

Rhodes' vice-chancellor to lead by example

Rhodes University is counting the days until Friday's historic inauguration of its first black African vice-chancellor since its doors opened 110 years ago.



Image credit: www.ru.ac.za

Dr Sizwe Mabizela, who is expected to outline his vision for the university during his inauguration at the 1820 Settler's National Monument, said he did not want the institution to get hung up on the fact he was the first black African vice-chancellor.

"For me it is whether the university has identified a suitable and competent person to serve as its vice-chancellor and provide leadership for the institution at this time."

Mabizela, who has been at Rhodes for 10 years, had been previous vice-chancellor Dr Saleem Badat's deputy for academic and student affairs since 2008.

He was a front-runner for the hot seat out of the 17 applicants, after being appointed acting vice-chancellor when Badat took up a post in New York with the Andrew W Mellon Foundation in July.

Producing graduates not consumed with material gain

Mabizela said his aim was to lead the university by example in producing graduates who were not consumed with material gain.

"I have never had dreams of vast financial wealth, owning a multi-storey home or driving a fancy car.

"What is important is for us to gain knowledge that can help us understand our natural environment, human interactions and our place in the universe," he said.

According to Mabizela, it is all about developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of how we can live in this world in a sustainable manner, and in a manner that enhances the humanity of others.

"And if, along this path, our graduates acquire significant material wealth, then my hope is that they will use it to make a change in the lives of those who are less fortunate in material and educational terms."

Mabizela grew up in Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, and matriculated in 1980 from St Chad's High School.

His mother, Sibongile, was a nurse and his late father, Christopher, a teacher who instilled the importance and value of education in their children from a young age.

Source: Herald

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