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JOB DESCRIPTION

REFERENCE NUMBER: AP1180

JOB TITLE: Vice Chancellor (7 Year Fixed-Term Contract)

LOCATION: Rhodes University, Makhanda, Eastern Cape

BACKGROUND TO POSITION:

The Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive officer of the University and the head of its academic and administrative functions.

The incumbent leads the University in discharging its constitutional, statutory and institutional mandate: the advancement of knowledge through teaching and learning, research and community engagement; the contribution of the University to a democratic, equitable and non-racial society; and the maintenance of a financially sustainable and properly governed institution that is answerable to its Council and Senate, to its students and staff, and to the public it serves.

FUNCTIONS OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

- The Vice-Chancellor is the principal, chief executive, and accounting officer of the University.
- The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the University and has all the powers necessary to perform these functions.
- The Vice-Chancellor performs the functions of the Chancellor in the absence of the Chancellor.
- The Vice-Chancellor is accountable to the Council.
- The Vice-Chancellor is the Chairperson of the Senate and a member of the committees of the Council and the Senate, and of all joint committees of the Council and the Senate, unless provided for in the Institutional Rules.
- The Council may assign additional functions and privileges to the Vice-Chancellor.
- The Vice-Chancellor nominates a deputy vice-chancellor or a senior academic employee in an acting capacity in their absence.
- If the Vice-Chancellor is unable to nominate an acting Vice-Chancellor, the Council must designate one of the deputy vice-chancellors or a senior academic employee to act for such time as stipulated by the Council.
- An acting vice-chancellor performs the same functions as the Vice-Chancellor.

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- The Vice-Chancellor may, on such conditions as they may determine, delegate any of their powers under the Act and assign any of their duties in terms of section 68(3) of the Act to any other employee of the University.
- The Vice-Chancellor is the chief disciplinary authority of the University for all employee disciplinary matters and student disciplinary matters. The Vice-Chancellor is vested with the authority and responsibility to ensure the proper administration, application and implementation of discipline.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP

Strategic Planning

- Develop, in consultation with the Council and the Senate, a long-term institutional vision and strategic plan, and lead its implementation, monitoring, periodic review, and renewal.
- Define the University's identity and distinctive contribution within the national system and align it with the priorities of the National Development Plan and the post-school education policy framework.
- Build and sustain an executive team of high calibre, with clear delegations and a culture of collective responsibility.

Institutional Governance, Ethics, Risk Management, Compliance & Accountability

- Work in close and candid partnership with the Chairperson and members of the Council, advising the Council fully and timeously and implementing its decisions.
- Maintain constructive relations with the Senate, the Institutional Forum, the Student Representative Council and the recognised organs of staff.
- Ensure compliance with the Higher Education Act, the Institutional Statute, the reporting regulations, and the principles of ethical and effective leadership reflected in the King IV Code on Corporate Governance for South Africa Report as adopted by the Council.
- Ensure that the University has a functioning system of risk management, internal audit and internal control, and that audit findings are addressed.
- Account to the Minister of Higher Education and Training and to Parliament, as required, for the performance and conduct of the University, including

during any statutory intervention or assessment.
- Model the highest standards of personal and institutional integrity and ensure that the University maintains effective measures against fraud, corruption and conflicts of interest.
- Ensure that protected disclosures are received, investigated and acted upon without retaliation; and that whistleblowers are fiercely protected.
- Lead the University's response to institutional crises, including reputational, safety, cyber and governance events, with candour and decisiveness.

Financial Stewardship & Sustainability

- Ensure the financial sustainability of the University, including the preparation and execution of balanced budgets approved by the Council and prudent management of reserves, investments and debt.
- Manage fee-setting, student debt and the University's relationship with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme with fairness and rigour.
- Lead fundraising and the development of third-stream income, including relationships with alums, donors, foundations and the private sector.
- Oversee the maintenance, renewal and security of infrastructure, including energy resilience and information technology.

2. INSTITUTIONAL STEWARDSHIP

The Academic Project

- Provide leadership in teaching and learning, with particular attention to access, retention, throughput and the quality of the student learning experience.
- Ensure the integrity, coherence and currency of the academic project, including curriculum renewal, programme accreditation, and the maintenance of academic standards.
- Uphold academic freedom and promote an institutional culture in which contested ideas may be debated openly and with respect.
- Support the development of academic staff, including the cultivation of a new generation of scholars from historically underrepresented groups.

Research, Innovation & Partnerships

- Preserve and advance Rhodes University’s position as a top-tier research-intensive university

- Promote research of global standing and local relevance and strengthen the University's postgraduate and postdoctoral enterprise.
- Secure research funding from the National Research Foundation, other public funders, industry and international partners, and ensure the responsible management of those funds.
- Foster research integrity and ethical conduct, and ensure that effective systems exist to address misconduct, including plagiarism and authorship disputes.
- Encourage innovation, knowledge transfer and the protection and responsible use of intellectual property.

Community Engagement

- Position the University as an engaged institution that contributes to the social, cultural and economic development of its locality, province and region.
- Promote partnerships with local government, schools, communities and civil society, and ensure that the University's teaching and research respond to the needs of the communities it serves.

Students & the Student Experience

- Ensure that the University provides a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for learning, including residential accommodation, student health and counselling services, and academic support.
- Engage regularly and in good faith with student leadership, and manage protest, dissent and disruption in a manner that protects the right to protest, the safety of persons and property, and the continuity of the academic programme.
- Uphold a fair and lawful student disciplinary system consistent with the Student Disciplinary Code.

3. INCLUSIVITY, TRANSFORMATION & JUSTICE

People & Labour Leadership

- Lead the human resource strategy of the University, including recruitment, retention, remuneration, performance management and succession planning.
- Maintain constructive and lawful relations with recognised trade unions and ensure the fair and consistent application of disciplinary, grievance and dispute resolution procedures.
- Address questions of outsourcing, insourcing and

conditions of service for support staff with sensitivity to both fiscal reality and social justice.
- Support comprehensive Human Capital plans that enhance competitive remuneration, staff wellness, continuous professional development, and faster recruitment turnaround times.

Transformation, Equity & Institutional Culture

- Lead the implementation of the University's employment equity plan and transformation strategy and report openly on progress and shortfalls.
- Foster an institutional culture free of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and other forms of unfair discrimination, and ensure that complaints are resolved promptly and fairly.
- Ensure that the University maintains effective policies, structures and support services to prevent and address gender-based violence.
- Create an inclusive and receptive environment that nurtures and develops staff. Development initiatives that are explicitly directed towards leadership development, anti-bias training, restorative justice frameworks and interventions that dismantle subtle status hierarchies and value every employee's contribution to the university's vision and mission.
- Drive accelerated demographic transformation among academic staff and executive/senior leadership, specifically building the professorial pipeline.
- Redress and address employment disparities, inequities, and discriminatory practices in a sustainable manner and within reasonable time frames.

4. SECTOR PARTICIPATION, REPUTATION & DEVELOPMENT

- Maintain active, mutually beneficial partnerships with the Makana Municipality, civic structures, and Eastern Cape stakeholders to co-manage local socio-economic, water, electricity and infrastructure challenges.
- Represent the University to the Minister, the Department of Higher Education and Training, the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, the Council on Higher Education, the National Research Foundation, sector education and training authorities, and Universities South Africa.
- Develop and sustain partnerships with African and international universities and with regional bodies, and promote the internationalisation of the University

consistent with its mission.
- Serve as the University's principal ambassador, and a credible public intellectual voice on higher education and on the major questions facing South African society.

INHERENT CRITERIA:

Minimum Qualification(s)

A PhD plus at least fifteen (15) years' relevant experience in Higher Education institutions, and/or national systems of innovation, ten (10) of which should be at a senior level, such as but not limited to Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean/Dean, Executive Director/Director, or equivalent level, where such experience includes:

- A demonstrable, sophisticated understanding of the intellectual, social, political, and economic challenges of the Higher Education (HE) sector is required. As such, they must possess the knowledge and expertise that command the respect of all colleagues, as well as the experience to shape and drive the strategy of a complex institution.
- Previous experience of operating at a senior level in a complex organisation with evidence of providing leadership in the following settings:

  - ✓ Active participation in key policy and decision-making at the institutional level
  - ✓ Championing and managing transformation, preferably at the organisational/institutional level
  - ✓ Providing academic leadership at least at the division/faculty level, but preferably at the institutional level
  - ✓ A respected academic with the requisite strategic, administrative, and operational experience to lead the institution. In addition, one must be appointable at the level of either Associate Professor or Professor.
  - ✓ Effective management of substantial resources division/faculty, preferably at the institutional level.

COMPETENCIES: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES:

The successful candidate will be a person of intellectual distinction and personal humility, able to listen and to decide. The incumbent will be accessible to the University community, firm in defending academic values, and

resilient under public scrutiny. The incumbent will command respect through fairness, consistency and candour. In addition, the incumbent must demonstrate the following competencies:

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

- An excellent understanding of the social, political, and economic challenges facing HEIs today at the global and national levels and the implications of this for Institutions such as Rhodes University.
- Understanding of the challenges and opportunities in driving and building a teaching and learning culture
- Understanding the challenges and opportunities in pursuing a research and innovation agenda in an HEI, and the implications for an Institution such as Rhodes University.
- Understanding and conversance with the scholarship of research and innovation in HEIs.
- Sound understanding of institutional good governance principles.
- Solid grasp of the pitfalls of research misconduct, plagiarism, predatory publishing, and other forms of integrity lapses that could damage the reputation of the University.
- Understanding the social, intellectual, access and success challenges facing students in higher education.
- Practical grasp of financial management, strategic planning, and execution.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Ability to think creatively and innovatively concerning the following areas:

- The nature of the student body at Rhodes University and how best to facilitate formal and epistemological access for such students.
- People management skills with a consultative and inclusive style, able to build consensus and commitment to new initiatives.
- Ability to inspire and encourage colleagues.
- Collegial awareness.
- Ability to develop, articulate and implement strategic

goals.

- Ability to represent the University and act as an ambassador for the Institution.
- Intellectual and visionary leadership abilities.
- Change leadership and transformation skills.
- Well-developed communication skills.
- Strategic thinking and planning skills.
- Complex problem-solving skills.
- Influencing and negotiation skills.
- The ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing in English.
- The ability to communicate in other official languages, particularly Isi-Xhosa and Afrikaans, is desirable and will be an advantage.
- Exemplary confidentiality ability.
- Decisiveness.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Personal credibility and an ability to engender respect and instil confidence in people at different levels within the institution.
- Unquestionable personal integrity with a keen sense of fairness, able to balance the competing demands within a complex HE institution with staff, student, stakeholder expectations and institutional resources.
- To live out the values of the University.
- Commitment to transparent management.
- A passion for creating the conditions for others to succeed in their intellectual endeavours.
- High personal responsibility and corporate obligation with a results focus and a strong sense of accountability.
- High level of professionalism and conduct that will enhance the reputation of the University.
- Personal flexibility: willing to consider alternative perspectives and ideas, but able to make difficult decisions independently.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with an ability to relate to staff at different occupational levels, cultures, and backgrounds.
- Champions diversity: culturally aware and sensitive, fosters an appreciative attitude.

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- Actively seeks feedback, can withstand criticism, and uses constructive criticism to improve.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- A detailed cover letter indicating your suitability for the position.
- A comprehensive CV.
- An abridged CV.
- A completed Rhodes University Application Form which can be downloaded on this link: https://www.executivetalenting.co.za/wp-content/uploads/Rhodes-University-Updated-Application-form-for-all-posts_-updated-06052026.pdf
- Names and full contact details for at least 3 referees, one which must be from your present employer. Should you not be currently employed, a contactable reference from your previous employer must be provided.
- Certified copies of matric and degree certificates and Identity Document. Proof of SAQA verification of foreign qualifications, where relevant.

To apply please forward your application quoting reference number **AP1180** to Genevieve Michel c/o shireen1180@talenting.co.za

The closing date for applications is Friday, 15 January 2027.

Incomplete applications will not be considered!