

## **SAS renews partnership with North West University**

**Johannesburg, (DATE):** SAS Institute South Africa and North-West University (NWU) have concluded the signing of an agreement that reaffirms a long-standing partnership between the two organisations.

SAS is highly involved in the sciences faculty at NWU, co-funding the position of Head of the SAS Lab and encouraging the studies of high end analytics. At the core of the partnership is the Business Mathematics and Informatics (BMI) programme offered by NWU in collaboration with industry partners Absa and SAS.

“We have been working closely with NWU for the last ten years, partnering with them as thought leaders in high-end business analytics and risk management, which has given us a definite competitive advantage in the market,” says Murray de Villiers, General Manager Alliances and Operations at SAS South Africa. “The success of our partnership is evident in the numerous enquiries we get from countries across the globe who wish to duplicate the BMI programme.”

The BMI programme offers Science degrees up to Masters and Doctorate levels in four fields of specialisation, namely Quantitative Risk Management, Actuarial Sciences, Financial Mathematics and Data Mining.

“These fields fit into various SAS products and offerings which are being used by many large organisations in South Africa. The combination of in-depth theoretical and practical education as well as the associated SAS skills training ensures that the students from the BMI-programme have a well-rounded education. The second semester of the Masters degree includes an Industry Directed Research Project, which puts students on site at various companies to solve a problem that yields real value for the industry” says Riaan de Jongh, Director of the Centre for BMI at NWU.

“This approach ensures that students who have been through the BMI programme are skilled and experienced in SAS, which means that they can leave university and take up a position in large organisations without the need for extra training. Thanks to the involvement from SAS these students have a high marketability and most of them walk straight into jobs after graduation,” he adds.

Over the last decade NWU has developed a solid reputation for producing the best analytics staff and students in the country. This is set to continue as a result of the renewed partnership with SAS.

“By supporting the programme at NWU, SAS is doing its part to address the skills gap that exists between education and industry in South Africa. In return we can make sure that SAS and our customers have the best people to work with and are able to call upon experts in the field of business analytics and intelligence,” says Maphum Nxumalo, Managing Director of SAS South Africa.

“This continuing partnership will ensure that together SAS and NWU can work towards furthering analytics as a field in South Africa, and produce the next generation of SAS and business analytics experts,” he concludes.