

Wole Soyinka joins UJ as Distinguished Visiting Professor

Professor Wole Soyinka, the first African recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, has joined the University of Johannesburg (UJ) as a Distinguished Visiting Professor in the university's Faculty of Humanities.



From L-R: Nobel Laureate prize winner, Prof Wole Soyinka and Professor Ihron Rensburg, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

Educated in Ibadan, Nigeria, and Leeds, England, where he obtained an Honours degree in English, Soyinka has held Fellowship and Professorial positions in the Dramatic Arts and Comparative Literature at the Universities of Ibadan, Lagos and Ife (Nigeria), Legon (Ghana), Sheffield and Cambridge (England), Yale, Cornell, Harvard, Emory, Nevada, Loyola Marymount (USA). He continues lecturing as Visiting Professor, Distinguished Scholar etc. in other American, European, African and Chinese universities.

Soyinka has a stellar record in teaching, publications, and public intellectual discourse, says Prof Alex Broadbent, executive Dean, Faculty of Humanities, UJ. “He has been and continues to be associated with some of the best universities in the world. UJ’s drive to decolonisation as well as the Africanisation of knowledge have led to substantial dialogues at the institution. These conversations provided the university the opportunity to ask searching questions about our African identity and our role in nurturing the 'New Africa', and the future of our university. Prof Soyinka as a high profile academic and social influencer whose work, sentiments, and political positionality is taken very seriously in Africa, and across the world will bring a new dimension to this discourse,” says Broadbent.

At 83, Soyinka, Africa’s only black Nobel laureate for Literature, continues to actively teach, offer public lectures, write prolifically, and is critically engaged in the global politics stage.

Soyinka would also bring the work of the Soyinka Foundation to the institution for partnership anchoring. “Beyond the funds associated with the acclaimed Wole Soyinka Award for Literature, there is the added value of the foundation meetings that will attract high profile participants and enhance literature work at UJ worldwide. This will result in the further realisation of the internationalisation of the curriculum, and add to UJ’s international partnerships and mobility. The research and publications envisaged to flow out of the foundation work will be important too for UJ’s research profile.”

Currently he is Life Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, Emeritus Fellow of the Black Mountain Institute, University of Nevada, Overseas Fellow of Hutchins Institute, Harvard University, and Professor Emeritus, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, Founder and Chairman of the Wole Soyinka Foundation, Nigeria.

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