



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

# *Division for Internationalisation*



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# WELCOME TO THE *Division for Internationalisation*

The Division for Internationalisation at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) is responsible for maintaining and enhancing the university's relevance and reputation on the global stage. We do this by recruiting international students on behalf of UJ's nine faculties, facilitating mobility opportunities for staff and students around the world, and formalising strategic partnerships for research and exchange programmes.

Our team works closely with UJ's faculties, schools and colleges to welcome international students to our campuses. Our activities include advising students on the programmes offered at UJ, guiding them through the application process, and helping with all the legal and compliance-related matters involved, including study visas and medical aid.

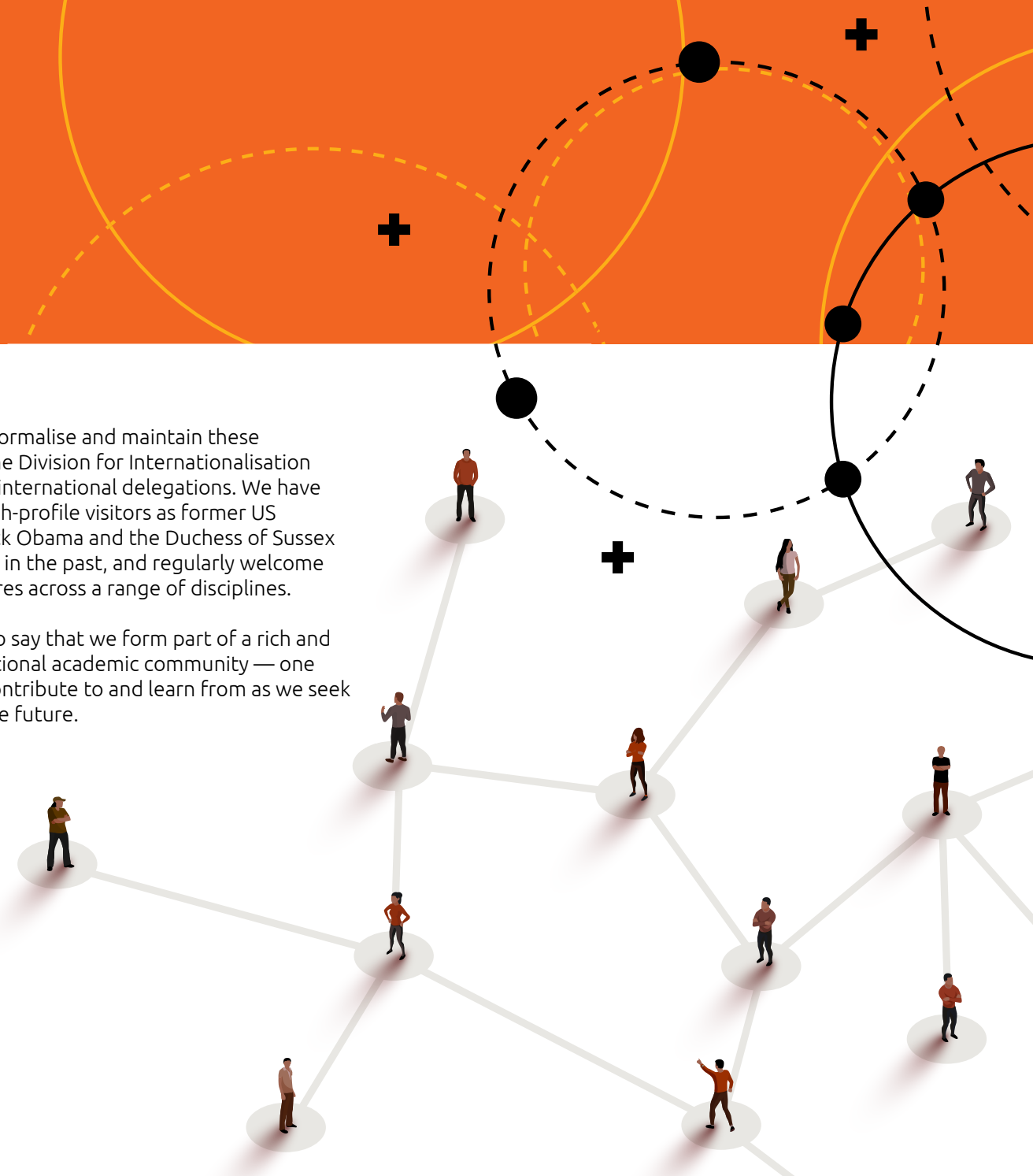
Once they are in South Africa, we help our international students register at UJ, introduce them to students and lecturers through our orientation initiatives, and provide them with ongoing student welfare services. We also liaise with South African foreign missions and the Department of Home Affairs when this is required.

Our support doesn't end there. It extends to our own staff and students who are interested in pursuing opportunities beyond South Africa's borders. The programmes we facilitate range from short courses to extended exchange programmes across Southern Africa, the continent and the world. In every aspect of this work, we help our staff and students to become global citizens with enhanced intellectual, social and cultural knowledge.

We also help to advocate for, establish and sustain strategic bilateral and multilateral partnerships. These partnerships exist between universities, organisations and governments across Africa, BRICS member states, and the global south, north and Asia-Pacific regions. We have strong relationships in place with the Association of Commonwealth Universities and Universitas 21 networks, too.

In an effort to formalise and maintain these partnerships, the Division for Internationalisation regularly hosts international delegations. We have hosted such high-profile visitors as former US President Barack Obama and the Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle in the past, and regularly welcome prominent figures across a range of disciplines.

We are proud to say that we form part of a rich and diverse international academic community — one that we both contribute to and learn from as we seek to reimagine the future.





A WORD FROM OUR SENIOR DIRECTOR

# *on our international strategy*

At UJ, we know that if we want to influence our country, continent and the world at large, we need to nurture and facilitate a global outlook among our staff and students. Through its many programmes, courses, interventions and partnerships, the Division for Internationalisation sits at the heart of these efforts.

We believe that universities and higher education institutions can no longer be the ivory towers they once were, removed from a rapidly changing world and policy context. Instead, modern universities have to be underpinned by equity, diversity and inclusion, both in how they are organised and how they run their activities.

Universities also have to be conscious of the roles they fulfil. At the most basic, they provide people with the qualifications and skills necessary for employment. But they also form part of a knowledge economy through the research their students and academics conduct.

This puts them in a unique position to push the boundaries of human knowledge and contribute to the world in a multitude of ways.

Universities have a particularly important role to play as forces for social good. This is especially clear in South Africa, the continent and the wider global south, where education is critical in helping people build better lives.

At UJ, our global strategy aims to continuously build our national and global reputation for critical intellectual inquiry. We aim to enhance our standing and rankings by leveraging our networks and partners, and building strong internal and alumni structures.

In practice, this involves pursuing academic collaboration with reputable universities worldwide, increasing our international and industry partnerships, and leveraging external funding. We want to build strategic relationships that are values-based and sustainable. This entails partnering with, and participating in activities that promote internationalisation with other higher education institutions and global networks.

We strive to ensure that all our global engagements are guided by the pursuit of positive societal impacts and sustainability. To this end, our partnerships and engagements are aligned with, and our staff are trained in, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). We also actively seek to address global challenges and encourage science without borders.

This is the first magazine we have produced to showcase our activities, events and, especially, our community of students, staff and partners. We hope that you will find the pages that follow interesting and inspiring.

**Prof. Ylva Rodny-Gumede**



# UJ'S POSITION

## soars in global rankings

In 2023, UJ improved its standing in the latest Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, the most prestigious and influential university rankings in the world. Today, the university is ranked among the top 500 universities globally in the 401–500 band. This is an all-time high for UJ, and a significant achievement considering our relatively short 20-year history.

“While university rankings remain a contentious topic, they provide a valuable benchmark of university performance,” says Lisa Bonney, Institutional Researcher at the Institutional Research and Planning Unit. “They push universities to be at the top of their game, providing quality world-class teaching and learning, conducting cutting-edge research and innovation, making a positive impact on society, and shaping a sustainable future.”

We are delighted that, as of 2023, the THE Rankings have placed UJ fourth in South Africa, up four places since 2022. And we are proud of our position in the THE’s Impact Rankings, which assess universities against the UN SDGs. We hold the top position in South Africa in over 40% of the SDGs, and are placed number one overall in South Africa, and number one in the world for SDG 1.

“Our rise in the rankings is testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff and students,” says Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi, UJ’s Vice-Chancellor and Principal. “We are committed to providing our students with a world-class education, and to conducting research that has a positive impact on society. Our improved ranking is a reflection of our progress towards these goals.”

The following tables indicate where UJ is placed in terms of several international rankings, as well as the THE’s impact rankings.



## WORLD RANKINGS

Ranking	World	South Africa
Times Higher Education World University Rankings	401–500	4
QS World University Rankings	306	4
Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai Ranking)	501–600	5
Best Global Universities Ranking	421	5
University Ranking by Academic Performance	537	6
Center for World University Rankings	628	6
Webometrics	612	6

## IMPACT RANKINGS

Ranking	World	South Africa
Overall ranking	46	1
SDG 1: No Poverty	1	1
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	93	1
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	301–400	4
SDG 4: Quality Education	55	1
SDG 5: Gender Equality	17	2
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	201–300	2
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	101–200	1
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	6	2
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	201–300	2
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	40	1
SOG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	201–300	2
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	44	1
SDG 13: Climate Action	301–400	1
SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	101–200	2
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	201–300	3

# Facts and figures

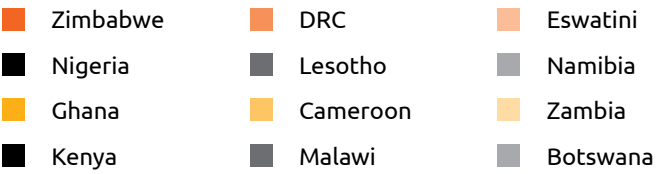
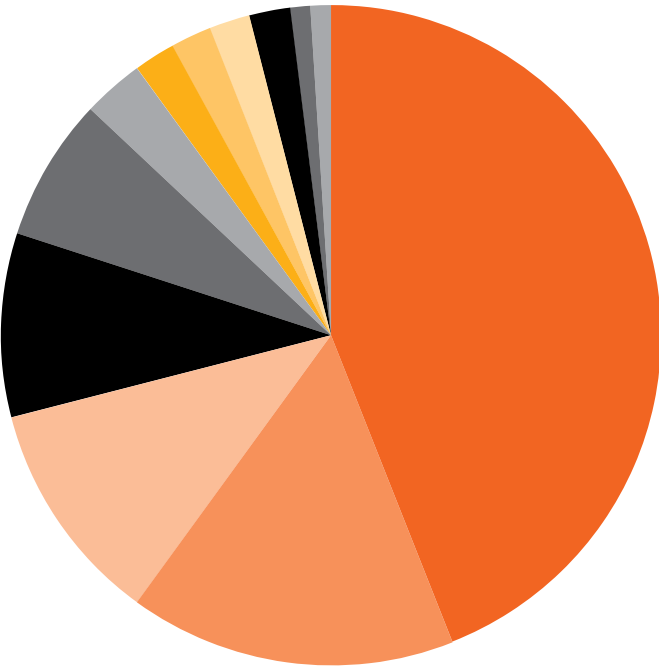
We consistently strive to promote our world-class qualifications so that we can attract and enrol a wide variety of students. This work involves active marketing, recruitment and enrolment efforts across our regional and international markets.

Our international recruitment activities include virtual information sessions, adverts in newspapers in targeted countries, web banners, recruitment fairs and international school visits. The International Student Recruitment and Admissions team has developed a strong working relationship with a number of schools, particularly in the SADC region, and undertakes annual school visits to Lesotho, Botswana, Eswatini and Namibia. The other countries targeted for recruitment purposes include Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Zambia and Ghana.

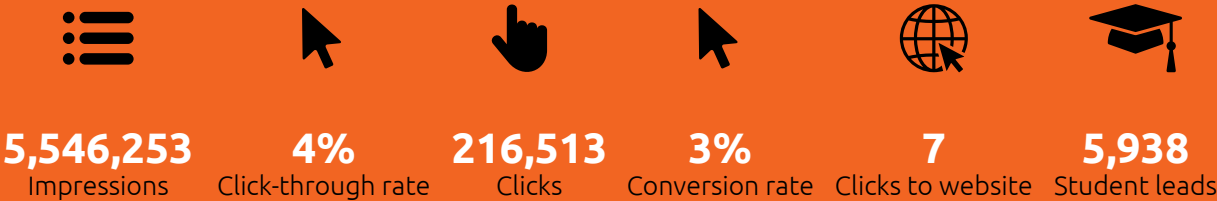
For the 2023 academic year, we had 4,558 international students representing 82 countries at UJ.

In terms of our marketing efforts, the UJ website saw over 5.5 million impressions, with a 4% click-through rate and a 3% conversion rate between January and September 2023. This resulted in almost 6,000 student leads, whom our international student registration team was able to contact.

## STUDENT DIVERSITY



## UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG



Most of our impressions, clicks and student leads came from the countries below.

No.	Impressions		Clicks		Student leads	
1	USA	23%	South Africa	39%	South Africa	38%
2	South Africa	18%	USA	23%	Nigeria	6%
3	France	6%	France	6%	Ghana	4%
4	Germany	4%	UK	5%	Zimbabwe	3%
5	UK	4%	Germany	4%	Kenya	3%



# A look at our recruitment

Creating a rich and diverse complement of students at UJ involves promoting our university to students across the region, the continent and the world. A lot of this work is run by our International Student Recruitment and Admissions unit. While the unit's activities are conducted year-round, UJ accepts only one intake of students, which takes place in January every year.

While he was on a recent recruitment trip to Lagos, Nigeria, we spoke to the unit's Senior Director, Tshidiso Konese, who offered some insight into his team's work.

"Our programme involves recruiting undergraduate and postgraduate students from new and existing markets," Tshidiso explains. "Once they apply, our unit looks at the undergraduate applications, while the postgraduate applications go to the relevant faculties directly. As you can imagine, we work closely with UJ's faculties, schools and departments."

Where once Zimbabwe used to be UJ's primary source of international students, this has since changed. Today, the university works closely with South Africa's neighbours in Southern Africa, and with countries in East and West Africa, too. Students are drawn by UJ's impressive rankings, and by the country's relative affordability over universities in the US, Canada and Europe.

"Ensuring diversity and social cohesion is at the heart of our work," Tshidiso says. "We help students to learn about different cultures and to understand alternative perspectives. It is rewarding and meaningful work that cuts to the core of UJ's ethos."

The unit is delighted by some of the successes it has seen. These include the international undergraduate students who went on to become PhD candidates, the lecturer in Public Management and Governance who first came to UJ as a refugee, and the Zimbabwean student who now works for the Human Rights Commission.



BROADENING STUDENTS' HORIZONS

# Africa by Bus

*"Our work involves creating global citizens," says the Division for Internationalisation's Lebethe Malefo. "That's what we believe is our primary responsibility. And one of the ways we do that is through our Africa by Bus programme."*

Africa by Bus was first launched in 2012. Through it, faculties collaborate with the division to help students travel to countries within SADC by bus. While it started as a cultural exchange programme initially, Africa by Bus has since developed into a more formal academic programme. It is one of the university's most successful projects.

"Africa by Bus is our flagship initiative," Lebethe explains. "It's the biggest programme in terms of the number of students, partners and collaborators involved. Before we started Africa by Bus, many of our students travelled to Europe if they were looking for international experience. We didn't have a programme in place that focused on Africa — and we knew that was something we had to remedy."

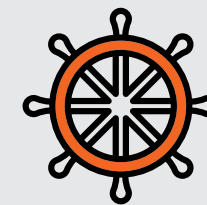
The different countries and activities chosen depend on the different faculties involved. In 2023, a total of 180 students visited Botswana, Mozambique, Eswatini, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho.



## Some of our programmes:



**The Faculty of Health Sciences** runs clinical interventions in several different countries. The results of these interventions are reported on every year, and published in a journal.



**The Faculty of Science** runs a marine ecology research project in Mozambique. This is a credit-bearing project, which means it forms part of one of the students' modules.



**The Dean of Humanities** runs a liberation history programme that visits different liberation camps throughout the continent.



**The Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture** runs an internship programme at Windhoek Fashion Week, where students who assist receive a certificate.

"The Africa by Bus experience is life-changing for our students," Lebethe adds. "It helps to open the minds of those who are ambivalent about travelling, or who have preconceived ideas about other countries in Africa. After their time away, we find that they're even more enthusiastic about their chosen disciplines, and that they tend to do well once they enter the workplace."



# UJ World Cafés — a meeting place for all

The UJ World Café series began in 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. It formed part of the Division for Internationalisation's Study Abroad Programme, and was intended to keep international study in the minds of UJ students, despite it not being possible at the time.

"Beyond the academic and professional advantages, international travel also helps students to build their confidence, become more culturally sensitive, understand globalisation, and network with people and organisations worldwide," says Lethebe Malefo, UJ's Director of Study Abroad and International Student Services. "We knew we needed to keep the possibility of its return alive during the hardest days of lockdown."

The series targeted students registered at UJ, and was delivered virtually by academics and experts who had travelled extensively for work and study, developed study abroad programmes, or hosted events internationally. Today, the World Café serves as an essential tool, linking UJ's students and academics to the rest of the world, and to current and potential partners.

In its four years, the series has included fascinating discussions by Dr John Lucas, President and CEO of the International Student Exchange Program, and Luis Munana, Director of Windhoek Fashion Week, on their international studies, and how these experiences shaped them personally and professionally.

Jacob Lief, Founder and CEO of Ubuntu Pathways, spoke about the need for projects that uplift, inspire and transform communities, and Professor Ylva Rodny-Gumede, Senior Director, Division for Internationalisation at UJ, described her experience managing UJ's mobility and intercultural exchange communication during the pandemic.

South African writer, filmmaker and music producer Professor Zakes Mda spoke openly about his writing journey and what has driven his success, while Professor Erik McDuffie from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign explored racism and apartheid in the United States and South Africa. Students from Birzeit University in the West Bank, described what it means to study as a Palestinian and how Israeli authorities restrict mobility and academic freedom in the occupied territories.

Each of these presentations contributed productively to our World Cafés, and helped to expand the perspectives of all our attendees. Looking ahead, it's likely that we will hold in-person World Café sessions as well as virtual meetings.

## Meet Eden Nur, one of our international students

**My name is Eden Nur and I am an international student at UJ. I am originally from Addis Ababa in Ethiopia.**

My university experience as an international student has been nothing short of transformative. As with most students, I wasn't sure what to expect when I first arrived. It didn't take long for that anxiety to subside, though, as I was soon welcomed by a vibrant community of local and international students.

At UJ, you so quickly encounter other international students that it sometimes feels like you never left home at all. The local students are also often intrigued by the international arrivals and take any opportunity to connect with us and expand their world views.

The academic rigour and the engaging, passionate professors I have worked with have challenged me to reach new heights. And I have been encouraged by the fact that some of the staff are also from other parts of the continent and the world. I think this displays the university's commitment to drawing from a diverse pool of knowledge.

But what makes this experience truly exceptional is the friendships I've forged and the global perspectives I've gained. I've had the privilege of sharing cultures, ideas and experiences with fellow students from around the globe. The exposure to different cultures and viewpoints has not only broadened my understanding of the world but also enriched my personal growth.

In addition to being a student, I have also had the opportunity to work at UJ's International House as a student assistant. There I have witnessed first-hand just how committed the staff are in helping international students at the university. They display genuine compassion and understanding for how stressful and complex it is for international students to study in a foreign land. And they work tirelessly to make this experience as smooth as possible.

I will always be incredibly grateful for the opportunities and memories UJ has provided me.



## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

# through high-profile visitors and delegations

UJ's reputation as a university of international excellence and stature is reinforced by the strong relationships we hold with our international partners and the high-profile visitors and delegations we host. As we welcome these prominent people to our campuses, we help to further conversations about some of the most important issues of the day.

In the last year, we were pleased to discuss racial equity with Her Excellency Anielle Francisco da Silva, the Minister of Racial Equality in Brazil; women and gender-based violence with Her Excellency Monica Geingos, the First Lady of Namibia; and disability and neurodiversity with the Honourable Anne Rabbitte, the Irish Minister of State for Disability.

### Race equity

Da Silva is a journalist and educator who holds a master's degree in ethnic-racial relations. Her visit came as the 15th annual BRICS Summit drew to a close in Johannesburg.

"The marks of colonialism and the enslavement of Africans and Afro-descendants have a profound effect on communities and countries around the world," she said during her visit to UJ. "Brazil and South Africa, despite different colonisations, still reflect a great social appetite between access to opportunities, dignified life and well-being of mostly vulnerable black populations. . . It seems to me this South-South collaboration is perhaps the crucial paradigm to a world in which there is equity, equality and justice."

### Women

Geingos was one of our honoured guests at our Transformation Unit's discussion on equitable spaces for women. She spoke about the importance of addressing difficult topics like gender-based violence and acknowledged the role patriarchy plays in perpetuating it.

Geingos also noted that a lack of respect for the inherent dignity of others is at the root of many social ills, including gender-based violence. She urged families, universities and governments to do more to address the issue, advocating for changing mindsets and promoting accountability.

### Disability and neurodiversity

When Rabbitte came to UJ's Soweto Campus, it was to visit the Faculty of Education's new Centre for Neurodiversity and its flagship programme on childhood education. Through various initiatives, the centre aims to address the neurodevelopmental learning needs of children and the youth.

During her visit, Rabbitte stressed the importance of using educational psychology in communities, and putting mechanisms in place to support learners, students and educators. "Children don't know how to ask, that's the same challenges the global north and south face. Early intervention is key. The younger we can identify and diagnose, the better the outcomes, the fewer gaps, and the better the solutions," she said.



Brazilian Association of Rectors of State and Municipal Universities (ABRUEM).

















Discussion with H.E. Mrs. Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia.



Irish Minister of State for Disability The Honourable, Anne Rabbitte T.D. visit to the Soweto Campus.



*We were also proud to welcome a number of high-profile delegates to our campus during 2023*

13 JANUARY		High Commissioner of Canada to South Africa
2 MARCH		Consul General of India, Johannesburg
7 MARCH		Minister in the Embassy of the People's Republic of China
16 MARCH		Irish Minister of State for Disability The Honourable, Anne Rabbitte T.D.
24 MARCH		Ghent, Antwerp and KU Leuven
28 MARCH		SASUF Swedish VC's delegation
20 APRIL		H.E. Mrs. Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia
3 MAY		Her Excellency Samar Al-Zibdeh, Chargé d'Affaires a.i Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Jordan
22 MAY		University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
25 MAY		Carleton University
2 AUGUST		His Excellency Charles A. Owiredu, High Commissioner of the Republic of Ghana to South Africa
17 AUGUST		Her Excellency Sandra Kramer, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to South Africa
23 AUGUST		Shen Haixiong, Vice Minister of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee and President and Editor-in-Chief of China Media Group
24 AUGUST		Her Excellency, Anielle Francisco da Silva, Minister for Racial Equality, Brazil
30 AUGUST		Brazilian Association of Rectors of State and Municipal Universities (ABRUEM)



Carleton University



Her Excellency Samar Al-Zibdeh, Chargé d'Affaires a.i Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Jordan to South Africa



Her Excellency Sandra Kramer, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to South Africa



His Excellency Charles A. Owiredu, High Commissioner of the Republic of Ghana to South Africa



His Excellency, Chris Cooter, High Commissioner of Canada to South Africa



Shen Haixiong, Vice Minister of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee and President and Editor-in-Chief.



University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



SASUF Swedish VC's delegation



## EXPANDING UJ'S

# global engagement and partnership footprint

UJ is committed to contributing to and having an impact on national, continental and international transformation agendas. A key component of this involves partnering with higher education institutions and organisations that align with the university's goals, and encouraging joint research, new knowledge creation and the exchange of ideas.

As part of this process, the Division for Internationalisation facilitated the following international trips during 2023.

### Slovenia

In June, UJ Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi led a UJ delegation on a working trip to the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. The two universities signed a memorandum of understanding and participated in a conference on "The Universality of the Rule of Law: Sustainable Development".

### Ghana

In August, a UJ delegation visited the Ghana Communication Technology University. In addition to signing a memorandum of understanding, Professor Mpedi delivered a keynote address on "Ethics and Regulations in an AI Era". The trip's highlight was the launch of the UJ alumni chapter in Ghana.

### Belgium

In September, a team from UJ attended a European regional conference on labour and social security in Belgium. The event was hosted by Ghent University and the Belgium Society for Labour and Social Security Law. Productive engagements were held with the Faculties of Law and Criminology, Arts, Design and Architecture from several universities.

### USA

In September, Dr Nolitha Vukuza, UJ's Senior Executive Director and MEC member, led a delegation of the university's student leadership, including the Central SRC and the Chairs of House Committees, to the USA. The group participated in the Global Student Leadership Program at the Appalachian University in North Carolina.

### Japan

In September, Professor Mpedi delivered an opening address at a panel discussion on transformational leadership in higher education. He spoke passionately about societal impact, and how the vision, mission and activities of universities must translate into transformed communities. He also gave a special word of thanks to the International Association of University Presidents for fostering global collaboration across the higher education landscape.



### Erasmus

In 2023, more than a dozen staff members travelled to Italy, Türkiye, Greece and Lithuania as part of the Erasmus programme. Simultaneously, two groups of faculty from Italy and Türkiye arrived at UJ. This exchange offered valuable staff training opportunities, particularly for the unit that manages Erasmus agreements and partnerships.

The UJ team also participated in a discussion in Italy regarding UJ's potential involvement with the UNITE Alliance and our continued involvement with the Una Europa Africa working group.

# Awards for the recognition and benefit of the international community

In February, UJ Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi presented the 2023 Global Excellence and Stature (GES) Award to Dr Kakha Shengelia, President of Caucasus University, at a ceremony held in Tbilisi, Georgia. The GES Award is a relatively new award that isn't made every year, but rather only when there are exceptional nominations.

It wasn't the first time Dr Shengelia had been recognised for his work. At the annual Vice-Chancellor's Awards, he was commended for contributing to the worldwide vision of global higher education by promoting peace and international understanding through education.

For the GES Award, Dr Shengelia was celebrated for championing intercultural, scientific and intellectual exchanges and demonstrating exemplary leadership.

"His emphasis on global excellence and stature finds many parallels at UJ and there are lessons and opportunities to be gained," Professor Mpedi said at the ceremony. "We have long emphasised excellence and celebrated it when demonstrated.

"An important aspect of our strategy has been our focus on internationalisation and partnerships. There are enormous benefits to be gained from engaging internationally to increase our profile and research capability. International collaboration in higher education leads to breakthroughs in knowledge, the free exchange of ideas, and enduring bonds between institutions and nations."

Dr Shengelia announced that Professor Mpedi would be given an honorary doctorate at the Caucasus University later in 2023.

The Division for Internationalisation is also proud to acknowledge Tshidiso Konese, Senior Manager of International Student Recruitment and Admissions.

Tshidiso was recently recognised for his outstanding work at the 2023 International Career & College Counselling Conference & Expo in India. He received an award for his counselling-based approach to student recruitment and admissions in Africa.

"Part of our work involves collaborating with the counselling departments of different schools across Africa, helping them prepare their learners for higher education," he explains. "I was surprised to hear that I had been nominated for this award, and it was an extraordinary honour to stand among the other nominees who are doing great work in this field."



# From funding proposals to high-impact grants

The Division for Internationalisation's Funding and Administration unit coordinates research, student and staff mobility, and scholarship funding proposals. There are several recent projects that we have been involved in that have led to high-impact grants being awarded to the university's faculties.

The Faculty of Humanities has been awarded a R37 million grant to host an Intra-Africa Scholarship Programme, which is funded by the EU Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Programme. Towards Enhancing Sustainable and Innovative Environmental Change Solutions (TESIECS) is a Southern African initiative that will enhance academic mobility through collaboration between five Southern African universities and one EU technical partner.

TESIECS's primary objective is to promote the expansion of qualifications, technical and vocational skills, and pro-active solution-focused capacities of talented Southern African professionals. It encourages participants to get involved in and influence government policies, and to raise public awareness through the adoption of local, regional and global best practices on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Another milestone was a grant awarded to the Faculty of Law by the Co-Impact Gender Fund. The Co-Impact Gender Fund will support and partner with organisations to strengthen the development of women's leadership across all levels. It will also disseminate information on how to support gender equality.

The project aims to implement institutional change in the legal profession in South Africa by sustainably advancing female leadership. It will work towards creating an institution that is responsive to the lived experiences of black women, promoting their agency, voice and power, and reimagining barriers to entry, leadership and success. The target population will be black female law students and early-career female academics.

The project was launched in June 2023, together with core partners, including the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges, Women in Law in South Africa, and Mapongwana Attorneys Inc.

In her opening speech, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor Wesahl Domingo, said, "This is the first project of its kind both at the university and from the Co-Impact Fund, as it usually donates to philanthropic NGOs. While the project is launched at UJ, the bigger picture is to impact the lives of marginalised future legal leaders in South Africa."

Dr Charissa Fawole has been coordinating the project since 2021 under the leadership of Professor Domingo. In her remarks, she reflected that the long journey to get to this point was motivated by the goal of equipping and empowering black women to take up positions of leadership and thrive in the legal profession.

"In a continent rich in diversity, culture, and resilience, it is imperative that we recognise the immense potential that lies within the hearts and minds of young African women," Dr Franaaz Khan, a project partner, added. "By empowering them through education, we can unlock a future of limitless possibilities, not only for these women but for entire nations."





The Future.  
Reimagined.