

Invitation

Virtual webinar

17 February 2022

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



The Department of Political Sciences invites you to a virtual webinar entitled:

'Why African universities need to study the United States of America'

DATE AND TIME:

17 February 2022 @18:00 (SAST)/12:00 (EST)

RSVP:

Click here:

<https://forms.gle/TvhE8Gzi8TUhPoW7>

ENQUIRIES:

Mrs Rina du Toit (rinadutoit@up.ac.za)

HOST:

Prof Tawana Kupe: Vice Chancellor, University of Pretoria

SPEAKERS:

Prof Landry Signé: Thunderbird School of Global Management, Brookings Institution and Stanford University

Amb Sidique Abou-Bakarr Wai: Sierra Leone Ambassador to the United States

Amb Mohammed Ali Mire: Somali Ambassador to South Africa

Prof Maxi Schoeman: Political Sciences, University of Pretoria

MODERATOR:

Prof Christopher Isike: Political Sciences, University of Pretoria

Top universities globally have research centres and think-tanks dedicated to the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary study of other countries or regions, and the broad purpose is to understand the historical, social, political, economic, and cultural development of the countries and peoples they study. It is not only a worthwhile venture for knowledge's sake, but also helpful in formulating domestic and foreign policies to further the national interests of their states. Thus these universities not only justify their mandates as citadels of learning, but also as influencers of foreign policies and international relations in general. In the United States, there are over 40 institutions across universities in the country that study Africa, and this dates to 1948 when the first African Studies centre was established at the Northwestern State University of Louisiana. How has Africa fared in this penetrative gaze on it which has grown exponentially over the last 74 years?

The record shows that Africa has not scratched the surface of studying the US, a world power with many political and commercial interests in the continent, that it has engaged with since 1945. As a result, it engages from a disadvantaged position. There are only 2 research think tanks in Africa dedicated to studying the US. These are the American Language Centre (ALC) in Morocco and the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS) at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. This needs to change, and it begs the question of what the University of Pretoria can do about this given its unique location as the political capital of South Africa? What should be the niche focus of such a research centre? Who should be involved, and what benefits will researching, teaching and learning about the US state and society offer these stakeholders, Africa generally and the US?

These are some of the questions this webinar is designed to address as the University of Pretoria prepares to establish its own African Centre for the Study of the United States which aims to be a premier African knowledge-creation hub in the field of studies of the United States.

