



Human Rights Day

Message from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal



Human Rights Day is commemorated annually as a tribute to the citizens of South Africa who assembled at Sharpeville in 1960 to assert basic human rights in the face of injustice and oppression.

It is an opportunity for us to recommit ourselves to instil a culture of human rights that embodies our value system as a university community. We encourage our diverse community of staff to incorporate values of human rights into their teaching and research and to identify the implications of human rights in the many research fields in which we specialise. We do this to not only highlight the importance of human rights, but to enhance the access and success of our students through meaningful engagement.

It is pleasing to note the many examples at UP such as the work done by the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, whose research ensures that persons with disabilities and complex communication needs have their human rights upheld by having access to the justice system. The Department of Family Medicine at UP ensures that the health and wellbeing of persons with substance use disorders are cared for with suitable interventions to prevent further drug abuse. The Centre for the Study of Resilience in the Faculty of Education focuses on acknowledging the human rights of learners who overcome great adversity and obstacles and trains teachers and industry practitioners to be cognisant of and have an understanding of the rights of these learners or employees in various sectors. The Faculty of Theology has research conducted by the Centre for Sustainable Communities which combines faith with the collective human rights of communities through poverty reduction, improving the quality of lives, eco-justice and rural livelihoods. The Department of Business Management runs the Mamelodi Business Clinic which facilitates human rights through poverty reduction by encouraging entrepreneurship and imparting business skills to the community to help people grow their businesses and break the cycle of poverty through education and skills. Similarly, the Institute of Food, Nutrition and Well-being promotes human rights by actively researching and promoting the use of sustainable, indigenous staple food and crops so that South Africans have basic food security.

These are just a few examples of how UP makes each day matter through our daily contribution to improving human rights. We highlight these in order to re-emphasise the impact and social responsibility of our work - that our work improves lives and makes a difference to society.

On this occasion, we call on staff and students to think about human rights not only as a legal concept, but as a way of life at UP. We encourage our students to take up work opportunities in any of the many community engagement projects that are linked to their curriculum. This will open your horizons to understanding that in the future, the work that you do in your chosen career or business should always be underpinned by a desire to uplift South Africa through a recognition of the basic human rights of all its citizens.

Prof Cheryl de la Rey
Vice-Chancellor and Principal