

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### 2019 Unisa Academic Highlights

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The University of South Africa (Unisa) is the largest university on the continent and a leading Open Distance e-learning (ODEL) institution recognised for its academic prowess. The year 2019 signaled the beginning of a concerted and deliberate focus on academic relevance and excellence.

To this end, Unisa's has committed itself to the following:

- To reassert and re-prioritise the core business of the university, namely, teaching and learning, research and innovation, and community engagement.
- To ensure the institution's programme offerings are contextually relevant, cutting edge and of indisputable quality. A key pillar of Unisa's transformation process involves the re-curriculation of its courseware, not only in line with more recent innovations in ODeL (technologically and digitally) but also in line with our strategic intention to become an authentically African university.
- To uphold the university's reputation as a leading ODeL university. With this in mind, Unisa is subjecting its entire quality regime to thorough internal and external scrutiny. Later this year, Unisa will be hosting the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL), who will be conducting an institutional quality audit, complete with findings and recommendations for improvements in its quality regime.
- To ensure that administrative and operational challenges do not impact on Unisa's service delivery.

The following academic highlights illustrate what has been achieved in the respective colleges of the university.



### Economic & Management Sciences (CEMS)

- 22 staff members graduated with PhDs in 2018; 4 staff members graduated with PhDs in autumn 2019, and three more theses are under examination.
- Two new NRF ratings (C3 and C1) were awarded and one re-rating was improved to a B3.



- A cohort of 6 of the UCDP-funded Graduate Development Fellowship Programmes commenced on 1 June with 444 academics-in-training; Cohort 5 celebrated one PhD, three master's and 7 honours graduations during the autumn 2019 ceremonies.



## Agriculture & Environmental Sciences (CAES)

- Two staff members obtained doctoral degrees from the college – one in Animal Health and the other in Plant Sciences.
- 31 students have been involved in Animal Health work-integrated learning programmes, skilling them for the world of work.
- An epidemiologist professor from the University of Tennessee is visiting the Department of Agriculture and Animal Health for three months.
- CAES is deeply engaged in the upcoming international conference on the theme *Accelerating the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa*.



## Accounting Sciences (CAS)

- Two staff members were awarded PhDs, and three master's degrees.
- 6 students received doctoral degrees, 6 MPhil degrees and 8 MCompt degrees.
- Staff members registered for a six-week postgraduate supervision training workshop. The development of this course was undertaken by a consortium of universities in South Africa and the Netherlands through the funding of the DHET and the Dutch government, administered by NUFFIC.
- Three staff members received Excellence Awards for Innovation in Teaching and Learning.
- One new NRF B3 rating was awarded.
- Prof. Lourens Erasmus, an NRF C2-rated researcher, was appointed to the Financial and Fiscal Commission by the Minister of Finance.



## Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL)



- The Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership launched the KwaZulu-Natal chapter of its education programme for military veterans in April 2019. The programme was initiated by President Cyril Ramaphosa with Unisa as a strategic partner.
- The SBL continued to advance women leadership in tourism with the second cohort, comprising 34 women, successfully completing the Executive Development Programme for Women in Tourism. The programme was launched in 2016 as an initiative of the National Department of Tourism (NDT) to empower women and build an inclusive and sustainable tourism sector.
- The SBL recently endorsed *The Executive Insights Series Compendium of Supply Chain Management Terms* – a world-first all-inclusive reference guide focused on various aspects of supply chain management.
- Mr Ozias Ncube delivered the keynote address at the Chartered Institute of Government Finance and Risk Officers (CIGFARO) conference entitled *SCM Regulations and Implementing Innovative Procurement Strategies* during May 2019.
- A partnership was entered into with three international universities, the Northumbria University & Strathclyde University in the UK, the University of Newcastle in Australia, and the Joao Pessoa University in Brazil, involving an international research project into smart cities.
- The SBL expanded its footprint in Africa:
  - ✓ Since the establishment of a Regional Learning Centre in Akaki, the university has graduated 460 master's students, 170 of which are SBL alumni. In addition, 240 doctoral degrees have been awarded.
  - ✓ The SBL recently signed an agreement to jointly deliver the DBL in Ghana through its partnership with the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in that country.
- 357 students completed the Master of Business Leadership (MBL) programme and 67 the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme, and graduated between October 2018 and June 2019.



## Science, Engineering & Technology (CSET)

- The first-ever Unisa-Ghent University (Belgium) joint PhD student graduated at Ghent University and is expected to graduate at Unisa during the spring graduation ceremony.
- CSET facilitated an MoU between Unisa and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (USA) in April 2019.
- CSET has been awarded a grant from the UK to enable Unisa staff at CSET to pursue doctoral qualifications at UK universities.
- 9 academics were promoted to the level of associate professor using the current Senate criteria for *ad hominem* promotions.



## Graduate Studies (CGS)



- Scholars who received awards for excellence:
  - ✓ Dr Zebib Nuru received a research grant from the Royal Society in the United Kingdom under the Flair-Royal Society Millennium Africa Initiative.
  - ✓ At the 21st 2018/2019 NSTF-SOUTH32 Awards, Prof. Lindiwe Zungu won the TW Kambule-NSTF Award: Emerging Researcher and was a finalist in the category  
Special Annual Theme Award: Materials for Inclusive Economic Development.



## Human Sciences (CHS)

- Prof. Zethu Nkosi, Head of Teaching and Learning and Student Support in CHS, received an award for her leadership role in nursing education from the Forum for Professional Nurse Leaders.
- For the first time, 45 modules were offered in the 9 African Languages alongside the 5 Afrikaans and 5 English modules in the new B Ed programme.
- The Department of Health Studies hosted FUNDISA, a forum for Nursing Deans in South Africa.



## Education (CEDU)

- The college is developing multilingual glossaries in all South Africa's official languages.
- 7 master's degrees and 13 doctoral degrees were conferred.
- Two staff members obtained doctoral degrees.
- One staff member received the Principal's Prize for Excellence in Research.
- Number of NRF-rated researchers, academic associates and visiting researchers:
  - ✓ 10 NRF-rated researchers
  - ✓ 13 academic associates
  - ✓ 1 visiting researcher



## Law (CLAW)

- A community engagement MoU was concluded with the University of Nigeria.
- An academic/research MoU was concluded with the OP Jindal University in India.
- 4 staff members completed doctoral degrees.
- One staff member completed a master's degree.
- One researcher obtained an NRF C2 rating.



- The College entered into a bilateral agreement with the Southern African delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross and hosted the All-Africa Training Course on International Humanitarian Law.
- Prof. Mpfariseni Budeli was appointed by President Cyril Ramaphosa to serve on the SA Law Reform Commission

For more information on any of the above-mentioned achievements or initiatives, please contact the Unisa Media Office on 012 429 3981

**- Ends-**

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