

YOUUNISA

Magazine for Unisa students, alumni and friends

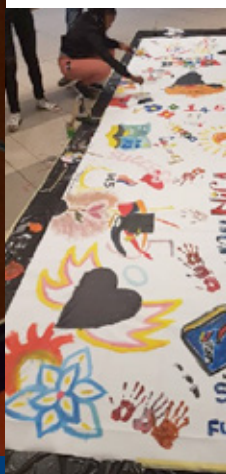
Issue 3 | 2018



Define tomorrow.



02 EDITORIAL



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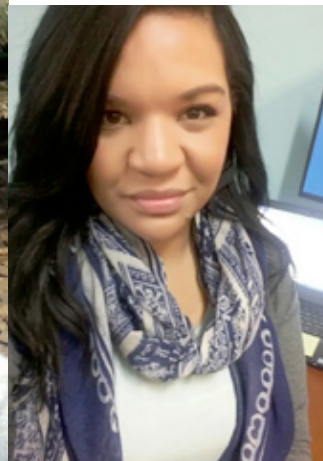
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Editorial

Celebrating a major milestone

This year Unisa celebrates 145 proud years as a beacon of knowledge and inspiration on the African continent – as a leading light shaping futures, and being illuminated in turn by its students and alumni, its partners and the worldwide community it serves. In this special issue of *YOUNISA* we deviate from our regular format to celebrate this special anniversary in words and images.

We bring you highlights coverage of the 4th of July anniversary event, and take a look at the university's fascinating journey over the past 145 years.

We asked you, our readers, to weigh in on how Unisa has been a guiding beacon in your life. We were blown away by the response, and would have loved publishing each and every heartfelt testimony. Sadly, we had the unenviable task of choosing, from the hundreds of submissions, the 20 most inspiring student stories, and the 20 best alumni testimonies. As much as this issue is a celebration of Unisa@145, it also serves to salute you, our students and alumni, who, in the words of Unisa Chancellor Thabo Mbeki, will be the architects of what is currently only an imagined future.

“We were blown away by the response, and would have loved publishing each and every heartfelt testimony.”



Sibhiyozela inqanaba elibaluleke kakhulu

Kulo nyaka iUnisa ibhiyozela iminyaka yebhongo eli-145 ilichibi lolwazi nenkuthazo kwilizwekazi leAfrika – njengesibane esikhokelayo nesiyila amakamva, sibuye sintunyekwe ngabafundi bangoku nabo bagqibayo ukufunda, amaqabane ayo nehlabathi lilonke elikhonzwa yiUnisa. Kolu papasho lukhethekileyo lweYOUNISA siyaphambuka kwindlela esiqhele ukubhala ngayo kuba sibhiyozela esi sikhumbuzo somnyaka ngamagama nangemifanekiso.

Siniphathele amagqabantshintshi ngesiganeko sesikhumbuzo esasingomhla wesi-4 kweyeKhala (Julayi), kwaye siphosa iliso kuhambo olunomtsalane lweyunivesithi kule minyaka idluleyo ili-145.

Sinicelile nina bafundi bopapasho lwethu, sathi khanihlomle ngendlela iUnisa ethe yaba sisibane esikhokelayo ebomini bakho. Sivuye asayivala imilomo yindlela enisabele ngayo, kwaye besingathanda ukupapasha onke amabali enu asuka ezintliziyweni. Ngelishwa, siye sanomsebenzi onzima wokukhetha awona mabali akhuthazayo abe ngama-20 qha avela kubafundi bangoku, nangama-20 qha avela kubafundi asele begqibile ukufunda, phakathi kwamakhulukhulu enithe nawathumela.

Njengokuba olu papasho lungumbhiozo weUnisa@145, lukwayindlela yokothulela umnqwazi nina bafundi bethu nani nina sebagqibayo ukufunda apha, nina kubhekiswa kubo yiNgqonyela yaseUnisa uThabo Mbeki, xa ethi niza kuba ngabakhi nabayili beli kamva sisaliqikelelayo.

“Sivuye asayivala imilomo yindlela enisabele ngayo, kwaye besingathanda ukupapasha onke amabali enu asuka ezintliziyweni.”



Go keteka tiragalo ye kgolo ye bohlokwa

Ngwaga wo Unisa e keteka mengwaga ye 45 ya boikgantšho bjalo ka leswao la tsebo le tlhohloletšo mo kontinenteng ya Afrika – bjalo ka ketapele go beakanyeng dinako tše di sa tlogo, le go hlalošwa gape ke baithuti ba yona le baithuti ba maloba, badirišani le setšhaba seo e se šomelago lefaseng ka bophara. Mo phatlalatšong ye ya go ikgetha ya YOUNISA re aroga go mokgwa wa rena wa tlwaelo wa go keteka matswalo a a go ikgetha ka mantšu le diswantšho.

Re go tlišetša tshekatsheko ya dintlha tše bohlokwa tša tiragalo ya matswalo ya la 4 Mosegamanye, gomme lebelela leeto la go kgahliša la yunibesithi mo mengwageng ye 145 ya go feta.

Re kgopela lena, babadi ba rena, go lekola ka moo Unisa e bilego leswao la go hlahla mo bophelong bja gago. Re tantšwe šedi ke dikarabo, gomme re be re ratile go phatlalatša pego ye nngwe le ye nngwe ya kgonthe. Ka maswabi, re bile le mošomo wo bothata wa go kgetha, go tšwa go dikakanyo tše makgolo, dikanegelo tša baithuti tše 20 tšeo di hlohleletšago go feta ka moka, le dipego tše 20 tša go phala tše dingwe tša baithuti ba maloba.

Le ge phatlalatšo ye e le moketeko wa Unisa@145, e šoma gape go hlompha lena, baithuti ba rena le baithuti ba rena ba maloba, bao, ka mantšu a Mokhanseliri wa Unisa Thabo Mbeki, e tla bago baagi ba seo gonabjale e lego fela bokamoso bjo bo akanywago.

“Re tantšwe šedi ke dikarabo, gomme re be re ratile go phatlalatša pego ye nngwe le ye nngwe ya kgonthe.”



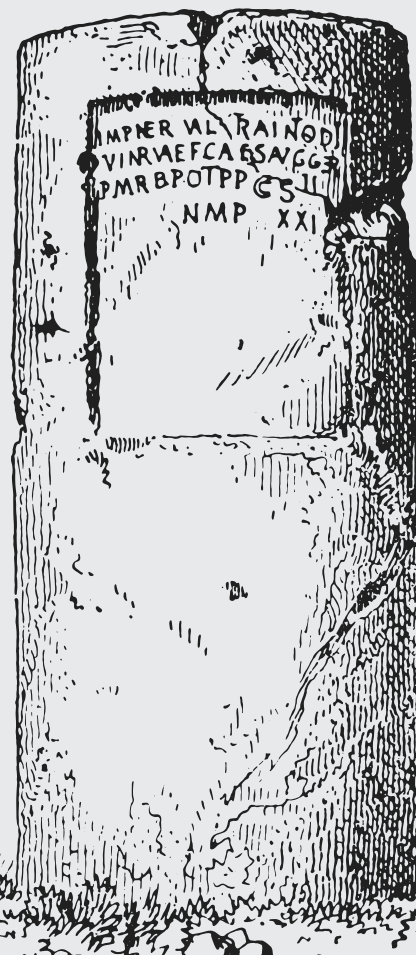
WORDWISE: MILESTONE

In **WORDWISE**, we take a look at interesting words or concepts in the world of academia and broader society.

Milestone, a term we commonly use nowadays to refer to an important event in a person's life or career, or in the history of an institution or even a nation, originally referred to actual stones placed next to roads to indicate distances between points.

In the Roman Empire stone obelisks were widely used as milestones, and some remain to this day. Milestones were also used in the Byzantine Empire, Post-Medieval Europe and India, and metal highway location markers, the modern equivalent of milestones, are used in most of the world's countries today.

Sources: Wikipedia and Wiktionary





Halala, halala, halala, Unisa

With drama, drumbeats, dancing, declamation, and sheer delight, Unisans celebrated the 145th birthday of the venerable elder of South African universities.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr Naledi Pandor, Minister of Higher Education and Training, said that Unisa had the institutional capacity and intellectual resources to make a critical contribution to the many important challenges confronting South Africa.



145

145 years of lighting the way.

'Distance education and open learning have a major role to play in providing opportunities for people who are not able to study full time, including working people who need to upgrade and improve their qualifications and young people who are looking for a flexible way to study and, perhaps, to do so while in and out of work,' she said.

The minister pointed out that in South Africa, distance education accounts for just over one third of university enrolments, with the vast majority of distance enrolments at the university itself.

'Over its 145-year history, Unisa has provided opportunities for a diverse range of students to access university studies, particularly those who could not or who were prevented from accessing traditional pathways. It has thus made a significant contribution in providing access, in particular, to students from marginalised groups of our society.'

***“In South Africa, distance education accounts for just over one third of university enrolments, with the vast majority of distance enrolments being at Unisa.*”**



Zandile Sodladla (President: NSRC), HE Thabo Mbeki (Chancellor of Unisa), Prof. Mandla Makhanya (Principal and VC), Dr Naledi Pandor (Minister: DHET), Sakhi Simelane (Chairperson of Council), and Sabelo Mhlungu (President: Unisa Convocation) cut the birthday cake.



The party included a surprise birthday performance by Tshedi Mholo, former lead singer of the group Malaika, who has emerged as a star in her own right. She had the audience dancing with her on the stage and in the aisles.



HE Thabo Mbeki (Chancellor of Unisa)

“It is in the context of the imagined future that all of us will work to live up to the vision of reconstructing the institution as practically the African university, that I am honoured to salute all those staff, students, management, and workers of Unisa who will be the architects of this outcome.”

HE Thabo Mbeki, Chancellor of Unisa, echoed the minister’s words by saying that anybody interested in the development of the system of higher education in South Africa since the last quarter of the 19th century would be well advised to study the story of Unisa.

However, as he was quick to emphasise, the fact that the vision which inspires Unisa today is towards the African university shaping futures in the service of

humanity, shows how far the original 1873 University of the Cape of Good Hope and its successor the 1918 federal university had travelled.

He affirmed the common obligation shared by everyone who constituted today’s Unisa community to ensure that the university did, indeed, live up to this vision.

“We are a university of the people and for the people in the broadest sense, and we will work together with anyone whose vision for our country and her people is consonant with Unisa’s vision...together we must ensure the kind of transformation that will take us forward to the desired end-state of quality and excellent education.”

Prof. Mandla Makhanya (Principal and VC)





Dr Naledi Pandor (Minister: DHET)

“*The success of our students must be at the heart of our mission,’ said Dr Naledi Pandor (Minister: DHET), delivering the keynote address at Unisa’s 145th birthday celebrations on 4 July 2018. ‘Because, after all, if our students don’t succeed, why do we exist?’*

Growing from an African seed

Quoting the late Nigerian Professor Tijani M Yesufu, the chancellor said that the African university must ‘be made of a different and distinctive substance from the traditions of Western universities, and must evolve a different attitude and a different approach to its task. The truly African university must be one that draws its inspiration from its environment, not a transplanted tree, but growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in the African soil.’

Prof Mandla Makhanya, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, picked up on the metaphor by asserting that Unisa’s roots were deeply embedded in African soil. ‘This university has nourished—and been nourished—by many generations of scholars, evident in the hundreds of thousands of Unisa graduates who represent every stratum in society and who are to be found in all echelons of society and public and private enterprise around the world—and who have served and achieved with distinction.’

The VC noted that while it was good to celebrate an illustrious legacy, it should not become a crutch for a lack of vision. Action focused on a vibrant, productive, and engaged future was needed. ‘That is why you will find that our strategy is firmly focused on the attainment of an unapologetically African university that is undergirded and driven by innovation, creativity, and deliberate transformation. Unisa aims to be a beacon of quality and excellence in teaching and learning, research and innovation, and community engagement at the vanguard of South Africa’s and Africa’s renewal.’



Seetša sa rena se a Kganya. | Ilitha lethu liyakhanya. | Lebone la rona lea Kganya. | Tshedza tshashu tshi a penya. | Our beacon shines. | Lesedi la rona le a phatsima. | Uphawu lwethu lukhanyisa kude. | Helder skyn ons lig. | Luphawu lwetfu luyakhatimula. | Ikwekwezi yethu iyameruza. | Mfungho wa hina wu voninga kule.

“We are an institution that has dedicated itself to be truly African in ethos while globally competitive. We might have been the first institution of higher education here in South Africa that was never afraid of the resurgences of decolonisation and Africanisation.”



Sakhi Simelane (Chairperson of Council)

Sakhi Simelane, Chairperson of Council, had no doubt that the 145 milestone that Unisa was celebrating was a reflection of its emergence, trials, tribulations, triumphs, and resiliencies. He said that while Unisa had to be responsive to the demands of diverse stakeholders, it also had to avoid acting like a weather vane, responding to each and every wind blowing. 'There are times when a university has to lead in public discourse based on the accumulation of cutting-edge research while remaining obedient to its diverse constituencies.'



The Unisa Choir under the talented direction of Itumeleng Molefe: Thuma mina, Unisa.

Expressive birthday wishes

As part of the year-long anniversary celebrations, Unisa students turned up in their numbers at the university's regional hubs on 15 June to create art works expressing their personal expression of how Unisa is shaping futures.

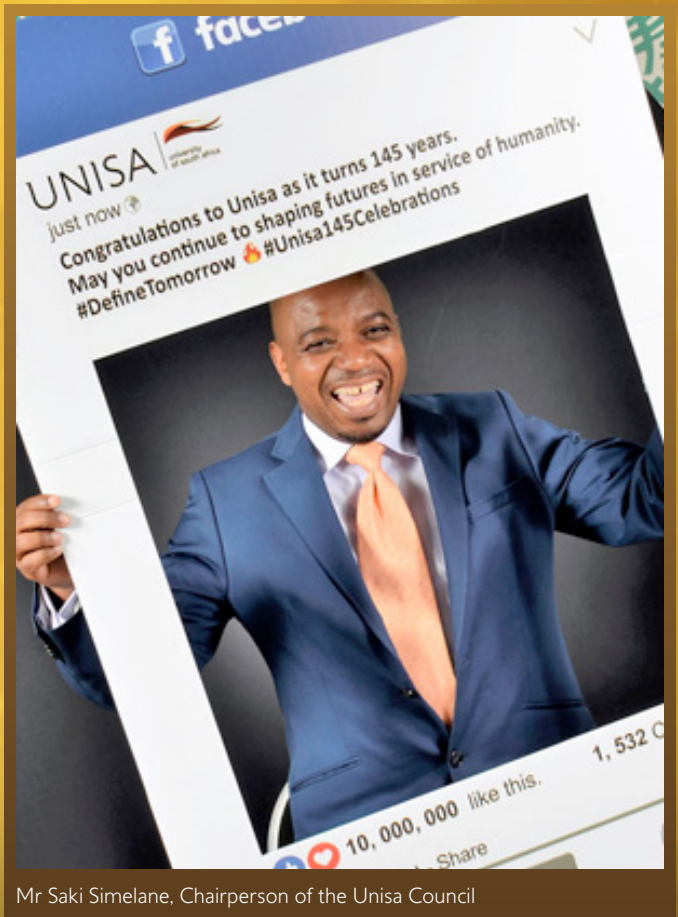


The Unisa Male Voices—Mike Malapile, Elmon Mashego, Itumeleng Molefe, Vincent Mosomi, and Clarence Tswale—delivered a heartfelt and harmonious tribute to Chancellor Thabo Mbeki that roused the enthusiastic audience to a cheering frenzy.

Unisa Council leads the way with 145th anniversary pledges



Prof. Mandla Makhanya, Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor



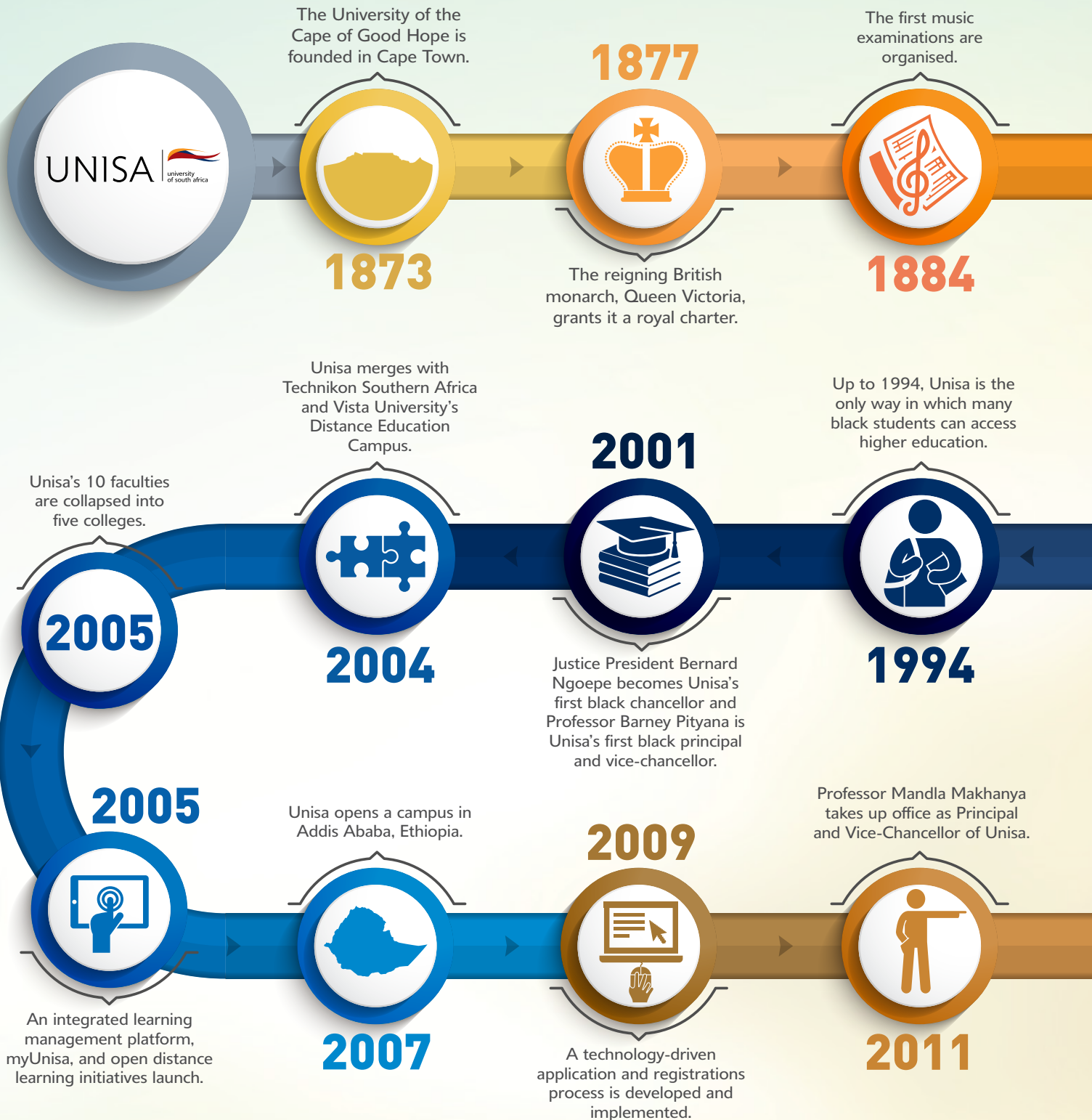
Mr Saki Simelane, Chairperson of the Unisa Council

Leading up to the 4th of July celebration, members of the Unisa Council were the first to pledge their contributions towards Unisa's 145th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign. Mr Saki Simelane, Chairperson of the Unisa Council, together with Prof Mandla Makhanya, Unisa Principal and Vice-Chancellor, led the process to appeal, inspire and motivate other Unisa staff members, alumni, donors, friends of the university and Unisa community at large to also donate to student bursaries.

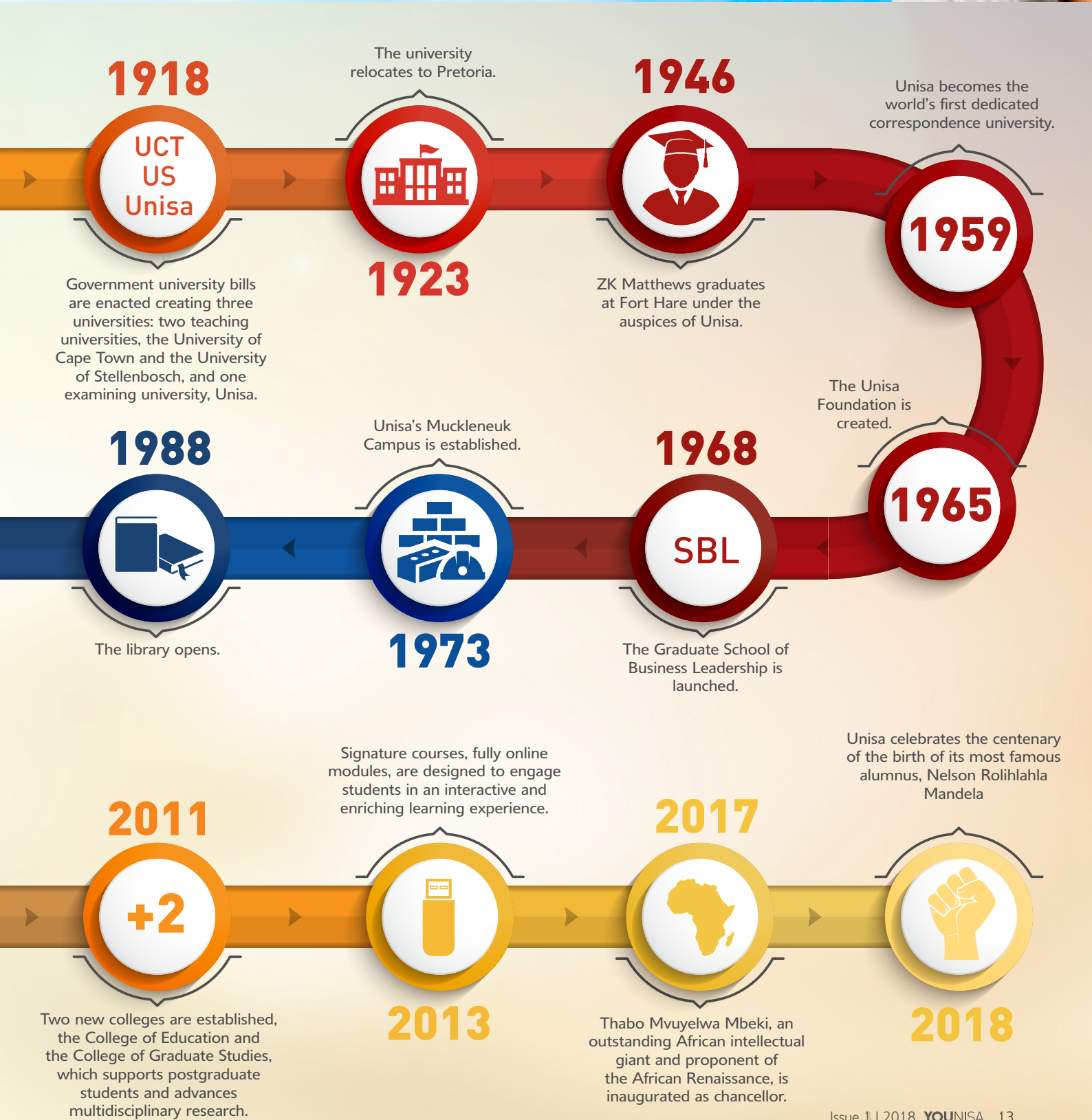
if you want to contribute to lighting the way and shaping future of the generations to come, visit <http://bit.ly/Unisa145>.



Our beacon shines—145 years of lighting the way



This year Unisa reaches a significant milestone in its history. The university's remarkable journey extends from humble beginnings in 1873 to its current role as a premier open, distance, and e-learning institution on the continent.



Testimonies @145

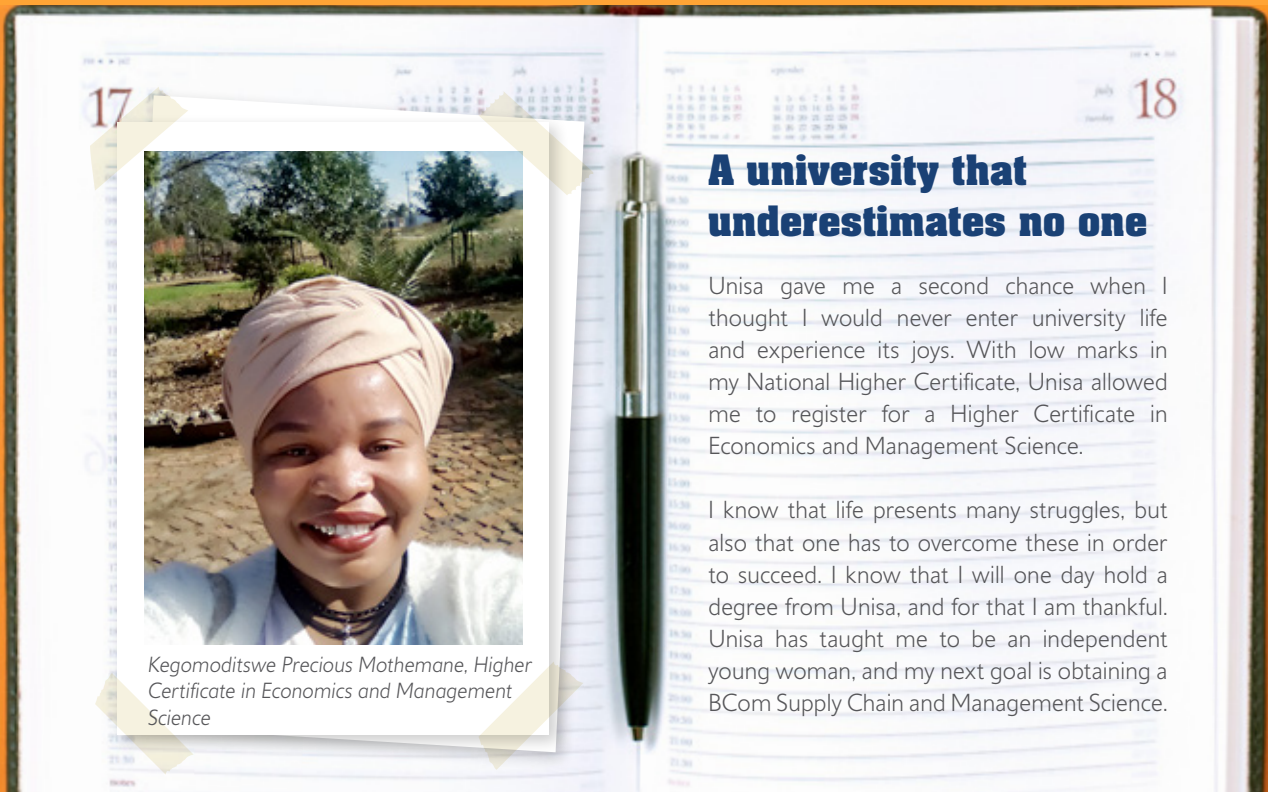




Student testimonies

We were awed by the number of 145th anniversary testimonies received from our readers, and thank all of you for your entries. Authors of the messages published here will each receive a branded item from the Unisa Shop as a small token of our appreciation.

* Please note that some messages have been edited for length and style.



Kegomoditswe Precious Mothemane, Higher Certificate in Economics and Management Science

A university that underestimates no one

Unisa gave me a second chance when I thought I would never enter university life and experience its joys. With low marks in my National Higher Certificate, Unisa allowed me to register for a Higher Certificate in Economics and Management Science.

I know that life presents many struggles, but also that one has to overcome these in order to succeed. I know that I will one day hold a degree from Unisa, and for that I am thankful. Unisa has taught me to be an independent young woman, and my next goal is obtaining a BCom Supply Chain and Management Science.



Reinhardt van der Merwe, BA Accounting Sciences in Financial Accounting

Starting a proud family tradition

For years universities were reserved for the wealthy and the elite. Unisa has given everyone the opportunity to invest in themselves and their future. The university has made it possible for me and other students around the country to further our education on our own terms while still building a strong foundation for a flourishing career or to look after our families.

At first I was concerned that studying towards becoming a chartered accountant through Unisa was looked down upon, but lately we act as an inspiration for others and you get the sense of respect from other people as soon as you mention you are studying through correspondence.

I am proud of my university and will be equally proud to send my kids and grandkids to Unisa. Congratulations on an inspirational 145 years!



Success starts outside the comfort zone

Malini Munsamy, BA Social and Health Sciences – Applied Psychology

Coming from a single-parent home and a disadvantaged background, I was forced to seek employment straight after matric due to financial constraints. It was only three years ago that I was able to follow my dream of studying psychology through Unisa. For me, Unisa is super convenient as I am able to work and study at the same time.

The lecturers are extremely helpful and their excellent assistance and sharing of valuable knowledge forms such a great source of inspiration to all the students. The entire journey with Unisa is quite a challenging one, but I think this has made me move out of my comfort zone and work towards achieving good results. I would like to thank Unisa immensely for being my beacon of hope for a shining and brighter future.



Tackling the future with military precision

Rewayne George, Diploma in Law

In high school we did not have sufficient resources and financial support to assist us in applying for, and obtaining, university admission. After being unsuccessful in my initial attempt to gain university admission, I successfully applied to join the military because I believed that where there is a will there is a way.

I was determined to study part time. And fortunately I could do that with Unisa and its affordable study fees. Serving the country whilst studying only made me stronger. I never experienced any difficulties with Unisa. Next semester I want to continue with the LLB degree.

Unisa produced successful professionals and that serves as motivation enough. I have read the story of the Unisa LLB graduate Jeeoshni Moodley Mazzuocolo, and this is a true motivation for me. Unisa really serves as a beacon in my life.



Releasing innate potential

**Lawrence Mathebane
Mokobane, LLB**

Unisa is a beacon in my life in that it has granted me an opportunity to live to my full potential when the chance appeared to have eluded me. Growing up in an underprivileged family I had no option but to take whatever learning opportunity that readily presented itself. Driven by the hunger to achieve my goals in life, I came across Unisa's ODL learning model.

This gave me the option of learning whilst on the job. I stand here in an advanced stage of my degree and due to finish in the first semester of 2019. This has released a lot of tension that had built up in me as I thought my future was doomed.

Working towards a qualification of my choice helped me feel useful and that my innate potential was finally getting unraveled. This is was all made possible by my Unisa.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Michelle Meyer, BEd Intermediate and Senior Phase



A beacon is a light in a high or prominent position, and the University of South Africa has been that light for me this year. I can't attend a residential university as I am teaching fulltime, and I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to further my studies through Unisa. Right from day one, the online lecturers supported me and answered every question I had.

The module content and assignments are most relevant to the course and I would like to give special mention to the module *Being a professional teacher*. This module didn't just allow me to re-evaluate my role as a teacher, but also inspired me to think

outside the box and explore teaching out of my own comfort zone. I look forward to seeing where this light will guide me in future.



Convenient success

Amahle Nakasa, LLB

I have always presumed that I would go to a residential university and study fulltime. However, due to financial challenges I had to work and pay for my studies. Unisa was the most convenient option in that respect.

Studying at Unisa has been a great experience and equipped me with skills that improved my life both at a personal and professional level; skills such as Independence, working with teams, time management and organisation.

Unisa has been a beacon to me in the sense that I do not only learn and acquire skills from the course offered, but I learn a great deal by studying through Unisa. I will certainly further my studies with Unisa because it helps to balance between life and studies and provides great quality education.

Cracking the research ceiling

Tanya Marquard, BA Honours in Psychology



In the words of Juliana Rotich, an inspirational Kenyan technologist and co-founder of Ushahidi: "I am guided each day by these three questions: 'What are you fixing?' 'What are you making?' and 'Who are you helping?'" Unisa has allowed me to tap into hidden potential and cultivate my talents in research.

As a female of colour it has been an immense difficulty to be taken seriously in both the corporate world and the South African research field. Unisa has given me a chance to follow my passion and equipped me to become a thought leader and prove my worth by a qualification that is backed with years of expertise and legacy from the Unisa staff and brand. I can now comfortably say that I can make a difference in South Africa by means of the knowledge I have gained.





From a curse to a blessing

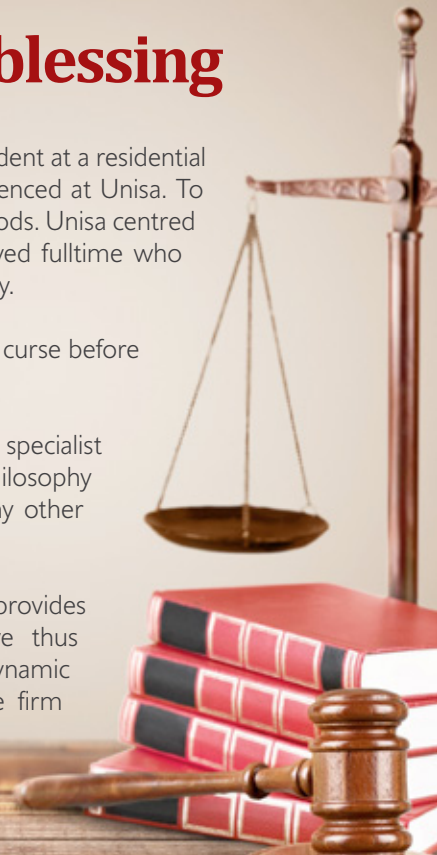
Harold Kaune, LLB

Compared to my prior years as a fulltime student at a residential university, my best university life was experienced at Unisa. To me, Unisa is more than a lifeline to livelihoods. Unisa centred its interests around especially those employed fulltime who are unable to attend fulltime courses, globally.

I now see the light in my life which felt like a curse before I 'met' Unisa.

Other institutions are GPs whilst Unisa is the specialist in quality distance education. Unisa's philosophy is invaluable and serves as a model to many other institutions, even those in Namibia.

Unisa is so accommodating that it even provides practical legal training at distance. I have thus immense respect for Unisa and its dynamic management and staff. Unisa stands more firm now than ever before.



Dream beacon

Diniel Nomagugu Sithole, LLB

Growing up in a family that was struggling to make ends meet, I felt it unfair for me to expect my parents to pay university tuition fees. However, their financial incapacity was not going to be a hindrance to my legal career ambitions. So I job-hunted and got employment as a cashier, still with the plan to save money to attend a residential university.

A colleague then told me about Unisa. I was skeptical at first, not knowing that this was the genesis of my legal dream. Not only can I now achieve my LLB and further degrees, but I can also continue working to pay my tuition fees and help at home financially. I'm very proud to be a 4th-year LLB student and currently an LLB intern.





NO BORDERS

Matimba Kenny Nxumalo, BTech Electrical Engineering

The University of South Africa is one of the oldest in the world. As we celebrate the centenary of Nelson Mandela, Unisa is celebrating 145 years of being a beacon throughout the world and not only in South Africa.

I have been part of this beacon since 2014 and can attest that the content is relevant to students all over the world. The quality of education is of an international standard. I was very impressed that my fellow students hail from as far afield as Botswana, the DRC, Zimbabwe and Nigeria. This shows that the knowledge that is being invested in me is of top quality and fit anywhere in the world. Unisa will always produce the best students and reach them wherever they are situated.



‘ON MY OWN TERMS’

Laura Shopedzai Toendepi, LLB

In matric most of my peers were accepted at top universities. I was an above-average student, yet had no prospects. I can vividly remember the day I sat on my bed thinking “Well, flipping burgers can’t be that bad”. I felt hopeless and uncertain about my future.

After months of dwelling in a dark pit of despair, I enrolled at a private institution. In retrospect, I was still reeling from despair and dropped out soon

after. My self-confidence in my academic ability was shattered.

Just as I was about to accept defeat and settle for mediocrity, I came across Unisa. Unisa has given me an opportunity to pursue my dreams at my own pace and on my own terms. Unisa is a beacon that reminds me that success is a state of mind.

Short course, long future

Charlton Bowkers, BEd Foundation Phase



I had the opportunity to study a short course – a Programme for Career Guidance Practitioners – back in 2015. This course enabled me to evaluate my career path as at the time I was not sure what career to follow. Through this course I learnt how to take all facets of my life into consideration and was able to narrow my choice and guide myself towards a suitable career choice.

The career I decided on was to that of educator. Why? Because I want to make a difference by helping to shape young children. I love working with children, and as a young child playing 'teacher teacher' I always wanted to be the teacher instead of the student.

Today I am a first-year BEd Foundation Phase student enrolled at Unisa. Because of the short course I took at Unisa I have reached the first milestone on my career path. I hope to one day use the techniques learnt to give career guidance education to my learners.

Chains, be gone

Rehana Basson, LLB



From a very young age, I was always the little girl asking: "Why are people with different skin colour treated differently?" It bothered me so much that I wanted to be the change or at least try to make a difference. However, I realised soon enough that it was me against the world.

Nelson Mandela was the inspiration for my career path. In 2016, I enrolled for the LLB degree at Unisa and my life has changed dramatically since. I am currently a fulltime mom, while also working and studying. I am in my third year and am already giving legal advice.

I want to thank Unisa for opening the door of opportunity for me. With the knowledge acquired, I will be able to assist in breaking the chains of apartheid and making sure that equality, dignity and freedom, as enshrined in our Constitution, are granted to all and understood by all South Africans.



Regaining control

Fanie Sefatsa, BA Information Science

I completed matric with exemption in 1999 but could not afford to further my studies. I opted to play soccer instead, but did not go far as I planned. I felt stuck. I would wake up in the morning, look around and feel caged. Then I got a job and my life was transformed. I managed to register with Unisa in 2017 and regained control over my life.

Today, I am able to stand in front of people and tell them about my difficult life story and my struggles, and how I managed to overcome them. My life is better because I can see the bright future in front of me. I will soon be obtaining my first degree, and will be a better person – all thanks to Unisa, the beacon of my life.

Life-changing experience

Tshiamo Phiri, ABET Higher Certificate

Unisa has a timeline stretching over 145 years, and here is my own.

In 2014 I matriculated with a diploma pass. I tried to better my marks by rewriting in 2015 but my marks remained exactly the same. In 2016, I was anxious, depressed and demotivated. I applied to various traditional universities and the only university that accepted my application to study education was Unisa. Honestly, I wasn't happy that I was going to be part of the Unisa student body because I thought I wouldn't be able to handle being a distance learner.

Fast forward to 2017, my first year as a distance student, and the year my life changed for the better. The Muckleneuk library and my books became my best friends. I passed the year with distinction because of discipline, hard work and determination. Today I am a proud Unisa education student and a future teacher.



THERE IN EVERY GENERATION

Lindile Nontuthuko Xaba, BA
Human and Social Studies

It seems like yesterday when I used to collect my late uncle's returned assignments as a nine-year-old from the postman who used to deliver mail back in 1996. Fast forward to 2015, and here I was at the age of 28 registering and studying towards my BA in Human and Social Studies, majoring in Public Administration and Communication Facilitation.

All I can say is that I do not regret my decision to enrol with such an amazing institution. Unisa has afforded me with an opportunity to work and provide for my kids while realising my dream of obtaining a degree and improving my life.

Had it not been for Unisa, my future would have been bleak. Thank you Unisa for being a beacon of light for the Xaba family. With you by my side, the sky is the limit.



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Susan Jansen Van Rensburg, MA in Linguistics

At the age of 42, a single parent and breadwinner supporting three teenagers, I finally had the opportunity to pursue my dream: to further my studies! I said from the beginning I'm going all-out or not-at-all. Nothing less than a degree, but my target was the ultimate one – a D Litt et Phil in Psychology. Even though I worked at a university of technology at the time, Unisa was my first choice.

Unisa became my family, and still is. They were there with me throughout my journey thus far. I feel at home at Unisa. This year I'll be completing my master's degree in Psychology. I'm almost there! After that I am looking forward to completing my doctoral studies at Unisa.

There is no other university for me. Viva, Unisa, and thank you!



THE SECRET IS BALANCE AND FOCUS

**Nadia Esterhuizen, BA
Communication Science**

Due to financial constraints I was not able to go to university after Grade 12. However, I always held out hope that one day, someday, somehow, I might get an opportunity to study through Unisa. To me, Unisa was a beacon of hope for the future.

I worked hard and was finally able to start studying when I was 31 years old. The next five years were very difficult. I received some bursaries from work, and had to pay for the rest myself. I felt alone and isolated most days and had to find a way to balance work life with family life and yet try to fit studies in-between. I never lost focus of the end goal, and kept visualising myself on that stage, getting my degree. By the grace of God I am graduating this year.



QUALITY AN ADVANTAGE LIKE NO OTHER

Tshepo Kgosi Bahula, BSc Computer Science

I started my journey with Unisa in 2013 when I enrolled for an alternative pathway programme under the College of Science, Engineering & Technology. Upon successful completion, I enrolled for a Bachelor of Science in Computing with a dual major in Computer Science and Information Systems in 2014.

The programme has laid a solid foundation for me through its robust focus on algorithmic processes in both domains of study and it has prepared for me for any analytical role in the technology realm.

In mid-2017, I had already accumulated 312 credits of the programme and I felt that I was ready to apply what I have learned in the corporate market.

The response from the market was amazing for someone who's NOT yet "formally qualified" to be selected for initial and call-back interviews.

The icing on the cake was when in one of the recruitment processes I learnt that one of the candidates I was up against was a graduate with an Actuarial Science degree.

I might not have gotten the roles; however, the whole experience left me really proud of myself and the quality of education we are receiving at the University of South Africa. I am thankful to the university for the opportunity to learn without limits, for reigniting the spark and reshaping my future, and, ultimately, for being my beacon of hope.



Alumni testimonies



Transforming doubt into confidence

Phyllis Mothiba, BTech Industrial Engineering

It is never difficult to see the value and gain achieved by those who receive good quality education. This is because of the transformational power education has. Education transforms information into knowledge, doubt into confidence and poverty into wealth.

I look at my life and it is very clear I am who I am because of the knowledge I possess through the education I received. This knowledge has developed my perspective on life and the world around me and I now have the power to change my circumstances and make an impact on the world. Education has given me something that money cannot buy, a voice and a point of view. Now if that is not empowerment, I don't know what is.

Thank you Unisa for not only allowing me to study, but also giving me an opportunity to learn.



'I can now lead my siblings'

Chan Micheal Job, Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting Science

I come from a poor family with no education history, and my parents were shocked when I approached them with study plans as it was unorthodox, unfamiliar and financially impossible for them. Hence fulltime study was out of the equation.

Being the hard-headed person that I am, I searched thoroughly for any chartered accounting (CA) audit firm in the bigger cities that will take in a student studying part-time for their degree for my CA traineeship. Thank heavens I found one in Cape Town and I was able to fund my studies at Unisa and also my accommodation.

Unisa enabled me to overcome the historic cycle of my family and to achieve my goals. Now I am able to lead my younger siblings into the world of education and encourage them to reach for the skies as it is indeed possible through Unisa.



Mission possible

Nkgadi Tyson Maletse, BCom Transport Economics



I first became a Unisa student fresh from high school in 2008. It wasn't easy since I'm from a rural area in Limpopo. One of the major challenges that I faced was the fear of being in front of a computer, let alone using it, but through the support of Unisa librarians I didn't feel exposed to fellow students as someone who didn't know anything about computers.

It looked like a mission impossible for me to graduate, but I finally did in 2012, I'm currently enrolled for an honours at Unisa. One of the things that I admire about Unisa is the ability to communicate with students via different channels. Unisa has taught me three major things which are helping me also at work: self-discipline, time management and self-study.



A sense of belonging

Roelof Lategan, BCom Risk Management

Unisa served as my beacon of light during my years in the corporate world. Countless times I was passed over for promotion, and then my degree bought hope to a hopeless situation. With affordable education, access to all the online resources and interaction with my fellow Unisa hopefuls, I was inspired. I was determined to stay the course and to finish the race.

My Unisa degree brought me in contact with fellow students with dreams and ambitions in line with my own, and I felt a sense of belonging in South Africa. I also motivated many other people to study with Unisa, with my own Unisa testimony.

Unisa, thank you for being my light in a dark time. I salute you!

GIVING UP IS NOT AN OPTION

*Jamie Jack, BA
Communication Science*

I have been enrolled as a student since 2005 and passed many milestones, but graduation remained elusive. Life happened, as they say, and each year I emailed the Unisa counsellors to ask what would happen if I had to cancel the qualification. Their reply was the same each time: they told me never to give up, and referred me to Unisa motivational stories as well as success stories of people who thought they would never graduate due to financial constraints and a busy lifestyle.

I remember reading those stories and getting up again and doing a little bit each year to finally graduate at age 31. It was one of my proudest moments for me. Unisa has a special way of keeping students on track, a special way of making them feel important and encouraging them. Despite what anyone says about distance learning being difficult, Unisa has been my beacon of light and has helped me to achieve my goal in obtaining a university degree.

Big up to Unisa!



Pushed to excel

*Mechele Mechele, BCom Honours in
Business Management*

Unisa has served as the beacon of hope in my life by preparing me not just to be the best leader in the organisation by simply keeping the status quo, but by making meaningful contributions. The university has challenged me to adopt the multiplier principle, which encourages students to become talent magnets by thinking out of the box, and by being liberators, challengers, decision makers, debate makers and researchers.

The institution has managed to save us from being the illiterates of the 21st century by pushing us hard to learn, unlearn and relearn through its determined and experienced lecturers.



There's no cure when the bug bites

Héloïse de Villiers, BA Hons in Psychology

Many years ago – in the 1970s, in fact – I registered at Unisa for a law degree and completed two years of study. However, being young and unwise with not a care in the world, I gave up my studies for wine, men and song! Many years later – in 2003 – I started working in Mozambique and decided to study Portuguese through Unisa. I went to register at the Nelspruit Unisa office. Imagine my delight (well, maybe not when I saw all the books I had to study) when they gave me my student number from the 70s, but not only that, I had credits!

I then decided to go all out – at the age of 49 – and finish my degree and I qualified in 2005. However, the study bug had by then bitten and I registered for my honours degree which I successfully completed in 2009.

My very proud father, at the age of 83, accompanied me to both graduations. Thank you, Unisa, for making it possible for me to finish my degrees while working fulltime.

ENRICHING IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Shuvan Ramhorry, Master of Business Leadership

I was exhilarated on being accepted to study at Unisa in 2012. Furthermore, my studies were funded by my company at the time (Sasol). Although balancing a challenging work and family life (a new pair of twins) was tough, doing the MBL was the greatest highlight in my life.

I was able to study subjects which enriched my career while also meeting students from all walks of life. The practical and theoretical knowledge which I have gained during my Unisa studies has allowed me to progress through the ranks in my career as well as providing me with the confidence to take up more challenging tasks in practical life situations.

I have not only grown as an individual, but have also imparted my knowledge and theoretical experience to my family, work colleagues and friends.

The magic of multitasking

Onie Cele, BA Social Work



I registered at Unisa in 2007, studied while working as a nurse and graduated in 2011. I managed to get employment as a social worker in the same year. Achieving my qualification at Unisa was the biggest milestone in my life.

Unisa taught me independence, patience, passion and, above all, the art of multitasking. I managed to complete my degree in a record period while I was working as a nurse. I was able to multitask between being a student, nightshift nurse, mother and wife. It made me realise that success is made of the choices that we make and the limits we apply in our daily lives.

Unisa has made me the strong woman I am today. The university brings hope to the hopeless and inspires greatness. I'm a proud Unisa alumna and will forever be grateful for the opportunity given to me to achieve my first university qualification.



The mature choice

Bernice Borain, BA Hons in English

Unisa was the only way someone like me could get a degree. I come from a single-parent home and in 1995 I had to start work. Because of Unisa I am now living my dream as an English teacher at a girls' school in Pietermaritzburg.

It may have taken me longer to get my degree because I studied part-time, but by the time I did, I had matured enough to choose a career that I was passionate about after my honours degree. I learnt to love studying for the sake of enlightenment, and not just to further my employment prospects. I learnt about aesthetic appreciation, critical thinking, and creative writing, which introduced me to my authentic self.

I know who I am now and what I want from life, and I credit Unisa with guiding me on this journey.



Practical know-how second to none

Haimanot Tesfaye Gizaw, Master of Business Leadership

Unisa provided me not only light to my life and widened my outlook about the world and its unlimited opportunities, but also released my last results on the day my fourth child was born. I received two awesome presents on the same day.

My three years spent in the Master of Business Leadership were filled with discovering knowledge, and sharing experiences with group members and outstanding teachers. Many thanks for the most interesting and up-to-date reading materials provided. The different case studies presented in exams I am now experiencing in reality; in my daily life and at the workplace. I am now aiming to be a better leader and share the wisdom of our African leader, Madiba.



The healing power of education

Nobuhle Mngadi, National Diploma in Management

When I was in matric I had to undergo surgery because I had encountered problems with my leg as I had been hit by a car when I was four years old. After matriculating I had still not healed and I would not have managed to stay at a residence or travel to a university daily to attend classes. Unisa served as a beacon in my life because it was my last resort to further my studies and I completed my qualification in 2016. My parents and my whole family were so proud of me – I was the first graduate in the family and after all that I had been through this seemed so miraculous.

I would like to inspire others to persevere no matter what life throws at them. Education is indeed the key to success and my motto in life is "Conquer against all odds, live life with a purpose".





PAYING IT FORWARD

Shereen Hassim, BCom

Unisa is my guiding light, my beacon of hope, the key to my success. While I completed a BCom degree through Unisa I worked, studied, lived abroad, got married, had two children, and managed to still fulfill all my responsibilities. I wrote exams in Durban, Johannesburg and even Australia.

I failed many courses because I could not afford textbooks. When I completed my degree I opened a bookshop to help others like myself. Today, I own a bookseller, offering learnerships while helping Unisa students to get affordable new and second-hand textbooks delivered all over South Africa and the world.

Thank you Unisa for empowering me to create employment while helping students achieve their goals.

The power of information

Ashley Paul Lewis, BA Information Science

I grew up in Manenberg, and was surrounded by influences such as drug abuse, gangsterism and school dropouts. Ideas such as matriculating, further education and goal orientation were non-existent.

When I started studying I was a library aid, ill-disciplined and unstructured. I had no idea of how to work towards achieving my goals. Through studying I obtained skills and knowledge on how to obtain relevant information, and knowledge of ICTs and its impact. I became disciplined when completing my assignments and preparing for exams. I learnt that information is a powerful tool and how it can be used to solve social and economic problems.

Due to this, I could create and manage various programmes in public libraries which led to me receiving various awards and the ability to change the lives of people in disadvantaged communities. Today I am a qualified librarian and a role model to others.



WELL WORTH THE PAIN



**Patricia Kamukwamba, Master
of Business Administration**

I will always be grateful to Unisa. I had a few certificates and diplomas, and some years of experience, all of which were relevant. But I always had to explain my qualifications. I longed to get one meaningful qualification to say that "I have this!". I inquired at the Unisa Graduate School of Business Leadership in 2004 and was surprised to learn that there was a part-time option.

I started a Management Development Programme (MDP). It was hectic to manage work schedules, home life with a young family and the studies, but I was determined. Students in my group often asked me why I was a sucker for pain!

I smile now, because I completed the MDP and after that the Master of Business Administration qualification at a mature age and graduated. It is never too late to study, but one must enroll first. I thank Unisa for being there for me to do so!



LAUDING LAW WITH A HEART

Victoria Fouché, LLB

Unisa's study material is of a high quality, very comprehensive and up-to-date with the times. The knowledge I gained through my studies gave me fresh confidence in my abilities, especially after participating in the street law project and positively affecting ordinary people's lives, including the elderly and prisoners.

All of my courses in general, and Legal Philosophy, Constitutional Law and Professional Ethics in particular, shaped me into an ethical attorney, readily confident to assist in the transformation of the legal profession into the honourable profession that it should be.

Unisa gave me confidence to be ready to start my own law firm soon so that I can meaningfully contribute to society. Thank you, Unisa.



Awakening the inner entrepreneur

Kerapetsi Magabo, MSc in Agriculture

Unisa resuscitated my aspirations of becoming not only an animal nutrition specialist, but also an entrepreneur. Its glowing light launched me on my career path in 2015 when I was admitted for an MSc in Agriculture, with no idea how I would fund my studies. My entire research and tuition were sponsored by Unisa until completion in November 2017.

Unisa's unique Annual Student Research & Innovation initiative made the most impact in my career. In 2017, my second year of participation, the programme took me to Zambia and Brazil where I was immensely inspired to be more innovative.

I am currently registered for a PhD in Agriculture and also working on my innovative idea of producing plant-made energy tonic for dairy cows. My focus on completing studies is no longer on job seeking, but rather establishing an animal nutrition manufacturing and consulting firm.



A family affair

Dr Samuel Binduko, DEd in Education Management

As Unisa celebrates 145 years of shaping futures in the service of humanity, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation of what this great institution has done for me and my family.

Unisa has shaped me academically over a period of eight years. I emigrated to South Africa in 2003 from Zimbabwe with a bachelor's degree from the University of Zimbabwe. Today I have a doctorate from Unisa. Two of my three daughters recently graduated from Unisa. My wife is in her third year with Unisa studying for a BEd Foundation Phase). My son-in-law is in his final year for a Diploma in Engineering with the university.

Thank you, Unisa!



Even in the bush

Queen Shangase, Honours BEd

Unisa saved my life in education. I was working in bundu areas where it is not easy to pursue studies at university level. Because of distance learning at Unisa, I was able to register for the Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in Natural Sciences. I passed my course and graduated, which also helped me to qualify to buy a house in Durban.

I then registered for an honours degree, passed well and graduated. Unisa changed my life and I'm working at one of the best schools in Durban because of my qualifications.



Knowledge, naturally

Percy Rathogwa, National Diploma in Nature Conservation

After completing high school I pondered which institution could accomplish my destiny, and I got to know about Unisa. As a provider of knowledge on the subject of conservation management, Unisa has served as a destiny shaper in my life and, in the bigger scheme of things, played a significant role in the conservation community through education.

I am employed in the Conservation Department at Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo because of Unisa. The university has equipped me as an individual to be responsible, and has given me the ability to work alone. After completing my qualification I am now networking with many dignitaries, conservators, students and the CEOs of many companies around the world.



Congratulations UNISA

on this prestigious milestone



We look forward to journey with you
and build on our long standing relationship.
For the love of education.

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Unisa could, with vision, imagination, and innovation, ensure that all its graduates become the greatest South Africans who have ever lived. ”

- Dr Naledi Pandor, Minister of Higher Education and Training

‘Unisa inakho ukuthi ngokujonga phambili, ngokuqikelela nangokuqweba, iqinisekise ukuba bonke abathweswe izidanga apha baba ngabemi boMzantsi Afrika ababaluleke kangangoko. ”

- Gqirha Naledi Pandor, uMphathiswa Wemfundo Ephakamileyo Noqeqesho.

Unisa e ka kgonthiša, ka pono, kakanyo le kaonafatšo, gore dialoga tša yona ka moka e ba Maafrika Borwa a makaone go feta ka moka ao a sa kago a ba gona. ”

- Ngaka Naledi Pandor, Tona ya Thuto ya Godimo le Tlhahlo