



2020.11.14

WELKOM CAMPUS REPOSITIONING

The CUT Welkom Campus is the only university campus in the northern corridors of the Free State, and unique in many ways. It is strategically located to thrive as a centre of excellence, seeking to empower graduates with knowledge and skills to create successful enterprises and become responsible citizens.

During the past decade, the Welkom Campus underwent some notable improvements:

- Student numbers doubled from 2000 in 2010 to roughly 5000 in 2020.
- There is a notable increase in staff who hold masters and PhD degrees, as well as an increase in the number of black women with PhDs.
- The number of professors increased from 1 in 2010 to 5 in 2020; with two of them being women.
- The university introduced new academic programmes.
- Infrastructure developments included the Thutong Building, Lemmy Mule Building, Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe Building, 255-bed student residence (first one for the campus), Campus Health Clinic, and cafeteria. Funding from the DHEST financed a Teacher Education Building, Multipurpose Hall, Sports Fields, and a 400-bed student residence.
- Recently the campus signed MOUs with key partners geared towards uplifting the socioeconomic advancement in the region.
- The Welkom Campus houses the Lejweleputswa Innovation Platform (LEAP) under management of the Campus Director and prof Ryk Lues.
- The business incubation HUB and FebLab are complete and will be launched soon.
- For the very first time in the history of Welkom Campus, and the Central University of Technology, we conferred an honorary masters degree to someone who has made a noteworthy impact on the lives of many in the community, Mr Lemmy Mule.
- There was a substantial gain in the number of graduates from first degrees to PhDs. In 2019 the presence of the Deputy minister of Higher Education, Honourable Buti Manamela, graced the graduation ceremony.
- A record of 1000 students were on course to graduate in 2020, sadly the COVID-19 pandemic forced universities to defer graduations ceremonies. This also lost us of an opportunity to confer the very first honorary PhD at the Welkom Campus.
- The Terms of Reference of the Welkom Campus Advisory Board (WCAB), which will oversee all strategic projects, was finalised.

Plans to reconsider the future of Welkom Campus have been ongoing since 2014. This year, we had our first engagement on 20 February 2020 with the CUT management, Deans of

faculties, organised labour, and the SRC from both campuses. Further engagements on the process came to a standstill due to the nationwide lockdown.

In a meeting held on 16 July 2020 it was resolved that an External Facilitator be appointed to facilitate the process. On 1 August 2020 we appointed Prof Nicky Morgan as facilitator who immediately began consulting with the various stakeholders. Prof Morgan held numerous leadership positions in the South African higher education systems as DVC at CUT and Vice Rector at the University of the Free State, among others. During his career, he has successfully improved institutional research outputs, increased revenue, and restored good governance.

The first round of consultations concluded at the end of August 2020 upon which a consultative report was submitted. A second round of consultations took place which led to the joint meeting of all stakeholders on 20 October 2020. Matters linked to the campus leadership, academic leadership, student support structures, appropriate infrastructure, and connectivity are currently being discussed and specific recommendations are made to ensure a quality learning and living experience and the elimination of inter-campus inequalities.

A final round of consultations will conclude with a full day workshop to discuss the final feedback from the External Facilitator. This workshop is scheduled for the 24th of November 2020. The outcome of this workshop will give effect to the submission of a final report with recommendations regarding the repositioning of the Welkom Campus which will be tabled at Mancom for discussion *en route* to council in 2021.

Once included in the strategic plan to Council, there will be greater certainty about the institution's commitment to promote the Welkom Campus as a place of excellence. And by 2030, we should have produced tangible evidence to the university council that we used resources allotted for our strategies appropriately. We are particularly delighted about these improvements and we encourage staff and students to partner with us as we shift the vision into reality.

Finally, be watchful of the reality that COVID-19 is still with us. During his recent address to the nation the President singled out, amongst others, Lejweleputswa and Mangaung District Municipalities as areas of concern. Therefore, we encourage you to continue to mask, sanitise, and practice physical distancing.

It also delights us to mention that the 3rd CUT Transformation Summit 2020 will be held at Welkom Campus on the 25th and 26th of November 2020. We invite everybody to be part of this historic moment.

Please click in the attached invitation on the “To RSVP online Please Click Here” link to register for the Summit.

Thank you very much.

Prof Solomon Makola

Acting **Deputy Vice Chancellor: Resources and Operations**