

Purple is the colour of excellence, but also of remembrance

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During the month of December, the three main gates of the North-West University's campuses in Mahikeng, Potchefstroom and Vanderbijlpark will be illuminated in purple for a specific reason.



Mahikeng



Potchefstroom



Vanderbijlpark

The colour purple symbolically runs through the veins of every staff member, student and stakeholder of the North-West University (NWU).

Since its introduction in 2018 as the NWU's official colour, purple has become the sign of excellence and unity for every person who walks through the gates of any of the three campuses.

This December, purple has additional meaning for the NWU family. The main gates of all three campuses will be illuminated in purple for the entire month, leading the NWU into a new year. Demonstrating the NWU's ethic of care, this symbolic

gesture is in remembrance of the sacrifices that were made and challenges that were overcome, and the resilience and excellence displayed despite the various challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Business unusual leads to new opportunities

Business as usual quickly became business unusual as Covid-19 invaded all aspects of human life. The pandemic had a heavy impact on the NWU community, affecting campus and research activities and community engagement.

International collaborations became restricted to what could be done in front of a computer screen. Students lost the privilege of attending contact classes and participating in the NWU's exciting student life. Staff lost the support of informal peer discussions over a cup of coffee.

Along with universities worldwide, the NWU had to adapt its contact teaching and learning approach to predominantly online learning, relying on and adapting quickly to this modality of education.

In this regard, staff and students took up the challenge, discovering new opportunities to learn. They worked together to achieve excellence, to minimise the disruption of the academic year and to successfully overcome obstacle after obstacle.

Remembering the personal toll

The pandemic also had a profound personal impact, affecting social and family interactions and day-to-day activities and resulting in irreplaceable and tragic losses for many.

Many staff members shared their experiences of grief and loss as the pandemic carved away every sense of normality.

Prof. Alida Herbst of the School of Psychosocial Health initiated the illumination of the main gates in purple as a symbolic gesture to demonstrate the NWU's ethic of care and to acknowledge losses and express grief amid the pandemic.

She says the purple illumination also emphasises hope and care as contained in the meaning of the colour purple, which includes nobility, power, ambition, creativity, wisdom, dignity, devotion and pride.

The purple-illuminated gates spread a message of hope. We not only suffered losses, but have learned valuable lessons about communities, our university, our students and ourselves.

The NWU family's resilience grew as they faced the challenges with creativity, dignity, devotion, wisdom and pride. This is why the purple illumination is also a sign of gratitude to every person who played and continues to play a pivotal role in the success of the NWU.

As of 1 December, when you pass the main gates of any of the three campuses of the NWU in Mahikeng, Potchefstroom and Vanderbijlpark, remember that we are remembering and celebrating.

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