



## BOARD MEETING UPDATE

15 December 2011

### Rhodes aspires to be a place of knowledge, a place of learning

- That embodies a respect and love of knowledge.
- That advances through research the frontiers of knowledge and human understanding.
- That through teaching and learning develops graduates as intellectuals, professionals and critical citizens who contribute to development and an equitable, just and democratic society.
- That promotes through community engagement mutually respectful and beneficial relationships with diverse communities.

These aspirations are pursued within a commitment to a number of core values and principles. These are:

1. Striving for excellence in everything that we do.
2. Building an institutional culture that embraces human dignity and respect, human rights, non-racialism and non-sexism.
3. Respect for difference and diversity and the development of all social groups that constitute the Rhodes community.
4. Attracting and producing a new generation of scholars and administrators who are also more representative of our wider society.
5. Putting in place the academic, residential and sporting infrastructure to maintain our position as an outstanding university.
6. Ensuring academic freedom, freedom of expression and a culture of open, honest and rational discussion and critique, as befits a university.
7. Making wise and decisive choices and planning in a way that ensures financial sustainability in the decades to come.

This year we are some 7 300 students and over 1 400 staff, including 350 permanent academic staff. We remain the smallest university by far in South Africa – we have no envy of our larger sister universities.

Key features of our 2011 enrolments are that 59% of students are women; 26% are postgraduates and 21% are international students from some 45 countries around the world.

By 2013 we plan to be 7 645 students and hopefully 30 % postgraduate.

Rhodes continues to enjoy a very favourable academic staff to student ratio among South African universities, which means that students are guaranteed easy access to academics and close supervision.

We also enjoy the distinction of having among the best undergraduate pass rates and graduation rates in South Africa, and outstanding postgraduate success rates - testimony to the quality of our academic provision, and to the commitment of Rhodes staff to student learning, development and success. In addition, among South African universities we have one of the highest proportions of academic staff with doctoral degrees, and among the best research output per academic staff member.



**Significant recent achievements include:**

- The construction of a spectacular new Library at the cost of R75 million, including only one of four 'Research Commons' at a South African university.
- The award of a five prestigious national Research Chairs in Medicinal Chemistry, Marine Biology, Astrophysics and two in Mathematics Education. The Chair in Astrophysics is part of a major South African initiative to win the bid, in competition against Australia, to construct the world's largest radio telescope.
- Some R 140 million being raised from state departments, science councils, business and local and international donors for research and development activities.
- The creation of the Centre for the Study of Democracy under the directorship of the respected political analyst Prof. Steven Friedman.
- The creation of the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning and the establishment of a doctoral programme in higher education studies.
- The launch of the Confucius Institute with the support of the Chinese Hanban and the development of teaching programmes in Mandarin and Chinese studies.
- New Masters degree programmes in Social Policy, Applied Computer Science, Bioinformatics and Creative Writing and an Honours programme in Health Journalism.
- New Research and Postgraduate Focus Areas in the Humanities, funded by the Mellon Foundation, in Southern African Literature; the Visual and Performing Arts of Africa; Critical Sexual and Reproductive Health Studies, and Media and Citizenship.
- Two grants of over R20 million each through the European Union and the Sishen Trust for development of teacher education in the Northern Cape and elsewhere.
- The award to the Institute for Water Research of over \$800 000 by the Carnegie Corporation for water research in collaboration with universities in other parts of Africa.
- The establishment of the Biomedical Biotechnology Research Unit to enhance promising research and postgraduate development in this field.
- New chairs in the University's world-renowned School of Journalism and Media Studies in Media and Information Society and in Media and Mobile Communication.
- A grant from the Kresge Foundation of \$900 000 to extend our successful accelerated development programme for women and black scholars so as to develop a new generation of academics.
- Building of a new Environmental Learning Centre, opposite Eden Grove.
- Construction of 7 new residences and a new hall in the past few years enabling us to house almost 50% of on-campus students and 65% of undergraduates in our residences.

**The University is also pursuing a number of exciting initiatives:**

- To become, in coming years, a more postgraduate and research oriented university but which does not sacrifice its great reputation for the quality of undergraduate education.
- A major water education and research initiative with other universities in South Africa and the rest of Africa that could see Rhodes becoming the hub of postgraduate work in water.
- Building academic and scientific relationships with select universities in India, China and the rest of Africa.



- A major community engagement initiative the Kesikammahoek area of the Eastern Cape that involves research, support to schools and teachers, computer living labs and rural aquaculture development.
- New buildings for teacher education, life sciences and computer science, a postgraduate centre and new postgraduate residences.

**Rhodes students continue to excel on a number of fronts:**

- In six out of eight years, the prestigious Flanagan scholarship for a woman student to undertake postgraduate study anywhere in the world has been awarded to a Rhodes student.
- At least one or more of our students continue to win a Rhodes scholarship to study at Oxford University, helping to maintain one of the best track records among South African universities for the winning of Rhodes scholarships.
- Exercising of dominance over the prestigious Mandela Rhodes scholarships awarded for postgraduate study at South African universities. Significantly, while Rhodes students constitute only 0.8% of South Africa's university students, we win almost 15% of the Mandela Rhodes scholarships every year. Most students opt to continue their postgraduate studies at Rhodes.

In summary, despite various challenges, including a difficult current economic and financial climate, the University continues to develop in a manner that is congruent with its goals, aspirations and commitments.

You can rest assured that your alma mater will make the necessary considered choices and decisions to ensure that Rhodes continues to be a special, distinctive and outstanding African university.

We may be small, even the smallest in South Africa, but we are not short on ambition – to continue be one of Africa's outstanding universities!

Please contact us from time to time so that we have your current contact details and especially emails. We celebrate your successes and achievements as Old Rhodians; we celebrate especially when you don't forget your alma mater and contribute generously to our Alumni Annual Fund and other fundraising efforts.

With best wishes

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