

Unisa's Chance to Advance Programme launched



Prof Narend Bajjnath, Dr Genevieve James & Prof Mandla Makhanya slicing the Chance to Advance cake

The much anticipated Chance to Advance Programme was launched on Thursday 27 January 2011 in the Kgorong cafeteria on the Muckleneuk campus.

The Chance to Advance Programme is the brainchild of Dr Genevieve James from the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, and consists of learning initiatives and courses which aim to inspire informal learning.

Some of the courses offered include the following: An introduction to cinematography; Become a language interpreter; Bringing the museum to school; Liberating the power of reading, health and wellness; Discover the art of public speaking; Harnessing the power of e-communication; Radio production; and A journey into the world of religion.

Unisa's Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Prof Narend Bajjnath stated: "This programme will make the university accessible, as expertise will be taken to the people. This will help with the development of our people as the university opens the academic world to society. As part of our institution's visionary commitment, "Towards *the* African university in the service of humanity", this programme will contribute to the education of the privileged and underprivileged. Furthermore, it will promote the culture of continuous learning."

Kate Lenahan, Director of North Gauteng Mental Health, is one of the champions of the programme. North Gauteng Mental Health is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation which promotes mental health and wellbeing. Ms Lenahan is in charge of projects in Mamelodi and Soshanguve, and is thrilled about the programme as some of her volunteers will be attending courses. "Unisa is making great strides in South African education. Chance to Advance is a dream come true for people who come from poor and unemployed sectors. For the first time, some people will access information and education, be able to take it back to their communities, and change and inspire other community members. I speak on behalf of the community, and I can't speak more highly of what Unisa is doing. Thank you for this opportunity."

Dr James, who is also the Project Manager of the programme, concluded the launch by expressing her gratitude to those who had helped her over the last years of planning the programme. She also praised the facilitators and encouraged the course presenters to be strong, to persevere and to strive for excellence over the next two weeks.

The programme will run from 28 January until 13 February 2011.