



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

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Dear Rhodes University graduand,

On behalf of our Chancellor, Justice Lex Mpati, Council and the entire Rhodes University community, I offer you our heartfelt congratulations on your well-deserved graduation with a Masters or doctoral degree. The past year-and-a-half has presented unique and daunting challenges. You however mustered the requisite will, drive and focus to achieve the academic goal you had set for yourself. You have risen to the challenges on your journey with remarkable fortitude, resilience and determination. Well done!

We deeply regret that, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and the national restrictions on gatherings, our University is unable to hold in-person graduation ceremonies this year. This has robbed us of an opportunity to celebrate this proud moment of your life with you and your loved ones in the way we have always done at Rhodes University. This however does not, in anyway, diminish the significance of this personal milestone in your academic pursuits.

In compliance with the University Statute which states that “a person is not entitled to any of the privileges conferred by any degree until he or she has been admitted to such degree at a congregation,” the Chancellor, **in the video below**, constitutes a virtual congregation of Rhodes University for the conferral of degrees *in absentia* at 12pm on Friday 29 October 2021 in the following playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAztaQ4TBvjTFeqXdNYCqKZquk6hGqwWN>

The Chancellor will also confer two honorary degrees, Doctor of Science (*honoris causa*) and Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*), on Prof Salim Abdool Karim and Ms Noxolo Grootboom, respectively. We honour and celebrate these eminent compatriots for their extraordinary lifetime achievements and exceptional contributions in public service. Their personal journeys and selfless service to public life serve as an inspiration and an example worthy of emulation by all of us. We extend our warmest congratulations to both of them.

In this virtual graduation ceremony, the Chancellor will confer postgraduate degree qualifications on 216 students. Of these, 162 (75%) are Masters graduands, while 54 (25%) will receive their doctoral degree qualification. Of these graduands, 112 (52%) are male and 104 (48%) female students. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the graduands are international students. We are a small University. However, there is nothing small about our postgraduate pedigree and standing in the country and on the continent.

With your graduation, you join a special and powerful network of our proud alumni - extraordinary women and men who are making remarkable contributions in many and diverse fields of human endeavour. This year we launched a new and innovative interactive platform to connect our alumni in a lively and versatile cultural space. This exclusive platform is able to connect our graduates across generations and across the globe to form communities based on shared interests. You will be able to communicate and engage with one another and with your *alma mater*. The platform will enable you to access mentoring opportunities and be part of many other constructive initiatives with like-minded Rhodes University graduates.

You have earned your place in the distinguished and select group of Rhodes University alumni who are

leaders in our society and beyond. We would love to see you at our affinity events which aim to expand your professional network and be part of our leadership conversations programme. Please visit www.ru.ac.za/alumni to update your contact details and keep abreast of our annual engagement programme or email alumni@ru.ac.za

Graduands , families, friends, Rhodes University staff, alumni, and other community members are encouraged to post their celebratory photos and short videos on their personal social media pages using the hashtag **#RUGrad2021** as a way of celebrating our graduates. In order to participate, simply post photos and/or videos along with a congratulatory message to your personal Twitter profiles using the hashtag **#RUGrad2021**. These messages and videos will automatically be collected on a social wall created at

<https://www.ru.ac.za/communicationsandadvancement/socialmediawall/>

In these difficult and uncertain times, our society looks to you, graduates of this outstanding institution, for reassurance that things will be fine again. You now have an opportunity to define and shape the post-pandemic future that is better - a better society and a better world. You have much to offer humanity as we rebuild our devastated lives, destroyed economies and shattered dreams and hopes. May you be a beacon of hope and a source optimism for a better tomorrow. Take to heart the wise words attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Do not follow where the path may lead you. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” Trust your instincts; follow your impulses; find your passion and live it to the full and make a positive change.

We wish you much success, happiness and fulfillment in the years ahead. We look forward to hearing of your future success and accomplishments as you play your part in the re-imagining and remaking of our society and our shared future for the benefit of all.

Once more, heartiest congratulations to you on your graduation. Halaaaalaaa! Halaaaalaaa!

Yours sincerely



Sizwe Mabizela,
Vice-Chancellor & Principal, Rhodes University.