



REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Dr Paul F de V Clüver
Chair of the University Council

Though 2010 is by now a thing of the past, and annual reports traditionally deal with things that lie behind us, this year will be remembered as a time in which Stellenbosch University (SU) purposefully addressed the future.

By 2010 the University had been carried along over many decades with great success by its excellent teaching and learning, research and

community interaction. SU's proud traditions are symbolised by the centuries-old oak trees and national monuments on our campus. Yet we know that, to keep up with the competitive higher education environment, we need to create behind the fine historic façade an institution whose vision, thinking, staff and infrastructure make it ultramodern; an institution that will entrench the University's position as an academic leader in a world now changing faster than ever.

For the Rector and his Management Team, 2010 was the year in which active steps were taken to position Stellenbosch University as a creator of hope. This was done by engaging SU's proven expertise and putting science to work to improve the quality of life for people in diverse ways. The internal strategic planning of the preceding years had led to the HOPE Project, which was introduced to the outside world in July.

The HOPE Project brings together a wide range of interdependent and complex initiatives to outline the kind of institution that Stellenbosch University aims to be by 2015. Teaching and learning, research, and community interaction lay the scientific groundwork for the host of academic and research initiatives that are being developed to create hope. Add to this the innovative initiatives to support staff and student success, the supply of ultramodern infrastructure and the fund-raising campaign to enable sustained management of the HOPE Project, and one just begins to glimpse the depth and scope of this vision.

All these different strands have been woven together like the reeds in some traditional African baskets. The core functions of the University – the delivery of sought-after graduates, cutting-edge research, and development-driven community interaction – set up a framework essential to the design. The other strands, in their turn, contribute to its colour and ingenuity

through innovative and creative thought, and in so doing bring about the SU's distinctive character as an institution that finds solutions from Africa for Africa.

In the past four years, the Rector and his Management Team have successfully led Stellenbosch University through two phases: a first phase of consolidation of the strategic goals, keeping Vision 2012 central, and a second phase of gearing up the whole institution to turn its new positioning into fact.

Here are some of the management successes of the past few years: the establishment of a rural development programme; the further expansion of SU's successes in research and academia, including keeping up its student throughput at rates far above the South African average; the noticeable progress made by SU in its student diversity profile; renewal of the facilities management plan and capacity; SU's relevance in South Africa, in Africa and further abroad, with particular reference to the development agenda; the formal positioning of SU to leave an indelible scientific footprint in Africa; the establishment of a sustainability plan for the University; and the development of a unique SU-schools partnership programme.

To the Rector and each member of his team go my congratulations on the legacy that SU is now creating to secure the sustainable management of its tradition of excellence.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their steadfast attendance of meetings, their critical thinking and their valuable inputs but also, and especially, for their support of the University's long-term vision. There is agreement on what the future SU should look like. The HOPE Project is an effective vehicle on our way to our goals.

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COUNCIL MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

The Council of Stellenbosch University consisted of 30 members: four were executive members; 14 were independent, non-executive members; five were employee representatives; five were appointed by government; and two were student representatives. Council officially met five times during the year under review. Stellenbosch University is proud to report that the average rate of attendance of meetings was 92%. The lowest rate of attendance was 83%.

COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL: MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

Council has eight committees that meet at varying intervals – some meet before every Council meeting, while others meet only as the need arises.

The most important committee is the Executive Committee of Council. This Committee, which comprised seven members in 2010, met six times during the year under review. There are no matters pending on the agenda of the Committee. Matters pending on the agendas of other committees that report to Council via the Executive Committee will eventually appear on the agenda of the Executive Committee – who will then deal with those matters.

Attendance at the meetings of the Executive Committee was as follows:

March: 6 members present
May: 5 members present
August: 7 members present
November: 6 members present

- For 2010, the average rate of attendance for the Executive Committee was 86%.
- On the whole, the meetings of the committees of Council were well attended. The average rate of attendance of the committees was 83%.

Launched! – the HOPE Project

The HOPE Project was launched at Stellenbosch on 21 July, at a splendid function, and shortly afterwards also at Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. "Hope is a powerful human concept...hope raises us up to go out and make a difference." The quote is from President of Rensselaer Polytechnic, USA, Dr Shirley Jackson, who at the launch made her speech by international video link-up. The Rector, Prof Botman, is shown here along with some of the Hope flags that line Victoria Street.

