

University of Hull Vice-Chancellor to step down

1 August 2016

Professor Calie Pistorius has announced that he will step down as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hull at the end of January 2017, after more than seven years in the role.

During Professor Pistorius's tenure as Vice-Chancellor, the University has developed and implemented an ambitious strategy that has increased its regional, national and international profile, strengthened its links with business and industry, and firmly established it as an anchor institution.

Professor Pistorius has brought about significant organisational renewal for the University, initiating the largest investment programme in its history. This £200m investment programme, now well underway, enhances the University's academic endeavours, staff and student experience, physical and IT infrastructure, and business and community partnerships, both in the UK and overseas.

Professor Pistorius commented:

It has been a privilege to lead the University of Hull for the last seven years. It is a fantastic university, with a great academic heritage, a beautiful campus, welcoming people, a wonderful student experience and a real sense of purpose as an anchor institution.

I have enjoyed my time at Hull tremendously and am proud of what we have achieved in the University, and also in the city and the region. At this point in my life and career, I am ready for and want to move on to my next opportunity and role. When I step down in January, I will hand over to a strong leadership team who will build on our momentum with confidence and continue to strengthen the University's vision of empowering people to shape the future – regionally, nationally and globally.

Professor Pistorius will remain in post for the next six months, but will take a three-month sabbatical to continue with his research interests in the management of innovation, returning to campus in December for a two-month handover period. During this period of sabbatical and transition, Professor Glenn Burgess, Deputy Vice-Chancellor will assume the position of Acting Vice-Chancellor. The University of Hull will now begin the process of finding a new Vice-Chancellor.

Barry Dodd, CBE, Chair of the University Council commented:

We are extremely grateful to Calie for his leadership and vision in steering the University through a rapidly evolving and increasingly competitive higher education environment.

Our impressive £200m investment programme is now well underway and Calie recently launched the University's new strategic plan, which articulates our vision and ambitions until 2020. We pride ourselves on delivering an outstanding student experience and will continue to invest in our infrastructure, people, teaching and research to ensure this remains our emphasis.

The Rt. Hon. Alan Johnson, MP for Hull West and Hessle, commented:

Calie Pistorius has been a great ambassador for the University and city of Hull. As Vice-Chancellor, Calie Pistorius has done a tremendous amount to take the University forward and to establish the University of Hull as an anchor institution in our region. The University's contribution to winning the UK City of Culture 2017 bid and its status as Principal Partner are shining examples of this. We are really sorry to see Calie step down and know that he will make an equally valuable contribution in his next role.

Prior to his appointment at the University of Hull, Professor Pistorius was Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the University of Pretoria in South Africa from 2001-2009.

The University of Hull is one of the region's largest employers with around 2,500 staff members and 16,300 students, and has an annual turnover in excess of £180million.

Additional Information

The University of Hull has made great strides forward during Professor Pistorius' term as Vice-Chancellor. Through a period in which there has been significant and rapid change in the higher education landscape, the University articulated a clear vision and implemented ambitious strategic plans, placing students at its heart and focusing on enhancing the student experience, setting an excellence agenda for research, teaching and learning, and emphasising internationalisation, engagement and partnerships.

Under Professor Pistorius' leadership, the University has seen transformational organisational renewal and the largest investment programme in its history – an ambitious £200m initiative to invest in the academic portfolio, people and the student experience, partnerships and internationalisation as well as the physical and IT infrastructure.

The University of Hull prides itself on the quality of its student experience. The period saw the implementation of the Student Experience Programme (StEP), the Hull University Union crowned as the best students' union in the country in 2012, the development of employability awards and the strengthening of the careers service. In July 2016, the University of Hull was ranked equal eighth in England (up eleven places from the previous year) for graduate employability, with more than 96% of graduates being in employment or further study within 6 months of leaving.

The University has recently refreshed its entire curriculum and academic offer, reconfigured its academic structures and reviewed its professional services and governance. New interdisciplinary research institutes that cut across all faculties have been established in the areas of maritime and marine, energy and the environment, culture and the creative industries, logistics, and combating slavery. Research in the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE) led to the University being awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2015. A number of new academic programmes have been introduced, including chemical engineering and mathematics, and specialised research units, such as the E.A. Milne Centre for Astrophysics and the GW Gray Centre for Advanced Materials, have been established. The University was proud to have recently been awarded the Athena Swan Bronze Award for the advancement of the representation of women in academia.

The University improved its research performance in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), with areas such as geography and computer science achieving a top five position nationally for research impact. Over 60% of the research submitted was rated world-leading or internationally excellent, and the University maintained its top 50 ranking based on research power.

The Higher Educational Review by the Quality Assurance Agency in November 2015 gave the University top marks, confirming that the University met UK expectations with regards to the setting and maintenance of academic standards, the quality of student learning opportunities and the quality of information about learning opportunities. The University was commended for its enhancement of student learning opportunities. Several areas of best practice were identified, including programme design and the embedding of employability within curricula, the contribution of the library project to the enhancement of learning support and the University's strategic transformational approach to cross-institutional enhancement.

Recent investments in the physical infrastructure include the £28m redevelopment of the Brynmor Jones Library and its impressive new art gallery, which received four Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) awards in 2016. The £9.5m refurbishment of Middleton Hall will offer a new state-of-the-art concert hall and cinema space, along with recording studios and a television editing suite. These facilities are due to be completed later in 2016 in readiness for Hull's reign as UK City of Culture in 2017. A £30m investment in new student residences on campus, due to be completed in September 2016, will provide high-quality accommodation for 560 students. In July 2016, the University announced a £15m investment in new sports facilities.

A multi-million pound health campus is being created, which will provide some of the best medical and health training facilities in the UK. The Allam Building, dedicated to biomedical research, was opened in 2013. Dr Allam has also made a generous donation towards the new Allam Medical Building, which will be completed in 2017.

Dr Assem Allam, commented: "Calie Pistorius is a visionary Vice-Chancellor. He has been instrumental in moving the university forward and has played a vital role in bringing to the forefront the contribution made by the University of Hull to the local and regional economy and the community it serves. The greater prominence of the University of Hull in the region as well as its international footprint are now firmly established thanks to Calie's determination and tireless efforts. I have been struck by the forward looking investment-driven strategies that he championed, his commitment to the academic ethos and research, and the provision of outstanding facilities for staff and students to build a university for the future. I shall be sorry to see Calie go and wish him the very best in his future role."

An investment of over £25m has led to ongoing transformation of ICT provision, resulting in effective service delivery, very fast wifi coverage, the replacement of corporate systems, a new virtual learning environment and the establishment of a high performance computing facility, as well as comprehensive mobile applications and refreshed web presence.

During the period, the University pioneered the term and established itself as an 'anchor institution' for its surrounding regions, emphasising the mutual benefits of the role the University plays in its local and regional communities with regard to economic regeneration, building social and cultural capital and enhancing competitiveness and quality of life. This is evidenced by the University's significant economic impact, joint ventures such as the Hull History Centre and The Deep with Hull City Council, its role in Hull's successful UK City of Culture 2017 bid, contributions to the local and regional skills agendas and to relevant research solutions, participation in bodies such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and cooperation with other local educational institutions.

During the Vice-Chancellor's time in post, the University of Hull has made a significant contribution to the regional and UK economy. The University is one of the region's largest employers, with around 2,500 staff members, 16,300 students and an annual turnover in excess of £180 million. A recent independent economic impact report revealed that the University contributed £913m GVA to the UK economy in 2013/14 and supported close to 8,000 jobs. The University of Hull's Knowledge Exchange has created

more than 145 new businesses since 2009, and the University won the Guardian University Awards 'Best Business Partnership' prize in 2014 for its work with For Entrepreneurs Only. The companies in the Knowledge Exchange contributed £5.6m GVA to the UK economy in 2013/14.

The University continues to deliver transformative impact not only locally, regionally and nationally but also internationally. It was recently ranked in the top 3 per cent (top 500) by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and in the top 160 based on international outlook. The University attracts international students from more than 100 countries, and during recent years established offices in Shanghai and Kuala Lumpur to strengthen its international reach. Earlier in 2016, a Confucius Institute was opened on the campus, in partnership with the Tianjin Normal University in China.