

Message to the New Zealand Old Rhodian Reunion

Dear Old Rhodians

Warm greetings on your reunion! I trust you will have an enjoyable time as you reunite as Old Rhodians and reminisce on your time at Rhodes. But please do also find a moment to talk about how you can contribute to your alma mater's ongoing development.

It is my aim as the new Vice-Chancellor to maintain and further enhance the academic excellence associated with Rhodes University. I am especially committed to ensuring that Rhodes is at the forefront of the dissemination and production of knowledge; is indeed a place 'where leaders learn', and which nurtures and harnesses the potential of all the members of its community.

Rhodes is entrusted with nurturing and cultivating the most intellectually talented of our society, women and men that have the potential to make a significant contribution to equity, social justice and social, cultural and economic development.

We are also entrusted with producing knowledge that can both foster understanding of our natural and social worlds, and also inform the interventions and policies that are required to advance social equity, social justice and development.

My principal responsibility is to create the optimal environment for the creation of knowledge, the sharing of knowledge and the cultivation of the intellect, and for social engagement with a variety of communities.

I am committed to ensuring that there is the necessary environment, culture, structures, high quality academic programmes, and facilities to support learning on the part of students, and that we strive for academic excellence and to produce high quality graduates.

Rhodes is small and distinctive university. Although we have less than 6 000 students, 25% are postgraduates and 25% are international students from over 50 countries around the world. Currently, we have the most favourable academic staff to student ratio among South African universities, which means that students are guaranteed easy access to academics and close supervision.

We enjoy the distinction of having among the best undergraduate pass and graduation rates in South Africa, and outstanding postgraduate success rates. This is testimony to the quality of our academic provision, and to the commitment of Rhodes staff to student learning, development and success. We also have the best research output per academic staff member of any university in South Africa, which means

that students learn with academics that are often leaders in their fields and disciplines.

Almost 50% of all Rhodes' students live in the University's 42 residences and are associated with its 11 halls. The residences are an important part of the student culture at Rhodes and through a well-established structure of wardens, sub-wardens, and house committees the residences play an important role in supporting student development and success.

In as much as we seek to be a great small university we are, alas, a relatively poor university, there are major challenges ahead, our needs are great, and the support of friends and alumni is vital to our ongoing institutional development. In this regard I urge you not to forget your alma mater and to contribute in whatever way you can.

I look forward too to the opportunity to meet with you sometime in the future, and to especially discuss how you could contribute to your alma mater's future development.

With best wishes

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