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Policy Uncertainty Index declines slightly, but remains in negative territory

NWU delivers SAIPA Top Achiever







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Full steam ahead!

Message from the School Director, Prof Fulu Netswera

I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the new academic year 2019 and at the same time bid farewell to the year that was (2018). The academic year 2018 happened to have been my substantive year with the NWU Business School having started in November of 2017. Since then, I have had an opportunity to work with students, academics, School Advisory Board and other stakeholders, mainly from within the NWU. I would like therefore to report on a few things in this newsletter order to give you a perspective about our historical journey and about the journey into the future:

- NWU Business School is one among the eight South African business schools accredited by the Association of Master of Business Association (AMBA);
- According to the annual 2018
 Financial Mail survey, 72% of our students chose us for reasons that we are accredited, 56% for our programmes academic quality. 93% believe that they were able to enhance

their strategic business thinking out of their training with us;

- The CHE has accredited us for the delivery of the Master of Business Administration (MBA part-time delivery), Postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDiP full-time, parttime and distance delivery modes), and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Business Management;
- We currently operate in three delivery sites of Mahikeng (Leopard Park), Vanderbijlpark and Potchefstroom to enable our students access facilities closest to their employment and residence. In the Part time;
- In the past nine years, i.e., between 2008 and 2017 we graduated 1 161 MBAs, 84 PhDs and 966 PGDiP students;
- We operate a range of Executive Education short learning programmes independently and in strategic partnerships that are meant to provide quick interventions in capacitating business leaders;
- 78% of our academic staff members



hold a doctoral degrees and at least two doctoral graduations can be expected in 2019; and

 Some of our flagship programmes in the MBA includes the Company Projects and community engagement methodology in the design of the Project Management Module of the MBA.

We consider the following to be areas where a lot of effort is required from now henceforth to position the NWU Business School as a premium business school embedded in the society in which it delivers relevant business and research education:

- Increase the research completion rates in the MBA and doctoral programmes. This will require a series of intervention and cooperation from our students and their employers;
- Annually develop at least five NWU Business School based case studies in order to share knowledge and experiences with the rest of the world from the perspective of the global South but equally

so from South Africa;

- Improve the publication output rate by paying special attention to the research productivity of postgraduate students (MBA and PhDs);
- Ensure that our community outreach is optimised and relevant by engaging, among others, areas in the public sector where society experiences service delivery deficiencies, e.g., municipalities, public health as well as in corporate sector where ethics in business practices seem to allude our corporates; and
- Optimise our regional and international collaborations through, among others, study tours.

My advice to the current and new NWU Business School students in 2019 and specifically to students in the MBA programme is as follows:

- The MBA is a two year programme and as such it requires your full dedication of time and energy towards its completion;
- The MBA mini-dissertation is the biggest

holdback and you therefore need to pay special attention to its planning and execution;

- Try your best to complete the research proposal by end of the first year and get supervisor allocation early in the year so that in your second year you will be able to finalise this research project;
- Try not to work in silo this programme is intended for you to establish lifelong business networks which you can tap into during and outside the scope of the MBA programmes;

The NWU Business School academics are ready to support you with your learning journey. Take charge of this journey and make sure you maximally get value for your time and financial investment out of this process.

I wish you a very successful academic year ahead!

Fulu





Policy Uncertainty Index declines slightly, but remains in negative territory

By NWU Business School

As outlined when the PUI was launched in early 2016, the role of policy uncertainty has loomed large in much of the recent economic debate in SA. It is seen to have important implications for business confidence and the investment climate in the country. Hardly any recent economic assessment or media release from international or local financial institutions, business lobbies, economic analysts, financial journalists or credit rating agencies appears without the inclusion of the words 'policy uncertainty' occurring in them. The design of a policy uncertainty index for SA has nonetheless been spurred not only by economic circumstances in the country, but also by the increasing academic and policy interest globally around the cause, effect, measurement and definition of policy uncertainty.

There have been many manifestations of policy uncertainty in SA over the years. The institutional setting and policy making environment clearly influence the extent to which negative shocks and developments lead to bad outcomes and tough policy challenges. It seemed that the time had arrived to craft a more accurate measurement of this recurrent factor in SA's economic outlook. A deeper understanding of how uncertainty 'shocks' affect the SA economy helps policy makers to assess how future shocks will impact markets and business.

Interesting correlations have been found of the policy uncertainty index with economic outcomes. Empirically it shows that when economic policy uncertainty is strongly present in the environment, it indeed lowers investment, employment and output. High levels of such policy uncertainty inhibit meaningful investment and consumption. Elevated policy uncertainty in many countries contributes to sluggish growth. Economic policy uncertainty then has actual consequences for the economy.

In an article 'Macroeconomic Uncertainty in South Africa' published in the September 2018 SA Journal of Economics, Chris Redl concludes that 'both fiscal and monetary policy makers should monitor the levels of economic uncertainty as this may foreshadow a decline in economic activity.' The PUI is published in January, April, July and October of each year. An increase beyond 50 reflects heightened policy uncertainty; a decline in the PUI means reduced uncertainty. The value of the PUI as a proxy for policy uncertainty will lie in tracking changes in policy uncertainty over time, and as the index settles down over time and builds a track record.

The PUI for 4Q 2018 eased slightly from 52.2 in 3Q 2018, but remains in negative territory. The SA economy has moved out of recession territory yet the economic recovery is slow and patchy. Growth in 2018 as a whole is likely to have been about 0.6% and the forecast for 2019 is approximately 1.5%, a little above the World Bank' recent expectation of 1.3%. The SARB has now cut its growth forecast for 2019 from 1.9% to 1.7%, with downside risks.

Of particular concern has been the weak performance of fixed capital formation and its implications for future growth performance. Hence the strong emphasis on boosting investor confidence.



Levels of political and policy uncertainty in 2019 are likely to be shaped for better or worse by the following cross-currents:

* the extent to which the nascent economic recovery is underpinned in the months ahead by appropriate monetary, fiscal and other policies. The economy is not on cruise control.

* the degree to which inconsistent policy signalling around issues such as Eskom finances and renewed load shedding, as well as the eventual outcome of the land reform process, may weaken investor sentiment

* the impact of the forthcoming SONA and National Budget in February 2019 on the policy environment and investor confidence

* the effect on business and consumer confidence in the event of a highly



divisive and populist election campaign prior to a May election

* a world economy which is less supportive - but the more SA's house is in order, the better its ability to manage any global economic headwinds



Photo: Prof RWK Parsons

Widely expected MPC decision to leave interest rates unchanged is the right one in present economic circumstances

The widely expected recent decision by the MPC on 17 January, to leave interest rates unchanged is the right one in present economic circumstances. This is according to Prof Raymond Parsons, NWU Business School Economist. "Although it is mainly to structural economic reforms that SA must look for future sustained economic growth, neither should monetary policy hamper it at the current vulnerable point in the business cycle. Monetary policy should therefore continue to give the economic recovery, which is still slow and patchy, and 'sluggish' according to the MPC, the benefit of the doubt."

Parsons says the range of forecasts of economic growth in SA in 2019 remain conservative, including from the SARB. "The World Bank recently reduced its growth forecast for SA this year from 1.8% to 1.3% and MPC's expectation is of 1.7% GDP growth in 2019, with downside risks. The MPC has rightly expressed its concern about weak fixed capital formation inhibiting future growth potential. These sub-optimal growth rates emphasize the importance of underpinning the nascent economic recovery with appropriate policies."

Parsons also welcomes Governor Lesetja Kganyago's additional comments at the MPC media conference on the role, status and autonomy of the SARB. "It is essential that the constitutional mandate of the Bank to provide price stability in the interests of balanced and sustainable growth be protected, even more so at a time when SA is anxious to boost investor confidence."



Business school hosts annual SUMMER study school

The NWU Business School will this year again host their enthusiastic Summer Study School for first and second year MBAstudents from

28 - 31 January 2019 in Potchefstroom.

According to Prof Christo Bischoff, one of the organizers, an exciting programme awaits the participating students that will be complementary in their quest for progressive management and leadership enrichment.

The study school consists of the following academic building blocks:

- Academic lectures;
- Guest lectures; and
- Research and meetings with study
- leaders by appointment final year students.

This study school will employ a number of speakers to provide students with the best opportunity to make the most of their studies. The topics to be lectured and

discussed within these sessions includes: Keynote address: Prof J Mokgoro:

- Premier of the North West Province; Dr Chris Lombard: Consultant: Change
- Capacity and People Capacity Solutions;
- Mrs Christine Bronkhorst: NWU: Ferdinand Postma Library: Information Librarian for MBA;
- Prof Johan Nel: The founder and currently
- the Executive Manager of the Centre for Environmental Management (CEM), Faculty of Science, Potchefstroom Campus, NWU;
- Mr Reece Alberts: Centre for Environmental Management (CEM), at
- the Faculty of Science, NWU; Prof Raymond Parsons: Professor at the NWU Business School (BS); Chairman of
- the NWU-BS Advisory Board; Mr Willie Bezuidenhout: Chief Executive
- Officer of Peninsula Energy Limited's South African operations(October 2018);
- Mr Theo Venter: Political and policy specialist at the NWU Business School;

Special advisor to the Vice-chancellor of the North-West University;

- Mr Tom Winterboer: Independent non-
- executive director of First Rand Ltd; Mr GP Van Rheede van Oudtshoorn:
- Senior marketer: NWU department of Marketing and Student Recruitment.

They say that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy! We are firm believers of that and have therefore organized a socialising and networking opportunity on Wednesday 30 January, at the Crista-Galli venue, situated on the Carletonville road.

The NWU Business School Summer Study School provides the perfect platform to bond with fellow students, to learn more about the wonderful world of business and management, and extend your networking relations. Should you have any enquiries about the Study School, you are welcome to contact Prof Bischoff for assistance on 084 548 2256.







NWU delivers SAIPA Top Achiever

After four long years of blood, sweat and tears. Dr Corrie Cloete not only walked away with a PhD from the North-West University (NWU), but also a South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA) Top Achievers Award.

Dr Cloete received first prize in the doctoral degree category of the 2018 SAIPA Accounting Thesis Competition on 11 October 2018 during a prestigious ceremony in Johannesburg.

In his award-winning thesis he developed a risk analysis tool for professional accountants. This tool will enable accountants to assist their clients in the management of an array of challenges experienced by entrepreneurs who own small-medium enterprises.

"I am deeply honoured by this award," says Dr Cloete.

He adds that winning such a prestigious competition will have a positive effect on his career, since he developed research skills on a level that is impossible to do otherwise. "The research standards set by the NWU are very high, and this is evident if one analyses the reports issued by the non-South African examiners."



"Dr Cloete's excellent submission has without a doubt contributed immensely to the realisation of that vision," she says. She adds that it was the quality of his research and his unique concept that made his submission stand out from numerous theses and dissertations submitted from universities. across South Africa.

the bar for accounting research.

Dr Cloete has had his own private practice for 27 years and applied for his PhD in 2014.

The risk analysis tool he developed will allow both professional accountants and their clients to map a very clear path in the process of analysing current and potential risks.

"This tool will save time and money, and will ensure that all risk analysis elements are fully covered," says Dr Cloete. He adds that it could also provide court-admissible evidence with a clear set of arguments that legal representatives and accountants could use.

Photo: NWU alumnus Dr Corrie Cloete (left) was awarded SAICA's Top Achiever Award for his doctoral thesis. With him is Prof Danie Schutte, his Promoter.

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Photo: Delegates, authors of scientific papers and keynote speakers shared essential information about the state of water and sanitation management around the globe.

Business School hosts international conference to optimise water and sanitation

The North-West University's Business School, led by Prof Fuluhelo (Fulu) Netswera recently hosted a conference in Cape Town where leaders and researchers in the field of sanitation waste and water management came together to discuss issues for a sustainable globe.

The conference was attended by more than 120 delegates from 12 countries which included South Korea, Japan, Finland, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sweden, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, Germany and Bangladesh. According to Prof Fulu, the proper and sustainable management of sanitation, waste and water resources is a fundamental goal of the United Nations and needs urgent attention with regard to its challenges and problems worldwide. "The management of these resources has a direct bearing on the quality of lives for all, but more especially communities in cities. Fresh water resources are depleting at an alarming rate, contaminated by human waste from industries and households, which compounds the water scarcity problem that currently affects one out of every ten people worldwide. More than 2.1 billion people lacks access to safely managed drinking water resources and more than half of the global population (4.5 billion people) lacks safely managed sanitation services," Prof Fulu said.

Furthermore, in 2017, UNESCO found that



nearly 80% of wastewater flows back into the ecosystem without being properly treated. This means that poor solid waste management presents a devastating effect on ground water.

More than 2.1 billion people lacks access to safely managed drinking water resources and more than half of the global population lacks safely managed sanitation services," Prof Fulu said.

"The burden of diseases associated with poor sanitation, water pollution and poor waste management is escalating, manifesting in intestinal nematode infections, lymphatic filariasis, trachoma, schistosomiasis, malaria and other infectious diseases. The World Health Organisation estimates that more than 2.2 million people die from diarrhoea annually," Prof Fulu stated.

Professor Jan-Olof Drangert from the Linkoping University in Sweden, Charles Tumwebaze, a lead Consultant at Interbuild Consultants in Uganda, Trevor Mulaudzi from the University of Limpopo and Dr Ki Hee Ryu from the Seoul National University were among the keynote speakers who addressed the conference about important issues in water and sanitation management. The conference was sponsored by National Research Foundation, The World Toilet Association and the South African National Convention Bureau. The Chairperson of the World Toilet Association, Yeom Tae-Young, who is also the Mayor of Suwon City, was in attendance with his mayoral committee of ten.

Other issues which were addressed by national and international experts, includes:

- Concepts and theories of sanitation, waste and water practices and management;
- The socio-economic dimensions of water, waste and sanitation;
- Sustainable sanitation, water, waste and hygiene policies, practices quality standards;
- New innovations and technologies in ICT;
- Treatment and recycling methods/approaches for sanitation, water and waste;
- Water and sanitation epidemics, causes and effect in resultant disease burdens;
- Use and re-use policies and practices of sanitation, waste and waste resources;
- Behavioural change in sanitation, waste and water use practices;
- Ecosystem management and restoration of the natural environment, e.g. river restoration;
- Urbanity and new ecosystems.

The conference concluded with a technical tour in the Cape Town area where a waste water treatment plant and an informal settlement was visited.

Business School broadens students' horizons in Ireland

It is no secret that we as South Africans can only benefit to learn from businesses and tertiary institutions in developed countries. For this reason, the NWU's Business School organized a tour for students to Ireland to do just that.

According to Johan Jordaan, a lecturer at the Business School and tour organizer, the purpose of the tour was two-fold: (a) To give students experience of doing business in a developed country through lectures and through visits to industries; and (b) to form ties with at least one Irish university. The visit was anchored by a two-day summer school hosted by National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) AMBA-accredited business school.

The tour programme included a plant visit to Thermo King (manufacturer of cooling units for cooling trucks, containers and railway carriages) in Galway where





one of the supervisors took the students on a guided plant tour. Jordaan says it was impressive to see their efficiency and cost management being so good. "Although their raw material cost is the same as their competitors, they produce at a lower cost as any of their competitors, including those in the Far East. Their environmental management is so good that they have sent no effluent to landfill sites since 2013."

They also visited SAP's headquarters in Galway where it was insightful to see the agility of their product development, that the office can develop a prototype solution for a new client overnight and have a first deliverable available within two weeks.

According to the students, their visit to the Mount Lucas Wind Farm outside Dublin was just as impressive. The plant's public relations officer, Catherine Swaine, gave more insight of how wind farms work and the process of starting and operating a wind farm (including how to manage the environmental concerns), followed by a technical discussion with two of the Siemens engineers who are operating the plant on behalf of the energy company Bord na Mona (a joint venture between the Irish government and a private company).

Students also attended a lecture about the unintended consequences of technology on the workplace, by Dr Eoin Wheelan of NUIG Business School. "Interesting research was shared on the effect that social media, cell phones, e-mail and the Internet has on the productivity, satisfaction and wellbeing of employees and what to do to counter the negative unintended consequences of technology. Interesting suggestions, based on research in Ireland includes banning cell phones at meetings, allowing employees to disconnect after hours, methods to manage your usage of e-mail and to counter the expectations of real-time feedback, so that the negative consequences of these technologies could be minimised, Jordaan says. To the NWU's delight, a memorandum of understanding was signed by both the NWU Business School and the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics at the National University of Ireland Galway. "There are many similarities between the two business schools. Both received their first AMBA accreditation in 2013 and both schools run a two-year MBA course. The Faculty staff was very interested when we discussed the possibility of inviting them on a similar visit to South Africa. NWU Business School has also been invited to send future groups to NUIG, possibly for a three-day summer school. Next step is to exchange curricula and contact details of lecturers teaching corresponding modules to enable direct contact with peers," Jordaan says.

Based on the students' feedback, the tour was good value for money and in all respects a worthwhile experience and also allowed an excellent internationalisation opportunity for the NWU Business School.



Our staff sharpens their pencils at international conference

As dedication towards academic excellence and keeping up to date with the latest trends in the tertiary sector, Prof Fulu Netswera and Prof Anet Smit from the NWU Business School recently attended the illustrious Association of MBA's Global Conference in Sweden. This has been a remarkable event and took place in Stockholm at the Hilton Stockholm Slussen. The conference was set to attract the most distinguished figures in management education. Some of the world's pre-eminent Deans, MBA Directors and other business leaders have shared and discussed their views on topics such as:

- Attracting more MBA students;
- Innovation and digital delivery;
- Globalisation vs anti-globalisation;
- Latest exclusive research on the MBA market.

Something quite special was the showcasing of the revolutionary 3D Hologram Professor. AMBA pushed the boundaries of education technology by hosting a

session presented by human holograms. You can view a snippet of the hologram technology here: https:// youtu.be/h3TGckDfMHo

An event not to forget was the dinner in the Golden Hall at Stockholm's iconic City Hall, where the Nobel Prize winners normally dine.

The Global Conference 2018 also highlighted Business Schools' commitment to the triple bottom line business model, that is, people, planet, and profit. AMBA Chair, Bodo Schlegelmilch stressed the importance of teaching students the skills related to the sustainability of our planet.

Håkan Ericson, Director of the GU School of Executive Education at the School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, said the School is pursuing a clear strategy to make sure all master programmes represent aspects of the triple bottom



Photo: Prof Fulu Netswera and Prof Anet Smit from the NWU Business School attended the illustrious Association of MBA's Global Conference in Stockholm, Sweden.

line business model. He said sustainability in all three aspects is prevalent in all of their master programmes and that the focus must be beyond profit.

Irene Rosberg, Executive MBA Shipping & Logistics Programme Director (The Blue MBA) at Copenhagen Business School, said that in order to ensure that the graduates are kept abreast of the new developments Schools would benefit from considering them as 'partners'. She went on to say that this will give the Business Schools the opportunity to be more involved and could invest more effectively in 'lifelong learning' and 'keep the knowledge given to the graduates more current'. Rosberg also explained that it was important for employers to have MBA graduates who can understand the challenges of today and come up with innovative solutions with sustainability being part of the strategy.

Ericson emphasised that sustainability is another way of staying relevant in a constantly changing environment.



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Why an MBA?

The MBA qualification broadens and enhances knowledge and should be viewed in a sense of building up skills.

Although the most popular reasons for undertaking the MBA is to increase salary, other reasons include widening career opportunities, furthering one's career and/or to extend personal networks. There are other equally important reasons that any prospective MBA student will state, but by far the most compelling is to create career opportunities for oneself. The challenges imposed by the 21st century have made it an essential component that we upgrade skills and qualifications in order to meet the demands set by companies, customers and the environment we operate within.

This is where the MBA becomes a tool to be utilised in building up existing competencies - the theory learned can be utilised to find plausible solutions to concurrent business issues. At the end of an MBA programme, one emerges with an upper level of functional managerial and business issues as well as new conceptual skills ready to meet the demands that are set by the competitiveness around us.

With an MBA, you can:

Advance your career

Whether you're a doctor, an engineer, or an editor for your local newspaper, a graduate business degree can prepare you to move into a managerial position within your field.

Change your career

If your current career path is a less than perfect fit for your aptitudes and interests, business school can give you the opportunity to explore your options, then provide you with the training you need to change careers entirely.



Set up your own business

Interested in starting your own business, but not sure that you have the necessary expertise to launch a start-up in a high-growth industry? An MBA can prepare you to do everything from writing a business plan to acquiring venture capital to launching an IPO. Research has shown that the failure rate for small businesses started by an MBA is about 50 percent less than the standard failure rate.

Develop technical skill and business knowledge

Can you advance to a managerial position or launch your own business without the benefit of a graduate degree in business? Yes. There is much to be learned from on-the-job training and employers certainly value work experience. However, an MBA programme will put you on the fast-track to career advancement by offering you the chance to develop a wide range of general business knowledge and a broad base of technical skill in a relatively short period of time. **Become a leader in an emerging field** Innovative education can lead to an exciting career in a newly emerging field, such as brand management, information technology, e-commerce, or mobile telecommunications.

Network

Networking is another key benefit. Business school teaching styles encourage teamwork and, over the course of an MBA programme, you'll develop important relationships that can serve you well throughout your business career. And no matter the school, you can often get plugged into a network of alumni working at a wide range of companies. This is useful for professional contacts.

Although the degree is considered the pathway to a successful career, it still does not guarantee a flood of job offers, but when one considers the positive options, it far outweighs the negative issues. It is a costly course and the time constraints that are associated with the study load are legendary. That's why, in some circles, it has been termed "Married, but away". Approach the studies with an open mindset and let your intentions be to develop yourself to your full capacity. Accept the programme as a challenge, set your personal as well as career objectives and, most importantly, utilise the Masters of Business Administration degree to close gaps that may exist within your skills and qualifications, so that you can facilitate and expedite your management career.

The NWU Business School has three sites of delivery, situated in Mahikeng, Potchefstroom and Vanderbijlpark. With our internationally accredited MBA, we strive to give our students the edge in an ever-changing business environment. This institution offers various options in terms of language and modes of delivery in our flagship programmes – the MBA as well as the Postgraduate Diploma in Management.

We also strive to make our mark on the African continent – this is a priority for us!

QNWU®

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NWU Business School Vision & Mission

Vision

To be an innovative and quality-driven business school that, strongly anchored within a regional context, also plays a dynamic role in Africa and internationally.

Mission

The NWU Business School is committed to high quality teaching, research and the operationalisation of expertise measured against international standards within a context of a client- and service-oriented approach. The mission is vested in the following eight pillars:

The following eight elements are key pillars of this mission, which leads to the formulation of specific goals and applicable targets that the NWU Business School wishes to achieve, namely:

- The optimal utilisation of academic and support staff to achieve the goal of the NWU Business School.
- To develop, teach and empower, by means of innovative teaching and quality learning, wellrounded graduates, who are able to think laterally and critically and who are able to serve the country and its people, the continent and the world.
- Develop and maintain **relevant**, **focused research of a high standard** that is aligned with national priorities and that offers innovative solutions to the challenges that face the academic community, the country, the continent and the world.
- Expand the commercialisation, implementation and marketing of expertise to benefit all roleplayers.

- Expand the community involvement of the NWU Business School in order to make a fundamental difference with all role-players.
- The proactive expansion and maintenance of international collaboration agreements with regard to teaching-learning, research and the marketing of expertise.
- Development of the NWU Business School image and the strengthening of the NWU Business School trademark.
- Be a **responsible**, **well-managed**, **financiallyviable business school** with a strong client focus to support and improve the quality of our core business.

