welcoming Programme for first years – to orient you to campus. And this programme, plus all the support services that I have mentioned, are all aimed at creating a more inclusive University. This is important to us as we attract a greater DIVERSITY of students – from all population groups and regions of the country and walks of life.

Our changing nature as an institution is also reflected in LANGUAGE. There was a time when Stellenbosch was an Afrikaans university. This is no longer the case. But neither are we an English university. Stellenbosch is a world-class, multilingual South African university. This provides our

graduates with a significant competitive advantage in today's diverse and integrated society – not only in SA, but globally.

There has been a policy decision to put English and Afrikaans on an equal footing as languages of tuition at Stellenbosch. Now we are in the process of implementing this policy. Many of our courses are already offered fully either in English or Afrikaans. Other classes might be bilingual. Or there is a simultaneous interpreting service, similar to the one here tonight. And as has been the case for many years, most text books are in English, and you can write all your assignments and tests and exams in English.

Dit beteken nie Afrikaans is nie vir ons belangrik nie ... allermens! Ons vind innoverende maniere om te voorsien in die taalbehoefte van ons Engels- en Afrikaanssprekende studente. Ons volg hierdie benadering want ons weet taal is 'n instrument van bemagtiging. Ons doen moeite om almal welkom te laat voel.

Ladies and gentlemen, you might have seen reports in the media about talks on campus about the language issue, and TRANSFORMATION. I want to reassure you that this is OK. This University is not an ivory tower, and neither are we an island. We are part of a society in transition, a society undergoing transformation. That's fine, that's good.

We welcome an open conversation on campus, we encourage critical discussion and dialogue. And we are committed to **transformation through education and research**.

We have, however, also made it clear that we cannot allow disruption of either academic or administrative activities. And nobody has the right to infringe on the rights of others. So, we remain committed to dialogue, as we become more inclusive, as we build excellence and as we focus on the future.

Speaking of the FUTURE ... we are constantly innovating to stay at the cutting edge of technological developments. Across the world, there is a revolution underway. We find ourselves in the Information Age of the 21st century. Knowledge is flowing faster and easier than ever before thanks to the internet and mobile technology.

Young people today – the millennials and post-millennials – are learning in different ways. That means we have to teach differently. Stellenbosch is one of the best internet-connected universities in South Africa. You will have access to computers for online research in the library, in residences, in study centres, etc. And we have a campus-wide wireless network for students, called "Maties WiFi". So, you can B.Y.O.D. – bring your own device for easy access whenever you want.

Students here can access important university services online – you simply go to my.SUN and click through to the info they need, e.g. about accommodation or the library or the exam timetable or their academic progress. And we also have an e-learning platform called SUNLearn. That's your online connection to all your academic course work and to your lecturers.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I am extremely excited to be here and to see you here tonight. And I would certainly like to welcome you here in 2016 at the start of the academic year. See you then!