

NEWS RELEASE

UP welcomes alumni back to Hatfield Campus in celebration of global network and legacy



University of Pretoria's (UP) Vice Chancellor and Principal, Professor Francis Petersen.

PRETORIA - University of Pretoria (UP) Vice-Chancellor and Principal [Professor Francis Petersen](#) welcomed alumni back to UP's Hatfield Campus on Thursday 27 March 2025 for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recent Alumni and Friends Cocktail Event marked the first time that an alumni-only group had been invited back to campus since 2019.

"UP alumni are part of a global and dynamic network, whose achievements continue to inspire us. Their continuous connection to the University strengthens UP's legacy," said [Dr Samantha Castle](#), UP's Senior Manager of [Alumni Relations](#). She added that being a UP alumnus is about more than just fundraising. "It is about a continued love for UP and about upholding UP's legacy of excellence... Additionally, alumni serve as ambassadors, advocates, and partners in shaping UP's future and in maintaining a legacy of continued excellence, which is why

alumni are such an important part of the institution.”

Dr Castle urged the gathered alumni to remember that a student’s connection to UP doesn’t end when they graduate – they carry UP’s legacy with them, wherever they may go. “The success of alumni inspires current students, and the extensive alumni network provides students with opportunities that allow them to, in turn, achieve success ... We hope that UP alumni will feel a sense of belonging; a sense of coming back home when they return to campus for occasions like these.”

Alumni giving back

While alumni gatherings often place emphasis on gathering financial support for students, speakers at the Hatfield Campus Alumni and Friends Cocktail Event highlighted a more abstract way that alumni can continue to shape UP’s future. Prof Petersen encouraged alumni to “share their expertise through mentorship programmes, which will open doors for students through sharing valuable knowledge and skills.” He added that alumni form part of a global community of professionals who have the ability to provide students with a multitude of opportunities that will allow them to achieve academic and professional goals they might not otherwise reach.

“UP’s vision is built on two pillars: firstly, being a global leader in academic excellence and, secondly, fostering inclusivity,” Prof Petersen said. “As a result, UP has attracted students from over 75 countries.” Additionally, with UP being the largest research university in South Africa, the first pillar – being a global leader in academic excellence – is fast becoming a reality.

According to Prof Petersen, UP’s slogan – Make Today Matter – is a commitment to action. “It shapes continuous refinement to ensure that the knowledge we create remains relevant and impactful in the future. It calls on alumni and other university stakeholders to contribute to uplifting communities and to shape a compassionate and ethical future... It places emphasis on the human-centred approach that the institution has – towards its past, current and future students, and towards ensuring a collectively improved society.”

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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 its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers 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 with a [Faculty of Veterinary Science](#), which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2025 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of [Accounting](#) and [Finance](#); [Architecture](#); [Electrical and Electronic Engineering](#); Law; Sport Science; and Veterinary Science. UP's Faculty of Law has been ranked as the top law school in Africa for a remarkable eighth consecutive year.

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their [2024 World University Rankings \(WUR\)](#). UP was the only South African university featured in the [2023 World University Rankings for Innovation \(WURI\)](#), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

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