

Convocation hosts its annual general meeting

The Convocation held its annual general meeting early in November. Prof Pieter Kapp, President of the Convocation, tells us more.

The bond between the mysticism of Stellenbosch and the mastery of science was illustrated in a distinctive fashion at this year's meeting of the Convocation. The great number of reunions that took place this year made one realise that it is much more than just books and knowledge that bind students to Matieland.

The presentation by the new Vice-Rector (Research), Prof Arnold van Zyl, illustrating the niche that research has carved for itself within the activities of SU, stirred a sense of pride among members of the audience at the manner in which SU is pursuing academic excellence.

According to the Leyden list, SU is second among South African universities and one of only two local universities that are ranked among the world's top 500 universities. This could only have been achieved through the variety of domains in which major projects in the field of applied and

basic research have been undertaken.

In terms of funding, Stellenbosch occupies first place in South Africa. South Africa is indeed a laboratory waiting on researchers to start plying their trade and one can thus understand that the University's international status is growing and that more and more researchers and postgraduate students are keen to use the opportunities.

Prof Christo Viljoen, Vice-President of the Convocation, indicated that with a research expenditure of merely 0,95% of its gross domestic product, South Africa still lags very far behind the target of 1,5% for developing countries.

One of the domains that Prof Van Zyl pointed out as a field of research in the humanities is South Africa's cultural and social diversity.

In my own report I could link up with what he had said by making a comparison between the key role SU played at the time of its establishment in 1918, in



The Convocation held its annual general meeting on 6 November in the HB Thom Theatre in Stellenbosch. Seen in the picture are Prof Arnold van Zyl, Vice-Rector (Research) and guest speaker at the function; Prof Christo Viljoen, Vice-President of the Convocation; Ms Sanette Nowers, member of the Convocation management; Prof Russel Botman, Rector and Vice-Chancellor and Prof Pieter Kapp, President of the Convocation.

the development of the First Afrikaans Renaissance and the current challenge of also playing a leading role in the Second Afrikaans Renaissance. In this way Stellenbosch can help to create stability and mutual understanding and insight. This can however only happen if SU focuses its language policy on meeting the need for both inclusivity and security.

- On this occasion Prof Kapp was re-elected as President of the Convocation, Prof Christo Viljoen as Vice-President and Mr Johan Aspeling as Secretary.



Left: Student council chairpersons who attended the occasion.

Right: Ernst van Dyk (centre) with guest speaker Prof Magda Fourie, Vice-Rector (Teaching) and Dr Le Roux van der Westhuizen, chairperson of the Student Council Chairpersons' Club. (Photo: Hennie Rudman, SCPS)



Student Council Chairperson's Club celebrates its 25th year of existence

The Student Council Chairpersons' Club, established in 1984 to serve as ambassadors for Stellenbosch University, celebrated its 25th birthday in October. Past presidents from way back in 1954 to 2008 attended the dinner at the Wallenburg Research Centre at STIAS at the close of the annual general meeting.

According to Dr Le Roux van der Westhuizen, the current chairperson of the Club, the culmination of the annual proceedings is the presentation of the medal of honour for service excellence. The

medal is awarded to an alumnus or alumna who has made an outstanding contribution to the South African community and who still deems his or her relationship with the University as important.

This year the award went to multiple wheelchair-racing champion Ernst van Dyk.

"Ernst van Dyk is a worldwide ambassador for South Africa and for persons with disabilities in general. He serves as an inspiration across different boundaries and is the epitome of all-consuming passion," Dr Van der Westhuizen said.

Previous recipients of the medal of honour includes Profs JG Meiring, Mike de Vries, Gawie Cillie, Evert Groenewald, Bun Booyens, Willie Esterhuyse, Elize Botha, Theo Pauw and Drs Danie Craven, Jan van der Horst, Willem de Klerk, Audrey Blignaut, Beyers Naude, Dawid de Villiers, Elsa Joubert, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and Mr Riaan Cruywagen.

Prof Magda Fourie, Vice-Rector (Teaching) was the guest speaker on this occasion and her address focused on how a pedagogy of hope could be realised for Stellenbosch University.