

Prof Nicholas Pearce appointed *Head of the UFS School of Clinical Medicine*

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Prof Nicholas Pearce led the COVID-19 Task Team of the Universitas Academic Hospital, ensuring that the hospital not only had enough Personal protective equipment (PPEs) and beds for patients, but also that the vaccination process ran smoothly. Now, the Best Doctor of the Year for 2022 – as named during this year's National Annual Batho Pele Excellence Awards (NBPEA) – will lead the School of Clinical Medicine in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS).

Prof Pearce, former Head of the Department of Surgery at the UFS who served the faculty in multiple capacities over a long period, took up this position on 1 December 2022 – a position he is looking forward to.

Create world-class doctors, maximise students' full potential

"I'm excited about taking up my new position as Head of the School of Clinical Medicine. This is a role that comes with huge responsibility, and my vision is to create world-class doctors and to maximise each student's full potential. We, as university, are a national asset and need to grow and develop to be of service to the future of our country. So, to lead a school with such a prestigious history is truly a privilege," says Prof Pearce.

According to him, the goal for the Medical School in the next five years should be determined by three main core drivers: service delivery, research, and teaching and training. He would like to be in a stronger position, with innovation that can produce world-class doctors (both undergraduate and postgraduate).

If you look at the strategic plan of the UFS, says Prof Pearce, it is clear that, under the leadership of current Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Francis Petersen, a period of regeneration and innovation is upon the university. Tied to this concept is the idea of self-evaluation and improvement. The idea of challenges and coming up with solutions excites him.

"I think for a while, my main aim will be to bring the university, the provincial Department of Health, and the school in alignment, ensuring that we are all pulling in the same direction to achieve the same goal."

"At the end of the day, the goal here is to provide quality health care to the people of South Africa, while the Department of Health, the university, and society each function in different environments – coming together and understanding each other's needs and having a common goal – excellent health care in this country for all our citizens."

Lessons learned from surgery and running COVID-19 task teams

Prof Pearce, who was awarded the UFS Chancellor's Medal for outstanding service during the April graduation ceremonies, says lessons learned from being both a surgeon and running COVID-19 task teams, are that strategic organisational processes need to be in place – systems strengthened, the policies and procedures adapted, and comprehensive planning taking place.

However, he says, one must also bear in mind that we have a history of very high academic standards in the School of Clinical Medicine, so you want to improve on that rather than go backwards.

"I learned a lot from surgery and COVID-19 that will equip me in future. COVID-19 taught me about organisational management, disaster management, funding, resource management, people management skills, development, etc.

"Running the Department of Surgery, one of the largest departments in the faculty with multiple inputs and personalities, has taught me that you are only as strong as the team behind you. I have an amazing team behind me in this new role, whether it is the dean, vice-dean, heads of department, administration, rectorate, and so forth."

He will continue to work at the Universitas Hospital; however, being fully employed by the university, he will only be doing some calls and working over weekends. ■

"As a surgeon, theatre has always been my safe haven, my place of meditation, my place of peace, and I am sad to say goodbye to surgery and the Department of Surgery – it has been loyal, and I am grateful to everyone in the department; but I think as with all good things, there is a time to come and a time to go."

Prof Nicholas Pearce



Prof Nicholas Pearce has joined the Faculty of Health Sciences' management team after being appointed Head of the School of Clinical Medicine. Prof Pearce is the former Head of the Department of Surgery at the UFS and led the Universitas Hospital's COVID-19 Task Team.

Prof Nicholas Pearce appointed
Head of the UFS School of Clinical
Medicine ■ 1

UFS hosts country's first Indigenous
Knowledge and Bio-Trade Indaba
■ 2 & 3

Department of Nuclear Medicine
reports successful treatment
of patient with advanced stage
prostate cancer ■ 4

New advance medical imaging
technology for the Department of
Medical Physics ■ 5

UFS researchers contribute to cost-
effective genetic testing for breast
and ovarian cancer ■ 6

International collaboration for
Dr Champion Nyoni in prestigious
Lancet journal ■ 7

Vision 130 ■ 8

UFS hosts country's first Indigenous Knowledge and Bio-Trade Indaba

The inaugural international Indigenous Knowledge and Bio-Trade Indaba, hosted by the University of the Free State (UFS) in collaboration with the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) – an entity of the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) – is the ideal platform for various stakeholders to network and share knowledge on current developments in indigenous knowledge research and product development, biodiversity, conservation, innovation, and commercialisation of the IK-based researched products.

The IKS Bio-Trade Indaba was championed by the university's African Medicines Innovation and Technology Development Platform (AMITD), which is funded by TIA. AMITD was established to stimulate economic growth by providing science-based solutions and developing technologies that would utilise indigenous knowledge and South African biodiversity to produce high-quality African traditional-medicine-based proprietary products, focusing on priority diseases. AMITD is a national leader in research, development, and formulation research on traditional medicines and has a strong history in IKS research, community collaboration, and participation initiatives, as well as partnerships with industry on herbal medicines.

The indaba, which took place from 24 to 25 November, was a success, opening much-needed dialogue and engagement on the role of IK-based knowledge in research and commercialisation. Going forward, the indaba will be a vital platform to enhance the role of IKS in inclusive development and transformation.

African traditional medicine should be internationally recognised

Prof Motlalepula Matsabisa, Director of Pharmacology in the UFS Department of Pharmacology and AMITD, said he has a special interest in the pharmacology of traditional medicines and that he wants to see more national, continental, and international collaboration so that the dream of making ATM internationally recognised and a global force can be realised.

"How do we develop new drugs and medicines based on the knowledge we have. We do this without compromising on good all-inclusive science on ATM. We should take the science and put it on the global stage so that all people will begin to respect it," said Prof Matsabisa.



Prof Motlalepula Matsabisa, Director of Pharmacology in the Department of Pharmacology at the UFS, hosted the first IKS Bio-Trade Indaba, which took place between 24 and 25 November on the Bloemfontein Campus of the UFS.

According to him, research conducted by AMITD should address national research priorities, community research needs and aspirations to respond to industry research questions and challenges and develop products, intellectual property (IP), as well as commercialisation. “Research needs to have a societal impact and must impact the quality of life of people. We do responsive research that needs to address old diseases, new diseases, neglected diseases, current pandemics, as well as new and re-emerging pandemics.”

Elevation of IKS profile can no longer be delayed

Dr Vuyisile Phehane, Executive: Bio-Economy at the TIA, said the indaba came at a time when the elevation of the profile of IKS can no longer be delayed. TIA acknowledges the rich, largely untapped source of knowledge within communities that has yet to be fully exploited for the economic and social benefit of particularly the underserved regions of the country, and it should be systematically well researched.

Dr Phehane, gave a message of support from TIA, saying the indaba came at a time when the elevation of the profile of IKS can no longer be delayed.

“Sectoral support priorities in agriculture, manufacturing, health innovations, and allied health cannot be overlooked, and neither can the various master plans created to support industrial sectors. This thought leadership has a direct bearing on what we are doing here, engaging in dialogue to shape our future, and seeking ways to collaborate and build long-lasting partnerships in the space of IKS. These partnerships not only serve us in the country, but also on the African continent,” said Dr Phehane.

According to him, TIA played the role of industry builder and sought to increase its efforts to grow and enhance the role of IKS in inclusive development and transformation. The successful commercialisation of all indigenous knowledge-based projects involving the use of indigenous plants requires the capacity to commercially cultivate these plants.

Dr Phehane said TIA funded AMITD to ensure that the products of promising indigenous knowledge innovations are safe, effective, and of consistently high quality. “This platform seeks to address generations of market failure by bringing IK into the mainstream of commercialisation and truly equitable benefit sharing. Going forward, 20% of our annual MTEF allocation will be channelled towards IK initiatives, which is significant. This is testament to our commitment to IKS.”

The two-day indaba hosted various panel discussions on multiple aspects of IKS research and developments in human and plant health. Among these were discussions on cannabis research to mitigate cancer multidrug resistance, phytoconstituents for the treatment of diabetes, the development of PHELA, a plant-based product as a treatment for COVID-19, natural product-based colon regulator commercialisation, the development of cannabis and other medicinal plants in wound healing and developing hydrogels, as well as the development of IK-based herbal pesticides.

Discussions also focused on new developments in the indigenous health infusion industry, developments in medicine regulations and IK-based clinical trials in South Africa, as well as African medicines research internationalisation. International panellists included Prof Minke Tang (Beijing University of Chinese Medicine), Dr Samuel Obakiro (HOD, Department of Pharmacology, Busitema University, Uganda), and Dr Kofi Donkor (Centre for Plant Medicine Research, Mampong, Ghana), all of whom shared experiences on IKS-related research in their respective countries.

IKS one of the areas targeted for investment and growth

Dr Glen Taylor, Senior Director: Research Development at the UFS, said the Department of Pharmacology is one of the fastest-growing departments in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the UFS, and attracts a large number of applications from national and international scholars largely due to a very understated Prof Matsabisa.

“We always look at areas where we need to invest in the future and grow, and IKS is one of those areas we targeted and invested in significantly. Through the research and work in IKS, this is done to reposition the institution as a research-led university that is relevant to its communities and societies.”

The TIA UFS IKS International Indaba was funded by the TIA IKS unit and the Department of Pharmacology – AMITD platform. ■

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Student voice

Taking the *One Health* message to schools

International One Health Day is held annually on 3 November. The goal of the day is to educate and increase awareness of One Health to encourage a collaborative effort between multiple disciplines, promoting the concept that the interactions between humans, animals, and the environment impact the health of people, animals, plants, and the environment.

The aptly named One Health Warriors, a student group comprising postgraduate students from the Division of Virology at the University of the Free State (UFS), was formed in 2016. The One Health Warriors annually participate in arranging a One Health event to celebrate International One Health Day. What is One Health? What zoonotic diseases should the public be aware of? How do zoonoses affect the healthcare provider? These are all questions that the student group addresses in their events.

In 2022, the One Health Warriors targeted scholars to participate in their annual event. It is important for scholars to start learning about One Health from an early age, because most of them do not understand the importance of taking care of their pets. They are not always aware of the diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans and how to protect themselves.

It is for this reason that postgraduate students from the Division of Virology took One Health awareness and science communication to the classrooms of Ratau Primary and St. Pauls Primary schools in Thaba Nchu, Bloemfontein. Grade 6 scholars were included in the events and a total of 224 learners participated in the day.

According to Prof Felicity Burt, an expert in arbovirology in the Division of Virology and the National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS) – who holds an NRF-DST South African Research Chair in Vector-borne and Zoonotic Pathogens Research – and Tumelo Sekee, PhD student and research assistant in the School of Pathology, they decided to start with primary schools as they believe it is good to start teaching scholars from an early age to take care of their pets and understand the importance of One Health.

Making the youth aware

The focus was on making the youth aware of diseases transmitted from animals to humans, how to protect themselves from zoonotic diseases, and how to take care of their pets. They used role-play activities in which the learners were educated about the risk of contracting the rabies virus and some of the signs that may be shown by rabid dogs. The learners also got to learn about the importance of reporting any bites and getting appropriate treatment from the clinics.

Rabies circulates within this area and is a high risk for children who play with stray dogs. They were advised about vaccines to protect their dogs against infection and thereby protecting themselves. They were shown how to remove ticks from the dogs, and the importance of not eating a dead animal whose cause of death is unknown.

“The children were advised on the potential for tuberculosis (TB bovis) to occur in their livestock and the potential for spread to humans. Pictures were circulated among the learners showing them what a rabid dog or animal might look like and how an animal with TB bovis may present. The learners were taught about the importance of hand washing. In the finale of the event, the learners made a pledge to take care of their pets, and this was confirmed with painted hands on our One Health posters,” says Tumelo Sekee.

According to Prof Burt, One Health is an approach that recognises that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and their shared environment. One Health is not new, but it has become more important in recent years. “This is partly because many factors have influenced the way humans interact with animals (domestic and wild), plants, and our environment. These changes have led to the spread of known (endemic) pathogens and the emergence of novel pathogens and zoonotic diseases, which are diseases that can spread between animals and people. The recent pandemic is an example of how zoonotic transmission of a pathogen from wildlife to humans has a devastating public health impact,” explains Prof Burt.

Positive feedback

Sekee says the feedback was extremely positive; this may be because the communication was done in the learners’ mother tongue, Setswana, which made it easy for them to understand the importance of not eating a dead animal whose cause of death is unknown.

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One Health Warriors with the scholar pledge cloth after scholars made a pledge to take care of their pets at St Paul's Primary School in Thaba Nchu.

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Positive feedback

Sekee says the feedback was extremely positive; this may be because the communication was done in the learners’ mother tongue, Setswana, which made it easy for them to understand. Says Sekee: “There were many questions and discussions after the play, which suggested that the scholars showed interest in learning about a One Health approach. The scholars were also enthusiastic about participating in future events of the One Health warriors.”

The postgraduate One Health group previously also visited schools in Botshabelo and Bloemfontein, as well as farm workers in Kroonstad. They now plan to visit other schools in the Free State so that the One Health message can reach as many people as possible.



New advance medical imaging technology for the Department of Medical Physics



Two of the master's students, Hané Pieters (left) and Ghita Bruwer, with the 3D printer.

The Department of Medical Physics in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS) recently procured a 3D printer which prints 3D phantoms that accurately represent the composition and dimension of certain human organs.

These printed phantoms can be filled with various radionuclides and imaged with positron emission tomography (PET) and single-photon emission computerised tomography (SPECT) systems to mimic specific clinical scenarios. Medical physicists can use these simulated clinical images to develop and evaluate clinical software programmes.

Pilot study

In a pilot study conducted in the department, cardiac, thyroid, and kidney phantoms were printed and digitally segmented from real-life anatomical images, and then printed with a Formlabs 3D Low Force Stereolithography printer. These organ-like phantoms were validated by comparing the acquired images with clinical images. This was done by filling the phantoms with the appropriate radioactivity concentrations and acquiring images with a SPECT/CT gamma camera to produce realistic clinical images. These images are used to evaluate the accuracy of existing commercial and new in-house software programs.

Dr Freek du Plessis, acting Head of the Department of Medical Physics, says printing technology capable of producing three-dimensional (3D) objects has evolved in recent years and provides the potential to develop reproducible and sophisticated physical phantoms. 3D printing technology can assist in rapidly developing relatively low-cost phantoms with appropriate complexities that are useful in imaging or dosimetry measurements.

Medical imaging technology has historically been employed as a non-invasive method for mapping the anatomy and function of the human body and detecting and localising disease. Radionuclides have been used for decades to provide information about organ function and physiology. In the process of using a 3D printer, Dr Du Plessis found that PET and SPECT are two imaging modalities in nuclear medicine that produce functional images of organs in the human body.

The use of a 3D printer for research

This printer assists in evaluating the integrity of PET and SPECT imaging systems and is essential to ensure optimal image quality for clinical studies. Several tests for image quality and dose accuracy can be performed using physical phantoms. Dr Du Plessis stated that “to date, there are several commercial physical phantoms available that can be used to perform these tests. However, these phantoms have limitations, such as cost and the inability

to represent certain organs accurately in the human body. The new 3D printing technology that allows users to reproduce clinical organs more accurately can provide a solution to these limitations”.

The validated cardiac phantoms will be used to evaluate the accuracy of the volume and ejection fraction values obtained from commercially available cardiac software programs. The radiation-absorbed dose to certain patient organs is vital when radionuclides are used to treat specific cancers. Therefore, the printed thyroid and kidney phantoms will be used to mimic clinical images. These images can be used to assess the accuracy of organ volume and radioactivity uptake, which is necessary to perform accurate patient dosimetry. These simulated images will be used to assess the accuracy of an in-house dosimetry software program.

Funds to procure the printer were made available through a collaborative internal radiation dosimetry research project between Medical Radiation Physics at the Lund University in Sweden and the Department of Medical Physics, funded by STINT and the NRF.

The research is also done in a joint effort with the Department of Nuclear Medicine. The most important outcome of this research will be that patient diagnoses and treatment will benefit from the availability of these printed phantoms. ■

UFS researchers contribute to *cost-effective genetic testing* for breast and ovarian cancer

Researchers in the University of the Free State (UFS) Division of Human Genetics believe the implementation of a new diagnostic test for familial breast and ovarian cancer – using new technology based on rapid point-of-care (POC) testing – will reach more communities and hopefully contribute to saving more lives.

Dr Nerina van der Merwe, a principal medical scientist in the Division of Human Genetics within the Faculty of Health Sciences and the National Health Laboratory Service, and PhD candidate Jaco Oosthuizen, are involved in a collaborative project with Prof Maritha Kotze and her research group from Stellenbosch University.

“We were approached by Prof Kotze, who is also very passionate about cancer research. She and her team, together with a company in the United Kingdom, have been working on designing a POC assay for this new technology, based on our research results. We became involved, as we are currently the state referral centre for familial breast and ovarian cancer in the country and have screened more than 3 000 patients diagnostically up to now. With the use of our research results and access to positive controls, we are in a position to assist with the validation and potential implementation of this technology in the future,” says Dr Van der Merwe.

Years of research

According to her, this new technology – once it is validated as a diagnostic genetic test – is the future of familial breast and ovarian cancer testing in South Africa when performed in conjunction with genetic counselling. The robustness of the assay and user-friendly practical method makes it extremely suitable for use in rural clinics, thereby eliminating the need for expensive laboratory equipment. By performing the test at the community clinic, patients no longer have to be transported to tertiary hospitals for genetic testing, and more patients and related family members who are unaware that they have inherited a disease-causing change in high-risk cancer genes such as BRCA1 or BRCA2, will be reached.

Dr Van der Merwe has been involved with genetic research on familial breast and ovarian cancer since 1995 and says this is the outcome of nearly 30 years of South African-specific cancer research. She was appointed with the main goal of determining the range and contribution of genetic changes in these two genes to our population. Her work, in collaboration with Prof Lizette van Rensburg from the University of Pretoria, identified the first South African-specific variants, which proved to represent South African-unique recurrent, or founder variants found in African and Afrikaner populations. Gradually, the number of founder variants unique to our population increased to a total of six, says Dr Van der Merwe. The presence of these founder variants in our population is ideal for the implementation of rapid POC testing, as these variants are common in affected patients and justify being screened first, before moving onward to more expensive diagnostic testing.

She is extremely excited that the progress being made in the field will not only benefit the patient, but also unaffected at-risk family members. According to her, implementation of this new technology has various benefits; not only is it cheap and robust, but the results are available within 90 minutes. Another benefit is that the test will be validated using saliva or a buccal swab, which is less invasive than taking a blood sample. By performing genetic counselling while the test is running, patients and family members will have the opportunity to ask questions about genetic testing and cancer, which will simultaneously increase community awareness. By talking during a face-to-face consultation, the counsellor can ensure that the patient and related family members understand the value of the test. This will eventually result in an increase in the currently low uptake of genetic testing in related at-risk family members, as this cancer type is inherited.

Benefits of POC

“The majority of the patients we are currently testing are already affected. Should a patient test positive, it might assist in their cancer treatment. We, however, need to screen the related family members to identify who is at an increased risk, but currently, this is not the case. So, I think by taking the test to the patients, that is where the benefit would be, as patients are often accompanied to the clinics by their family members. This will provide an opportunity to inform them, as patients often do not discuss their diagnosis and test results with family members. This is evident in patients receiving a positive test result for an inherited disease, but who are not even aware of a family history for these cancer types. This applies especially to African communities.”

“The possible impact of such a testing strategy makes me extremely excited, because why are we doing this? We need to warn unaffected related individuals about their risk, which can only be done by testing them. By doing this, we can play a part in the earlier detection or diagnosis of patients, ultimately improving their cancer survival rate.”

Apart from founder testing, Dr Van der Merwe and her team have since broadened their testing regime from screening for BRCA1 and BRCA2 only, to multi-gene panel testing using next-generation-sequencing to include other genes causing these two and other specific cancer types. ■

Dr Nerina van der Merwe is a principal medical scientist in the Division of Human Genetics within the Faculty of Health Sciences and the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS), who has been performing research on various familial breast and ovarian cancer genes throughout the years.

International collaboration for Dr Champion Nyoni in prestigious Lancet journal

Dr Champion Nyoni, Senior Researcher in the School of Nursing, has achieved a landmark in his career by contributing to an article in The Lancet.

A researcher in the School of Nursing at the University of the Free State (UFS), together with other researchers from Brazil, Singapore, and the United Kingdom, was invited by The Lancet to write a paper related to the Frenk et al. paper on 'Transforming health professionals' education'.

Dr Champion Nyoni, Senior Researcher in the School of Nursing, says this is a landmark achievement in his career – being recognised as a researcher by The Lancet and publishing in such a prestigious journal, which is a first for the School of Nursing. The Lancet is a globally recognised and influential journal in health sciences. The journal boasts a wide readership and impact factor above 200. It has an extensive global reach, with more than 42,5 million annual visits on TheLancet.com, and 268,7 million downloaded articles across TheLancet.com and ScienceDirect.

According to Dr Nyoni, the Frenk et al. paper has significantly influenced health professions education and research over the past decade. This paper has been updated with the publication of the Frenk et al (2022) paper focusing on Health Professions Education after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Invitation to contribute

He was invited to contribute to this work in October this year, and the piece was published later the same month. Within two weeks of publication, the paper was reshared by major organisations such as the Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE) in the UK. Dr Nyoni believes he was invited to contribute because of his involvement in various global collaborative projects that are focused on the development of scholarship in interprofessional education – and we are spearheading global research on the development of educator competencies within the interprofessional space.

In addition, he is also the chairperson of several renowned organisations specifically for the advancement of interprofessional education and collaborative practice. "I am the current Chairperson of the Board of Directors for the Africa Interprofessional Education Network (AfriPEN), and Deputy Chair of the Board for Interprofessional.Global – a global confederation of interprofessional networks based in the Netherlands."

Curated literature including research articles

Dr Nyoni and his colleagues' publication drew on global experience of implementing interprofessional education and practice, including specific challenges and opportunities for the future. Uniquely, the paper highlighted issues related to variations in educational contexts and perspectives from the so-called Global South, including specific suggestions for global research in interprofessional education and practice.

According to him, he curated literature from research articles, policy documents, and strategic initiatives of various organisations, including the World Health Organisation (WHO). He co-wrote the initial draft and collaborated on the revisions and comments.

Dr Nyoni says the process of writing was quite interesting – they had a very short time to put the piece together, drawing on expertise, experience, and research outcomes, as well as priorities from the various contexts. "Literature was used for this futuristic work, and we aligned with some of the priorities from regional networks and our contexts. There were a lot of sleepless nights dealing with the review process, as The Lancet uses a very

rigorous peer-review process. We also had to balance the various time zones – I mean, the UK is easy to deal with – but Brazil and Singapore, that's another ball game. Often, the meetings or discussion were during interesting times," he says.

Dr Nyoni, who became the first UFS staff member and only the third African to win the prestigious Sigma Emerging Nurse Researcher/Scholar award, says he is thrilled with this achievement, which is a mark of excellence for the School of Nursing and the university. Furthermore, he encourages younger researchers to focus on excellence in research towards more meaningful and impactful outcomes. ■



University of The Free State *Vision 130*

Vision 130 acknowledges the immutable values of Excellence, Innovation and Impact, Accountability, Care, and Social Justice, that shape and inform the UFS culture and provide a framework for our actions and decisions. These are the values that form the bedrock of our institution, and that will continue to be the guiding lights in our quest to deliver quality graduates that are well-equipped and sought after in the world of work.



EXCELLENCE

We are committed to pursuing excellence in every aspect of university life. We look at excellence as an idea that is more than a benchmark, more than a goal, more than a distant destination. In the context of the Academic Project, excellence is the foundation of rigour in our scholarship, including the advancement, imparting, and the application of knowledge. It informs our learning and teaching, wider engagement, as well as our management and governance processes.

The University's ultimate goal is to be a University that impactfully supports societal development. We value and encourage creativity and strive to identify, question, and challenge the status quo. Our knowledge will continue to contribute to the development of the Free State, South Africa, and the African continent and to advance global knowledge and understanding.



INNOVATION AND IMPACT



ACCOUNTABILITY

We recognise our obligation towards our students, staff, stakeholders, society in general, and the global knowledge community. To this end, we will be stewards of good governance who are accountable, responsible, and dutiful in our actions. We will be conscientious in our utilisation of the financial and physical resources of the University as well as concerning our impact on the wider environment.

We are committed to creating circumstances that are not only conducive to high-quality teaching, learning, and scholarship, but doing this in ways that emphasise the well-being and happiness of the University community. We are therefore committed to caring for ourselves, our fellow humans, and the natural environment. We seek a new citizenship and new ways of belonging to the UFS that are premised on respect, inclusivity, listening, and empathy.



CARE



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social Justice: In the pursuit of social justice, we seek to advance the values of human dignity through ethical and transparent institutional responsiveness. We interpret social justice within the South African historical context to entail an emphasis on inclusiveness, the reduction of inequality, and the creation of opportunities and pathways out of poverty and dispossession. Our commitment to social justice is our call to everyone to build on the productive foundations laid by all, and to build new structures in the pursuit of truths and practices that will grant human dignity to everybody.

We commit to ethical and responsible stewardship of all institutional resources, processes, and practices to ensure operational, financial, environmental, and societal sustainability. Further, we aspire to live in harmony with our environment, and this will influence all our choices and decisions.



SUSTAINABILITY

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VISION130

*Renew and Reimagine
for 2034*

