



Scribbling for Success

Penned by the Deanery

Welcome Note

A very warm welcome to everyone for the 2025 academic year. It's amazing how quickly time passes, as it feels like we were wishing everyone a good holiday period just last week. It has also been an extremely busy period for the Faculty as we had to work hard to admit our new students into the BVN and BVSc programmes following the earlier-than-expected release of the matric results, as well as having to manage student appeals and sort out all the logistics for this year's programme delivery.

There has also been an extremely swift [change in the status quo internationally following the inauguration of the new US president](#). The world will likely be impacted for many years to come by the major change in US foreign relations. While we have been isolated from the major chaos thus far as the animal health industry (unlike our medical colleagues), time will tell if there are any real impacts on South African animal health, as a number of Faculty staff hold US government research grants.

We would also like to take this opportunity to [officially welcome Prof JP Schoeman as the incoming head of CACS, Prof DN Qekwana, who has started a second term as HOD and Dr Alfred Kgasi, who has taken over as hospital director](#). We wish you all the best in your new portfolios and look forward to all the new initiatives you bring during your respective terms.

As we facilitated last year, [the Deanery will host small group lunches with staff on a rotational invitation basis](#). Please feel free to use these lunches to get to know your colleagues or raise any questions. We will also attend at least one departmental management meeting this year to discuss any items that need collective attention from the Faculty management team.

Our Faculty

- ❖ 100 years of the BVSc degree being awarded
- ❖ 97.3 undergrad pass rate in 2024
- ❖ A new pot-plant on the sixth floor

Within the Box



★ **Orientation week:** The Faculty has just completed orientation with our first-year and transfer students. [The Deanery extended our traditional warm welcome](#) and wished our future colleagues well with their studies.

★ **OTAU:** The Faculty has, over the last three months, received a number of complaints on the management of animals at OTAU, with a specific focus on food quality. [We would like to assure all staff that this is being given significant attention](#). Our major constraint is, unfortunately, finding a supplier for the grass. If you know a large producer who could supply OTAU, please contact Metse.

"Even when life places you on a short leash, let your determination lead you to boundless opportunities. Like a dog who greets every challenge with unwavering loyalty and courage, face life's obstacles head-on, knowing they're just markers on the trail to your dreams."

Faculty of Veterinary Science

Fakulteit Veeartsenykunde
Lefapha la Disaense tša Bongakadiruiwa

- ★ **PQM matters:** The Faculty continues to work on the PQM to ensure that all our degree programmes are correctly registered. This does, unfortunately, mean that the new programmes that the Faculty has applied for permission to deliver are also delayed.
- ★ **Wellness:** Wellness remains a concern for the veterinary profession. As such, it is up to us to ensure that we help colleagues in need and, more importantly, to [reach out for help when needed](#). We also have some exciting wellness projects and activities lined up for the year, and we can't wait to see you all there.
- ★ **Language Policy:** We would like to remind all staff that [English remains the official language](#) for all teaching activities and communication at the Faculty. While the Faculty acknowledges that clinical consultations are facilitated in different languages, it is [incumbent on all staff to facilitate a fair translation for all students involved in said training activities](#).
- ★ **Interns:** Welcome to all our new interns. The Faculty values your commitment to not only furthering your own education but also contributing to the clinical training of the BVSc class.
- ★ **Renovation:** Various renovation projects will be commencing on campus this year. While it may be of some inconvenience, we're hopeful that the outcome will make the renovated spaces a better environment to work.
- ★ **Performance contracts:** [Please finalize your 2024 performance](#) scoring on the PeopleSoft system by 14 February, and remember to discuss your 2025 agreement as soon as possible.
- ★ **Declarations:** Please also remember that [all staff](#) must complete both [the conflict of interest and external work applications on the system](#). It expires at the end of each year and is not automatically carried forward. Remember, the declaration of interests covers activities like business ownership and external roles of responsibility, [while external work covers any private work, paid or unpaid](#). Even if they are the same, you have to complete both declarations independently. If you need help, please reach out to your line manager or HR. Please also remember that no external work is allowed during working hours or through the use of UP equipment, including digital consultation, and that no competition is allowed with OVAH activities within a 50km radius of the Faculty, including offering further services to OVAH clientele.

Outside the Box

- ★ **Biosecurity:** Despite a bit of a slow start, the national Biosecurity Hub is gaining major impetus under our new Minister, with funding already flowing into the University. Following the recent high-level discussion between the VC and the Minister, we as a Faculty have been asked to consider one major area in which risk assessment could have a major impact on the agricultural industry. [We would love to hear your suggestions](#). We think the focus should be on safe food after the devastating impact that pesticide contaminations have recently had on snacks available to school children.
- ★ **Stakeholder Engagements:** The first edition of the new OPNews was recently published and shared with all staff. [We would love to hear your opinion on the content](#). Since the magazine will be shared with Alumni, we also welcome stories that you think could be of general interest to all our Alumni.
- ★ **Accreditation:** The Faculty received feedback from the RCVS and AVBC; it is all good news. The [AVBC has accredited the BVSc with minor deficiencies](#), noting that the curriculum review needs to be finalised. At the same time, [the RCVS has accredited the programme with no conditions until](#)



Questions

Drop The One (aka Neo) a question and we'll make sure we answer. Don't be afraid to challenge us, give us direction or suggest strategies to take the Faculty forward: neo.mashitisho@up.ac.za

**Faculty of
Veterinary Science**

Fakulteit Veeartsenykunde
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2029. A very big thank you to all staff who not only participated in the accreditation visit but continued to tirelessly contribute to the success of the Faculty.

- ★ **Quinquennial:** Besides being an awful word, the Faculty is busy working on our five-yearly review that the University runs. We have recruited Prof Penzhorn's expert service to assist with the process and to ensure that the Faculty is comprehensively reviewed, as this review allows the Faculty to think forward and plan for the next chapter in the development of the Faculty.
- ★ **Wasteful management:** No, it is not a typo. The Faculty recently went through a rather wasteful questioning of the waste removal contractor assigned to the campus to remove biological waste. The dispute with the Directorate of Animal Health was whether a city licence to move biological waste included infectious waste. Thankfully, the city could clarify the licence and the powers that be was satisfied with. However, if you are aware of any projects that are still being unnecessarily delayed, please bring them to the attention of our Faculty quality manager.
- ★ **Town hall and Professional services staff dialogue sessions:** With the huge success of last year's discussion, we will continue with the same format this year. Look out for the invitations on OPInfo and through your departmental platforms.
- ★ **Transformation Committee:** A friendly reminder that all staff and students are welcome to attend the Faculty transformation meetings. Look out for the invitation on OPInfo. Let's co-create a Faculty culture we will all be proud of!



Imploding the Box

★ **Physiotherapy:** We have just signed a [service-level agreement with Equine Librium](#) to provide [veterinary physiotherapy services through the OVAH to clients as a private clinic](#), similar to medical physiotherapists working at private hospitals. Equine Librium has also agreed to expose our students to physiotherapy procedures during their activities. We hope this will allow our new graduates to understand the importance of working in a veterinary team and how their future patients may benefit from these additional therapeutic modalities.

★ **Funding Boost for Climate Change Research:** In collaboration with Cornell University (USA), the university has received a major grant to advance climate change research and develop practical solutions for resilience and sustainability. Our Faculty plays a key role in this initiative, with [Prof. Marinda Oosthuizen](#) as co-lead and [several researchers contributing to vector-borne disease research and community engagement](#). This funding strengthens both UP's and the Faculty's commitment to impactful research that benefits South Africa and beyond. Stay tuned for updates on this exciting initiative!

- ★ **Big News! UP to Lead Key Pandemic Prevention Research:** The National Institute for the Preparedness and Prevention of Pandemics has officially been approved! UP is one of 10 South African universities taking part, and we're leading the charge on [Theme 1: Preventing Pandemics with a Focus on Early Warning Systems](#). Several researchers from our Faculty are involved in this exciting initiative, which will play a crucial role in safeguarding public health. Stay tuned for more updates!

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