



## Academic Excellence in Service of the Nation

### Hon Dr Sanet Steenkamp's Story of Purpose and Perseverance

Marking a moment of national pride, the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), collaborated with the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture (MEIYSAC), and the University of Namibia (UNAM), to present a public lecture celebrating Hon Dr Sanet Steenkamp's doctoral milestone.



Seated from left to right, Hon Ghislain Thierry Maguessa Eboomé, Hon Dr Sanet Steenkamp and Prof Andrew Niikondo, pictured with delegates at the Public Lecture.

The lecture, held on 19 February 2026, was more than a celebration; it served as a masterclass in research-driven leadership. In reflection of her recent academic journey

that earned her a Doctor of Philosophy in Education from Rhodes University last year, Hon Dr Steenkamp shared her story of vulnerability and scholarly insight with striking

authenticity.

She titled her lecture 'A Journey of Turbulence and Transformation', reflecting on her decision to step away from

academia after completing her Master's degree in 2002, and her eventual return years later while navigating the responsibilities of public office.

Setbacks, supervisor changes, and COVID-19 pandemic disruptions tested her resolve, yet she described the journey as "deeply enlightening and very rewarding". Her message to aspiring scholars resonated clearly: discipline is essential; consistency is hard, and growth comes through revision.

Her research examined how learning support teachers in resource schools can expand their leadership roles. She emphasised that educators in special education are too



**SHE GOT HER FLOWERS:** Prof Andrew Niikondo, NUST Acting Vice-Chancellor, handing over flowers to Hon Dr Sanet Steenkamp, the Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture.

often undervalued yet hold immense potential to drive inclusive learning. When trusted and empowered, she noted "teachers become architects of transformation within their schools and communities".

In a congratulatory message, Acting NUST Vice-Chancellor Prof Andrew Niikondo com-

mended the Minister for exemplifying the seamless blend of scholarship and public service, while remarks delivered on behalf of Prof Kenneth Matengu, Vice-Chancellor of UNAM, by Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Frednard Gideon, underscored the resilience required to attain a doctorate "against all odds".

## Over 22 000 NUSTodians Enrolled

Approximately 22 718 students have registered for the 2026 Academic Year across NUST's campuses nationwide, the highest enrolment in the Institution's history.

Speaking at the Official Opening Ceremony in Windhoek, the Acting NUST Vice-Chancellor, Prof Andrew Niikondo, noted that "this year, thousands of young Namibians are entering universities and training institutions without the barriers that once stood in their way of accessing higher education". He was referring to the Government's Subsidised Tertiary Education initiative introduced last year, which has significantly improved access to higher learning.

### A Call to Government

While welcoming the milestone, Prof Niikondo equally addressed ongoing challenges, particularly regarding student accommodation. "We still have students walking long distances to campus. There are several government buildings in and around campuses, and across the regions, that are dormant or underutilised. I would request Government to allocate these facilities to NUST for conversion into student accommodation or resource centres," he said.

### Otavi on the Horizon

NUST's continued regional expansion was also outlined during the ceremony, with the Rietfontein Agricultural Campus set to relocate to Otavi,

where construction is scheduled to commence. The move reflects a deliberate shift toward regional inclusion, ensuring that higher education opportunities extend beyond urban centres and into rural communities.

The expansion aligns with national development priorities articulated in a message from Hon Veikko Nekundi, Minister of Works and Transport.

His remarks, delivered on his behalf by the Deputy Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon Dino Ballotti, emphasised that Namibia's development corridors, logistics systems and transport networks require graduates equipped with both technical expertise and practical skills, precisely the calibre of graduates institutions such as NUST are mandated to produce.

Official Opening Ceremonies were held concurrently across all NUST campuses: Windhoek, Lüderitz, Rietfontein and Eenhana.



Windhoek Campus



Rietfontein Campus



Lüderitz Campus



Eenhana Campus



Khumalo Kapelwa, Acting Manager for NUST's Cooperative Education Department (left), accepting the award for the Highest Student Placement at the Institute for People Management (IPM) Conference. The award was handed over by Lisa Matomola, IPM President, together with Human Resources Professional, Yageni Chendela.

## Cooperative Education Department Recognised for Highest Student Placement

NUST's Cooperative Education (CE) department has been recognised for its exceptional contribution to Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in Namibia. During the Institute for People Management (IPM) Conference held late last year, the Department was honoured with an award for facilitating the highest number of student attachments nationwide, exceeding 100 placements.

This achievement highlights NUST's commitment to strengthening industry partnerships and enhancing student employability. By aligning academic programmes with industry

needs, the Department continues to ensure that students gain meaningful workplace exposure and develop the practical competencies required in today's labour market.

Acting Manager of the Department, Khumalo Kapelwa, indicated that with the recruitment of new staff members, the department aims to expand its reach and further improve placement processes. "This recognition not only celebrates past successes but also motivates the institution to continue leading in WIL nationwide," he added.