

Welcome to the Dean of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

Prof Sunil Maharaj, the University's former Head of the Department of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering and Chairholder of the Sentech Chair in Broadband Wireless Multimedia Communications (BWMC), was appointed to the position of Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology at the University on 1 October 2014. This follows a research, industrial and academic career spanning more than 27 years.

With engineering and the associated disciplines in the School of Engineering within the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) celebrating 60 years in 2016, Prof Maharaj is committed to building this Faculty on the great foundation that was established by his predecessors in order to make a distinct contribution to and impact on our great country and the African continent in terms of its economic competitiveness.

Academic background

Prof Maharaj obtained his BSc Engineering and MSc Engineering degrees in Electronic Engineering at the University of Natal in 1986 and 1989 respectively. He then completed an MSc in Operational Telecommunications with a merit pass from the University of Coventry in the United Kingdom in 1996. He returned to his alma mater to complete his PhD in Electronic Engineering in 2008.

He launched his career in Pretoria in 1989 at Electromagnetic Laboratories (EMLab) as a radio frequency (RF) and microwave design engineer. In 1992, he moved to academia when he accepted a position as senior lecturer at the Transkei Technikon.

This was followed by his appointment as Director of the School of Engineering of the Eastern Cape Technikon in 1993, and Vice-Rector: Academic of the same institution a year later.

In 2000, Prof Maharaj joined the University of Pretoria as a senior lecturer, a position he held until 2008. During this time, he was appointed as the inaugural chairholder of the Sentech Chair in BWMC, a position he still holds. He became associate professor in the Department of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering in 2009 and Acting Head of Department in 2011, and was promoted to Head of Department in 2012. In October 2014, he was appointed Dean of the Faculty for an initial term of four years.

Achievements

Prof Maharaj is a professional engineer (PrEng), fellow of the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers (SAIEE) and fellow of the South African Academy of Engineering (SAAE). He has published widely in several journals in his field, and has received recognition in the form of several awards, including the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP) award of the Department of Trade and Industry (the dti) in

the Advanced Hi-Tech Category for research work in broadband wireless communications in 2010, an award he received again in 2013.

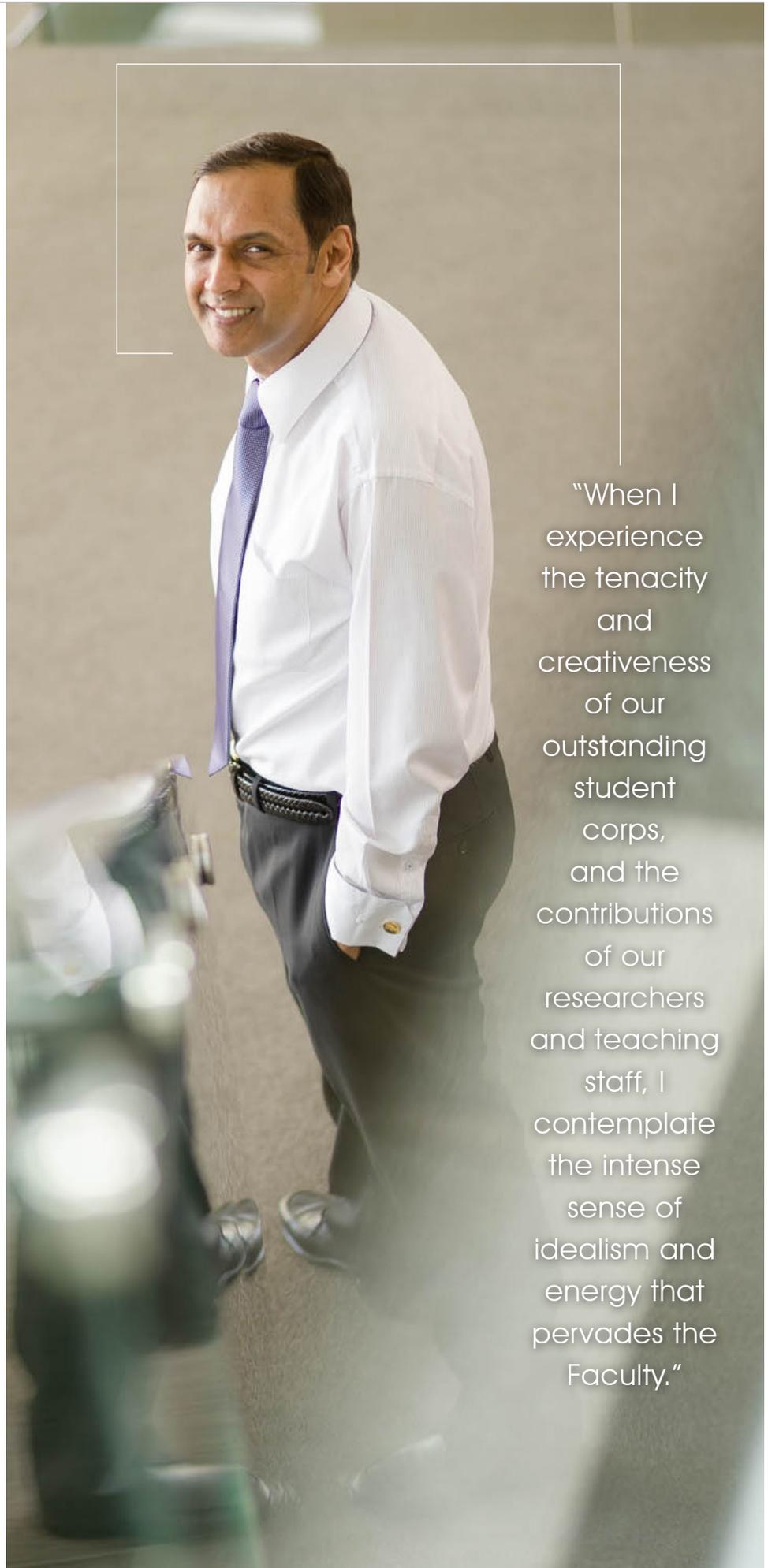
Prof Maharaj's vision for the Faculty is to build on the four pillars of quality, relevance, diversity and sustainability, as outlined in the University's strategic plan, *UP 2025*. In the process, he sees the Faculty contributing directly to the country's National Development Plan for 2030.

Looking back at his first year as dean, Prof Maharaj is filled with great optimism for the future. "When I experience the tenacity and creativeness of our outstanding student corps, and the contributions of our researchers and teaching staff, I contemplate the intense sense of idealism and energy that pervades the Faculty.

"I believe that each one of us has a unique opportunity and responsibility to meet the critical challenges of our time, and it is a privilege to be able to lead such an incredible Faculty at this time."

Prof Maharaj has articulated the following five-point plan, which contains the pertinent issues on which he intends to focus during his tenure as Dean:

- Enhancing the quality of the Faculty's programmes as required for professional and international accreditation, and the continuous improvement of its facilities so that UP can offer outstanding teaching and learning, as well as research opportunities to its graduates.
- Hiring, developing and growing talent so that the Faculty can develop a pipeline of outstanding future academics and researchers that are reflective of the country's diversity.
- Positioning the Faculty as a faculty of choice among learners, postgraduate students, parents and industry, so that it can attract and retain the top achievers, and be the preferred partner of industry in research and human capital development.
- Increasing international collaboration so as to strengthen UP's position in international research rankings.
- Improving and integrating the culture of technopreneurship, so that it can have a greater impact on society and industry competitiveness, and contribute to knowledge-economy-type job creation. 📍



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