



A proud product of the Department of
Communication and Brand Management.

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University of the Free State

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Inspiring excellence. Transforming lives.

Inspireer uitnemendheid. Verander lewens.

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA





UFS Business School Building, Bloemfontein Campus.

Included in the UFS Corporate Profile are quotes from internal as well as external stakeholders of the UFS which we received from the perception audit commissioned by the Department of Communication and Brand Management in 2014. The audit was conducted by an external firm of independent researchers. It was aimed at determining internal and external stakeholder understanding and endorsement of university strategy, as well as tracking core reputational indicators and perceptions.

The uniqueness of the study and the research model developed for the project has received international recognition from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and the International Business Awards (IBA). The university received the prestigious Jake Wittmer Research Award (international) as well as a Gold Quill Award (Africa region) from the IABC for this work.

Vision

A university recognised across the world for excellence in academic achievement and in human reconciliation.

The place to be

The University of the Free State (UFS) is increasingly being seen as an exciting scholarship destination, as evidenced by an unprecedented level of interest by academics and students from around the world.

The changes taking place at the university continue to capture the imagination of people everywhere, including the international media and our growing base of international universities.

The UFS is proud to be associated with a new class of honourees. In recent years, honorary doctorates were awarded to Nobel laureates Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, internationally renowned jurist Justice Richard Goldstone and US media icon and humanitarian Oprah Winfrey.

One of the reasons for the broader interest in the UFS is our very public commitment to the highest academic standards. In doing so, the university pursues a vision of uplifting standards for students and academics alike despite the challenges young people encounter in the school system. We believe strongly that given the opportunity, all young people can achieve the high standards set by our university. This is our academic project.

The UFS remains conscious, however, of its responsibility for public scholarship, for turning ideas into action, for making research count in the lives of ordinary people and for developing a spirit of service through scholarship among our students. These students are the next generation of leaders in South Africa, on our continent, and in this global, interconnected world. In these pursuits, the university seeks to distinguish itself from its competitors. Few universities, for example, make human reconciliation one of the foundations of its mission. This is our human project.

Firm foundation of more than a century

With its central campus situated in Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State province, the UFS is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in South Africa. It opened its doors in 1904 with a mere six students in the Humanities and has since grown to more than 30 000 students spread across seven faculties. Besides the Bloemfontein Campus, the university also has a South Campus in Bloemfontein.

Bloemfontein is not only the birthplace of major political parties that shaped the political landscape in South Africa. The city has also produced some of the leading minds in teaching, medicine, agriculture, science, theology, economics, management and many other fields. We are particularly proud of the legal minds cultivated in the university and in the city, the home of the Supreme Court of Appeal.

The UFS also has a vibrant Qwaqwa Campus in the Eastern Free State serving rural students from the immediate area and surrounding provinces, and a smaller South Campus in Bloemfontein that provides alternative access to higher education for promising students who obtained poor marks in their final school examinations.

The university's seven faculties with more than 130 departments and/or schools are served by more than 1692 academic staff members, supported by a strong administrative and support staff.



Main gate, Bloemfontein Campus.



Mission

The university will pursue this vision through its mission:

- Setting the highest standards for undergraduate and postgraduate education.
- Recruiting the best and most diverse students and professors to the university.
- Advancing excellence in the scholarship of research, teaching and public service.
- Demonstrating in everyday practice the value of human togetherness and solidarity across social and historical divides.
- Advancing social justice by creating multiple opportunities for disadvantaged students to access the university.
- Promoting innovation, distinctiveness and leadership in both academic and human pursuits.
- Establishing transparent opportunities for lifelong learning for academic and support staff.

Values

The following five core values represent deeply held commitments that inform every policy and steer every action.

- Superior Scholarship
- Human Embrace
- Institutional Distinctiveness
- Emergent Leadership
- Public Service

These values underpin both the Academic Project and the Human Project as the foundation on which the university builds its strategy.

Academic and Human Projects

The Academic Project aims to build a strong academic institution, marked by distinctiveness in teaching, research and public scholarship. The project includes rigorous academic entrance qualifications for first-time students, elevated standards for the professoriate, the transformation of undergraduate curricula, the recruitment of world-class professors and the identification and promotion of “next generation” professors.

The Human Project seeks to connect the teaching and research of the university to the improvement of human lives. Our scholarship of service, through myriads of projects and initiatives, makes the vital connections between campus and communities through the production and dissemination of knowledge. The heart of the university recognises the work of our Human Rights Desk and that of our Institute for Reconciliation.

“The UFS is on of the top institutions that has shown equality, fairness and respect for students who are determined to take this institution to the next level.”

2014 Stakeholders Perception Audit





"The UFS is the university of choice. It is academically excellent. It unleash the potential of each student."

2014 Stakeholders Perception Audit

"I am impressed by the efficient and effective administration and the good human relations staff members display."

2014 Stakeholders Perception Audit



South Campus, Bloemfontein.



Students participating in Kvsie Community Rag's annual rag procession.

"The UFS is an outstanding academic institution of higher learning."

2014 Stakeholders Perception Audit

Economic and Management Sciences

This dynamic and innovative faculty meets the demands and challenges of the ever fast-changing economic and management environment at local, regional, national and international level.

As a result, its undergraduate and postgraduate students have access to unparalleled opportunities for training, research and community service. They also have an exceptional opportunity to gain international exposure by means of various exchange agreements.

UFS Business School

The UFS Business School makes a major contribution towards the development and the delivery of successful business and leadership learning programmes in South Africa.

In the competitive MBA market, the UFS Business School stands out among its peers nationally and internationally.

The Bachelor in Management Leadership degree (BML) is a unique undergraduate programme in the adult learning environment, creating learning and empowerment opportunities for business orientated adult learners.

The Centre for Business Dynamics operates under the banner of the Business School. This centre offers customised non-curricular training in assisting companies and individuals to bridge the gap between their existing skills and competencies and for those required to ensure their future performance and competitiveness as business leaders.

Humanities

The Faculty of the Humanities is in the throes of transformation and enjoys international respect and recognition for its broad range of scholarship from psychology and languages, to history and political science. Its mission is the critical, imaginative and scholarly exploration of diverse aspects of the human condition, in service of humanity.

The faculty forms the foundation on which the university has been built. Its scholars and students are recognised nationally and internationally for their high level of professionalism, their dedication and contributions to the humanities.

Health Sciences

The faculty consists of the School of Medicine, the School for Allied Health Professions, and the School of Nursing. It benchmarks its training and research on international standards and delivers a crucial healthcare service in a vast, very poor part of South Africa.

It boasts the National Control Laboratory for vaccine testing and is the only one in South Africa evaluated to do vaccine testing for the World Health Organisation. The Sports Laboratory in the Department of Pharmacology tests samples for prohibited substances for various sporting codes.

The faculty is considered one of the best in the country and is proud of the high quality of health professionals it produces. In today's competitive marketplace, ensuring a consistent approach to offering higher education and service is critical.



Natural and Agricultural Sciences

The Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, with its diverse disciplines, encompasses a broad spectrum of expertise in the natural, agricultural and building sciences. Natural Sciences focus, among others, on the biological sciences, forensic sciences, conservation genetics, biotechnology, mathematical, physical and chemical sciences and geosciences.

The Agricultural Sciences has the most specialised group in South Africa serving the farm-animal industry with expertise in breeding, nutrition and physiological manipulation. Research on irrigation and salinity, water harvesting and the optimisation of water use are some of the other focus areas.

The Building Sciences departments are national leaders recognised for their highly relevant and innovative work and are highly rated by national and international professional bodies.

Law

The Faculty of Law is one of the oldest and most distinguished faculties of its kind in South Africa and the only one in the judicial capital of South Africa. The faculty has played an important role in legal education and training in the country for more than a century. One of the unique initiatives is the Centre for Financial Planning Law.

It is the first academic institution in South Africa to offer formal postgraduate qualifications providing access to membership of the Financial Planning Institute of South Africa.

Valuable and widely recognised work is also done in the centres for Estate Planning Law, Business Law, Judicial Excellence, Labour Law, the Unit for Children's Rights, and the UFS Law Clinic.

Education

This faculty was contributes to the social transformation of the broader society in South Africa. It is recognised nationally and internationally for its scholarship and contextualised understanding of education. Capacity is developed by strengthening the links between teaching, research and community engagement.

The faculty's most important role is to prepare pre-service teachers for their work in schools, ensuring that they have a strong disciplinary base for their professional work. A second role is the training of in-service teachers. This work is informed by and closely related to research and community outreach.

Theology

The programmes in this faculty are recognised by many church denominations, such as the Dutch Reformed Church, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, the Anglican Church, Pentecostal and other independent churches.

The faculty's training is recognised internationally as being of exceptional quality. Postgraduate students constitute a significant strength of the faculty with representation from all over the world, including Africa, Europe, Asia and the USA. Sixty per cent of the total number of students is postgraduate students.

The mission of the faculty is to make a unique national and international contribution to the development of the church, society and the academe academy by means of quality theological training and specialist research in all disciplines comprising the field of Theology.

The more recent focus on Religion Studies is intended to broaden the base of teaching and research beyond the traditional churches served by the faculty in the past.

The faculty is also involved in a sweeping process of curriculum review focused on the transformation of knowledge in the service of society.



School of Open Learning

The activities of the school are driven by a central principle: opening up access to those who have not had the opportunity to study at a higher education institution due to geographical location, socio-economic circumstances or other factors.

Programmes are delivered through a blended-learning model, which combines contact teaching with distance education. The school collaborates with our faculties and also manages the continuing education sponsored endeavours of the Faculty of Education. These include projects for in-service training of teachers in Mathematics, Natural and Physical Sciences, Languages, Literacy, Economic and Management Sciences, Technology and various areas of Management and Leadership.

International footprint

The objective of our international cooperation strategy is to foster high-quality and productive scholarship through partnerships, networks and coalitions with leading international organisations, universities, scholarly networks and individuals.

Our diversity of international partners enables the university to increase our research revenues, to enrich multicultural understandings, to enhance our teaching and learning programmes and to collaborate in scholarships across geographical and social boundaries.

Our established partnerships are to be found in Africa, Asia, USA and Europe. In the USA, our flagship agreements include an institutional affiliation with the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University and a comprehensive agreement with Cornell University. Both focus on advanced research and teaching collaborations. Partnerships with European institutions dating back many years enable the UFS to achieve its objective to become a research intensive university through building capacity among our post graduate students and emerging academics. Partnerships facilitated by the European Union's Action 2 Erasmus Mundus programme and European South African Science and Technology Advancement Programme (ESASTAP) funding mechanisms have expanded our international footprint.

Institutional partnerships also exist with Stanford University, University of California in Los Angeles, University of Antwerp, Groningen University, Katholieke University of Leuven, Mahasarakham University, Osaka University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University to mention but a few. The agreement with the Institute of Political Sciences in Bordeaux is centered on reciprocal exchange of staff and students including joint publications in the area of Political Science, while the partnership between the Robert Schuman University and the UFS Business School entails academic teaching in our MBA Programme.

Our academic footprint on the African continent is a key strategic objective and the recently formalised partnership between the UFS and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) will give momentum to the establishment of strategic and impact making partnerships with African universities and strategic organisations. Internationalisation remains a very important strategic objective of the UFS which is owned and implemented by all entities of the university. Through the international partnerships and collaborations we have been able to continuously improve the quality of teaching and learning and research as we aim to produce graduates with competencies that will allow them to complete globally and to support our academic staff to become the best in their disciplines and contribute through their research to finding solutions to global challenges.

Ninety eight staff members at the UFS are international staff members.



Autumn in Graduandi Avenue on the Bloemfontein Campus.

“The university provides us with better skills that are helpful outside school. I’m thankful to have been a student at the UFS. It truly is the place to be – where learners become leaders!”

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Computer laboratory, Qwaqwa Campus.



“My son is the breathing living essence of happiness since joining the UFS. He is inspired, he is proud, he is involved, he is determined, he has respect, he has conversation and he has thoughts about the future.”

2014 Stakeholders Perception Audit

Research development

The UFS has committed itself to becoming a 'research-intensive' university and the Directorate Research Development provides some core services to enhance the UFS's national and international research standing by means of:

- Intellectual Property Protecting and Technology Transfer Advice
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Funding Opportunities
- Postdoctoral Fellowships
- RIMS (Research Information Management System)
- Research Outputs
- Student Accelerator Programme

Financial stability

The UFS is recognised nationally for its sound financial position with an annual institutional budget in excess of R1,6 billion.

The university is a major role player in economic and social development in the Free State, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape, as well as in neighbouring Lesotho. Apart from being one of the largest "businesses" in Bloemfontein, the university is also a significant supplier of work opportunities in the city and also in the Eastern Free State on its Qwaqwa Campus. The UFS has a major impact on the economy of the region in terms of buying power and the use of utilities and resources.



The tree of knowledge sculpture in front of the Winkie Direko Building on the Bloemfontein Campus.

Campuses

The Bloemfontein Campus is an attractive, leafy campus where staff and students walk through and enjoy beautiful new buildings, parks, lawns, artwork and social communes. This campus is regarded as one of the most racially integrated places of higher learning in South Africa.

The Qwaqwa Campus is located in one of the most picturesque settings in the Eastern Free State. The campus is nestled between sandstone mountains in an ecologically important afro montane region. The unique rural setting is close to the towns of Harrismith, Phuthaditjhaba, Kestell and Bethlehem. The campus has vibrant undergraduate programmes and a number of unique postgraduate offerings. The Qwaqwa Campus plays an important role in providing higher education, research and community engagement to this important region.

The South Campus offers the University Preparation Programme and other bridging courses to students preparing to access mainstream degrees. This campus also houses the administration of all the university's short course programmes and a facility to assess the recognition of prior learning among adult learners. Home to the School of Open Learning, South Campus programmes reach thousands of students in 40 centres in Limpopo, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu Natal, Free State, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape where education programmes are being presented. Also part of the South Campus operations are six Varsity Colleges where the LLB programme is being presented (three campuses in Gauteng, two in KwaZulu Natal and one in the Western Cape).

The university also has five satellite campuses in Bethlehem, Kimberley, Oudtshoorn, Sasolburg and Welkom where students can complete first-year programmes in the humanities, economics, management, the sciences and other fields.

The South Campus also boasts with an award winning project, the Internet Broadcast Project (IBP), which was launched in 2011 as a collaborative project between the Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) and the ICTISE (ICT Innovation in School Education) unit of the university. The project provides daily expert curriculum support to teachers and learners using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Lessons covering a range of subjects are broadcast in real time to teachers and learners from Grades 8 to 12 at 68 education centres, covering 40 Free State towns, including the most rural areas. With this project the university is making a difference in schools.

Approximately 33 000 students are enrolled at the UFS.



“The university really takes transformation seriously and this is having an extremely positive impact on campus.”

2014 Stakeholders Perception Audit



Centenary Complex Gallery, Bloemfontein Campus.

Initiatives to be proud of

The University of the Free State is proud of a variety of initiatives, research and other activities that sets it apart from other institutions of higher learning. A list of some of these follows:

The Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice is a critical space where engaged scholarship, public discussion, community engagement and teaching are innovatively integrated towards exploring and finding solutions to the complex and challenging work of social transformation in South Africa.

The Leadership for Change Programme is a study abroad experience for first-year students aimed at exposing them to diverse cultures and to learn leadership skills in order to build new campus cultures. These students become leaders during their years of study and commit to building a non-racial community beyond their years at university.

The No Student Hungry Bursary Programme provides a food bursary to poor but academically promising students on all three its campuses; the Bloemfontein and South Campus in Bloemfontein and the Qwaqwa Campus in the Eastern Free State.

The Schools Partnership Project intends to turn around learner performance in the last three grades of high school leading to senior certificate examination. Sixty-six schools in the Free State are already part of this project where the innovative model focuses on direct mentoring of principals and teachers as well as subject matter competence in accountancy, physical science and mathematics.

UFS 101 is a core curriculum that introduces first-year students to complex social problems in South African society covering “big questions” from the fields of science, religion, history, law, economics and ethics.

The Vice-Chancellor’s Prestige Scholars Programme identifies and promotes the most promising young academics in the university towards becoming full professors with superior research accomplishments. This fast tracking of the next generation of professors involves an intense mentorship programme at the home institution and an international placement with a leading scholar in a top university.

Making a difference

The University of the Free State produces cutting-edge knowledge and cultivates research expertise to serve disadvantaged communities in South Africa and the region. It takes great pride in projects such as:

The Family Math and Family Science Initiative of the Centre for Education Development brings everyday mathematics and science to children and their families.

The Boyden Observatory outside Bloemfontein, one of only three optical observatories in Africa, plays a significant role in research but also brings schoolchildren into contact with astronomy research and practice.

The Mangaung String Programme provides more than 500 township children with quality training in classical music. Some of the children graduate to play in music ensembles.

With the First-Generation Student Programme, Grade 10 students are selected and placed in first-year Accounting, Chemistry, Psychology or Law classes. In addition to being exposed to content-based knowledge at university level, participants are able to experience elements of university life in context, which increases the probability of a smooth transition from school into the first year of higher education and subsequent success. This is one way in which the UFS has invested and is investing in providing and widening access to higher education for deserving school leavers, especially first-generation university students.

Bloemfontein can claim the honour of being the first city in sub-Saharan Africa to have a digital planetarium. The planetarium, situated at the old Lamont-Hussey Observatory Building on Naval Hill, has been established by the UFS with the support of founding partners – the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the Free State Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DETEA) and the Mangaung Metro Municipality (MMM).





The new residences, Outeniqua and Conlaurès on the western side of the Bloemfontein Campus.