



RHODES UNIVERSITY

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MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Rhodes University passed a real milestone in 1982 when its student registration topped three thousand for the first time. On the annual university census day in June there were 3 202 students, an increase of 218 over last year's figure, or 7,5 per cent. It is the first time since the ex-servicemen's invasion in 1946 that we have had an increase of more than 200 in one year.

It is also interesting to note that, apart from that unusual year of 1946, Rhodes took 54 years to reach a thousand students, another 13 years to reach two thousand and then 11 years to reach three thousand.

This large increase led us into a difficult situation at the beginning of the year when we had to house students in hotels for some months while the builders converted part of the former Prince Alfred Infirmary into a new residence.

In order to set up an early warning system the University introduced a closing date for student applications at the end of October with a small penalty for late applications. By the end of November we had already received nearly ten percent more applications than last year and we expect this to increase further.

To exacerbate the pressure on residences we believe the number of students who will be able to find digs in Grahamstown next year is likely to drop.

The obverse of every problem is an opportunity and these circumstances are providing the University with an occasion to raise our academic standards. By being unable to house every student who qualifies to enter university we are being forced to select by our natural criterion of academic performance and we shall thus reduce the proportion of weak students who enter this University.

Another important event this year is that, for the second year running, Rhodes University received over one million rand in donations. In view of the general economic climate I think this is one of the most heartening demonstrations of faith in our University that anyone could ask for, and I wish to thank our donors for this magnificent support.

I have informed many of our donors that the University can survive on its fees and government subsidy, but nearly all research and improvements to facilities depend on the additional funds that we can raise. Compared with our 1982 operating budget of R17,9 million, the R1,1 million we had been given by the end of November was just over six per cent, or roughly equivalent to the general sales tax. I am not quite sure how to interpret this - or how the Professor of Psychology would see it - but at least it gives a clear picture of the size of the gift.

In order to keep the initiative the University has decided to transfer Mr Neil Papenfus, the Director of Public Relations and Development to its Johannesburg Office. He is likely to move in February and will be in a much better position to keep in touch with the University's friends in the Pretoria/Witwatersrand area. He will maintain his close links with the University through regular visits to Grahamstown.

On the academic front the renamed Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry offered a fully fledged course in biochemistry for the first time. This proved to be very popular and the department will be able to expand it next year into a two-year major with the appointment of a senior lecturer.

The Department of Education introduced a computer literacy course for teachers in conjunction with the Department of Computer Science. Apart from introducing new teachers to computers the course demonstrates the most appropriate ways in which teachers can use the computer and considers the implications of introducing micro-computers into schools.

Computers also featured in another new course introduced in 1982. This was in business data processing. The Department of Business Administration which mounted the course has been able to provide its own computer for the practical work.

Some of the language departments have co-operated in the introduction of a course in modern fiction in translation. This is believed to be unique in South Africa in that it is limited to fiction and the novel.

In East London ninety students registered for the part-time Bachelor of Commerce degree with a much improved drop-out rate than the previous year.

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The new premises came into use at the beginning of the year and are becoming a centre for informal community-orientated courses such as a year's course for women controlling day care centres, which was run in conjunction with the Early Learning Centre. The Rhodes Institute of Social and Economic Research is investigating the tertiary educational needs of the greater East London area and is expected to report early in the New Year.

The major building work in the centre of the university, known as Quad Two, is proceeding according to schedule. The departments of English, Geography and Geology should be moving into their new premises in the July vacation. The project will have cost about three-and-a-half million rand.

I was on leave during the two middle terms and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brommert, acted as principal. Unfortunately the short spell of leave he took on my return has had to be extended while he underwent an unexpected major operation. I am pleased to be able to report that he is recuperating well on a Vredenberg farm and intends returning in the New Year. I am sure he would agree with me that 1982 has been a year of consolidation and solid progress and that the prospects for next year are very good.

May I wish you a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Derek S. Henderson

Dr D S Henderson
VICE-CHANCELLOR

Public Relations and Development Division