

## A family man with great integrity

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**Namibia University of Science and Technology has welcomed Dr Eroid Naomab as vice-chancellor for a five-year term effective from 1 January 2021.**

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Monique Adams

Dr Eroid Naomab was born and raised at Omaruru in the Erongo Region.

At the age of nine he was orphaned and he had to mature quickly and take up odd jobs at the tender age of eleven.

He attended primary school at Ubasen and then Paheye at Omaruru. For junior secondary school, he went to a rural school called Dibasen (Okombahe) and then matriculated from Paresis Secondary School at Otjiwarongo.

Despite changing schools often, Naomab stayed focused and was always the top academic performer at every school he attended. After matriculating, he had to take a gap year due to lack of funding. Fortunately, during this period, he secured his first formal job at Social Impact Assessment and Policy Analysis Corporation (SIAPAC) Namibia, a private development consultancy firm.

He then went on to pursue four degrees in a nine-year period, namely: Bachelor of Science University of Namibia (Unam); two master's degrees (Science, Unam and Research in Strategic Resource Management, Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom) and finally a doctorate (Science, Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom)

"I also finished top of the class at all institutions of higher learning local or international that I attended. Initially, I actually wanted to become a lawyer, but eventually it became clear that my passion was and is science," he says.

He added that over the years he has assumed various leadership roles, at the same time prioritising his family. "I am blessed with a lovely wife with whom I have two beautiful children, a girl and boy," he says proudly.

Naomab is a firm believer that a good upbringing at a home with strong values will guide one to a successful career. He also prioritises being a productive family member and, ultimately, a good citizen.

Prior to his appointment at Nust, over the years, he held various positions at the University of Namibia's Southern Campus. These include: founding director; head of the department of chemistry and biochemistry; and lecturer, where he taught undergraduate and postgraduate students. Thereafter, he became the assistant pro vice-chancellor.

His job description as the new Nust vice-chancellor focuses on providing academic, administrative, strategic and transformational leadership to the university, in line with the principles enshrined in the Nust Act, statutes, policies, rules and regulations.

Everything he does must be aligned with the core mandate of the institution, which is to provide quality education to the nation and beyond.

One of his goals is to promote financial sustainability. “It is a common cause of concern that the unit cost of offering learning is rising, institutional debt is rising and threatening the very sustainability of universities globally.

“Therefore, promoting sustainability will inevitably not be a simple task, but whilst it is indisputable that Nust cannot function without government subsidies, it is of paramount importance that the institution, on its part, also scales up its efforts to diversify income streams.

“I firmly believe that we can achieve this by venturing into business-to-business relations by translating our capabilities into commercially compelling new offerings,” he says.

The theme for the Nust 2021 academic year is ‘Re-envisioning higher education in a post-Covid era’. Naomab says this does not imply that the pandemic is over, but it is a theme that aims to implore the campus community to look to the future and critically assess the important lessons learnt. Furthermore, it aims to encourage staff and students to be proactive and embrace the opportunities brought about to revitalise higher education for the Covid-19 generation.

What people can expect from Naomab’s leadership is more remote teaching and learning, as well as enhanced online activity as the university scales up its efforts to fully embrace technology and keep up with global trends.

“Remember to be patient as you walk on your career path. You will face many challenges and make mistakes along the way, but it is sometimes necessary because failure is a good teacher. Results are rarely achieved overnight, but you have to stand against all odds.

“Also, remember that it is not simply about excelling at a personal level, but also it is about uplifting others in whichever way possible. In conclusion, strive towards being a good citizen,” he says.