



1 March 2021

Public universities are ready to receive the NSC Class of 2020 into higher education, and to see them succeed

As public universities gear themselves to receive the National School Certificate Class of 2020 on their various campuses, Universities South Africa has assured the new entrants to higher education that universities are ready to welcome them into their next study adventures and to enable them to succeed. USAf's Chief Executive Officer, Professor Ahmed Bawa, says he has no doubt that the first-entering cohort to bachelor, diploma and higher certificate programmes will not struggle to the same extent as those who entered university in the pre-CoVID-19 era.

"It is an incredible performance that this cohort achieved, in the face of enormous challenges," Professor Bawa said from his office, this morning. "Having excelled in their examination in 2020, the NSC Class has proven their resilience to succeed amidst any challenges they might be confronted with in future."

As he congratulated the Class of 2020 on the 76.2% pass rate, Professor Bawa said this level of success, achieved during a pandemic era that disrupted teaching and learning across the board, demonstrates resilience, discipline and diligence on the part of this cohort. "They hold high levels of commitment and dedication to their studies – characteristics they will need to navigate the higher education terrain with success."

Professor Bawa reminded the new crop of university students that, as a response to CoVID-19, universities are increasingly resorting to blended modes of teaching and learning. "Students attuned to this model of learning are already at an advantage. They are likely to confront hardships with agility and will therefore resist future shocks to the system better than those who came before them." As the USAf CEO invited the new entrants to take up their places in the new academic year, he assured this cohort that "universities will be embarking on new initiatives to develop capacity in our students, our lecturers and our teaching, learning and research infrastructure to adapt more solidly to the 'new normal'". Needless to say, the universities are all anxious to return to face-to-face teaching as the pandemic is brought under control, Professor Bawa added.

In conclusion, the USAf CEO extended his gratitude to all role players in both basic and higher education sectors for their dedication to ensuring learner and student success, against all odds. “Hats off to the teachers and lecturers who are going beyond the call of duty to ensure the success of our knowledge enterprise. We may have lost many to the CoVID-19 battle in 2020. We nonetheless count on the commitment of our new students, and staff, to make 2021 a better year.”

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