

UJ receives R15m for mining faculty

Sibanye will inject R15m into the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Department of Mining Engineering and Mine Surveying over the next three years, to integrate mining education with the fourth Industrial Revolution.



From L-R: Karen Coetzee (Senior Manager, Strategic Partnerships and Development, UJ); Neel Froneman (Chief Executive Officer, Sibanye); Prof Tshilidzi Marwala (Vice-Chancellor Designate, UJ), Prof Saurabh Sinha (Executive Dean: Faculty of Engineering and the Built environment, UJ) and Dr Hennie Grobler (Head of Department: Department of Mining Engineering and Mine Surveying, UJ)

Sibanye's CEO, Neel Froneman, said that although the primary aim of the investment is to provide high-quality teaching and learning, increased research and innovation intensity and capital investment into facility expansion and maintenance, the company also appreciates that a portion of the investment will be aimed at improving the lives of students via bursaries.

The investment will be used to set up mining emulation infrastructure at UJ's Doornfontein Campus. The emulation, combined with virtual and real-life communication, will enable students to have an immersive learning experience and bring together multiple disciplines to advance teaching and research in the sector.

Speaking at an event for the handover of the investment, UJ's Vice-Chancellor Designate, Prof Tshilidzi Marwala stated that the emulation could explore the use of power-line communication (PLC) to integrate LEDs that could be used for communication, virtualisation and determining where and when accidents could occur, using techniques such as pattern recognition or artificial intelligence. He pointed out that this component brings 'real-life' into the cyber world and allows students to integrate directly and practically with the fourth Industrial Revolution.

Prof Marwala emphasised that Sibanye's contribution is an investment in the future of mining. "The mine emulation will enable us to develop engineering education strategies to enhance undergraduate exposure and employability in mining specific areas. Only through partners like Sibanye can we adopt and adapt the fourth Industrial Revolution into the mining sector and ensure our students will be work-ready and equipped when they transition from UJ into the world of work," said Prof Marwala.

Sibanye's newest investment of R15m follows a previous investment by the mining house of R12.5 million, paid over three years, towards UJ's Doornfontein campus redevelopment project from September 2014 to 2016.

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