



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

PROF MANDLA MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
WELCOMING ADDRESS DURING THE 2018 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE
GRADE 12 RESULTS FOR THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ZK MATHEWS HALL, UNISA
04 JANUARY 2019

- Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga
- Premier of Gauteng, Mr David Makhura
- MEC of Education in Gauteng, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, and MECs present
- Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane, Councillor Solly Msimanga, and other Executive Mayors present
- Senior Officials of the National and Gauteng Department of Education
- Management of the University of South Africa
- Leadership of various schools in our Province

- Parents
- Learners

Programme Director, we are pleased as the university to have been chosen to provide the venue for the release of the matric results for the Gauteng Department of Education. For us, this choice is not simply because we have the requisite facilities for an event of this nature. The symbolism of hosting this event here at the University of South Africa communicates two powerful messages, which I hope will not be missed.

The first is that by holding this event in a university campus the department is indicating and strengthening the continuum between Basic Education and Higher Education. As a feeder to the higher education system, Basic Education is critical and requires all of us to join hands in always exploring ways in which we may improve the input that we provide to our learners as we prepare them for the future.

In a study published seven years ago titled *An examination of university-school partnerships in South Africa*, Judith Mutemeri and Rajendra Chetty explore some of the ways in which universities and schools may

collaborate to improve the quality of education in the participating schools.¹

Some of the findings that Mutemeri and Chetty arrive at include the fact that universities benefit from the practical experiences that schools bring to such partnerships and are therefore able to formulate relevant teacher education offerings.

On the other hand, schools benefit from the research carried out by universities and the new methods of instruction that continue to emerge in many parts of the world. Needless to emphasise the fact that the ultimate beneficiaries of such dynamic exchange of ideas would be learners.

It is important therefore, Minister Motshekga, Premier Makhura and MEC Lesufi, that we should explore ways in which we may, as a University and the provincial Department of Education, collaborate to add to the excellent work that the department and yourselves personally are doing to improve the quality of education for our learners.

¹ Mutemeri, Judith and Chetty, Rajendra (2011) *An examination of university-school partnerships in South Africa*. South African Journal of Education, Volume 31, Number 4 (January 2011), pp 505 - 517

The second symbolic gesture of holding this function in a university is to give the high achieving learners gathered here today a feel of being on a university campus. Yes, for others this might sound trivial. But for some of the learners, especially those coming from our townships, this day will be etched on their memories and serve as an encouragement to dream big.

Programme Director, we meet here today to reflect on the year that was – 2018. As we receive the breakdown of the matric results for the Gauteng Province, and congratulate the learners gathered here, and those at home, we must acknowledge the sterling work done by the GDE. The leadership of the GDE has a difficult task of ensuring that they maintain the excellent standards that exist in some of the high performing and well-resourced schools. At the same time, and more importantly, they must uplift working class schools in the townships. Such is the challenge of managing a public education system in a cosmopolitan province, where privilege lives side by side with disadvantage. It is not a system that is evenly endowed with resources and caters for learners who come only from privileged backgrounds. Just like us here at UNISA, the public basic education system is a multi-class system whose leadership must manage the resources at their

disposal with a bias in favour of the poor, while not disadvantaging the rich.

We wish to commend the GDE under the leadership of MEC Lesufi for maintaining this difficult balance. Indeed, the investments made in township schools in areas such as Hammanskraal, the West Rand, Tembisa and Soweto, have led to marked improvements in the quality of results produced in these areas. What this means is that learners from these areas can enter university and compete with their peers from privileged backgrounds.

The marked improvements shown over time in these areas are a demonstration of the fact that good education is a collaborative effort between the State, schools, parents and learners. The steady improvements in results would not be possible without dedicated efforts by the political leadership and officials of the department who put in long hours of reflection, planning and execution in the education of our children. These efforts are well complemented by hardworking principals and teachers; that class of workers who are often forgotten whenever we celebrate our country's progress.

Programme Director, in the era when the world is going through a lot of challenges which we ourselves as academics are struggling to understand, parents must be congratulated for guiding through and supporting their children to do well in their studies.

The main congratulations must of course be directed at the learners themselves. Their hard work, dedication and discipline must be commended. It is indeed not easy for young people to cope with the challenges thrown at them by their environments and still manage to rise to the occasion and perform exceptionally well. To the Class of 2018 we say as the University: Well Done!

We must of course not forget those of our learners who may have performed below the levels that they had wanted to. I am referring here to those who passed but did not achieve Bachelor or Diploma pass. As a university we have started to introduce practical measures to absorb those learners who may want to enrol for university study but do not qualify. We have introduced several Higher Certificates at NQF Level 5. Successful completion of these certificates facilitates articulation to register for either a National Diploma or a Bachelor's degree. We therefore commend other efforts by the State to support learners who fail their matric examinations.

It is our firm belief as a university that much more can still be done. We stand ready always to make our contribution for the advancement of our nation. With no claims made on our side that we have all the answers, what we can commit is to seek answers with yourselves. We are therefore proud to be the hosts for this year's announcement of provincial matric results.

We hope that this will be a yearly event, and that the Minister and the National Department will also consider using this national institution as the venue for future events.

On behalf of the Council and Management of the University of South Africa, together with the entire staff and student body, I welcome you all to the University of the Land.

I thank you!