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MEDIA RELEASE

UP successfully hosts second annual virtual #ChooseUP Day

PRETORIA – The second annual virtual #ChooseUP Day was successfully held by the University of Pretoria (UP) on Saturday, 4 September. This exciting event saw thousands of grade 12 learners and their parents/guardians visit UP’s campuses virtually.

#ChooseUP Day takes place annually in August/September to introduce UP, its staff, campuses, faculties and student services to grade 12 learners, who have received conditional admission offers subject to their matric/school-leaving results. With the country surviving over a year of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and migrating to mostly virtual events, UP continued to showcase its prowess by giving students and their parents a world-class virtual event.

The event was hosted on UP’s Virtual Campus, an online platform that allows visitors the opportunity to explore the university’s facilities and campus life through a combination of 360-degree panoramas and videos, as well as course-related information.

A live-streaming session was held, during which Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Tawana Kupe, Student Representative Council President, Lerato Ndlovu and faculty deans addressed visitors. The session was moderated by senior lecturer in the Department of Business Management at UP, Dr Olebogeng Selebi.

Proving that UP’s initiatives are not only innovative, but also popular with prospective students, the university has received over 43 000 applications so far, with most courses having reached capacity. Dr Cila Myburgh, Director of Enrolment and Student Administration, shared her excitement over this increase.

“This year we received 10 000 more applications, compared with the same time in the previous two years. This is an incredible increase, and indicative that UP is the institution of choice for more applicants. Unfortunately, most of our programmes have reached capacity already. We are, however, very happy with the quality of our applicants and look forward to welcoming those that decide to #ChooseUP next year,” Dr Myburgh said.

Speaking at the event, Prof Kupe welcomed conditionally accepted students to an institution that is passionate about contributing meaningfully to South Africa, Africa and the world.

“We believe in a UP that matters to everything that is important to our country, continent and world. We aim to be a leading research intensive university in Africa, recognised internationally for offering a high quality education, creating knowledge and producing research that will have an impact and make a difference to local and global challenges,” Prof Kupe said.

Ndlovu echoed the Vice-Chancellor’s sentiments, reminding prospective students that their choice of institution would have a major impact in their lives.



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“Every great step in life begins with a choice, a decision to take that step. If you are watching this, it means you are about to take another decision in your life. And I must say, it is quite a big one. Today, I am inviting you to come join the UP community,” Ndlovu said.

One such prospective student is Michel Maseko, from Nkomazi in Mpumalanga, who said she is looking forward to studying towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery in 2022, because UP is simply one of the best institutions in South Africa.

“I feel that UP is one of the best universities I know of, and I am particularly looking forward to meeting new people next year and getting to know the campus even better,” Maseko said.

She added that she had thoroughly enjoyed the virtual #ChooseUP Day, because she learnt about the calibre of UP students and alumni there. “I really enjoyed it, especially because I learned from listening to the VC’s speech that the Olympic and Paralympic medallists come from UP,” she said.

Ethan Dorfling, a conditionally accepted BSC (Biological Sciences) student from Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape, is excited by the opportunity to learn how to help animals.

“I chose UP because it had the course I was interested in studying. I want to be able to help animals someday. I am also excited by the chance to be in a new environment, with different people,” Dorfling said.

Urry Bandi, from Mamelodi East in Gauteng, said she hopes to become a psychologist, and the BA that she’s been conditionally accepted for is the first step.

“I chose UP because I think it’s the best university in the country and because I have realised that students that study at UP succeed in life. I enjoyed the virtual #ChooseUP Day because I got to see more about the Faculty of Humanities that will be my home,” Bandi said.

Ndalama Matshidze from Thohoyandou in Limpopo said his studies in Veterinary Sciences would enable him to explore his love for animals a bit more.

“Besides UP being the only university with a Vet Sciences qualification, it is also one of the institutions that is closest to my home. Based on the Virtual #ChooseUP Day that I got to experience today, I saw that UP is big; there’s a lot to learn and explore. It’s so awesome. I look forward to also being in close contact with wild animals too,” Matshidze said.

The Virtual #ChooseUP Day experience was tailored and personalised for each conditionally admitted UP student. Their invitation contained links to all the interests they indicated on their RSVP to the Virtual #ChooseUP Day invitation. They were able to take virtual tours of UP’s nine faculties spread over seven campuses, get advice on alternate admissions, accommodation, how to choose their modules, and what they would need to do to become successful students.

The Virtual Campus platform contains more than 20 new videos which specifically address questions frequently asked by visitors on #ChooseUP Day, and additional panoramas have been added to the more than 120 panoramas already on the platform. Via a livestream presentation, videos, panoramas and more than 800 photographs, students learnt more about UP, a variety of study programmes, student support services available and gained insight into campus sport, arts and culture, the UP ethos



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and vibe, and what it means to live THE UP WAY. This ethos entails being excellent, as well as kind, in everything the UP community does.

At the end of the live morning session, there were 29 222 page views on the Virtual Campus platform. During the live session, there were three UP branded hampers that were won by viewers, as well as six study bursaries specifically for the conditionally accepted students, to the total value of R120 000.

Closing off the live virtual #ChooseUP Day event, Prof Kupe took the opportunity to welcome the students to their new home.

“At UP, we are a future-focused and future-orientated university. To those who are joining us next year, we wish you a very warm welcome as you become part of what makes us so special; as we teach, innovate, live, advance and grow THE UP Way. We are the University of Pretoria: a leading, top university in SA, on the continent and in the world. See you next year!” he said.

Caption: 1 Prof Tawana Kupe addresses grade 12 learners and their parents/guardians at the second annual virtual #ChooseUP Day

Caption 2: Prof Tawana Kupe and Dr Olebogeng Selebi

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on the Hatfield Campus, Pretoria. This 113-year-old institution is also the largest producer of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country that has a Faculty of Veterinary Science which is ranked top in Africa, and overall has 120 academic departments, as well as 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 55 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes.

UP is one of the top five universities in South Africa, according to the 2019-2020 rankings by the Center for World University Rankings. It is also ranked among the top 100 universities worldwide in three fields of study (veterinary science, theology and law), and among the top 1% in eight fields of study (agricultural sciences, clinical medicine, engineering, environment/ecology, immunology, microbiology, plant and animal sciences and social sciences).

In May 2020, the annual UK Financial Times Executive Education Rankings once again ranked GIBS as the top South African and African business school. The University also has an extensive community engagement programme with approximately 33 000 students involved in community upliftment. Furthermore, UP is building considerable capacities and strengths for the Fourth Industrial Revolution by preparing students for the world beyond university and offering work-readiness and entrepreneurship training to its students.

As one of South Africa’s research-intensive universities, UP launched the Future Africa Campus in March 2019 as a hub for inter- and transdisciplinary research networks within UP and the global



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research community to maximise 4IR innovation and address the challenges and stresses our continent and world is facing. In addition UP also launched the Javett Art Centre in September 2019 as a driver of transdisciplinary research development between the Humanities and other faculties. In November 2020 UP launched Engineering 4.0. as a hub not only for Smart Cities and Transport, but also to link the vast resources in technology and data sciences to other faculties via Future Africa. These initiatives are stimulating new thinking at the frontier of 'science for transformation'.

For more information, go to www.up.ac.za