

T is for transformation

Change is a word frequently met with apprehension. One explanation might be that it implies changing to something different; moving away from what is known to the unknown. Its synonym transformation, however, has a more positive ring to it and usually carries with it the association of 'changing for the better'. It has a future perspective to it; it holds the promise that it will turn the present into brighter tomorrow.

Focus on critical disciplines

Progress in leaps and bounds was made in the area of research, especially in the past few years. The establishment of a dedicated Research and Innovation Portfolio in 2011 brought new energy which has resulted in a year-on-year growth in research outputs and a fast-expanding community of talented researchers and postgraduate students. The opening

of Unisa's Science Campus with modern facilities and high-end equipment in 2013 did not only spark new interest among Unisa staff and students in the fields of science, engineering, technology, agriculture and environmental sciences, but also confirmed the university's responsiveness to the national need for more skilled graduates in these disciplines.

Knowledge production has a new home at Unisa's Science Campus



Signature courses are made available on digi-bands that allow students to work offline and only go online at intervals, thereby overcoming connectivity challenges



Harnessing technology for better teaching

Celebrating 20 years of democracy in South Africa, Unisa is also taking stock of its own transformation over the past two decades, and what a journey this has been. Keeping up with the times and new technologies, the university has gradually been transforming itself from a distance education provider to an open distance education university. Two initiatives signaling a new phase in its teaching and learning and a significant move towards becoming an open distance learning provider, were the introduction of myUnisa, an integrated management platform in 2007, and the first signature courses comprising of fully online modules that engage students in an interactive learning experience.

Engaged scholarship

In recent years Unisa has also pursued a clear direction regarding the all-important area of community engagement. Through university-wide engaged scholarship Unisa gave the lie to the myth that that community engagement is a separate activity from scholarship, teaching and learning, and research. Approaching communities with its discipline expertise, Unisa continues to engage with broad South African society to solve problems collectively. A case in point is the highly successful Chance 2 Advance (C2A) community programme in the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Narend Bajjnath. Since its inception, C2A has moved from a summer school concept to a mega community-learning programme. It has implemented 50 learning initiatives containing over 400 workshops. Participants represented over 100 communities across five provinces. The total number of participants stand at just over 50 000.

50 learning initiatives

400+ workshops

100+ communities

5 provinces

50 000+ participants