

GRADUATION: IVC'S WELCOME ADDRESS

DAY ONE, MORNING SESSION

Tuesday 23 September 08:30, Zamukulungisa Site

No of pages: 6

Our esteemed Chancellor of Walter Sisulu University, Dr Brigalia Bam
Government Dignitaries from National, Provincial and Local Government

Our guest speaker Ms Nombulelo "Bea" Hackula

Invited Guests from the business sector and the many communities of

Walter Sisulu University

Members of the Media

Parents and families of the graduands here today

Staff of the University and in particular our Walter Sisulu University

graduands who today have their efforts rewarded on this memorable

occasion in their young lives.

I am privileged to welcome you all most warmly to this highlight on the Walter Sisulu University annual calendar: the September 2014 Graduation Ceremony.

Today's ceremony is indeed an historical milestone for Walter Sisulu University. It is a bittersweet day today ... the last ceremony at which our beloved Chancellor Dr Brigalia Bam will be conferring degrees and awarding diplomas and certificates to WSU graduands. Dr Bam was inaugurated as the first Chancellor of WSU way back in 2007. Dr Bam has selflessly served this university far beyond the call of duty. She has remained steadfast, supporting us through bright times and in times of darkness. She has been a shining role model to all. With her quiet dignity, her high ethics, her commitment and her charm, she has indeed made us proud as our Chancellor. Dr Bam has a widespread reputation as a symbol of all that is good and great in a leader and we have been extremely fortunate to have her fly the WSU flag for so long.

As her term of office, which has been often extended, now comes to a close, we wish to express our deep gratitude to her, and our deep affection for her as we bid her farewell as our Chancellor.

Dr Bam, we hope you will always stay close to WSU; that you will continue to support our worthy cause and that you will remember us fondly. Thank you for the support you have given us for so many years. We shall miss you.

Today we will be capping almost 800 graduates, adding to the 4,200 that were capped during the May graduation ceremonies. All our faculties are represented here today – a wide mix of graduands in the areas of education, health, the sciences and business. We are particularly pleased to be awarding two PhDs in the faculty of education and we encourage our graduates to pursue post-graduate studies. In today's knowledge economy, education and research provide a valuable ticket to progressing in one's chosen career field.

The core business of this University continues produce the scarce skills required by our young democracy: Teaching, learning, research and community engagement sums up WSU's mandate across four campuses in this eastern part of the Province.

We are in the process of rolling out a new divisional governance and management system for WSU according to the new statute gazette for our university in January this year.

Many changes are underway as we seek new and improved ways of managing a complex and diverse university.

Our four campuses now each have a campus rector appointed – a first step in implementing a decentralized model. 11 new faculties have just recently been established across the four campuses, each head by a faculty dean.

This new academic model will ensure closer relationships between faculty on each campus.

The new institutional management committee was constituted in May and represents all the key functional areas in a lean and agile structure.

Our student governance has been realigned with four campus SRCs elected. There is no longer a central ISRC as each campus is treated individually within a centralized system of single policies and procedures.

We are currently completing a new organogram for a restructured WSU and towards the end of this year, will commence with a match and place process to populate the new structure.

We are most certainly in a time of constant change and I wish to show my support and express my gratitude to our staff and students for embracing this change. It is far more comfortable NOT to change; however change is a constant and we all need to see it as a positive step towards a brighter future for WSU.

Yesterday we celebrated yet another milestone at WSU with a construction ceremony at the new 240-bed residence being built at the NMD site. This residence will be in operation early next year. As a "decant" residence, it will house students from existing residences so that deep and thorough refurbishment can take place across the campus. Also last week tenders went out for the construction of a R90 million residence for the Potsdam site in Buffalo City. These are the first new residences to be built for WSU since the merger. Whilst we welcome and celebrate this progress, we understand that there is yet a long way to go in improving accommodation for our students so that they can enjoy a quality student experience at WSU. We are continually seeking funding to continue this expansion phase. DHET invested over R800 million in the past two year and our projects office is working around the clock to roll out many infrastructure projects across all campuses.

Recently we conducted a four-campus VC's Roadshow and held successful engagements with staff and students, giving us an opportunity to listen to concerns raised and to give our stakeholders an insight into the State of the University.

We have all come a long way together over the past few years and WSU stands proudly at the crossroads of new beginnings. We have much to be proud of as WSU – our student, staff and alumni successes are receiving increased positive media coverage throughout the country.

The WSU brand is strengthening ... and I especially appeal to each and every student, staff member and alumnus to remember that the WSU brand rests with each and every one of you. The way we do things as WSU members must set a shining example to all with whom we come into contact. Let us continue to build pride in our university – not only for ourselves but for the many generations waiting in the wings.

In closing, I congratulate our graduands here today as you also stand on the cusp of your future as WSU graduates. Thank you to the families and communities who have supported you in your quest for knowledge – I am sure you will make these sacrifices worthwhile.

Thank you.