



**Inauguration of Prof Francis Petersen**  
**19 May 2017, 17:00**  
**Odeion, Bloemfontein Campus**

**Chancellor:** By virtue of the power invested in me as Chancellor of the University of the Free State, I hereby constitute this congregation for the inauguration of the Rector and Vice-Chancellor.

**Prof Lis Lange:** Dumelang, goeienaand, good evening. Welcome to all the guests that we have here today, as well as the university community, to the inauguration of Professor Francis Petersen as the 14<sup>th</sup> Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State. This inauguration ceremony is the culmination of a week of introductions of the new Vice-Chancellor to the university community on all three campuses. These have been marked by a really festive atmosphere, and the truth is, we are quite tired of partying by now. But tonight is the symbolic moment of Professor Petersen saying 'I do' to the University of the Free State, and we are grateful for that. For those of you who might need interpreting, including sign language interpreting, please raise your hands and we will provide the service. Back to the ceremony. Universities are very old institutions and have a number of ceremonies, symbols, and rites of passage that mark moments of renewal and recommitment to the mission of the university itself. The inauguration of a new vice-chancellor is one such moment – in the South African context, in particular. The inauguration of a new vice-chancellor is a sign of optimism and hope. It is both an affirmation of the promise that the future holds, and a commitment to work in the present, and is simultaneously a sign of the connection of a particular university with the history of universities in general. It is in this period of hope and optimism, recommitment and renewal, that we welcome you all tonight to the University of the Free State and to the city of Bloemfontein. I would now like to open the programme and call on Dr Nthabeleng Rammile, Vice-Chairperson of the UFS Council, to do the official welcome for this ceremony. Thank you.

**Dr Nthabeleng Rammile:** Good evening, welcome to all our esteemed guests. This is a prestigious and a special occasion for the entire community of the University of the Free State. I have the privilege of specifically welcoming the following: Professor Francis and Mrs Cheslyn Petersen and their family, with a special welcome to Prof Petersen's mother, Mary Petersen. Chancellor of the university, Dr Khotso Mokhele; Chancellor of the Central University of Technology and Judge President of the Free State High Court, Madam Justice Mahube Molemela; Chancellor: Sol Plaatje University and Judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal, Justice Steven Majiedt; Acting President: Supreme Court of Appeal, Madam Justice Mandisa Maya; Chairperson of

the UFS Council, Mr Willem Louw; Vice-Rector: Academic, Prof Lis Lange; Vice-Rector: Operations, Prof Nicky Morgan; Vice-Rector: Research, Prof Corli Witthuhn; Registrar: Governance and Policy, Dr Gift Vinger; Registrar: Systems and Administration, Dr Karen Lazenby; Principal: Qwaqwa Campus, Prof Prakash Naidoo; Principal: South Campus, Prof Daniella Coetzee; Director-General of the Free State Province, Mr Kopung Ralikontsane; Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality's Dr Jeanine Nothnagel, representing Councillor Olly Mlamleli; Acting MEC for Education: Ms Elsabe Rockman, representing the Premier of the Free State, Mr Magashule; CEO: USAf, Prof Ahmed Bawa. Vice-chancellors, and all their representatives from universities: Prof Dan Kgwadi, North-West University; Prof Yunus Ballim, Sol Plaatje University; Prof Chris de Beer, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University; Prof Henk de Jager, Central University of Technology, appointed but not yet inaugurated. Very clear. Prof Sechaba Mahlomaholo, Walter Sisulu University, representing Prof Rob Midgley; Prof Norman Duncan, University of Pretoria, representing Prof Cheryl de la Rey; Prof Nico Koopman, Stellenbosch University, representing Prof Wim de Villiers; Prof Ingrid Woolard, University of Cape Town, representing Dr Max Price; Mr Max Makhubalo, University of Fort Hare, representing Prof Sakhela Buhlungu. Members of the UFS Council, President of the UFS Convocation, deans and acting deans. I am almost there. Former vice-chancellors of the university, Prof Francois Retief, Prof Frederick Fourie, former Chairperson of our Council, Justice Faan Hancke, Chairperson Kovsie Alumni Society, SRC President of the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa Campuses. You are all welcome, thank you very much.

**Prof Lis Lange:** Charity Leburu, Lindiwe Mahlangu, Anisja Smit, Katleho Maloisane, and Yonwaba Mbo will give you a small taste of the artistic talent of the Kovsie students. We are showing off to you, but also to Professor Petersen to see that there is a wide range of talents among our students, and they are often capable of moving you to tears. Charity, Lindiwe, Anisja, Katleho, and Yonwaba will perform *Plea for Africa*. Please welcome them onto the stage. I told you we have talent. Let's give them another round of applause. Now, I would like to call on the Chairperson of the Council of the University of the Free State, Mr Willem Louw, to introduce the new Vice-Chancellor to the congregation. Mr Louw, please.

**Mr Willem Louw:** Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, it has been said, but I would like to repeat it. It is a rather special day for the entire community of the University of the Free State; special in the sense that it is an opportunity that does not happen very regularly. And this evening, or the early part of this evening, I would like to present to you a consummate scholar and a gentleman of note. Before I continue with regaling you with the details, it is the culmination of a week of celebrations to welcome Prof Petersen to the university. I have a slight suspicion that it is getting close to the end. In true African tradition, we have been celebrating and we have been celebrating well. Three welcoming ceremonies took place this week on the campuses of the university; the first one was at the Qwaqwa Campus on 11 May, the South Campus yesterday, and the last one took place this morning. What makes this even more special, is the fact that Prof Petersen is our 14<sup>th</sup> Rector and Vice-Chancellor in the 113 year existence of this university, one of the oldest in the country. Now, I also believe that, if Prof Petersen has not already memorised it, he is at least slowly starting to close his ears in terms of this being repeated; so, how do you spice this up in a fashion that remains in the dignity of the moment, but also brings a bit of science to it? Just look at it – 11 May, 19 May, 113 years, 14<sup>th</sup> Rector and Vice-Chancellor. For

those who can remember, there is something called a prime number which is only possible to divide by itself and by one. Today, 19 May 2017, has three prime numbers in it; there is two prime numbers in 11 May, when the first event was held at Qwaqwa; 113 years of history has a prime number; 14<sup>th</sup> Chancellor, now pushing it, has a prime number in it. In fact, it is seven. It is one of the biggest single, if not the biggest, single one. There is seven wonders of the world, there are seven days in a week; I will leave you with that.

Allow me to introduce Francis Petersen, and a synopsis of his CV is as follows: Francis William Petersen was born in Oudtshoorn, and grew up in Malmesbury, *'n egte produk van die Swartland* in the Western Cape, where he also matriculated. He graduated from Stellenbosch University with a B degree in Engineering (Chemical Engineering), a master's degree in Engineering (Metallurgical Engineering), and a PhD in Engineering. He brings to the position of Rector and Vice-Chancellor extensive experience of management in industry as well as the academic sector. Before joining the University of the Free State on 1 April 2017 – and there we go again, one is also a prime number – as Rector and Vice-Chancellor, he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town. Positions prior to that include Dean of Engineering and the Built Environment at UCT; Executive Head of 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 known as the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Indeed a rare combination of theory and practice, a combination that we so desperately need in this country. Among others, he is a former Chairman of the Board of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (the 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, (the NRF). Francis 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 advisor to the Anglo American Platinum Beneficiation Fund, and he is a Fellow of both the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and the South African Academy of Engineers. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Professor Francis Petersen.

**Prof Lis Lange:** Thank you, Mr Louw. Now we have come to the special moment of the ceremony, which we call the 'handing over of the gown'. The Chancellor of the university, Dr Khotso Mokhele, will hand over the Vice-Chancellor gown to Professor Petersen. Professor Petersen has been divested of his academic gown, but it will be replaced by his new gown. I would like to say a few words about the gown that Professor Petersen will be wearing. The Free State has a long-standing friendship with neighbouring Lesotho, and the Basotho nation. For this reason, the university has decided to weave our and the Basotho traditions of wear together when we redesigned the main procession gowns. The gowns are inspired by the traditional Basotho blanket, the Seanamarena. The different patterns on the Seanamarena indicate the status one holds in the Basotho nation or reflect the occasion being celebrated. The pattern on the Vice-Chancellor gown is the Seanamarena design used exclusively for the king and the chiefs, which means to 'swear by the king'. This

blanket has the highest status among all the Basotho blankets. Professor Petersen, may the symbolism of this gown be a source of inspiration during your term.

**Professor Petersen:** Thank you, Programme Director. The Chancellor, Dr Khotso Mokhele; Her Worship Olly Mlamleli, the Executive Mayor of Bloemfontein; on behalf of the Office of the Premier of the Free State, Director-General: Mr Kopung Ralikontsane; on behalf of the MEC of Education of the Free State, acting MEC: Mrs Elsabe Rothman; the Chair of Council, Mr Willem Louw, and members of Council; the Chief Executive Officer of Universities South Africa, Professor Ahmed Bawa; vice-chancellors of other universities; deputy vice-chancellors and vice-rectors of the University of the Free State and other universities; members of Senate; members of the Institutional Forum; members of the unions present here tonight; the President of the SRC and the University of Free State students; the President and members of the Convocation; donors and alumni; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen. I am deeply honoured by the outpouring of support I have experienced since arriving at this university about six and a half weeks ago. I also want to thank everyone for welcoming me and my family with such hospitality and open arms. I am deeply grateful to the Senate and the Council of the University of the Free State for the confidence you have placed in me by appointing me as the 14<sup>th</sup> Rector and Vice-Chancellor in the 113-year history of the University of the Free State. I can only say that I will devote every fibre of my being over the next five years to this great university and its importance to the City of Bloemfontein, the Free State Province, the country, and the continent. I want to acknowledge the many vice-chancellors and their nominees from universities across the country and so many former colleagues across the different sectors (the academic sector, the science council sector, business and government), who have come to share this occasion. To the staff and the students present here this afternoon – your attendance means a lot to me. Let me also greet and acknowledge all of those friends and family who cannot be here, but are probably following the live streaming of these proceedings. I would like to acknowledge the presence of my mother, Mary Petersen, and my brothers and sisters and their spouses. My wife and children have always been pillars of strength to me. Thank you to Cheslyn, Curtis, and Clayton – sitting here in front.

I wish to pay tribute to my predecessors and to former Council members for their role in making this university what it is today. I acknowledge the former Rectors and Vice-Chancellors here tonight; Professor Francois Retief was the 10<sup>th</sup> Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State and Professor Frederick Fourie, who was the 12<sup>th</sup> Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State. They are here tonight and I really want to acknowledge them, and then Professors Stef Coetzee and Jonathan Jansen who cannot be here tonight, but they are here in spirit. I also want to acknowledge one of the former Chairpersons of Council, Justice Faan Hancke, who is also present here tonight.

Mr Chancellor, my inaugural address is really going to focus on a theme that I would call academic excellence through diversity, inclusivity, and innovation. Universities serve as the guardians of our culture and our traditions. I think this is obvious when you just look at the funny hats and the weird gowns and hoods that we are all wearing here tonight, specifically Council members and members of the academia; the ceremonial and almost sacred adherence to the ways of days gone by. But they also serve at our universities as practical engines of our economy; as the catalysts of social

mobility; as foundations of our democracy; and as the point of departure for our pursuit of truth, knowledge, and independent thought. Universities straddle the difficult divide between the concrete and the abstract, and between tradition and innovation. Even in pursuit of the new, the modern, and the never before considered, we cling to tried and tested scientific methods, to hierarchies we believe serve us well, and to roles that have been in place for centuries. Finding that fine balance between the push and the pull of the past, the present and the future, is a daily reality and achieving this balance is neither easy nor guaranteed. Mr Chancellor, the University of the Free State will continue honouring its responsibilities. We undertake to continue providing intellectual and moral leadership; to encourage academic staff to fulfil their roles as public intellectuals at the forefront of innovative thinking; and to keep motivating students to question and challenge the old ways of doing things. We will not give in to fear of speaking out when other leadership and governance institutions in our society fail us. This duty of ours involves ensuring that leaders, who are bound to do so, serve the citizens of our country and, in doing so, uphold the constitution. This insistence on accountability stretches further than our own relatively narrow interests – it includes obligations at all levels of society.

We also look inward, towards our own responsibilities and accountabilities. We acknowledge that we, as a university community, have an equally important responsibility to exercise tolerance, to listen, and to engage with strongly divergent views. We must do this in a manner that is always respectful, so that our engagement expands the space for debate, and builds understanding, even if we cannot reach agreement. I want to quote one of my very good friends and a very learned colleague, Professor Njabulo Ndebele, which he stated in his inaugural address as Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, and I quote: “Awareness of perspective makes you less inclined to venture a quick opinion. It imposes the responsibility to listen, weigh, and then decide. An open society thrives from the interaction of perspectives.” 2015 and 2016 were watershed years for the South African higher-education system. The Rhodes Must Fall, and subsequent Fees Must Fall student and staff protests challenged us, and re-energised a critical engagement around the purpose of the university in an equal society, both as a site of complicity and as a potential agent for social change.

The focus of these social movements has been on demands that seek to redress inequalities, prejudices, and structural disadvantages that continue to characterise South African society in general, and universities in particular. We experienced debates about access to quality and affordable higher education. We discussed the decolonisation of the physical campus landscape and the curriculum. This decolonisation process must investigate ways of adapting our teaching to the learning needs of this generation of students, of adapting our offerings to make them more relevant for living here today – in 2017 and beyond, in Africa and in a globalised world. We must look far beyond the ideas that used to work for us, because it has become clear that they no longer do. We reflected on intersectionality, a term that refers to the way our multiple identities – whether of race, gender, social class, religion or age, or any other of our multiple identities, interact in a way to create new social inequalities. And we heeded the call to consciously reshape institutional culture in ways that recognise diversity, and acknowledge that the institution has an obligation to adapt to, to embrace, and to incorporate those who have, to date, been marginalised by the way

things have always been. Instead of demanding adaptation to our ways of doing, we should also change and become inclusive of all.

However, the question is how do we, as the University of the Free State, respond to the call of these revolutionary movements? Yes, I call them revolutionary, as nothing less than radical change will ensure that we remain relevant. If we ignore the call for introspection, for restructuring, and for noticeable and effective change, the way forward will be characterised by obstacles, by questions and doubts about the validity of the contributions we claim to make. So, Mr Chancellor, as a second commitment, we call ourselves a student-centred university. As such, we will strengthen our focus on social justice and human rights through scholarship, through advocacy, and through progressive interventions. In this regard, we have reconfigured and established an executive portfolio for Institutional Change and Student Affairs. This portfolio will coordinate the efforts of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice; the Free State Centre for Human Rights, which was launched a few weeks ago; the Integrated Transformation Framework which was recently adopted by Council and that we will work on over the next couple of months to develop an Integrated Transformation Plan that will be inclusive and will also be used as a map over the next few years; and our Reflective Thinking and Practices of Otherness and Rights related to gender, sexual orientation, and harassment. Mr Chancellor, we will also pursue the establishment of an Office of the Ombud, which will strive to be independent and fair in dealing with concerns lodged by staff and students. We will further adopt a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, bullying, and any other behaviour that demeans people and disregard their rights. We will act as champion of those who are on the receiving end of this behaviour, and we will never stop working to educate, and where necessary, impose sanctions on those who seem to think that such behaviour will be tolerated. The inextricable way issues of social justice and social rights are intertwined, opens the door for exciting, unique, and ground-breaking opportunities for exploration. These opportunities take the form of local, national, and international research collaborations. It will also take the form of the development of multidisciplinary programmes, and the establishment of advocacy projects and other engagements that will translate into a greater realisation of what we are working towards in relation to social justice and human rights for all.

Furthermore, I wish to ensure that we, at the University of the Free State, succeed in creating an environment that is characterised by empathy and support, and a culture that reflects openness and inquiry. This will be a place where every one of our staff and students will feel valued, and will have opportunities for intellectual growth and development. In establishing this environment, it will of course be necessary for us to re-evaluate some of the elements of our current environment and culture. We will investigate and talk and think about our traditions and practices, our attitudes and our objectives. We will re-affirm the value of those that we conclude are meaningful and effective, and which are aligned with the direction we want to move towards. We will discontinue those that have outlived their usefulness, which no longer fit in with the society we live in today, or the university we want to be. The values, habits, customs, and practices that will be rejected will be those that do not promote the culture of diversity and the respect for human rights, and that do not acknowledge the right of people to express and uphold their particular values, views, and heritage. I am excited about the prospect of using those values and practices that we retain, as a foundation for crafting new, socially inclusive and forward looking traditions and ways of doing.

Mr Chancellor, I commit myself to working with the staff and students and other stakeholders to develop the University of the Free State into an institution that has an even greater impact than it has today or had in the past. This institution I am striving to establish will be one that responds positively to inclusivity, to diversity, and to transformation, and which can incorporate these values in our curriculum, our scholarship, our research in a very productive way. In particular, I wish to ensure that these values impact on the lives of our students and on the way they engage with knowledge, not only during their time on campus with us, but even after graduation. I want us to develop in our students the capacity to learn and to keep learning. We have to develop our students into adults who have the capacity to act as, and to promote, ethical and critical citizenry, and thereby to play an active role in the development of a vibrant and democratic society. We need to light in them the torch that eliminates the way forward, towards a future that is built on more than education to gain vocation-specific skills, but, instead acknowledges that a university degree represents merely the foundation of learning that will never stop, exploration that will never cease, and a willingness to listen to new ideas that will enrich and enlighten. And, Mr Chancellor, we will do this while aiming at the highest levels of academic excellence.

I am sure we all agree that the historical concept of the ivory tower, as home to education and research, a tower that stands alone, isolated and insulated from the rest of society, is no longer relevant or appropriate. The idea of limiting learning and innovation to the walls of this mythical enclave is patently absurd, considering the world we live in. The rising tide of global collaboration, the expansion of markets, and the diversification, on the one hand, and specialisation, on the other, of industries means a university's focus must range from the local to the national, from the continental to the universal. Development of and access to means of communication, the availability of knowledge sources, and the expansion of collective intelligence, means intellectual challenges are no longer the preserve of the university and its lecturers, researchers, and students. Universities represent just one element of a dynamic system of diverse and interconnected systems, whose cooperation is essential for propelling technological and economic development. The partnerships we need to forge with a range of associates must be between the university and other educational institutions; between the university and government at all levels; between the university and industry and the private sector; between university and science councils; and between the university and civil society at various levels. We, as a university, must avoid the temptation to work in isolation, or to make unilateral decisions about what we think others need. The goal must be to be socially responsive, and to work with others for the betterment of us all.

Mr Chancellor, these partnerships that the University of the Free State will pursue, will be approached in a very strategic, deliberate, and innovative way. We will search out ways of benefiting from what has already been discovered from the lessons learned, from the lessons others have learned, and we will utilise these experiences to avoid, in a manner of speaking, reinventing the wheel. I want us as the University of the Free State to leapfrog over that baseline, straight to the cutting edge, whether in the field of teaching and learning, whether in the field of research, or innovation, or whether we talk about engaged scholarship or management practices. So, let me give you an example of how we can do this. Our institution, the University of the Free State, is located in a province that is called the breadbasket of South Africa. From here, in the

centre of South Africa, we can utilise our vantage point and harness our existing facilities, past achievements and the expertise that is available, to pursue collaborations to the north of us and to the south of us, to build an intellectual meeting place of which the influence can extend far beyond South African borders, even beyond the African continent. We can pursue research into socially relevant fields such as agricultural development – to mention just one – encompassing essential foci such as food security, land reform, water management, economics, public health, and social development. In collaboration with all our multiple stakeholders, we can engage in investigating complex and multidimensional scientific, technological, legal, social, and economic challenges, and we can share our research findings, and we can test and apply new insights, evidence, and innovations. Through these associations and partnerships, we can bring benefits to society at various levels – benefits that stretch far beyond the mere financial.

Mr Chancellor, the University of the Free State, in pursuit of mutual beneficiary alliances, will develop and expand our existing partnership with, among others, government institutions such as the offices of the Free State Premier and the Mayor of Mangaung; educational institutions such as the Central University of Technology and TVET colleges, including Motheo and other colleges in the Free State; and organised business in the city and the province. Through these alliances, we will contribute to realising the potential, on various levels, of the city of Bloemfontein and the province as a whole, making it more competitive and improving the lives of our people in this region.

The University of the Free State is one university with three campuses: the Bloemfontein Campus, our South Campus, and the Qwaqwa Campus. I am committed to bringing the activities of these three campuses into alignment, and to integrate our activities to a greater extent. We will achieve this in several ways. Naturally, each campus has developed niches for itself, ways in which it strives to achieve excellence and distinguish itself. We will build on the strengths of each of these campuses to help the others to uplift standards, to improve operations, and to make their mark. For instance, we have access to the technology that can expand the benefits of open and distance-learning programmes developed at and implemented by the South Campus, and we will do further work on that technology. We will also use our technology and the lessons that we learn in practice to incorporate that in our main programmes on the Bloemfontein Campus. Academics and students at all three campuses can become involved in and benefit from the specialisations that are blooming on the Qwaqwa Campus, which are possible because of its unique location at the foot of the Lesotho Mountains, surrounded by vibrant rural communities. Those who haven't visited Qwaqwa Campus, I would like you to make some time and visit this beautiful part of the Eastern Free State. I am excited about the opportunities that await staff and students at the Qwaqwa Campus, which I believe has the potential to become a specialised hub for certain course modules and fields of research such as sustainability sciences, and which I know have the potential to attract students and researchers from all over the globe, who will come to Qwaqwa to explore its unique offerings.

To achieve the benefits of cooperation, we need to ensure that communication channels are open and operational between the three sites. We must know what is happening at each of the campuses. We must know our colleagues and their

respective strengths, and we must respond to our colleagues' needs and requests and should offer to become involved. We must scrutinise and reconsider the offerings of the three campuses to ensure that unnecessary duplications are avoided. Only by frequent contact and cooperative and empathic collegiality will we reap the benefits that these three campuses offer. And most importantly, we must work together to infuse each campus with the values that we have identified as essential if we are to make our mark as a united University of the Free State: academic excellence, diversity, inclusivity, and innovation.

In conclusion, Mr Chancellor, the University of the Free State is not a perfect university. However, I know that it is a profoundly important institution, one that has the potential to make an immeasurable, positive contribution to the lives of the people of the province, the country, and far beyond. I pledge to do my utmost on behalf of this university – in honour of its past, in celebration of the present, and especially, in anticipation of the future. I do so mindful of Michelangelo's foresight in noting, that "the greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high, and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it". I challenge us to dream big and to do big. It will not always be easy, but it will be rewarding and sometimes it may even be fun. The university deserves not less than my very best effort, and I am willing to give it my utmost. Thank you.

**Prof Lis Lange:** The Odeion String Quartet is the jewel of the UFS musical programme. They have brought to the university both national and international recognition. Tonight they will play for us the Lento movement from the String Quartet No. 12 in F major. Vice-chancellors know that theirs is a really difficult job, and because of that they always come in great numbers to congratulate and support an incoming member of their guild. I would like to call on Professor Ahmed Bawa, CEO of Universities South Africa, to give a message on behalf of the vice-chancellors.

**Prof Ahmed Bawa:** Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to be here this evening to celebrate the start of a new era at the University of the Free State. With the history going back to 1904 and passing through many political epochs, we indeed are excited by its entry into a new one. I feel privileged to witness the ascendance of Professor Francis Petersen to the Vice-Chancellorship of the UFS. We congratulate both Professor Petersen and the UFS on an excellent appointment. He brings with him much experience at all levels of the enterprise of the university as a social institution engaged in the business of knowledge. He brings with him significant experience as an academic, as an academic administrator, and as a professional engineer. As a physicist, I can understand that much of the knowledge we produce in physics, comes from a reductionist approach. We break things down to build knowledge, but like the construction of tall buildings, or long-span bridges, or chemical laboratories, universities are complex institutions, and as an engineer Professor Petersen will bring with him knowledge and techniques to produce the most beautiful solutions of a university as a social institution. On behalf of the 26 public universities and their vice-chancellors, I wish Professor Petersen every success. We commit ourselves as Universities SA Vice-Chancellors to working closely with him and to support him whenever necessary. We expect him and the UFS to play a dominant role in the sector, while it grapples with some of its most challenging, some of the most enormous challenges it has faced in its history. But there is still a question to be asked. In this time that is dominated by the ideas of insourcing, Fees Must Fall, Rhodes Must

Fall, and so on, who in their right mind wants to voluntarily be a vice-chancellor? There are just two possible answers to this. The first answer is simply somebody who has taken leave of the senses, and the second of course is someone who sees himself or herself as a servant of the nation, as a servant of the people, and as a servant of the young people that come to this university. From what we have heard today, we can be sure that Professor Petersen has given much thought to this and has decided in his own words, “to commit every fibre of his being to this great university”. We can feel sure that a great appointment has been made. When a vice-chancellor arrives at a university, he or she steps into a river – sometimes flowing calmly, and sometimes flowing turbulently. He or she produces ripples around his or her legs which impact on the university, society more generally, on the economy and so on. When he or she steps out of the river, the river continues to flow. May I, on behalf of all 26 universities and on behalf of Universities SA, encourage you, Professor Petersen, to make the largest possible ripples. Thank you.

**Prof Lis Lange:** Please help me welcome again onto the stage, Charity Leburu, now as a soloist. Charity will sing an aria from La Wally. I now call on the President of the Student Representative Council Bloemfontein Campus, Mr SK Luwaca, to come to the podium and publicly promise Professor Petersen that the SRC will not give him a tough time. And while he is here, he can also give a vote of thanks. Mr Luwaca.

**SRC President:** Mr Chancellor, Mr Rector and Vice-Chancellor, please allow me to say all protocol observed. I don't want to make any mistakes. It starts within us with a recognition that we could not live in a vacuum, each and every one of us are constituents of a great organism where we are members of this community, we are members of our country, we are members of our continent, and are also members of our world. Coming here today shows you are a member of this greater organism. By coming and celebrating this historic moment with us, it means that you are a member of this community. Also those who have been singing and rendering items, Desmond Tutu says 'do a little bit'. It is all those little bits put together that overwhelms the world. Thank you for all those items and I also thank you for becoming part of our community. The mere fact that you came to celebrate this moment with us, means that you are part of this community. Thank you also to the Petersen family for sharing Professor Petersen with us. Lastly, thank you very much for coming. Thank you very much.

**Prof Lis Lange:** Ladies and gentlemen, we have come to the end of the ceremony. Please rise for the National Anthem, and after the anthem please remain standing while the Chancellor dissolve the congregation. Please allow the main procession to leave first before you exit, and please – to the vice-chancellors from other universities – proceed with your gowns on to the far end of the foyer in the Odeion Hall for the photographs with Professor Petersen. Once again, thank you to all of you for your participation in this beautiful inauguration ceremony. Good evening.