

Introduction of Prof Francis William Petersen the 14th Rector of the UFS

Prof Francis William Petersen was born in Oudtshoorn and grew up in Malmesbury in the Western Cape, where he also matriculated. He graduated from Stellenbosch University with BEng (Chem Eng), MEng (Metal Eng), and PhD (Eng) degrees.

He brings to the position of Vice-Chancellor and Rector his extensive experience of management in both the industry and academic sectors. Before joining the University of the Free State on 1 April 2017 as Vice-Chancellor and Rector, he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town (UCT). Other positions include Dean: Engineering and the Built Environment at UCT; Executive Head: Strategy at Anglo American Platinum; Executive Vice-President: Research and Development at Mintek; and Head of the Department of Chemical Engineering at the Cape Technikon (*now the Cape Peninsula University of Technology*).

Among others, he is a former Chairman of the Board of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), a former non-executive director on the Board of Royal Bafokeng Platinum, and former member of the South African Minister of Science and Technology's National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI). He is also a former member of the Council of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), and a Board member of the National Research Foundation (NRF).

Prof Petersen is a registered professional engineer with the Engineering Council of South Africa. He has been a member of an International Panel on Sustainability for AngloGold Ashanti, a former adviser to the Anglo American Platinum Beneficiation Fund, and is a Fellow of both the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and the South African Academy of Engineers.

About the UFS

The University of the Free State (UFS) is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in South Africa. It opened its doors in 1904 in Bloemfontein as the Grey University College, with six students in the Humanities.

Since then, the institution has grown to more than 37 000 students, spread over three campuses and across seven faculties (Economic and Management Sciences, Education, Health Sciences, the Humanities, Law, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Theology).

Most of the students are located on the Bloemfontein Campus, with the Qwaqwa Campus situated in the picturesque Eastern Free State, serving a rapidly-growing number of rural

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students from the immediate area and surrounding provinces. The South Campus – also situated in Bloemfontein – serves as the centre for distance-learning programmes offered by the UFS, as well as alternative access to higher education for promising students who have not obtained the required marks in their final school examinations.

Over the years, the university has grown into an education hub which has positioned itself on the global stage, promoting research excellence, with exceptionally talented scholars and students who are recognised the world over, and alumni who have grown into influential leaders in society.

For Hi-res images of Prof Petersen, please email: mpeteor@ufs.ac.za.

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