



## Preface

The period that framed this sixth volume in the *Ad Destinatium* series was marked by several significant events and developments, among which was the appointment of the 12th Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria, Prof Cheryl de la Rey. The purpose of each volume is to serve as a reference resource of a specific time period, and over time, to reflect the unique circumstances that have shaped the University's identity and academic project. In this volume, we set out to trace and reconstruct major institutional developments during the period 2009 to 2018, which coincided with this leadership era.

The challenge was accurately and authentically to capture this timeframe, so that each chapter would be nested in an overall narrative that tells the story of the University. In addition to the texts, we intentionally included images that speak to this time. In broad terms, the structure of *Ad Destinatium VI* follows the following contours: Chapter 1 sets the context with respect to the higher education landscape and the imperatives of transformation. This is followed, in Chapter 2, by an overview of governance, from the UP Council as the apex structure, to the Executive and Senior Management, and the Office of the Registrar. Chapter 3 provides detail on the University's long-term strategic plan, UP 2025, and its implementation. Significant were the 'navigational markers' that became inscribed in the long-term strategy — and the deliberate positioning for the University to pursue a research-intensive identity.

The focus of Chapter 4, by far the longest chapter in the volume, is on academic identity. It includes the contributions of the nine faculties, the business school, and the Mamelodi Campus, and significant developments during the review period. Chapter 5 includes the contributions of the professional service departments that support and underpin the strategic direction of the University, while Chapter 6 points to the future. As noted here, this final chapter brings together a number of research institutes, centres and hubs that are essentially research platforms that attract scholars way beyond the borders of the University and have contributed in situating UP as an African university with a global provenance and relevance.

What distinguished specific eras in the history of institutions is a matter that we closely considered throughout the development of this publication. The *time-place* situatedness of UP, for example, was one of the binding ideas where UP's

intentional strategy and actions were necessarily entailed in local realities and, at the same time, a 21st century world where knowledge production has become the global currency of universities. However, while the profile of students, and to some degree staff, had changed radically, this could not in all instances be said of institutional culture and practices. Transformation and, more particularly, the voice of students became cross-cutting themes, from the cover design of this volume to the views captured in Chapter 1 on the tumultuous #FeesMustFall movement, and the curriculum transformation that marked this period in the history of the University of Pretoria, reflected in Chapter 4.

A third theme that helped to give coherence to the at times disparate content, and in fact echoed an institutional refrain, was the need to build on areas of research strength and to increase institutional capacity in order to have an impact on society and to make a difference. As we have noted, while this was perhaps not new in the history of the University, the commitment most certainly was enacted in new ways, ranging from branding and advocacy campaigns of 'make today matter' and 'research that matters', to the recognition that the University's spheres of potential influence were many and multi-dimensional. It seems accurate to say that the long-term strategy, UP 2025, positively framed the role and actions of the University and, in this period, helped to strengthen its identity and distinguish it from other universities, in Africa and in the rest of the world.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With a project of this magnitude, there is invariably a long list of credits that include people without whose contributions this publication would not have materialised. First, members of the editorial board and the chairperson, Prof Caroline Nicholson; in alphabetic order, Prof Karen Harris, Prof Gerald Ouma, Prof Maxi Schoeman, Edwin Smith and Dr Ria van der Merwe. Secondly, the engine room of the project and the administrative assistance provided by postgraduate students; in the first year, by Nirvaly Mooloo, followed by Anamika Anamallay. Thanks are also due to UP Archives, and especially Ria van der Merwe for her input, and the Department of Institutional Planning, for HEMIS data and analysis; in particular, Hugo Mouton and colleagues Papama Somgede, Carolyn Kriel and Carel Venter. A special word of thanks to Simla Bhawanipersad who printed reams of trees for the purposes of proofreading and authors' corrections;

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**Students' contribution** to the design of this publication demand specific mention. Early in the process, we approached Prof Duncan Reyburn, the coordinator of the Information Design programme in the School of Visual Arts, who involved third-year students in a design competition for *Ad Destinatum*

VI that formed part of their curriculum and assessment. Ten students received merit awards for their designs, and the winner of the competition, Marchollette Minnaar, then stepped into big shoes. In addition to her cover design, she remained part of the project for its duration — from designing the infographics to curating images, contributing to the layout and implementing author's corrections. We are pleased that her efforts were recognised and accredited as an internship. Also, our appreciation to Sanet du Plessis for her design and layout, and keeping in balance creativity, skill and patience.

There is always a boss (or bosses) in projects of this scale, therefore finally, our sincere thanks to Prof Nicholson for her time and wise counsel, the Deans and Directors who contributed texts and provided feedback, and the University of Pretoria for having made it possible to trace this history.

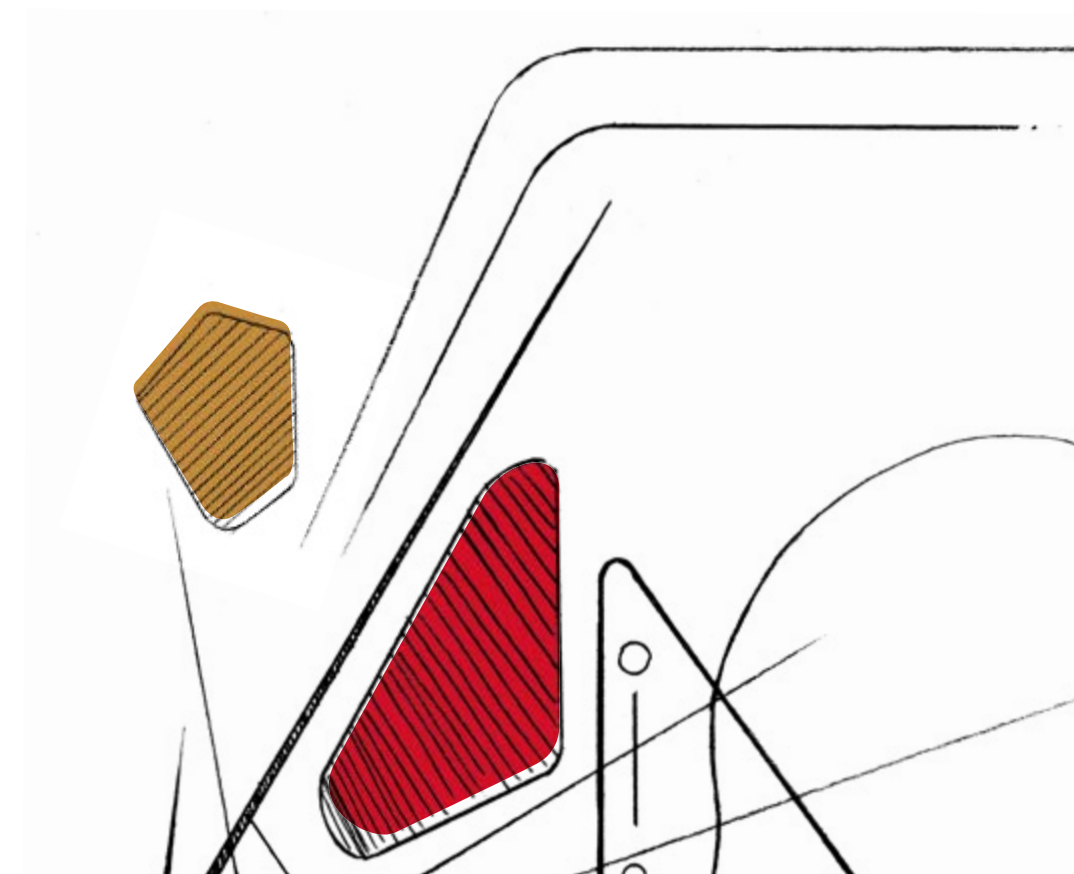
**Hanlie Griesel and James Ogude**

*Editors, Ad Destinatum VI*

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(front): Edwin Smith, Hanlie Griesel, Prof Karen Harris*



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## Messages

### From the Chancellor

Universities are important institutions that promote social and economic development and, indeed, the well-being of societies. In post-apartheid South Africa, the public higher education sector, and individual institutions, have played an important role in strengthening our young democracy and the culture of critical citizenry necessary for nurturing the values of social justice.

I had the distinct privilege to be the Chancellor of the University of Pretoria for the entire period that is the focus of this sixth volume in the *Ad Destinatum* series, spanning the years 2009 to 2018 and the leadership era of Prof Cheryl de la Rey as Vice-Chancellor and Principal. It was during this period that the University developed its long-term strategic plan for 2025 that soon came to be referred to simply as UP 2025. Approved by the UP Council in November 2011, the strategy set out clear guidelines and priority actions that framed much of the University's subsequent academic endeavours through the core missions of research, education and engagement.

There were, and undoubtedly will continue to be, many occasions when I took and will have great pride in the achievements of one of South Africa's finest universities — ranging from graduation ceremonies to world rankings and collaboration, and the many awards and accolades received by staff and students for the academic excellence in teaching and learning, research, creative outputs and the arts, and on the sports fields where individuals and teams excelled. This does not mean that we did not have moments of apprehension; on the contrary, there were periods of



deep contestation and introspection. These too have become part of the institutional memory, and the identity and development of a university that stands proud among its national and international peers.

I have no doubt that next generations of leaders — among staff, students and the executive — will build on the lessons learned in the achievements and challenges alike in what was a memorable period in the history of the University of Pretoria.

**Prof Wiseman Nkuhlu** | Chancellor of the University of Pretoria

## From the Chairperson of Council

Institutional governance, and the role of University Councils, had been in the spotlight since the work undertaken by the National Commission on Higher Education in the mid-1990s that paved the way for the 1997 *White Paper: A programme for the transformation of higher education*; and subsequently, the 2013 *White Paper for post-school education and training*. Much work needed to be done to meet the goals set for the transformation of the higher education system in South Africa; and Councils, as the apex oversight body of universities, had to play a significant role in this change process.

There were important, and frequently urgent matters in the review period 2009 to 2018 that demanded the full attention of Council and the leadership of the University of Pretoria. Notable were the difficult years following the #FeesMustFall student protests which started in 2015 and soon engulfed the entire higher education sector. Linked to this sea change in higher education that strained the sustainability of all universities, was the change in language policy at the University of Pretoria that marked a further imprint on the identity of the University. In this period, the UP Council held a number of special meetings in addition to the scheduled meetings and the annual workshop, the latter usually held in September to discuss the University's strategic priorities.

By 2018, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, had placed several universities and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) under administration. That the University of Pretoria remained stable throughout this period, bears testimony to the strong leadership within the University and the good work of Council and its committees in fulfilling their intended governance role.

It is also important to foreground UP's growth and development in this review period; the diversity and profile of students who enrolled and succeeded changed dramatically,



research outputs and impact strengthened, and there were major expansions on each of the University's campuses which Council considered and for which capital expenditure was approved. In line with the campus master plan, infrastructural development in this period — which included the major developments of Future Africa, the Javett-UP Art Centre and Engineering 4.0. — ensured that the University of Pretoria could compete with the best in the world.

In hindsight, the UP Council ensured that the University was well-governed fiscally and that its financial position was probably the best among South African universities. It was my privilege to serve the University of Pretoria as Chairperson of Council from 2008. Indeed, UP continued to benefit from visionary leaders who, each in their unique way, have paved the way for the University to be proudly anchored in Africa.

**Futhi Mtoba** | Chairperson of the UP Council

## From the Vice-Chancellor

History has the curious habit of being remembered differently by individuals and groups, and just as well: recorded and carried forward, it provides the archives (and counter-archives) that open to further scrutiny major events and developments that have taken place over time. The University of Pretoria has had a remarkable history of record-keeping, from the early days when it was founded, in 1908, as the Transvaal University College, to the present.

My tenure at UP started in November 2009, a year after the University's centenary celebrations. We were midway through the strategic plan 2007–2011 and soon started with discussions and the work of task teams that centred on the development of a long-term strategy for the University for the next 15 years. UP 2025, as it came to be known, provided the framework for guiding the University to achieve its vision as a university in Africa, inspired and driven by the continent's aspirations and challenges. Shorter one- and five-year planning cycles within this long-term vision and plan would allow us fully to exploit the vibrancy and responsiveness of the University, realign priorities and make it possible to harness the dynamic nature of change. Our lodestars were, from the onset, quality, diversity, responsiveness and sustainability.

This volume in the *Ad Destinatum* series illustrates the scope of activity, from governance to students and staff, faculties and service departments, and the platforms established to strengthen collaboration and position the University of Pretoria to engage in a complex nexus of problems, which invariably require multi- and transdisciplinary approaches for effective resolution. The research platforms briefly described in the concluding chapter of the volume point to some of the major achievements in this regard. I am particularly proud of the groundwork laid in making Future Africa, Engineering 4.0, and the Javett-UP Art Centre part of the legacy of this era in the history of the University of Pretoria. Each in their own right has become an example of engagement and frontier research that illustrate what can be achieved when the collective resolve is to make a difference.

There were many high points in the nine years that spanned the period 2009 to 2018, and predictably also challenges and upheavals that required strong leadership. The Executive team ensured, through their leadership and portfolios, that institutional stability was maintained both in turbulent times and periods of relative calm, and that, over time, a new equilibrium could be reached — such is the nature of change, and of strong leaders.



In my inaugural address, delivered in April 2010 in the capacity as the new Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria, I outlined what I believed could be achieved and the contours of a roadmap for the University into the future. I invited the university community to 'imagine UP in 2025'. *Ad Destinatum VI* is a reference resource that bears testimony to what subsequently materialised as the long-term strategy of the University, UP 2025.

I thank Prof Caroline Nicholson, Registrar and chairperson of the *Ad Destinatum VI* editorial committee, members of the editorial committee, and the editors, Hanlie Griesel and Prof James Ogude, for their immense contribution to this record of a period in the history of the University of Pretoria. Histories do not only have a curious way of being remembered differently, histories are also uncertain. As Hilary Mantel famously observed, history should be written pointing forward: "Remember that the people you are following didn't know the end of their own story... they were going forward day by day, pushed and jostled by circumstances, doing the best they could ..."<sup>1</sup>

I have immensely vivid recollections of the time I spent at the helm of the University of Pretoria and sincerely wish that this historic record will be of value for generations to come, and be read and used as an authentic reflection of an environment in which we had hoped students and staff would thrive.

**Prof Cheryl de la Rey** | Vice-Chancellor and Principal

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/obituaries/2022/09/23/hilary-mantel-wolf-hall-novelist-dead/>