

## MESSAGE OF THE DEAN

Dear colleagues,

This year has been extremely challenging. Last Friday at the end-year function of the Senior Management of the University, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof De la Rey, confessed that her job description changed in this exceptional year.

This is precisely what happened in this Faculty: our job description changed dramatically. I am impressed by the distinctive and innovative manner in which you handled this challenging situation, particularly over the past months.

- Prof Potgieter, our Deputy Dean for Teaching and Learning, became among other things Chief Examination Officer for NAS. The series of her regular updates to HODs reached the number 11 yesterday, which show that we communicated effectively. Thank you Marietjie for your excellent job.
- Prof Webb, our Acting Deputy Dean for Research and Postgraduate Education, dealt with the donkey-work of compiling lists for students' access to campus. Thank you to you Eddie and to your team of support staff, including Liana and Ina.
- Our HODs and Directors of Centres/Institutes made constructive critical analysis and addressed many difficult issues, including parent concerns. Thank you for your leadership.
- Our academic staff went extra mile in all aspects of their new job description where alternative teaching, learning and assessment approaches were needed. Thank you for your dedication.
- Supervisors, research/postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students sacrificed a lot to accommodate the extreme circumstances. Thank you for your dedication and for emphasising at all institutional structures that postgraduate education is the backbone of our vision to be a research-intensive university.
- Our Faculty Manager, Dr Kotze, was not exempted from changing his job description. He became the manager for students' admission at the entrance gates of the university. Thank you to you Simon and to your team from different departments.

- NATHouse and PSANA made at several occasions inspiring inputs. Thank you specifically to NATHouse and Dr Kritzinger who come today with an innovative idea: the award for best first-year lecturer.

Compared to the top five universities in the country, UP did well. The Faculty worked as a team. Thank you for your team effort that directly contributed to the successful completion of the academic activities characterized by:

- Good performance of our undergraduate students at the exams without compromising the standards;
- Finalisation or submission in the past two months of more than 70 dissertations and 45 these.
- Excellent NRF evaluation outcomes including strong ratings by emerging researchers

One question everybody is asking is: what will happen next year. In this regard, I would like to quote our Vice-Principal, Prof Anton Stroh, who wrote the following in a recent correspondence with Prof Mike Wingfield and me:

*"I must say that this is the hardest year of my life. Every day I hate what is happening with us all. I know the immense frustrations this create amongst staff and students. I am developing a Master plan to ensure that we have everything in place for securing UP in an environment that all will function as a University should, including opening study spaces and the Library. We will get through this".*

I agree with Anton that we will get through this. In the meantime, we need to rest since we are exhausted. For those who are used not to take vacation leave, I invite them to have vacation this time. You have to energise yourself since we expect you to be more innovative in 2017.

Before we acknowledge colleagues who are retiring from the university and those who have served the university for at least 25 years, I would like to express a wish. We should please be peace makers and messengers of joy where ever we are during this summer holiday. Peace and joy are indeed essential for us to rest. A festive season to everybody!