

**Message of Support:**  
**Nelson Mandela University Name Launch**  
**Judge Ronnie Pillay, Chairperson: University Council**

**Members of this esteemed audience, all protocol observed**

For more than a decade, this University has been a vital contributor in the metro, George and the Province producing tens of thousands of graduates for the region, country and rest of the world, providing well over 3000 jobs for staff, and using its technologies to uplift and improve the quality of business and communities. During this period, our country itself has undergone major transformations, as did our University. We are living in a period of major social change.

Since 2007, this University has introduced over 450 different academic programmes; our student numbers have grown from 22 500 in 2008 to about 27 000; graduate numbers have risen from 4 464 in 2008 to a record number of 6 768 graduates; and we have expanded the University onto seven new campuses in two cities – Nelson Mandela Bay and George.

Our research output and scale of technology innovation have had a remarkable impact on the growth of industry and development of the quality of life across many communities. The University's financial aid contributions in the form of bursaries and loans have risen from R250m in 2008 to over R600m by 2016. It's all part of our commitment to ensuring that no academically deserving but poor learner is denied the opportunity to study further.

In the last few years, our University reached new heights with the official approval by national Government of South Africa's 10<sup>th</sup> Medical School, and the establishment of South Africa's first full-scale Ocean Sciences campus to support, inter alia, the strategic objectives of Operation Phakisa: Ocean Economy.

I wish to extend Council's sincerest thanks and appreciation to the generous support of our Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr. Blade Nzimande, and the Department of Higher Education and Training, for these important achievements.

Today, we are marking a momentous day in the history of this University – a celebration and appreciation of its new name from henceforth to **Nelson Mandela University**. This day has been long awaited by Council and stakeholders of our University. It marks a major watershed moment in transforming the

identity of our University, and giving our students and staff the greatest gift – bearing the name of **Nelson Mandela University** throughout the world.

Council wishes to extend its sincerest thanks and deepest appreciation to the **Mandela family**, Mvezo Traditional Council and in particular, Chief Zwelivelile Mandela, the Executors of the Mandela Estate, in particular, Justice Dikgang Moseneke, Advocate George Bizos SC and Justice Temba Sangoni, Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr. Blade Nzimande for their generous support for renaming our University after the world's greatest statesperson and the founding President of South Africa's democratic system. We owe all of you a great deal of gratitude and thanks.

There's much more that I could share about the advances made in the 12 years since NMMU was founded. But I think it will suffice to say that the foundations and groundwork have been laid.

And so, our name change, from NMMU to Nelson Mandela University, is perfectly timed – for it offers us the opportunity to build on the efforts in support of transformation that began 10 years ago, and now tackle the **new** challenges of transformation in decades to come. I believe we are more than ready to take this University to a new level of success.

Nelson Mandela University must become so much more than its buildings and its programmes. It must forge a new curricula. It must offer groundbreaking skills. It must engage with civil society to break the grip of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It must work towards social cohesion based on equality and social justice. In short, our University must emulate the ideals that Tata Madiba had stood for all his life.

This statement is a clarion call to **ALL** of our staff, students and the wider University community to action to uplift our city, region and country from the vestiges of an unequal past, and forge a new society in line with South Africa's new Constitution. I believe that this is what Dr. Nelson Mandela would have wanted – that 'the doors of learning and of culture shall be opened', as stated in the Freedom Charter.

We must live up to our late President's challenge of being 'caring, responsible and innovative' and of recognising the importance of continuously striving towards a more just, healthy and equal society for all.

It is our **privilege** - to honour Dr. Nelson Mandela's name in this new era of transformation, development and change.

We must emulate his moral values and replicate his **servant leadership**, his compassion, his commitment to non-racialism, democracy and courageously championing for social justice.

As Nelson Mandela University is predominantly based in the Eastern Cape, we have a **special responsibility** to be steeped into tackling its many developmental challenges – a largely rural population, major backlogs in social housing, unemployment, security and uneven development. As such, it is the wish of Council that Nelson Mandela University must forge strong bonds with civil society, government and business to overcome these legacies of the past. It must be rooted in the communities and ensure that we break the grip of the inheritance of colonialism and apartheid, and usher in the dream of a non-racial, equal and democratic South Africa.

We need to do all this – together.

Please join us on this exciting journey, in the words of Dr. Nelson Mandela, **'to the change the world'**.

Study Abroad Opportunities - Library Foyer on South CampusI thank you.