



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

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NEWS RELEASE

First-year UP students receive warm welcome at Welcome Day 2024



Prof Flavia Senkubuge (Acting Vice-Principal Student Life) flanked by emcees/ UP Alumni Christo Golden and Jodelle Tantij take a selfie with the crowd at Welcome Day

PRETORIA - “The sky is now your limit! Welcome to an exciting chapter ahead – not only will you be embarking on studies at UP that will prepare you for a successful working career, but the experiences and memories gained will last a lifetime.”

These were some of the words with which Professor Themba Mosia, Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria (UP) welcomed 8 500 first-year students, their parents, guardians and families to UP’s global academic family.

Prof Mosia was speaking during UP’s annual Welcome Day, which took place at the Rembrandt Hall on UP’s Hillcrest Campus on Saturday, 10 February 2024. In his speech he also congratulated the students on their hard work during their school years. “You have earned a position at one of South Africa’s leading universities; one of the top 1,9% of universities in the world.”

He expressed his gratitude to family members for supporting learners during their school years and “for the sacrifices you made along the way”.

Prof Mosia emphasised that the decision to #ChooseUP is the best one students can make for their university journey and future. “UP is the largest producer of research in South Africa, which contributes to the high quality of education for our students and helps to give back to society through our skills, innovation and knowledge.”

A significant number of UP’s 2024 first-years achieved outstanding matric results, with seven and more distinctions and scores of 95% and above. Gauteng’s top three 2023 matric students have all chosen to study at UP.

Sheliza de Wet and Wian van Rooyen, Gauteng’s top two matric students, will both be studying Medicine at UP. Jéan Goodey, who ranked third in Gauteng, will be studying Actuarial and Financial Mathematics.

Zonke Thwala, from Siphesihle Secondary School in Waterloo, KwaZulu-Natal, ranked third in South Africa for Quintile 3 schools, achieved seven distinctions, and is studying Accounting Sciences. Zonke faced huge study challenges when the transformer in her area blew and she used a candle and torch to study for matric.

“These are just a few of the top matric performers who are in first year at UP, and we want to emphasise that even if you did not achieve the results you aimed for in high school, you can achieve them with us,” Prof Mosia said. “As an institution committed to academic excellence, we know that every student can thrive here at UP.”

The Welcome Day event also informed students about the excellent support structures UP offers to help its students succeed and graduate in the minimum time. The FLY@UP campaign (FLY stands for ‘the Finish Line is Yours’) has worked well and helped to create a 93% undergraduate pass rate.

“FLY@UP includes helping students to plan and manage your time and to meet deadlines, to spend extra time on your studies, and to engage with lecturers and fellow students to make sure you understand what you have learnt and to learn even more.”

Prof Mosia emphasised that university life comes with stresses and challenges, and urged students to make use of the various support services – academic and study support, health services and emotional support, including stress management and mentorship – that UP offers. “And when you see others around you are not coping, help them access what they need. We all need to remember the spirit of ubuntu, the African ethic which says that a person is a person because of other people, and may you, our new cohort of students, take that forward with you into your life journey.”

Students were reminded that UP has produced more than 250 000 alumni over the past 116 years, and that they would join the university’s family of trailblazing graduates within a few years. “We look forward to the amazing things that you too will achieve, with the backing of this dynamic community and some of the world’s brightest minds, working together across disciplines and across our seven campuses to discover new knowledge and find solutions to society’s most pressing concerns.”

Prof Mosia reminded first-years that UP offers a wide range of sports, societies, and arts and cultural activities. A recent survey among students ranked UP as one of the best in the country in terms of student experience, sport and accommodation.

“UP is Africa’s premier sports performance university, with many of our athletes succeeding nationally and internationally in our ‘Tukkies’ colours... I am sure that you will find your niche in our many sports, clubs and societies, and I encourage you to try something new,” Prof Mosia said. “Most of all I encourage you to have fun and explore your ability and talents to the full. Your time here at UP will be filled with new freedoms, excitement and hard work – buckle up and enjoy the ride!”

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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 2024 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of Law, Veterinary Science, Accounting and Finance; Agriculture and Forestry and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. 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