

Minister Pandor's speech at the opening of the Computational and Mathematical Sciences (CAMS) building at the University of the Western Cape

UWC campus, Robert Sobukwe Road, Bellville

13 November 2018

It gives me great pleasure to address you at the opening of the University of the Western Cape's new maths building. Thank you for this invitation. This is a R240 million initiative funded by the department, the university and donors.

The Computational and Mathematical Sciences or CAMS building is a major refurbishment of the old life sciences complex, part funded by the DHET's Infrastructure and Efficiency Grant (IEG).

This is one of the first major refurbishments and repurposing of old infrastructure on the UWC main campus.

UWC has been improving its teaching and learning infrastructure over several years and the buildings often signal the teaching and research priorities of the university.

In 2007 the Department of Education introduced the IEG which has supported these and other developments at UWC.

Since its inception the IEG has grown from strength to strength over five distinct cycles, and a total of R28.6 billion has been invested into university infrastructure across the public higher education system.

This amount excludes the funds that were allocated for the development of the University of Mpumalanga and Sol Plaatje University, which have been funded through a separate earmarked grant.

While I know that much more needs to be done, especially at historically black campuses that have large infrastructure deficits, we also need to celebrate what has

been done, and continues to be done, to improve university infrastructure.

I'd like to reflect a little on how far we have come and on the government support given to this university in its development.

Since the beginning of the IEG, most funding has been allocated to the historically black universities and campuses to help redress past inequality.

And the University of the Western Cape has benefited from this redress.

Over time UWC has developed in leaps and bounds and is now one of the top universities in the country. It's high time that UWC considers itself as 'proudly historically black' without attaching the label disadvantaged to its image. This may help begin a move toward a more confident status among HDIs in South Africa.

I'm pleased to say that government has invested significantly in universities in the Western Cape Province.

A total of R4.5 billion from the IEG has been allocated to the four Western Cape universities since 2007, and of that total R1.363 billion has been allocated to the University of the Western Cape.

One of the features of the IEG programme has been the co-funding model that has underpinned the infrastructure development programme at universities. Each university receiving an IEG to fund a particular project has had to commit to funding part of the total project costs themselves. This funding, in some cases raised through private sector and donor contributions, has enabled universities to develop further infrastructure, including student housing, lecture theatres, academic offices, research facilities, administrative buildings, laboratories, libraries, recreational facilities, social spaces, ICT infrastructure, and other facilities.

It cost a total of R243.713 million to refurbish and extend the old Life Sciences complex into the CAMS building we are opening today.

Of this, an amount of R71.365m was funded through the IEG.

The CAMS building houses the Departments of Computer Science, Statistics and Mathematics, and Information Systems. This building is efficiently planned to provide state of the art facilities appropriate for South Africa's leading E-Skills centre and its second most significant research centre in the field. This building will make a significant contribution to our plans to ensure we provide skills that can play a critical role in advancing our national skills strategy.

UWC is also being supported through the Student Housing Infrastructure programme to accelerate its provision of student housing through the development of a student village. This project is also being partially

funded by the Department and significant funds have been provided to support the project.

I'd like to also emphasise that the Department does not only provide universities with funding for infrastructure, it also provides support, through the recently completed Macro Infrastructure Framework, which assists universities to plan and manage their infrastructure programmes in an efficient and effective manner.

I congratulate UWC for having successfully completed its infrastructure projects and I trust that the University has adopted the life-cycle approach to infrastructure management by developing a comprehensive asset management plan for the management of its newly refurbished buildings.

In the light of the country's current economic climate, I urge all universities to be prudent and efficient in the use and management of existing infrastructure and to lead the way in the provision of infrastructure and facilities that are

environmentally sustainable, energy efficient, and accessible.

The Department remains committed to supporting UWC to develop sufficient infrastructure to impact positively on its overall student learning experience.

In conclusion, I wish you well in your efforts to deliver quality academic and research programmes and services to our students through well-maintained facilities and committed academic, research and support staff.

Thank you!