



→ Prof Roelf Sandenbergh (far left) receives the donated BMW on behalf of the Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering from Edward Makwana, Manager: Group Automotive Communications at BMW (front).

Vehicle Dynamics Group shifts gears

The Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering welcomed BMW South Africa's donation of a preproduction BMW 3 Series sedan on 23 July 2014. The vehicle will play an integral part in the Department's research on different aspects of vehicle dynamics and mobility.

According to Prof Schalk Els, Head of the Vehicle Dynamics Group (VDG), the Department will be using the vehicle to research aspects such as safety, comfort and efficiency. Research in the field of vehicle dynamics and mobility at the University of Pretoria began in the 1970s and gained renewed momentum with the establishment of the VDG as a formal research group in the Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering in 2011.

The VDG needed a research vehicle that has newer technology than the Land Rover Defender it has been using for its research up to now. The Defender will still be used, but the VDG can now conduct research on electronic driving aids, such as the parking assist and lane departure warning systems. Although it was part of the preproduction stage of BMW's Rosslyn Plant in Pretoria in 2012, the vehicle is ideal for the

VDG's innovative research. Brett Kent, a member of the VDG who is studying towards a BEngHons (Mechanical Engineering), said: "We don't have to test new technology in simulations and hope the simulations are accurate. We can just validate it on the platform the BMW provides."

Prof Roelf Sandenbergh, former Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology, received the vehicle from Edward Makwana, Manager: Group Automotive Communications at BMW South Africa, on behalf of the University. In his keynote address at the handover function, Prof Sandenbergh highlighted the fact that UP needs to collaborate with industry to address the shortage of engineers in South Africa. The Faculty has shown strong growth in research activities over the last few years, but collaborations like the one with BMW can pave the way for further growth. 🍀