

# UFS research project receives R8m investment from US Embassy

The University of the Free State (UFS) will further strengthen its ties with the Appalachian State University in the next two academic years through a mountain-to-mountain research project funded by the US Embassy and Consulates in South Africa.



Prof Geoffrey Mukwada says funding from the US Embassy and Consulates in South Africa will reinforce the ARU mandate.

The R8m project between the UFS and the US institution will cover the two master's degree programmes in underdeveloped niche areas, meteorological weather stations, leadership capacity building for black women in academia, and doctoral research projects. Qwaqwa Campus departments that will be involved are Physics, Geography, Community Development, and the ARU.

Talking about this collaboration, the project leader, Prof Geoffrey Mukwada, said it would bring together researchers from both the UFS and Appalachian State University and enable them to work together to develop what is currently an underdeveloped research niche, i.e. mountain studies.

"This project will reinforce the mandate of the Afromontane Research Unit (ARU). It will provide the basis for a long-term development agenda through training and infrastructure development. For instance, the project will fund the implementation of two master's degree programmes – the MSc in Mountain Environments and the MA in Community Development – which are long-term projects," he said.

“It will also support innovation in climate change research. Through this project, it will be possible to receive climate data from weather stations that are situated in distant, isolated, and generally inaccessible locations without travelling to those locations. We will be able to understand how the climate of the region is changing and assist in developing adaptation measures and decisions that are applicable to agriculture, water, tourism, environment, and other sectors. This will enhance the capacity of the ARU to contribute to the development of research in mountain environments,” he added.

There will be a virtual launch of the project on Tuesday, 10 November 2020, at 3pm (CAT).

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