

CUT one of the inaugural signatories of 'The Cincinnati Charter'

Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), Prof. Henk de Jager, was invited to participate in a unique opportunity to support a global commitment to work integrated learning (WIL) at the 21st World Association for Cooperative Education (WACE) World Conference at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio, USA.



Prof. de Jager (middle) taking part in the discussions at the 21st World Association for Cooperative Education (WACE) World Conference at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio, United States of America (USA).

The President's Summit at the WACE 21st World Conference was a "by-invitation-only" gathering of Presidents/Vice-Chancellors of universities from 14 countries; senior Executives in government involved in WIL; focused educational institutions and organisations; government ministries; and business and industry partners from around the world.

These global WIL leaders discussed challenges and opportunities relating to access-for-all to relevant education and effective preparation for the workforce of the future. The summit culminated in the signing of a global charter, known as "The Cincinnati Charter", on 5 August 2019, that represents a commitment by WIL world leaders to endorse international WIL as a key strategy to effectively prepare the next generation of graduates/workers for productive and rewarding employment locally, nationally and globally. CUT was the only university in Africa that participated in the signing of the WACE Cincinnati Charter.

The Cincinnati Charter is the first of its kind to bring the educational, business, industrial, non-profit and governmental sectors together through an international commitment to the model of WIL, in an effort to ensure access-for-all to effective preparation for productive and fulfilling work in an increasingly borderless world.

Said De Jager: "It was a very positive Summit and the delegates and executive management of WACE were clearly impressed with CUT's leading role in the area of WIL in South Africa, and our footprint in Africa and globally. Not only is WIL compulsory in the curricula of all new academic programmes at CUT, but we also have sabbatical leave for industry placement to ensure that our academic staff stay abreast with new technologies and developments in industry and business, and to bridge the gap between academia and the world of work. It is important to acknowledge the roles that Prof Phatha Ngidi, Dr Henri Jacobs, Deans and academic and professional support staff at CUT are playing in this regard.

"For CUT to be one of the inaugural signatories of The Cincinnati Charter, which contains calls for the scaling up of WIL as a key strategy for the preparation of the next-generation global workforce, was indeed a very proud moment for CUT, which is aligned with our strategic intent to feature WIL as one of our 'signatures' of CUT."

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