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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

## UP involved in hydrogen fuel cell systems training of TVET students

PRETORIA – The University of Pretoria (UP) is in involved in the training of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college graduates in Hydrogen Fuel Cell systems. This is in partnership with Bambili Energy and the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation (DSI) and the Energy & Water Sector Education Training Authority (EWSETA).

The launch of the training took place this week at the Hatfield campus. "Training is expected to end on 15 December. The aim is to develop competent, capable and work-ready technicians for the deployment, installation and maintenance of hydrogen fuel cell systems in South Africa and beyond," said Professor Raj Naidoo, Head of the Department of Electrical Engineering, in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT).

He explained that the training is funded by the DSI "as part of implementing the Cabinet-approved Hydrogen South Africa (HySA) Strategy through a 15-year Research, Development and Innovation HySA Programme. The HySA Programme is aimed at developing hydrogen and fuel cell technologies, with a focus on beneficiating the platinum group metals resource base that South Africa possesses. The Programme is therefore an important pillar in positioning South Africa to be part of the emerging global Hydrogen economy"

Dean of the Faculty of EBIT at UP, Professor Sunil Maharaj said "this is a great event for the university since UP supports human capital development and this is one of the ways of getting involved in the human capital development in the country. We are honoured to launch this event. At UP we aim to be part of the energy space in the country from both demands and management efficiency to solar and nuclear and now hydrogen. We are humbled to partner with Bambili Energy in this journey."

He said with reference to the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, "We need to save this planet especially in terms of climate change? and make it sustainable. We all need to work together to make this planet a safer place for the next generation. We are grateful to walk this journey with all the partners and thank you for trusting the University of Pretoria in terms training."

Bambili Energy was selected by the DSI to facilitate this training that complements the demonstration of 15 hydrogen fuel cell systems in South Africa. Currently, seven of these fuel cell systems are supporting a field hospital at 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria, in response to government support on the COVID-19 challenge.

"It has been an incredible journey of planning and organising for this launch. We are grateful for the partnership and support on this journey of training of the first group of graduates," said Mavuso Mbatha, CEO of Bambili Energy.

"With regards to the training of the graduates, we made sure that we partner with a reputable academic institution which is UP. The goal of this training is to ensure that by the completion of the training, graduates

are effectively knowledgeable about the fuel cell industry, about the hydrogen economy, about renewable energy and most importantly they have the ability to fuel and maintain the fuel cell systems going forward."

While virtually addressing the attendees at the event, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Buti Manamela said fuel cells are expected to play a significant role in providing energy to buildings and in off grid electrification, particularly in areas where grid extension is not economically viable. "In order to address these markets, capabilities need to be built in order to support the local manufacturing of the technologies as well as their deployment in the various applications. Having local skills to install, operate and maintain the fuel cell systems is highly critical. The Department of Science and Innovation views this as an opportunity that can be filled by graduates at N4 to N6 levels with electrical and chemical engineering qualifications."

CEO of EWSETA, Mpho Mookapele thanked all the partners involved in the project and said that "in the South Africa that 'we dream of 'we' always talk about collaboration and partnerships. There is a high number of graduates who are unemployed, and this project will help fight that, and it is exciting to see that this training is led by industry."

## Media enquiries

For interviews with Prof Raj Naidoo, please email Prim Gower at <u>Primarashni.Gower@up.ac.za</u> or call 083 229 9011.

## 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 112-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 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 2020 UP will launch 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