

PROFESSOR ANDREW MARTIN CROUCH

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

PROFESSOR ANDREW CROUCH JOINED SOL PLAATJE UNIVERSITY, IN APRIL 2020, AS ITS SECOND VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL, AND HAS LAUNCHED SEVERAL INAUGURAL INITIATIVES RELATED TO HIS FIVE-POINT FOCUS PLAN ON TAKING SOL PLAATJE UNIVERSITY FORWARD INTO THE NEXT PHASE OF ITS DEVELOPMENT.




His first days as Vice-Chancellor and Principal were dominated by forging a successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect of the national lockdown on the academic project. He drew on his extensive experience in introducing applications of new pedagogies in the digital sphere, championing the use of innovative educational technologies and integrating technology into existing teaching and learning programmes across multiple platforms; to steer Sol Plaatje University as it successfully moved to online learning.

His vast administrative leadership expertise meant that he could ensure that Sol Plaatje University was one of a handful of universities in South Africa that completed the 2020 academic year on time, while keeping the University fully operational.

PROFESSOR CROUCH HAS PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS AND IN FOSTERING SOUND RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL UNIVERSITY STAKEHOLDERS AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

To this end he spearheaded the signing of a Town and Gown Agreement between the University and the Sol Plaatje Local Municipality for the future collaboration and engagement between the city and the University.



Since April 2020, the University has also increased its landholding through the purchase of the Tafel Lager Stadium in Kimberley.

Under the management of Professor Crouch the University launched its first research entity, the DSI and NRF funded Risk and Vulnerability Science Centre. This will set Sol Plaatje University on a path to becoming a research leader in the study of arid environments and Desert Studies.

In October 2021, the University also launched the Talent Pipeline Programme, funded by the Anglo-American Foundation, which is an initiative aimed at producing more university ready learners from rural and peri-urban schools in the Northern Cape Province. This is the flagship programme of Professor's Crouch's tenure as Vice-Chancellor and Principal since it talks directly to his quest to make the dreams of young people become a reality.

Born in Kimberley to Jacob and Louisa Crouch and an alumnus of William Pescod High School, this son of the Northern Cape returned to his roots to take the helm at Sol Plaatje University.

Prior to joining Sol Plaatje University Professor Crouch served as the Vice-Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic at Wits University for eight years. He also served as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science at Wits for four years before his promotion to Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic.

During his eleven years at Wits he spearheaded the digital and online initiatives at the University, including the establishment of innovative teaching and learning spaces, smart classrooms, virtual learning spaces, as well as a proposed novel centre for educational technologies.

Before his tenure at Wits University, he was at Stellenbosch University, where he had served

as a Professor of Chemistry and the Associate Dean of Natural Sciences.

A full Professor of chemistry for the past 29 years, Professor Crouch worked at the University of the Western Cape for seven years, three of which was as the Head of Department of Chemistry.

He holds a BSc (Chemistry and Biochemistry) and a BSc Honours in Chemistry from the University of the Western Cape and a PhD in Chemistry from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.

An active member in the African higher education sector, Professor Crouch has wide-ranging experience in teaching, research and postgraduate training, having developed courses and taught at all tertiary levels. He is the recipient of numerous awards for teaching, research and administration. The most notable of these are the prestigious Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Fellowship and Gold Medal from the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund as well as the Excellence in Teaching and Research Award from the International Society of Electrochemistry for his contribution to the field of Electrochemistry in South Africa.

PROFESSOR CROUCH HAS
OVER 30-YEARS RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL
ELECTROCHEMISTRY AND ITS
APPLICATIONS, BEING THE
AUTHOR/CO-AUTHOR OF MORE
THAN 140 RESEARCH PAPERS
AND CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS
AND ONE PATENT IN THE AREA OF
ELECTROCHEMISTRY.