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|  | Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom South Africa 2520  Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222  Fax: +2718 299-4910  Web: [http://www.nwu.ac.za](http://www.nwu.ac.za/)  **Office of the Vice-Chancellor**  Tel: +2718 285 3002  Email: [Nkosinathi.Tom@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Nkosinathi.Tom@nwu.ac.za) |

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERED

**VICE-CHANCELLOR’S MESSAGE OPENING OF NEW FACILITY K21-23/03/23**

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Mr. Bert Sorgdrager: Chairperson of the NWU Council

Members of the University and Senior Management Committee/s

Prof Jacques Faul: CEO, Titans/Northens Cricket

Dr Eugene Hare: CEO, Blue Bulls Rugby

The Deanery of the Faculty of Health Sciences under the leadership of Prof Awie Koetze

Members of the Student Life Directorate and Centre for the Health and Human Performance (CHHP)

Cllr Patricia Mtshali: MMC Sport, Arts and Culture (JB Marks Local Municipality)

Esteemed Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening

At the 2000 inaugural Laureus World Sports Awards, the former President Nelson Mandela declared that: ***“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.”***

With the opening of this new facility this evening, we take the lead regarding scientific expertise and apply it with excellence to all our diverse services in the world of sport, exercise and health. Our primary focus is built on three pillars. Firstly, the academic training of undergraduate and postgraduate students, secondly active research and supervision of masters and PhD’s and last but not the least, quality service delivery to our patients and clients. This means that understanding human performance, sport, and health in a variety of contexts, is at the heart of everything we do.

One the one hand we have the School of Human Movement Sciences with the **vision** to be a school of excellence in the development and training of students in the areas of human movement science, biokinetics, recreation, sports science, kinderkinetics and coaching science, enabling them to be practitioners, leaders and innovators in these applied fields for the people of South Africa and Africa.

One the other hand we have the Centre for Health and Human Performance (CHHP) which is rendering comprehensive, quality, evidence-based services in the field of health and human performance, underpinned by neuroscience. The aim is to make a meaningful difference to the corporate market, elite and other sports people, as well as the general public, across the lifecycle.

**The unique combination where we bring academic rigor and practical experience together, set us apart from the competition and enabled us to deliver a world class service.** As a university, we remain committed to our dream of being **“an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care.”**

To complement our world class service, the facilities we are officially commissioning this evening are also truly world quality and evidence of this are the many national and international sports teams that make use of our expertise and facilities at the NWU. In June 2022 the Board of the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) officially endorsed the NWU as their official partner to host, operate and manage the Total Excellence Programme (TAE) for the next two Olympic and Paralympic cycles (up to 2028 inclusive).

With regard to teaching and learning, the NWU is seen as the leading university in South Africa with regard to the training of biokinetics, kinderkinetics and sport science students. The research done by Prof Gert Strydom in the 1970’s laid the foundation for the development of a new discipline, namely Biokinetics. Through his continued hard work Biokinetics was registered as an independent health discipline at the HPCSA. Therefore, the NWU is considered by many to be the birthplace of biokinetics.

Through our research focus area of Physical Activity, Sport, and Recreation we strive to contribute, through multi-disciplinary research projects and community engagement, to a more physically active, healthy and winning nation. Our slogan is therefore: "Researching Human Movement: From the Cradle to the Grave."

It is therefore clear that these new facilities will set the scene and create a platform that will allow us to further expand our footprint in sport, exercise, and health. Not only in South Africa, but also on the continent of Africa and on the global stage.

Enjoy this lovely opening and be merry.

Enkosi!

Thank you!

Baie dankie!

Ndiyabulela!

Ke a leboga!

Ngiyabonga!