

NELSON MANDELA

UNIVERSITY

VIRTUAL MESSAGE

Celebrating Excellence

VC's Staff Excellence Awards

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Dear colleagues

A very warm welcome to you all in this second year of pandemic-imposed remote engagement and celebration. Allow me to acknowledge in particular:

- Our Deputy Vice-Chancellors Professor Cheryl Foxcroft, Dr Thandi Mgwebi, Professor Andre Keet and Mr Lebogang Hashatse
- Executive Management
- The Deanery, and
- A particularly warm welcome to our staff members who are being honoured for their outstanding and excellent achievements

I also welcome our online audience

Thank you all for joining us as we “celebrate excellence” at Nelson Mandela University.

Celebrating Excellence

Today, we honour our “brightest and best” across the full spectrum of the university for their professionalism, their diligence and the demonstrable success that they have achieved in Teaching & Learning, Research, Engagement, Creative Outputs and Professional, Administrative and Support Services. We have come to honour their *excellence*.

Aristotle said: “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit,” and Charles Kendall Adams, second president of Cornell University had this to say: “No one ever attains very eminent success by simply doing what is required of them: it is the amount and excellence of what is *over and above* the required, that determines the greatness of ultimate distinction. ...”

Excellence then, denotes something special – a striving and aspiration to be more and better – over and above what is expected or required. It is a mindset fostered and entrenched by habit and discipline, and it is something that is tacitly acknowledged and respected by all who encounter it.

When it comes to a quality university, excellence should be axiomatic and inherent in all that we do. It should be our “go-to” or default position. It is not surprising then that Nelson Mandela University places such a premium on excellence that it is one of our core values.

But in truth, excellence remains a striving for most. Those whom we shall acknowledge this year, under the umbrella of “celebrating excellence”, have not achieved by fluke or by accident. They have developed an excellence mindset and they have been intentional in striving to *do* their best and to *be* the best in their respective fields. It is this mind-set that has enabled them to achieve so admirably.

Congratulations

So, thank you to all our achievers for 2021 for making excellence a habit. Your excellence has brought honour upon yourselves, your families and of course Nelson Mandela University. My sincere congratulations to those academics and researchers who have won either individual or team research, teaching, engagement, innovation, creative and performance awards; and to our

Professional, Administrative and Support Service staff, who have enabled the success of the academic project through their commitment to excellence.

I am immensely gratified by all your achievements, especially under the difficult working conditions that you have had to endure these past two years. You have prevailed and excelled while navigating new ways of working to enable our students to complete the 2021 Academic Year. It has not been easy.

We thank you all. We thank you for giving of your time, talents and hard labour to make it happen.

We thank your families and your support networks as well, for their encouragement and sacrifice and for the role that they have played in contributing to your success.

We salute you, congratulate you and share in your pleasure and pride.

Now let's sit back and celebrate excellence.

Thank you, baie dankie, enkosi.