

Setting goals and objectives is a critical part of any strategic plan, but a path must be plotted, targets set, to ensure that progress can be monitored on the way to realising those objectives. This document shows the baseline, current position of the University, and the progressive targets that it intends to meet on the way to 2025.

Strategic Plan 2025

Tracking progress towards achieving



1. FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL

These are challenging times for higher education in our country, as we continue to experience high unemployment, poverty and inequality in the wider society of which we are a part. These issues put pressure on our higher education system, to serve as the cornerstone of all efforts to radically transform our society, and provide a mechanism that will enable the country to meet these challenges. For the University of Johannesburg (UJ), this calls for radical changes and new ways to improve our teaching and learning, to enhance our research footprint and to ensure that the institution becomes more efficient and effective.

It is pleasing to note, however, that despite these many challenges, the university continued with its excellent performance, and surpassed all its key strategic targets for the last couple of years. These achievements ensured that UJ forged an identity unique among local and international universities, as a well-performing institution. As we continue in our quest to take UJ to greater heights, and boldly enter the international higher education space, we intend to attract and retain illustrious international academic staff, and high performing international students. However, we also realised that these ambitions required a moment to pause and reflect on the appropriateness of our vision and strategic focus, if we are to ensure that UJ remains competitive and attractive as a global institution of learning. Consequently, Council engaged with the Management Executive Committee in holistic and systemic strategic thinking which culminated in the development and adoption of the Strategic Plan 2025, with special emphasis on Global Excellence and Stature.

Born in 2005, out of the merger of three legacy institutions, that is, Technikon Witwatersrand founded in 1921, Rand Afrikaans University founded in 1968 and Vista University founded in 1979, UJ has now transformed into a diverse, inclusive, transformational and collegial institution, with a student population of over 49000, of which 2500 are international students from 52 countries. This makes UJ one of the largest contact universities in South Africa.

The VC also secured a place for UJ in the exclusive Universitas 21 group of research universities, initiated as an international network of universities for collaborative research and shared strategic thinking on globally important issues. UJ also improved its standing as a uniquely positioned academic institution locally and globally, with considerable gains in research output contributing to the global body of knowledge and improving the university's ranking. The university has also created space for academic staff and students of diverse cultures, institutions and languages to grow into a single, well integrated, multi-campus university community of international stature.

Council is extremely grateful for the strategic role displayed by the leadership of UJ in uniquely positioning the University as a global player. As Council, we have confidence and trust in the high levels of commitment and hard work of the collective leadership to implement this strategic plan and take this university to even greater heights.

PROFESSOR ROY MARCUS

Chairperson of Council

2. INTRODUCTION BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Shifting our identity and brand from new, young and innovative to a university of global excellence and stature is the future we desire for UJ. This new thinking, necessitated the review of the 2020 Strategic Plan, and the development of the 2025 Strategic Plan, anchored in the single strategic goal “Global Excellence and Stature” (GES). The new 2025 strategic plan places a lot of emphasis on “excellence” which is also a recurring theme throughout the six strategic objectives as outlined below. Over the years, UJ has focused on building a reputation of accessible excellence, and established itself as an institution of global excellence and world class stature. This is evident in the international recognition that UJ has won including its positioning by the authoritative Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings as being among the top 4% of universities in the world, and among the top 1% of universities in the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China & South Africa), where it is ranked 61st among this economic bloc’s 6 200 universities. It is also noteworthy that in both QS WUR and QS BRICS, UJ obtained high scores in the categories of academic and employer reputation, and international faculty. The URAP rankings that focus solely on research output, research impact and global research collaboration, place UJ among the top ten universities in Africa.

UJ is also the first and only African university admitted to the highly respected consortium of 28 research-intensive universities, otherwise known as Universitas 21, an important endorsement of its growing international stature. Furthermore, prospective university students voted UJ the second coolest and preferred university brand in South Africa for five successive years. UJ also boasts world class, internationally recognised academic programmes, based on curricula informed by cutting-edge developments in both undergraduate and postgraduate education. Most important, is the fact that our programmes are designed to prepare students for the world of work and for global citizenship, with a solid reputation of excellence established in our several flagship programmes.

In order to make our teaching, research and innovation goals a reality, we have over the past eight years invested in excess of R2 billion in the upgrading and expansion of living and learning facilities on all four of our campuses, with the intention of creating a safe, secure, world class learning and research environment for both staff and students. We also successfully introduced our ground breaking on-line late applications system in 2013, exceeded by far our target success rates, beat our graduate output targets, surpassed our research output goals, significantly grew our global footprint and academic reputation, and achieved an outstanding 93% graduate employment level within 12 months of student graduation.

All these awards and accolades, and our overall past performance, makes UJ a prominent academic institution in the local and international academic systems, and our willingness to submit credentials for international evaluation is a demonstration of courage, commitment and confidence in our staff and student community at large.

TOWARDS GLOBAL EXCELLENCE AND STATURE

Our vision is to be nationally responsive in a manner that only we can be, while we pursue global excellence and stature. We will therefore dedicate our time and resources over time towards the development and implementation of our global excellence and stature goal. We will, for example, make considerable new investments through the recruitment of a critical mass of distinguished visiting professors, and exceptional postdoctoral fellows, master's and doctoral students in our flagship teaching and research programmes. Our GES initiative seeks to nurture globally astute graduates. In that respect, a landmark initiative for which preparations started during 2013, is the phased introduction of the university-wide use of tablets and notebooks for teaching, learning, assessment and research.

We have set ourselves six new strategic objectives to drive the GES, with excellence as a recurring theme. The emphasis on excellence is important and necessary, as academic excellence forms the basis for the institution's contribution to nation-building, economic development, sustainability of innovative capacity, and education of the future workforce.

It is our sincere belief, that the achievement of the targets we have set for ourselves in relation to our six strategic objectives will make our vision of Global Excellence and Stature a reality, and make UJ a stronger, global university.

PROFESSOR IHRON RENSBURG

Vice Chancellor and Principal

<p style="text-align: center;">VISION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">An international university of choice, anchored in Africa, dynamically shaping the future.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MISSION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Inspiring its community to transform and serve humanity through innovation and the collaborative pursuit of knowledge.</p>
VALUES	
<p>IMAGINATION</p> <p>Shaping the future Thinking independently Developing a cosmopolitan identity Exhibiting ambition and drive Adopting entrepreneurial approaches</p>	<p>CONVERSATION</p> <p>Learning together from our diversity Making wise decisions collectively Engaging meaningfully with one another Displaying mutual respect Leading consultatively</p>
<p>REGENERATION</p> <p>Developing sustainability through creative contribution Introspecting for renewal Innovating for the common good Making positive change Taking advantage of overlooked opportunities</p>	<p>ETHICAL FOUNDATION</p> <p>Treasuring academic freedom Seeking balance in the pursuit of knowledge Facing challenges with courage and earning trust Acting responsibility by being fair, consistent and transparent Participating in and helping the community(Ubuntu)</p>

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following six strategic objectives also provide a focused means for realising the Vision, Mission and Values of the University as set out above. They further represent a re-working of the original Strategic Thrusts 2020 in the context of a wider positioning of the University as “The Pan-African” Centre for Critical Intellectual Inquiry, with the primary goal of achieving global excellence and stature.

Strategic objective one: Excellence in Research and Innovation – will be achieved through a focussed approach to Postgraduate studies, Research and Innovation. The aim is to attract outstanding graduates from diverse backgrounds into our postgraduate programmes, by offering a range of innovative programmes characterised by the highest level of scholarship and rigour that incorporate into the curriculum, cutting edge research developments. The university also aims to increase its stature and reputation through the quality, integrity and impact of its research endeavour, particularly as it engages with issues pertinent to the pan-African context. We will also promote the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship by providing a stimulating and supportive environment, especially in its technology stations, for problem-solving research projects that can be commercialised, and applied technology-driven research and development with the potential to lead to patents and technology transfer.

Strategic objective two: Excellence in Teaching and Learning – will be achieved through maintaining an appropriate enrolment profile, offering intellectually rigorous curricula which respond innovatively to the challenges of the 21st century, promoting outstanding achievements by the full range of our highly diverse student body, and establishing pre-eminence and stature as a teaching-focused institution. The enrolment profile will show increasing growth in SET fields, while maintaining significant proportions of enrolment across all the other primary disciplinary areas, with an emphasis on enrolment of outstanding students from diverse backgrounds, a significant proportion of international students, and a significant number of students from schools in the lowest two quintiles. We will offer a mix of strong, leading-edge, technology-driven programmes, professional and general formative programmes, some of which will have an inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary character, while some will be developed to the eminence of flagship status. The university will also aim to achieve excellent student success rates, improved retention and increased graduate output, and finally develop teaching as a scholarly activity.

Strategic objective three: International Profile for Global Excellence and Stature – will be achieved through recruitment of international students and staff, study abroad programmes (inbound & outbound), and smart institutional partnerships. The aim is to have an increased proportion of undergraduate and postgraduate international students through focused recruitment from Africa, the BRICS nations, Asia, the Americas, Australasia and Europe. Recruitment will target international academics of stature, and post-doctoral and other fellows, while for students structured inbound study abroad programmes will become a significant feature of our offerings. We also intend to increase the number and stature of our partnerships with universities, selected United Nations agencies, the African Union and various embassies to secure funding and facilitate the offering of joint degrees, executive short learning programmes and the establishment of a Global Policy Institute for Africa or Leadership School.

Strategic objective four: Enriching Student-Friendly Learning and Living Experience – will be achieved through excellent teaching and learning facilities, support through the student life cycle, learning and living communities, and a responsible and respectful student culture and ethos. We aim to provide sufficient teaching and learning facilities of varying sizes that are well equipped to serve as lecture, tutorial, seminar and laboratory venues. Our libraries throughout all campuses will operate as hubs for student learning through the provision of social and leaning commons and WiFi access. We will also provide a package of career and programme guidance to learners at school level, academic advice for appropriate placement, access to bursaries and loans, psycho-social counselling and career counselling at exit level. The learning and

living objective is to provide students with an environment that is nurturing and supportive of their academic endeavours, and provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities to meet their needs and interests, and foster their all-round development. Lastly we aim to produce students who are responsible and accountable for their actions, and respectful of human dignity, especially in relation to women, foreign students, gays and lesbians.

Strategic objective five: National and Global Reputation Management – We aim to be a pan-African centre of critical intellectual inquiry through extensive scholarship, participation in the knowledge networks of the continent, including partnering with CODERSIA and through a flow of scholars from the continent to UJ, as visiting professors to participate in our public lectures, seminars and programmes. We will also enhance public awareness of our academic achievements by profiling flagship programmes, top academic scholars and students, and our achievements and awards. We will develop dynamic brand and marketing strategies that enable the careful management of transitions through consistent alignment of all elements and environments, internal and external, including the UJ website, social media and the way in which the University advertises positions. We will also have proactive and responsive communications systems in place that project a positive image of the University and its achievements into the public arena and that enable an effective response to crises. We further intend to play a significant role in public leadership through thoughtful, well-informed and scholarly reflection and engagement on the part of our senior scholars, senior management, senior academic leaders, student leaders and members of Council. Our alumni group remains a very important stakeholder, and we will establish an active alumni base characterised by its loyalty to the institution, its positive promotion of our reputation and well-being, and its contribution to our time, expertise and resources.

Strategic objective six: Fitness for Global Excellence and Stature – We will put in place world class financial systems to ensure good investment returns and overall financial stability and sustainability. Our employment strategies for academic staff will build the proportions of black, women, disabled, and international staff, including the attraction and retention of illustrious academic staff. Promoting a welcoming and caring environment will be manifest in well-kept gardens, buildings and facilities, helpful and prompt attention at all service points and open communication. We will also minimise harmful impact on our environment through managing our carbon footprint, reducing energy and water wastage, encouraging paperless communication, and overall fostering of a culture of responsible stewardship. We will also provide world class infrastructure and systems, and ensure our operations are underpinned by principles of good governance.