

ACADEMIA

New Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UP outlines vision for future

STAFF REPORTER

THE University of Pretoria (UP) recently welcomed Professor Francis Petersen as its new Vice-Chancellor and Principal, during a special event attended by UP's senior management.

In his response, Petersen acknowledged the important role UP plays both locally and globally, while also outlining a path toward continuous improvement and enhanced academic excellence. "The University of Pretoria is an excellent academic institution, adding so much to our country, the continent, and the globe."

In his message, he acknowledged that, like any organisation, UP has areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. He emphasised that the key to progress lies in consistent reflection and the pursuit of excellence. "In both of these cases, we will assess and reflect, and we will enhance and improve – continuous improvement should be the basis of our approach," he noted. Central to Petersen's vision is the "Academic Project," which he described as the heart of the university's mission. This project encompasses teaching and learning, research and innovation, and societal engagement. It

is a collective effort, involving all 6,085 staff members at UP. "All our staff must be part of delivering an effective and quality Academic Project," he stated.

To achieve this, Prof Petersen highlighted three essential pillars: execution, support, and enablement. Execution will be driven by UP's faculties, support will come from all staff members, and enablement will be provided by the executive and senior management teams.

Beyond the academic mission, he stressed the importance of people. "The University of Pretoria is her people – we must focus on our staff and students,

we must care about staff and students, we must create an environment where our staff feel valued," he said, emphasising a commitment to fostering a caring and inclusive culture across the institution.

With this clear and inclusive vision, UP's new Vice-Chancellor and Principal has set the stage for a future defined by academic excellence, digital innovation, global leadership, and a deep commitment to both staff and students. His leadership promises to steer the university toward new heights while strengthening its foundational values of care, collaboration, and societal impact.



PROFESSOR Francis Petersen, new Vice-Chancellor of the University. | Supplied