



And the new director is...

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is now

NWU among the best in the world

Table of Contents

- Message from the director
- And the new director is...
- Newly elected Advisory Board
- Ploughing knowledge into our agri-sector
- Google Africa: “The Fourth Industrial Revolution is now”
- NWU student conducts employment study to help unemployed youth
- Is Big Brother watching you?
- What it was like to be an MBA student in 2020
- Supermom determined to achieve her academic dreams
- Congratulations Prof Nelda on your well-deserved success!
- Latest rankings reaffirm NWU is among the best in the world
- Ratings downgrades highlight need to change economic narrative
- Surfing the sound waves
- Bidding farewell to our retirees
- South Africa 2024 - a scenario perspective
- Relationships with WITS Business School



“Message and overview by Prof Jan van Romburgh,
director of the NWU Business School.”

Please click on the play button.

And the new director is...

The NWU Business School is pleased to announce the official appointment of Prof Jan van Romburgh – a forensic accountant by trade, as the school's chief director. In this new position, Prof van Romburgh will continue to provide leadership and build on the strong track record of shaping executive minds in Africa, as he has done over the past year in his capacity as acting director.

Prof Jan's appointment is effective from 1 January 2021. In his new role he is expected to harness the quality and energy that already exists among the staff of the Business School, to manage and oversee the daily operations, and to further grow the executive education profile and short courses.

He is also responsible for getting the NWU Business School ready for its Association of MBA's (AMBA) re-accreditation visit in 2021.

"I look forward to all the opportunities and challenges this role entails. I am also very humbled and excited about this opportunity. During my time as the chief director I aim to further execute the Business School's vision, to shape executive minds in Africa and to further distinguish the school as a partner for lifelong learning," Prof van

Romburgh says.

He adds that the school should be seen as a thought leader – not only in the North West Province, but on the African continent.

"There is no replacement for quality - we should be relevant and provide access to current and future business leaders," he says.

Years of experience

With numerous years of experience in forensic accounting investigations in the public and private sectors, Prof Jan successfully started the NWU's forensic accounting programme in 2006.

He also previously served as the acting dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, and the director of the School of Accounting Sciences at the NWU.

The NWU congratulates Prof Jan on his appointment and looks forward to the wealth of knowledge and experience he will share with the Business School and the university as a whole.

We received the following messages of congratulations from staff members:



"Congratulations, Prof Jan: the right man, in the right job, at the right time - and at the right business school!"

– Raymond Parsons

"Mooi so Jan. Nou kan ons vorentoe beur"

– Christo Bisschoff

"Good day Prof Jan. Congratulations on your new job as our awesome director. We are very proud of you boss"

- Kaizer Ndlovu

"Rea go lebogisa Prof JvR"

– Oarabile Manyapelo

"Baie geluk Prof Jan, mag Prof die volmaakte stories wat Hy in Prof se DNA geskryf het daagliks uitleef."

– Marli Moolman

"Congratulations Prof JvR...looking forward to more fruitful years of working with you."

– Lungile Ntsizwane

"Congratulations Prof Jan! You are skilled with great talent and thank God for this gift, now it is your turn to make Him happy by doing your job with honesty. Never hesitate to ask for His guidance and may you be bold enough to deal with any situation. Good luck!"

– Desiré Steyn

"Baie geluk Jan, die acting deel pas in elk geval nie by jou nie"

– Christoff Botha

"More Janneman. Verskriklik geluk met

jou aanstelling. Binne 'n kort rukkie het jy 'n massiewe verskil gemaak. Mag hierdie ervaring vir jou prettig wees en baie deure in jou lewe oopmaak. Ek glo ons gaan binne 2 jaar die buitengewone vermoë onder jou leiding. Jy's 'n besonderse mens, met baie sterk leierseienskappe en ek weet jy sien dinge myle vooruit. Geniet hierdie tyd. Ons is almal bly jy is aangestel... o ja... nou is dit bubble tyd hoor..."

– Nelda Mouton

"My best wishes on Prof's appointment as director that makes the Business School go from strength to strength"

– Christie Munro

"Jan, ek is regtig bly jy het die aanstelling gekry. Ek sien uit na die saamwerk met jou."

– Johan Jordaan

"Quote: "Leaders don't force people to follow. They invite them on a journey." So, I wish you a blessed journey with all the followers of NWU Business School!"

– Mara Boneschans

"Hearty congratulations dear Prof Jan...this is great news for all of us...looking forward to working with you..."

– Ravinder Rena

"Way to go Prof Jan. Hope you will have good years ahead with the Business School"

– Johan Coetzee

"Excellent, superb, wonderful, terrific. Those words don't say it well enough, of course, but I'm tongue-tied with happiness at Prof's new appointment. Congratulations!"

– Antonett Visagie

"Dear Prof Jan van Romburgh, Congratulations with your appointment as the chief director of the NWU Business School. Under your stewardship, hopefully the BS will be more united and become a leading BS in Africa as envisage"

– Joseph Lekunze

"He has been nothing but the best to our school and we are looking forward to many more great

achievements with him."

– Puleng Mogwere

"Baie geluk met die aanstelling Jan! Ek is baie trots om deel van jou span te wees!"

– Retha Scholtz

"Congratulations Prof Jan, with you as leader of the Business School, we can just move to higher expectations."

– Elma Senekal

"You're the kind of person who is never afraid to take the plunge. That's why you so deeply deserve this new challenge. Congratulations, I know that this superb appointment will be a springboard to even more triumphs."

– Morné van den Bergh

"Well done Jan for stabilising the ship. Blessings!"

– Ronnie Lotriet

"Dear Prof Van Romburgh, congratulations on your appointment... be assured of our full

support under all circumstances."

– Jan Meyer

"Baie geluk Prof Jan, mag hierdie hoofstuk Prof op baie nuwe paaie neem en alle voorspoed."

– Elé Wessels

"Prof van Romburgh, congratulations with your new appointment. May you receive grace to lead this magnificent school and be blessed with your new endeavour."

– Wendy Smith

"Dear Prof Jan. Congratulations!! Now you can make NWU BS's African footprint a 'giant leap for human kind'. We are by your side."

– Yvonne du Plessis

"Sincere congratulations on your hard-earned success I believe you have all the energy and determination to drive the Business School to the highest level."

– Tebogo Tebejane

CONGRATS

Newly elected Advisory Board

The first meeting of the reconstituted NWU Business School Advisory Board under the more autonomous Business School as well as the Board's new terms of reference, was held on 17 November 2020.

Professor Raymond Parsons was unanimously elected chairperson, and Ms Charlotte Mokoena, Vice-President Human Resources at SASOL, as deputy-chairperson.

Prof Parsons is no stranger to the economic sphere in South Africa. He is an experienced economist and academic, affiliated with the NWU Business School, and a huge favourite among media houses with regard to opinions and thought leadership.

Ms Mokoena is an executive leader in human resources, organisational culture, stakeholder relationships, reputation management and social impact programmes. Her career spans more than 20 years in leadership and management roles in different sectors and industries. She has a passion for coaching, mentoring, and is a popular speaker; which will be well utilised in her new role with us.

Reflecting on her appointment, Ms Mokoena said: "As we emerge from a global health pandemic, which has

impacted economies and societies the world over, institutions like the NWU Business School must reimagine and reshape the future of business education. As the advisory board we must reflect on the skills, capabilities and new mindsets leaders need in a post-COVID era and craft programmes to distill and impart this knowledge to not only our students, but the broader eco-system of higher-learning institutions in which we operate. Now, more than before, we are called upon to serve a higher purpose that contributes to rebuilding our society, by developing capable leaders who can strengthen and build a resilient economy for the benefit of all citizens."

The newly created position of deputy chairperson of the advisory board will support Prof Parsons and provide leadership to the Business School.

These appointments are for three years. The reconstituted and enlarged board will be actively seized with the important mandate of providing access to top level business advice in helping the Business School to reach its strategic goals in the years ahead.

We wish to congratulate all elected members and wish them well with their tasks.



Ploughing knowledge into our agri-sector

The Leadership Academy for Agriculture is a unique partnership between the NWU Business School, Grain SA, Thinking Fusion AFRICA and sector sponsors, in this instance Syngenta.

This academy makes a special contribution to the leadership development of young leaders in the full agricultural value chain. It offers a unique opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships across (cultural) boundaries, and makes a special contribution to the development of leaders for organised agriculture.

Over seven years and with Syngenta as the sponsor, the Leadership Academy for Agriculture developed from the very successful Grain Academy with its main focus on grain producers. The new academy was launched this year and now includes farmers of all commodities and the full agricultural value chain. Up to now, 225 producers and value chain members have

been through the Leadership in the Connection Economy programme.

On Friday evening 30 October 2020, the project work of the class of 2020 was evaluated. Prof Sonia Swanepoel, the North-West University's Executive Dean for the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, gave the opening address with the NWU Business School's Prof Jan van Romburgh making the concluding remarks and doing the integration.

Antonie Delport from Syngenta and Nico Mtimkulu, an alumnus of the academy, were guest speakers and very motivational, while Jannie de Villiers of Grain SA gave the panel feedback, after the presentations, gave the panel feedback to the participants, after the presentations. Dr René Uys and Harry van der Merwe from Thinking Fusion AFRICA were the facilitators of the programme.

The panel witnessed and judged three outstanding presentations addressing very complex sector problems using a systems thinking methodology. The panel, including Prof Sonia Swanepoel as well as Prof Jan van Romburgh, was very complimentary about the academic integrity of the project presentations. Mr Derek Matthews, chairperson of Grain SA, invited participants for further discussion on their thinking. The projects presented were one of four projects that need to be completed during the 10-day programme to attain successful completion and a certificate from the NWU Business School.

This class of 2020 was particularly impressive as they continued with and completed the programme despite the impact of Covid-19.

The participants deserve a huge round of applause.

Google Africa:

‘The fourth industrial revolution is now’

Two researchers affiliated with the NWU Business School have recently published articles in academic journals.

Prof Anet Smit completed her PhD in Financial Accounting on the financing of franchises. She was a lecturer in Financial Accounting, but has since become interested in the field of Management Accounting. For the past number of years she has been lecturing Management Accounting within the MBA programme and in a variety of executive education programs. She has published articles in the field of sustainability, disclosure, Environmental Management Accounting (EMA) and integrated reporting.

Her most recent article, published in the Journal of Humanities, is titled: “Analysing the contributory role of the accounting profession to save our planet”.

As an extraordinary professor of the NWU Business School, Benon C. Basheka is a Professor of the Public Administration and Management and the current Vice Chancellor of Uganda Technology and Management University in Uganda. He also founded Radix Management Consulting in 2006; a management consultancy firm headquartered in Kampala, Uganda where he serves as the CEO and Managing Director.

His article titled: “COVID 19: Supply Chain Practices, Challenges and Lessons Learnt: Ugandan Perspective” was recently published.



NWU student conducts employment study to help unemployed youth

A North-West University student is investigating whether agriculture is a possible employment option for unemployed young people between the ages of 18 and 35 in small communities.

Elise Oosthuizen began the data collection process with the support of the NWU Business School. She gathered information from unemployed youth volunteers at the Promosa Secondary School on Saturday. The participants completed a survey, which will remain confidential.

Prof Jan van Romburgh, the director of the NWU Business School, says the outcomes of the research will indicate what could be done to help the youth.

The objective of the research study was to improve the probability of securing employment for job-seeking youth in the province.

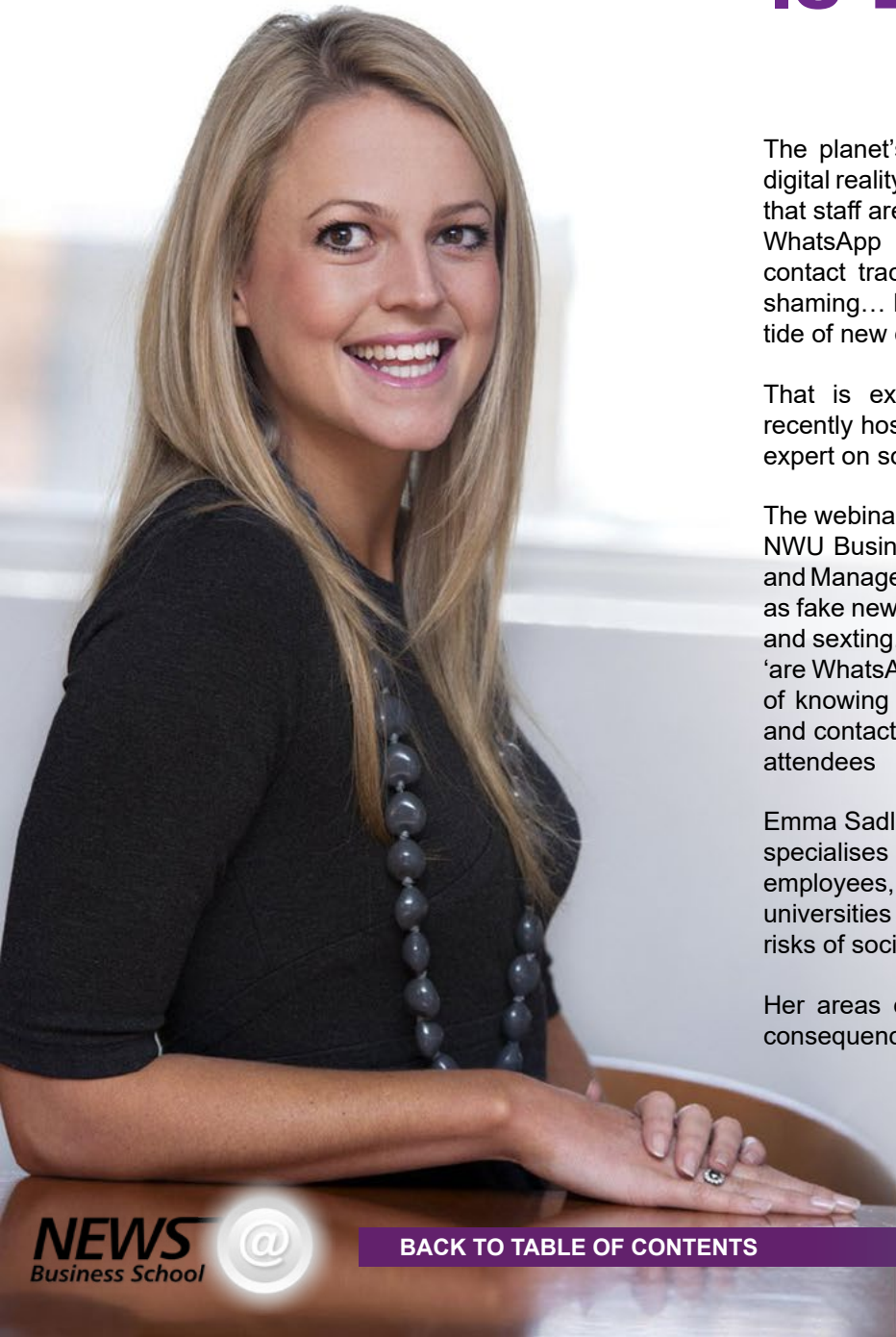
Oosthuizen thanks her supervisor, Prof Ronnie Lotriet, the school's principal, Veyonny Ferris, Prof Van Romburgh, Glenville Boeda Fransman and all the volunteers and sponsors who made the event a success.

Oosthuizen will continue gathering information from institutions specialising in agriculture.



Photo: Prof Jan van Romburgh, Elise Oosthuizen, the principal, Veyonny Ferris, and Glenville Boeda Fransman.

Is Big Brother watching you?



The planet's entire workforce has had to shift to a digital reality in order to conduct business. This means that staff are online all the time! Zoom bombing, work WhatsApp groups, fake news criminal offences, contact tracing using cell phone data, naming and shaming... It is a full-time job staying on top of the rip tide of new developments.

That is exactly why the NWU Business School recently hosted a webinar with South Africa's leading expert on social media law, Emma Sadleir.

The webinar was presented to staff and alumni of the NWU Business School and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, and it covered topics such as fake news criminal offences, naming and shaming, and sexting. Burning issues were addressed, such as 'are WhatsApp admins responsible?'. The importance of knowing the legal consequences of social media and contact tracing was a topic much enjoyed by the attendees

Emma Sadleir founded the Digital Law Company and specialises in educating and advising corporates, employees, schools, parents, teachers, and universities on the legal, disciplinary and reputational risks of social media.

Her areas of expertise include managing the legal consequences of using social media, such as

defamation, privacy, hate speech and intellectual property; cyberbullying and harassment; sexting and pornography offences; the disciplinary consequences of using social media; personal and brand reputation management on social media; as well as health and social media online safety.

Much of Emma's work involves creating social media strategies and policies for corporates and schools, drafting social media agency agreements and providing training and workshops on social media law. Emma and her team have collectively addressed hundreds of blue-chip corporate clients and over 100 000 learners across South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Kenya, Nigeria and the United Kingdom through educational talks and presentations. She also teaches media law to journalists and lawyers and lectures personal reputation management on various MBA programmes.

Emma is the co-author of "Don't film yourself having sex", and other legal advice for the age of social media, published by Penguin Random House in September 2014. The book was described by Professor Jonathan Jansen as "the most important textbook" a university student will buy. Her second book, "Selfies, Sexts and Smartphones: A Teenager's online survival guide", was published by Penguin Random House on October 2017.



What it was like to be an MBA student in 2020

The North-West University Business School is proudly accredited by the International Association of MBAs (AMBA) and the Business Graduate Association (BGA). These two bodies recently launched an initiative in the form of a survey to ascertain how students are managing to balance their studies and other commitments, in the face of an unprecedented pandemic.

The study of 752 MBA students shows that the class of 2020 was riding the chaos of the current global uncertainty and making the most of their unique MBA experience. Overall, more than half (51%) said that the MBA experience was exceeding their expectations. In fact, a sizeable 84% said the MBA experience either met or exceeded their expectations so far.

Key findings

- 84% of MBA students said that, at the time of completing the survey, the MBA experience was exceeding or living up to their expectations, despite social distancing and lockdown policies.
- A quarter of MBA students (25%) rated their teaching as excellent; 43% said it is very good and 24% said it is fairly good.


- 80% of MBA students rated the services provided by their business school's careers team as excellent, very good, or fairly good.
- 65% of MBA students rated their school's networking with employers as excellent, very good, or fairly good.
- 80% of MBA students said that the MBA had provided very good or fairly good value for money.
- The most popular reason among current students for choosing an MBA among current students was 'to acquire more skills and knowledge about the business world' (cited by 70% of participants); this is followed closely by 'to expand my area of expertise' (cited by 69%).
- 60% of current students had applied for just one MBA programme; 18% had applied for two and approximately 16% had applied for three or more.
- The number of offers received was largely in line with the number of applications made, with 60% receiving one offer; 21% receiving two; and 16% receiving three or more.

Association of MBAs
November 12 at 1:05 PM · 3

New research

International AMBA & BGA Survey reveals what it was like to be an MBA student in 2020. <http://ow.ly/PzpE50Cuxf>

The study of 752 MBA students shows that the class of 2020 was riding the chaos of the current global uncertainty and making the most of their unique MBA experience. Overall, more than half (51%) said that the MBA experience was exceeding their expectations. In fact, a sizeable 84% said the MBA experience either met or exceeded their expectations so far.



INTERNATIONAL MBA SURVEY 2020
PART 3: THE MBA CLASS OF 2020

2

Conclusions

The findings reveal that, for the most part, the class of 2020 was riding the chaos of the current global uncertainty and making the most of their unique MBA experience.

A quarter (25%) rated their teaching as 'excellent', 43% said it was 'very good' and 24% said it was 'fairly good'.

Considering advice received in terms of job applications, 82% used the services provided by their School's careers team as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'fairly good'. Two thirds of participants (67%) rated their School's networking with employers as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'fairly good'.

Just under a third (32%) said the MBA had provided 'very good' value for money, for them, and 45% said it had provided 'fairly good' value for money.

In saying that, a significant proportion of respondents were keen to put forward suggestions for improvements that their Schools may want to consider.

Seven out of 10 participants in the survey believed that the delivery and/or content of their MBA programme could be improved overall; more than half (52%) said that their networking opportunities could have been improved, and 43% said that the application process could be improved at their School.

Participants used the survey as an opportunity to offer their Business Schools suggestions for enhancing their services and strategies.

Suggestions from survey participants on enhancements to MBA programmes included more networking, more partnerships with other Business Schools and employers, and more teaching on AI and big data.

Participants used the survey as an opportunity to offer their Business Schools suggestions for building and enhancing the services and strategies that were already in place, rather than criticising the experience they were being offered.

Participants also recognised the work being done by their Schools to mitigate the challenges caused by social distancing and remote learning, with several remarking that community engagements, implemented and ongoing, and allowed them to still enjoy their experience, despite the effects of Covid-19 lockdowns and related restrictions that were out of the hands of their Schools.

Overall, more than half (51%) said that the MBA experience was exceeding their expectations. In fact, a sizeable 84% said the MBA experience either met or exceeded their expectations so far - and considering the obstacles and daunting future of the participant pool overall, the results suggest that Business Schools within the AMBA network can consider themselves to be succeeding in their delivery and their mission, in spite of global volatility.

"This class of 2020 was riding the chaos of the current global uncertainty and making the most of their unique MBA experience"

"A sizeable 84% said the MBA experience either met or exceeded their expectations so far"

Source:

<https://www.associationofmbas.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Students-Report.pdf>

Supermom determined to achieve her academic dreams



This University Business School MBA (Masters in Business Administration) student keeps pressing forward until she reaches her academic goals despite the hurdles she faces along the way.

The grace of God, perseverance and the undying desire to improve the lives of her children are what keep Elise Johanna Oosthuizen (34), pressing forward until she reaches her academic goals.

From a poverty-stricken family, Elise says nothing can stand in her way to succeed and achieve her dreams. "From a very young age, I always believed that the only way to break out of poverty and have a stable life is through education," she says. She always wanted a degree, but never knew how difficult her journey would be to get it.

Elsie was born in Derdepoort, but grew up on a farm in Rustenburg.

When she was in Hoërskool Rustenburg, her parents' financial situation took a turn for the

worste. However, she continued to see God's hand in everything and changed her life. After she matriculated in 2005, Elise wanted to further her studies, but due to finances, she could not. So she started working at the Thembelani Platinum Mine in Rustenburg, as a belt attendant.

To advance her career, she volunteered to do mining. Elise obtained a mining blasting certificate and became a miner. Year after year, she applied for study assistance, hoping to be granted the opportunity to further her studies, but her applications were unsuccessful. This did not stop her. She continued to improve her skills and gained more experience. In 2011, Elise was promoted as a human resources training practitioner.

Finally, her luck changed when she was awarded study assistance in 2014.

In 2015, she began her studies at the NWU, where she studied for her Bachelors degree in Training and Development in Human Resources Development. While there, she lost her study assistance and was obligated to pay for her studies.

During this period, things became more challenging. It was difficult to make ends meet and in her second year, Elise learnt that she was pregnant with her third child. "This pregnancy was complicated. I spent more time in and out of the hospital, but that did not stop me. I just told myself, come high or low, I had waited for more than 10 years to obtain a degree and nothing was going to stop me achieving that now," she says.

Her baby was due in November 2016 and Elise

thought she at least had time to complete her final exams before her baby would be born. To her surprise, however, her daughter came a bit earlier than expected. Left with three more exams to write, she continued her journey to complete her studies. With her baby a few weeks old, she took her with to write her second-opportunity exams.

She passed all her modules and proceeded to her final year. With her husband at work, Elise sometimes attended classes with her children as she was determined to achieve her degree.

After resigning from her job in 2017, she moved to Potchefstroom and started working at the NWU.

She obtained her qualification in 2018 and continued with her Postgraduate Diploma in Management with Business Administration, which she obtained cum laude. In 2019, she was accepted to study for her MBA, where she currently finds herself in the final stages of completing this degree. During this time, her family experienced some pains and losses, but she drew strength from her family, and her supervisor and mentor, Prof Ronnie Lotriet.

She wants to thank her family, Prof Lotriet, the NWU Business School, the Faculty of Health Science, her colleagues and all those who have supported her throughout her journey.

She encourages people not to allow circumstances to hinder them from attaining their goals. "I had nothing – started with nothing. But God provided and carried me through it all and I am still going. Yes, storms will always be there, problems will always come unexpectedly, but if you have set your eyes on that goal, you will make it, no matter what. Whatever you want to be or do, you can do it by the grace of God".

Congratulations Prof Nelda on your well-deserved success!



**The NWU Business School is proud to announce that
Prof Nelda was recently promoted to associate professor.**

Prof Nelda Mouton started her career as a teacher while completing her honours, master's and PhD degrees in English. She was then appointed as curriculum developer (as head of the FET and then of the GET phases in the North West Province) for the North West Department of Basic Education and also served as the chief education specialist for the Superintendent General of the North West Province. She also served on various national forums during her term as education specialist. In 2012, she completed her second PhD in Education Management and started her career at the NWU (2010), Mahikeng Campus. She was also appointed by the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences as an extraordinary senior lecturer. She

was then promoted to subject matter expert in the office of Prof Marlene Verhoef. After the restructuring process of the NWU, she moved to the Unit for Open and Distance Learning of the NWU as academic manager for the Faculties of Humanities and Economic Management Sciences. During this period, she completed her Postgraduate Diploma in Management qualification. In August 2020, she formally started her academic career at the NWU Business School as senior lecturer for Distance Education and Operations Management. Her focus is especially on distance/online research and supervising MBA students.

We are proud to have Prof Nelda on our team!



Latest rankings reaffirm NWU is among the best in the world

The latest rankings by Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings and the 2021 Best Global University Rankings again, like various previous rankings, recognised the good standing of the North-West University (NWU) among the best tertiary-education institutions. This is not only locally but also internationally, as measured in international rankings.

One of these rankings, THE World Rankings, highlights the quality of its subject offerings, while the other one, the 2021 Best Global University Rankings, has placed the NWU among the cream of the crop of local universities.

NWU shines through quality

THE World Rankings announced their results by subject for 2021 on 28 October. These rankings cover 11 subject areas, with performance in each area measured across four aspects. These aspects are teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook.

The NWU was measured against 1 512 universities globally. The university excelled in the clinical and health subjects, as well as in the law subject groups, and was placed globally in the 201 to 250 and the 201+ categories respectively. It also shone in psychology, where it was ranked in the 301 to 400 category.

Furthermore, the NWU was ranked in the 401+ category for arts and humanities, physical sciences, education, and engineering. Its social sciences offering was placed in the 501 to 600 category, followed by business and economics and life sciences, which were both ranked in the 601+ category.

The NWU has excelled among South African universities in the various subject areas. It was third overall locally in engineering, psychology, and physical sciences, fourth in clinical and health sciences, and sixth with law and life sciences. The NWU was seventh with both business and economics and education, and eighth in arts and humanities and social sciences.

To view the full THE subject rankings for 2021 visit: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/by-subject>

NWU among top seven universities in South Africa

The NWU was also one of only 13 South African universities to be included in the seventh annual US News and World Report's Best Global Universities Rankings for 2021.

The NWU was ranked among the top seven universities in South Africa and named number 564 on the list of the best universities globally.

These rankings are produced to provide insight into how universities compare globally. The rankings include nearly 1 500 top tertiary-education institutions across 86 countries. It takes into account the global and regional research reputation, publications, books, normalised citation impact and total citations, and international collaboration, among other things.

Commenting on the rankings, Prof Dan Kgwadi, vice-chancellor and principal of the NWU, commended staff and students for their hard work in ensuring excellence at the institution. He reiterated that although ranking is not a goal the university wants to pursue, it remains a cause for celebration when the NWU is ranked among the best. "We are proud of the NWU and its achievements as we are dedicated to being an internationally recognised university in Africa. The NWU is committed to engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care."

Ratings downgrades highlight need to change economic narrative



The latest decisions by both Fitch and Moody's to cut South Africa's investment grade rating further into junk status are not good news for the South Africa economy.

Prof Raymond Parsons, economist at the North-West University (NWU) Business School, says it again highlights the urgent need for South Africa to change its economic narrative.

"Although Standard and Poor's have kept their investment outlook as neutral for now, the fact remains that, overall, this is South Africa's worst rating ever, complicated by Covid-19. These ratings again confirm the seriousness of the growth and fiscal risks faced by the economy. It also puts the right fiscal mix in the

main Budget next February into even sharper focus."

Prof Parsons says what emerges again from much of the agencies' latest analysis is that, while it acknowledges the importance of the new Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) and the recent Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS), there is a "credibility gap" with regard to whether these policies and projects will be adequately implemented.

"Implementation risks are seen to be rising. A lack of confidence exists as to whether the tough decisions, such as on the containment of the troublesome public sector wage bill, will

indeed be made in order to help stabilise South Africa's public finances."

Prof Parsons says the strong message from the latest agency assessments therefore is that, in getting its economic house in order, South Africa needs to urgently build more confidence in its ability to deliver on what has been decided on the growth and fiscal fronts.

"In charting a course towards renewed growth and fiscal sustainability, the sooner a firm sense of economic direction can be consolidated, the better the prospects are for boosting investor confidence, achieving job-rich growth, and eventually regaining investment grade status."

Surfing the sound waves



Prof Raymond Parsons from the NWU Business School is hosted on a regular basis on the Classic Business Breakfast – the only dedicated morning radio business show in South Africa. Here, Prof Parsons, Warwick Lucas from Galileo Capital and Michael Avery, the Classic Business' presenter, are seen in studio.



Bidding farewell to our retirees



The time has come for us to bid farewell to two legends in the NWU Business School community. Dr Retha Scholtz and Mr Theo Venter have reached the milestone of retirement. As they look forward to scaling down we know without a doubt that the Business School will always remain 'home' to them.

Dr Retha was born and raised in Florida on the West Rand and attended Florida High School.

She has been part of the NWU Business School for 20 years. In 2003 she obtained her Master's degree in Industrial Psychology and started

practicing as an HPCA accredited industrial psychologist.

In 2010 she started lecturing at the NWU Business School and obtained her PhD in 2020. "My time at the Business School was filled with opportunities and support from my colleagues. I am grateful for the mentoring that I received under Prof Van Romburgh over the past two years. I had the privilege to attend eight IBC conferences that I will always treasure," she shares.

"I still have a lot of energy and look forward to this new chapter in my life. I regard this retirement

not as the end of a journey but rather as an opportunity to still share my expertise in terms of advice and consultations at the Business School. I am passionate about the academia and enjoyed my position as lecturer and industrial psychologist immensely".

Retha would like to thank the NWU Business School for 20 fruitful years.

Theo Venter's working career started in February 1978 at Military Intelligence where he worked for a period of five years before resigning to spend two years in the US as a Fulbright Fellow at the

State University of New York in Albany. During the period at Military Intelligence he was awarded the Military Medal of Merit for the work he did at the political desk on Namibia (UN Resolution 435) and the development of a scenario methodology for the military. On his return he was appointed lecturer at the department of Political Science and promoted to the deputy director of the Institute for Futures Studies in 1990. In 1995 he returned to the Department of Political Studies working as the programme manager on the MPA programme until 2001. In 2002 Theo became special adviser to the North-West University's rector, Dr Theuns Eloff, and after the merger, he stayed in this position until 2016. When Dr Eloff departed in 2013, he took the current position at the Business School and stayed on at the office of the vice-chancellor until 2016 in a part-time appointment. "The last few years at the Business School allowed me to bring all the practical experience to fruition," Theo says.

Some of the highlights and memorable moments in Theo's career include being involved in the process of negotiations at CODESA and involvement in the 1994 election. "Not far behind would be my involvement in the transformations process at the NWU from 1996 onwards and

being the first chairman of the then newly established Institutional Forum and serving on the Council of the University. In this period I was also part of a multi-university team that trained newly appointed provincial cabinets in North West, Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. It established networks that are still active today, including the current Premier of the North West Province. I acted as facilitator to at least five transitional local governments from 1999-2001 including Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, Zeerust and Randfontein. I gained incredible experience as project manager from 2009-2011 with the Potchefstroom Airport extension programme for the Soccer World Cup and met all the players that would win that World Cup for Spain in 2010," Theo mentions.

We want to thank both Dr Retha and Theo for their commitment and dedication to the Business School. It is because of people like them that we keep reaching new heights. Their absence will surely be felt. As educational television show host Fred Rogers once remarked, "Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else." We know that they will enjoy the time that lies ahead and will remember that they will always be a part of the NWU Business School.



South Africa 2024 – a scenario perspective



The North-West University Business School recently presented a Think Tank on the topic: South Africa 2024 – a scenario perspective.

Dr Frans Cronje, CEO of the Institute of Race Relations, and Dr Oscar van Heerden, Director Operations at the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflections, made presentations.

This particular Think Tank focused on political, economic, social and technological variables and the impact this will have on South Africa's future towards 2024.

Although South Africa is facing major political, economic, technological and social challenges, both presenters were positive about the future if the key political, economic and educational issues are addressed.

Dr Cronje emphasised the importance of property rights, the deregulation of markets and empowerment strategies as critical factors that may contribute to a better future for all South Africans. According to his viewpoint, empowerment should not be based on race, but rather in terms of poverty as the most important criterion.

He referred to surveys indicating the positive and constructive relationships among racial groups in the country –

contrary to what happened in Senekal and Brackenfell, for example.

Dr Van Heerden emphasised the importance of social cohesion, state capacity, a strong and active civil society, technological innovation and forms of socio-economic empowerment to address challenges in the South African context. He made specific mention of the importance of research and innovation as a determinant for development, and the importance of social grants for poor South Africans in the future.

Both presenters referred to the uncertainty in the framework of the ANC and the impact it could have on future support and the elections of 2021 and 2024.

Dr Van Heerden expects the ANC to improve their support base, while Dr Cronje emphasised the mediocre nature of party politics in South Africa, the disintegration of the ANC, the reconfiguration of politics and the necessity of coalition politics in the future.

For more information contact Prof Andre Duvenhage at Andre.Duvenhage@nwu.ac.za or 082 883 4156.

Building relationships with WITS Business School

On Tuesday 3 November, the NWU Business School was host to our colleagues, Prof Jannie Rossouw, the interim director and Sue Benvenuti, head of Academic Quality Assurance from WITS Business School. The day was arranged after a previous virtual meeting at which the two schools had shared some ideas on accreditation. This meeting was held on the premises of the NWU Business School with a simultaneous Zoom session to accommodate all colleagues. WITS Business School had their virtual re-accreditation earlier this year and the aim of the day was to share this experience with

us. Some very insightful information was collected, with the most important theme, the cooperation needed between members of the school and all stakeholders, such as: the advisory board, our industry partners, current students and alumni. All these stakeholders need to be involved, take part and deliver inputs to ensure a positive outcome of the accreditation process. The second important theme was to present the information to the AMBA panel in a well-organised and accessible way, as is demanded from a virtual accreditation exercise.

