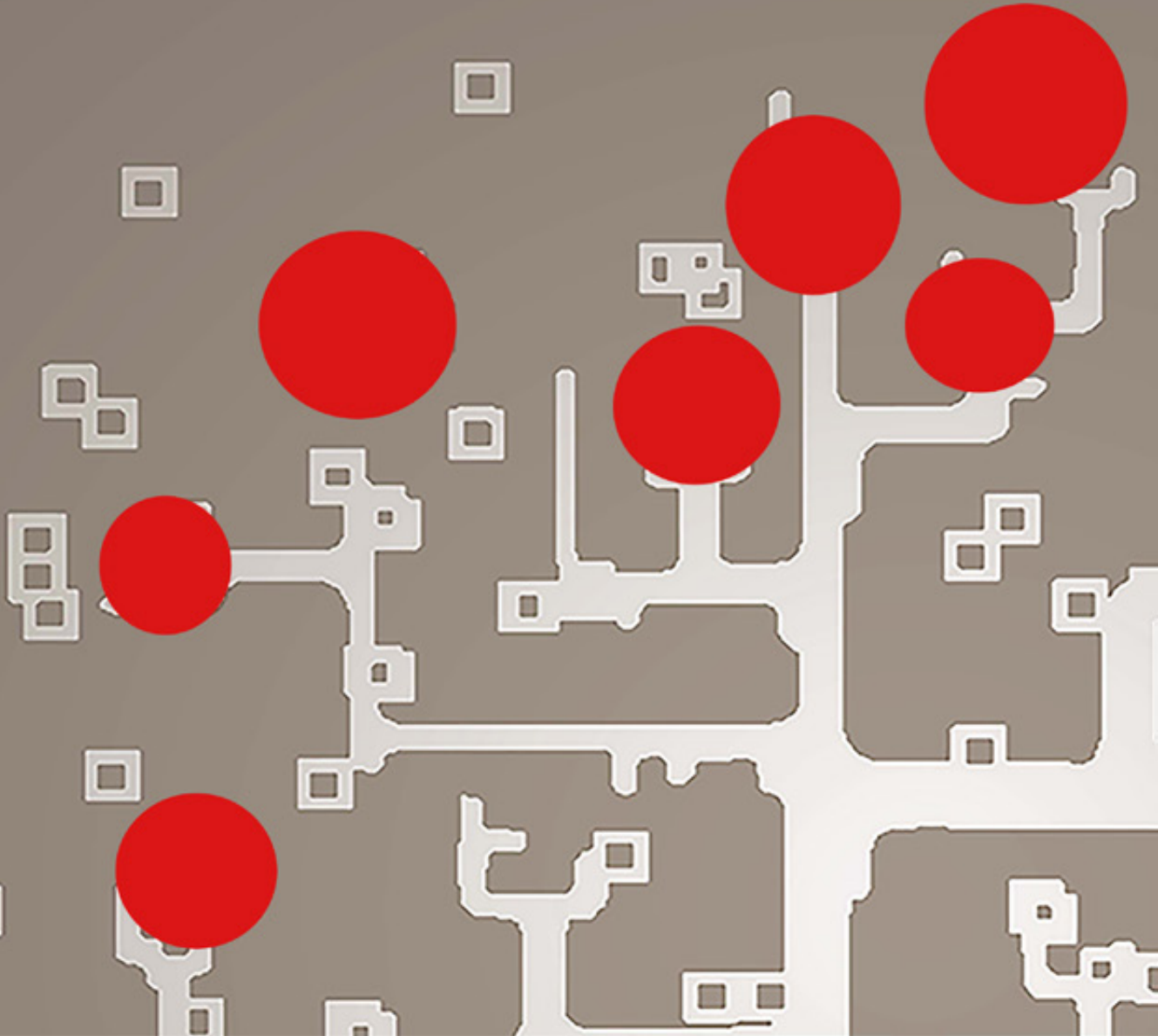


DECEMBER 2017 Edition



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take a minute

and relax with us...







# Preface

## the year 2017

was characterised by numerous challenges...

As the University is heading towards implementing the new strategy and structure, IT is preparing itself for the new era as well. We've been striving towards unity in IT for some time, and although we have achieved a lot, there is still some way to go. IT slowed down but was definitely not derailed by these events and we kept our focus on the mission of IT, namely:

- To align IT strategies and

value disciplines with business strategies and become a strategic business partner;

- To improve the balance and apply the optimal value disciplines between the five functional areas of IT by moving from a low value support focus towards a higher maturity level in terms of business value for Research, Teaching and Learning, while sustaining the maturity of administrative systems and shared services.

Regarding the latter, IT will be a core contributor to the successful implementation of the new Teaching and Learning strategy and we are therefore equipping ourselves to move into this new era and to support the strategic goals as set by the NWU.

We really stuck to our guns to make a difference in the core business of the NWU. We were very active in the research domain, from ca-

## We kept our focus on our mission...

capacity building activities to research data management. For the first time ever we took part in grant proposals and played a role in the allocation of R30 million to the National eScience Postgraduate Teaching and Training programme. Like everyone else, our budget is also under severe pressure and therefore we are always on the lookout for "value-for-money solutions". In 2017, we introduced Ceph storage, which is substantially cheaper than traditional enterprise storage.

IT takes external forces and the IT industry into consideration. Cyber security has become more and more important and balancing the security profile and strict control of IT with freedom of use remains a challenge. Humans are the weakest link and therefore we engaged in a cyber-security awareness campaign and went through an external cyber maturity assessment. This bimodal approach allows for different options to providing solu-

tions, i.e. subscribe, buy, build, integrate, IoT, Big Data, etc, which form part of our planning for the future. We are well underway with our shift towards adding real value (customer intimacy and product leadership) to Teaching and Learning, and the Research activities of the NWU. IT always aims to align itself with the institutional vision, mission and goals, and whenever there are major changes we re-evaluate our current strategies. An exciting 2018 awaits.



# Farewell tribute

## to a remarkable lady

Aldine Oosthuyzen



**P6**  
Quotes Aldine treasure...

**P7**  
Accomplishments and focus

Aldine states that her journey started many years ago "when, as a young statistics lecturer, I was appointed to manage the IT on this campus. It was still in the days of the mainframe and Computer Services (as the department was known). I am still wondering whether I was appointed as a means of getting rid of one of the biggest complainers... as I was busy with my research and was only allowed to use the mainframe after 02:00 at night. Every second night the effort was unsuccessful due to the lines being disconnected". She mentions that, as the years passed, the first ethernet network at the University was installed for Electrical Engineering on the Vaal Triangle campus: "We continuously had to adapt and change direction."



## Motto in life

Aldine's motto is derived from her problem-solving approach to life: "I love it when everything comes together in order to solve a problem or difficult situation. In other words, the experience when one realises that this is a job well done." As IT Manager at the Vaal Triangle Campus, she allows us a peek into her life journey, as 2017 marks the end of her distinguished career...



## Favourite Quotes, Aldine shared during the interview...



**"Life is fun and IT is fun, it is not all that serious...", she advises**



**1** "If you stress you are not changing the facts; worries are like a rocking chair, it keeps you busy but takes you nowhere..."

**2** "The way I see it ...yesterday is past tense, tomorrow is not yet here, but today is a gift – and that is why it is called the present..."

**3** "In my working life I have seen that very little mistakes cannot be rectified. It's a learning process; just don't repeat it."

**4** "I am the type of person who believes in living in the moment – I don't really have too much planned or lined up for the future."

However, it "was quite exciting for me as every new era poses new challenges. And now, a section that way back consisted of only one full-time and two part-time employees had grown to a 15-man group." To her amazement, she mentioned: "At the beginning of 1991 I had no idea where this journey would lead me. Not even how many different technologies I would have to work with, including supporting it amongst our users."



# Accomplishments and Focus



## IT is here to stay

"IT will, in future, play a more integral part in life; people in IT should not be worried about job expectancy... IT will become a huge necessity... Although IT might look a bit different in the future, you will always be connected. We should be aware of this, and take Einstein's words to heart: 'I fear the day that technology will surpass human interaction...'  
This is also what worries me: we talk about things on the surface, but not about emotions or experiences, and that is what we lack in true conversations..."

## Word of advice...

What should IT staff focus on more? "Relationships. Not your relationship with your laptop, but relationships with people. We should try and understand how users operate on the various campuses."

Any new IT changes should first consider the level of user or student experiences. An example is signing on to the NWU network, especially when you are new to the university: it may not come easy, as some students have never even seen a computer, a QWERTY keyboard, or even a mouse before. As IT people we should be sensitive to situations like this. For us, something like right-clicking is second nature, but for the student it might be an entirely new concept..." Aldine adds: "One of our accomplishments is the IT training we have started for the first-year students – especially for those who have never encountered IT before. They arrive on campus and suddenly they are expected to deal with all this technology. The training started off small, but it is growing and we plan to increase it exponentially." *Read more on the training on page 20 of the August IT Magazine.*





**WHAT**  
do we  
need to know?



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# RESTRUCTURING Systems

IT@NWU: How will our systems be impacted?



**T**he North-West University (NWU) has commenced with a process of restructuring to enable the implementation of a new strategy, approved by Council in November 2015 (Santana, 2016).

With the adoption of the new organisational model, it became apparent that "the various systems have to be adapted. IT@NWU received a request to assess how we can address the process of 'system change and priority' in the least disruptive manner, in order to provide access as quickly as possible..." explains Anna-Marie Bell, Manager: Software Development, Business Systems (BSS). She continues by saying that "These systems are co-dependant. The importance thereof is that ALL the relevant systems integrate with each other, using the same organisational, financial and academic structure."

Reference - Sanatana, M. 2016. Statement by the NWU's institutional management. <http://news.nwu.ac.za/statement-nwu%C2%B4s-institutional-management> Date of access: 22 November 2017.

**P6**  
Implications  
and tribute  
to the team

**P8**  
Peak times  
and behind  
the scenes  
info



# Systems re-structuring project team

## BACKGROUND

Building on the latter, Anna-Marie reveals that “we must remember we have about 150 systems in total. Each system has their own starting point but all are dependent on Oracle HR for structure. Once the HR structure has been finalised, everything else must be moulded around it...”. Cut-off dates are going to play an eminent part in December 2017 and January 2018. The process will be characterised by the dissemination of information from HR to finances utilising Chart of Accounts (COA), as every account is linked to an OE (organisational entity) code. In fact, everyone’s accounts are linked to an OE.

## IMPLICATIONS

**1** Organisational changes across NWU imply that the OE codes and COA will change in Oracle HRMS and KFS, and all other down-stream systems using this. Certain systems are technically “old” and improving them may make the cutover easier. This may mean that the current feeder system processes require change, for example consolidation. We won’t be able to implement yellow lines on 1 January 2018.

**2** Inability to deliver on the increasing demand will lead to departments seeking own solutions. In the long term, this creates new supporting and alignment challenges.

**3** Alignment of strategic initiatives (running and/or new project requests) with systems will slow down. The reality triangle of scope, resources (human and budget), and time must be balanced.

**4** National projects may be imposed upon the NWU on short notice, and we will have to attend to them by using the same resources for this project. Alignment and implementation of national initiatives within due dates will become a challenge, e.g. NSFAS, CAS, RIMS, etc.

**5** The deployment of the system changes is not an IT project only. Functional ownership and resources and their commitment are required to make the change project a success. This will impact business units and their own strategic alignment of their business processes and new initiatives.



## INTERVIEW



**Anna-Marie Bell**

Manager: Software Development

Anna-Marie reveals that: “we are still busy checking our systems and processes. Some of the systems were already completed by the end of October, and by the end of September we had compiled a complete end-to-end testing plan. This included the creation of dummy environments to which we uploaded our data on our data migration programs, as well as our data conversion programs. This is a repetitive process followed in order to perform testing. Every Thursday afternoon we (the systems restructuring project team) get together to reflect on these processes.”





## Peak times

“We have considered *peak times* at NWU during the year, and decide on appropriate action where necessary”, e.g:

- December exams 2017
- Registration, January 2018
- 1st pay run on 15 January 2018
- 1st month-end 2018 etc.

In order to have “all” the systems up and running by 2018, with the new structure, we suggested the following:

- Approve this project.
- Appoint a SteerCo to oversee this project.
- Reserve budget for the project in terms of resources - people, infrastructure and processes.
- Appoint a dedicated full-time project team across all the systems (functional & technical resources), as well as a part-time project team and people who will be working during December to do the actual cutover and implementation. The project team will include contractors from outside. (Interdependency matrix)
- Decide on appropriate immediate communication regarding the project and make decisions regarding certain dates at the end of the year – taking into account the following peak times:

go



- year-end and close-down procedures,
- cutover processes,
- critical employees’ leave etc.

For each NWU system an implementation process must be followed that migrated from the specifics that must change to the eventual cutover and implementation in 2018 as shown below. During the user acceptance testing, inter-dependencies will also be tested this will be the final test to check for implementation (*go-live*). Externally maintained systems will also need to go through this process.

Resources internally and externally are a big challenge, since they will be responsible for the change project as well as their day-to-day responsibilities and the additional responsibility of other new projects. The change project also impacts the infrastructure.

## Take into account...

“these changes will have an impact on each and every one of us ...”.

A back-up process will be initiated on 15 December 2017, and all systems relating to administration will be ‘switched off’ at 16:00 pm.

Our systems restructuring project team will be working non-stop until 2 January 2018 to ensure a smooth implementation.”

# RESTRUCTURING

## Our colleagues

“It is not necessarily only the ‘machines’ that made this project work, there were a lot of people that sacrificed a lot of time ..



## BE-HIND THE SCENES

**1** “We had to plan ahead, had to look at the ‘what ifs’ and simulate various scenarios. As we all have day jobs as well, we had to ensure that our work was not neglected due to the project. The team involved here is of outstanding quality,” reveals Anna-Marie. She further stipulates that “they are very committed, pulled their weight, and are prepared to walk the extra mile. Additionally, we are very fortunate to have buy-in from top management and our back-office colleagues, who assisted with the day-to-day business.”



**2** Anna-Marie continues: “We made a solemn decision that roll-back would not be an option. The reason for this is that certain processes were already started in October. Therefore, we decided to push through. We are still going to verify our level of readiness from time to time, but at the current moment we are 100% on track. If unforeseen incidents occur, we’ve agreed to fix it in our stride.”



**3** “I am full of confidence that we are going to be successful, based on all the effort everyone has gone through. This is a mammoth task, as each of the 150 systems have their own sub-processes. One can liken it to a number of relay races that we are undertaking. We have to ensure that each process reaches its destination successfully, and is accompanied by its correlating information. This is what I like about the big projects we undertake. In fact, I am crazy about it!”



# TRACS

## Tracking the production

of the development of study material

TRACS is the replacement system for SMP (Study Material Production) and phase 1 is in use since October 2017. SMP would not have worked in 2018 due to the restructuring of the NWU. Pressure to not fall behind and waiting for the completion of TRACS, placed pressure on the core team (back row on Photo). The first trainees are seated in the front row. The rest of the development will be done in close collaboration with the system owners, CTL and is on the priority list for 2018.







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Automated conferencing is a simple, quick and effective way to discuss your business ideas with customers, suppliers or staff. Up to 40 people can connect to this service simultaneously without pre-booking or operator assistance. All the participants are billed individually.



## How to Organise for an Auto- mated Teleconferencing



- Choose a 5digit PIN. Sequential and repetitive PIN's e.g. 12345 or 11111 are not allowed.
- The convenor needs to inform the other participants of conference details and the PIN to be used.

# AUTOMATED

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the operator, as is the case with operated assisted teleconferencing.

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- No rental or connection fees
- No pre-booking and operators involved
- Secure and confidential

### Read more...

- Teleconferencing
- Telkom adds convenience to teleconferencing service





# Holidays?

## Before you go...

apply the following tips to make your life easier.

### GroupWise

- Categorise your archives according to the different years, e.g. 2015, 2016, 2017 etc.
- Save this on your C drive as well as on a backup medium, e.g. an external hard drive or USB drive.
- Only the last two years' archives should be saved on your P drive e.g. 2016, 2017. If the archives are very big, further divide the years into increments of six months.
- If you need to know how to swop between the archives of 2016 and 2017, please contact your campus IT Service Desk for further assistance.

### Advantages

- If something goes wrong, you will only lose your 2016 data and not 2017, or vice versa. In case one of the archives becomes corrupt due to a virus, this archive may be retrieved from the P drive backup.

### Passwords

To make your password more secure, please use the following guidelines.

Use your current password and:

- Change the first letter to a capital letter;
- Add an @ sign and a number after the last letter of the password;
- Every 90 days when the password changes, just increase that number by one, e.g. Yxxxxxx@1 will become Yxxxxxx@2 with the next password change.
- Remember the password should be 8 characters or longer

### Take note:

NWUUSER and "compaq" are being phased out as logon credentials for security reasons. In the second term of 2017 it was decided to replace NWUUSER with the user's own personnel number and the password would also be your network password.

### Group-wise

**tips:** for making your life easier

### Pass-word

**tips:** to ensure utmost security



1

“Find a suitable date  
convenient to all our col-  
leagues...”



2

“Decide on a formal or in-  
formal function...”



3

“Find a suitable venue...  
and voila, we have a year end  
function!”



**Three  
steps**

To an unforgettable  
**Year End Function at**  
Limerick Lodge





# Step 1

“Find a suitable date

convenient to all our colleagues...”



## BACKGROUND

Our IT Director’s personal assistant and the department’s senior administrative assistant, Ms Alta van Zyl, arranged IT@NWU’s year-end function for 2017. The function was held on a Saturday, as the IT department is big and is navigating tough deadlines before the planned systems shut-down in December.

The main considerations were the date, formal or informal, and the venue. “We decided to go for something more informal this year, as it would allow employees to bring their families along,” says Alta.

Lunch was catered, which meant that IT’s valued employees could really relax instead of sweating away in front of the braai or attempting to slice salad ingredients while waving away flies and trying to keep an eye on the kids.



# Step 2

“Decide on a formal or informal function...”

Activities were enjoyed by young and old



Laser tag games allowed to reveal your combat skill...



## “Year End Function 2017

Left a lot of happy smiles and memories...”

Since the weather is always full of surprises, Alta and company could only hope and pray for a sunny day. They were in luck, because the day turned out to be very pleasant indeed.





# Step 3

## “Find a suitable venue

and voila, we have a year end function!”

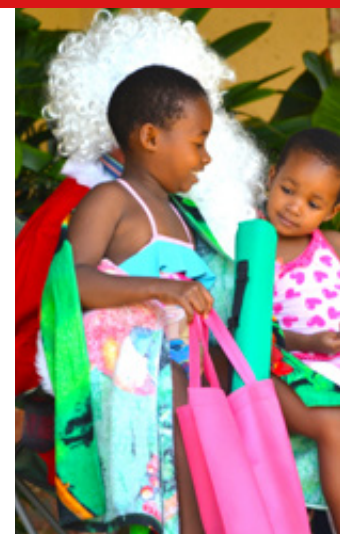


28

IT personnel across all three campuses enjoyed the day and made use of the opportunity to personally meet colleagues only ever spoken to telephonically or via email.



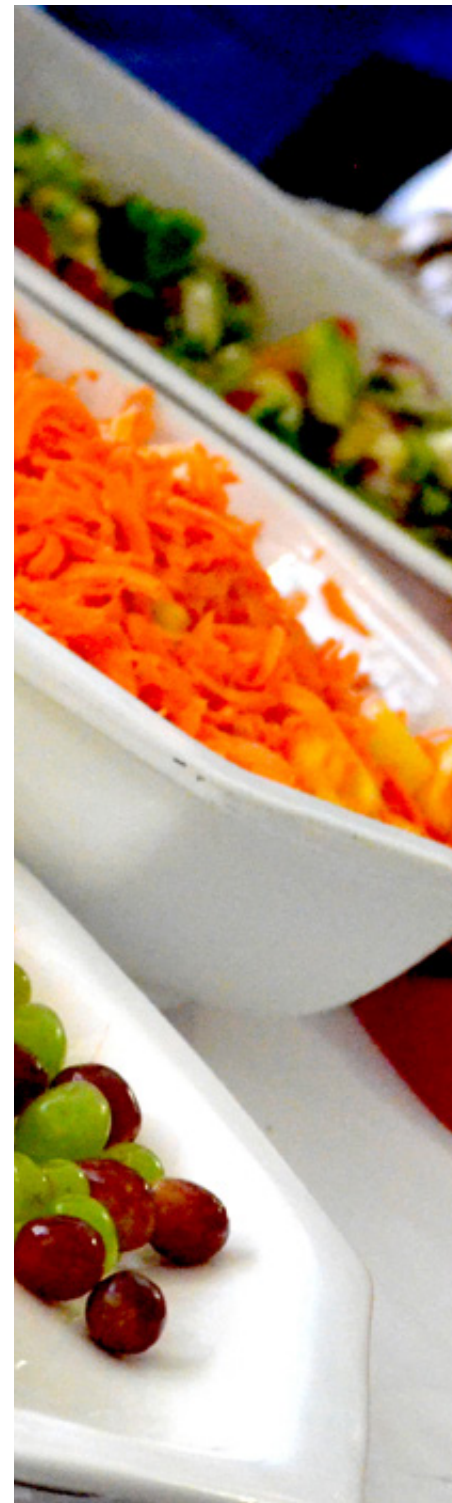
Add Santa and his Christmas elf...







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Alta thanks the Chief Director of IT, Boeta Pretorius, as well as all the IT directors for their contributions, and all personnel for ensuring a positive year-end experience.

## Acknowledgements



“ On behalf of the MC IT team I would like to thank you for a well organised event. Those members of my team that I have spoken to really enjoyed their time. All your efforts in making this a memorable occasion for many is much appreciated. “

Kind regards  
Claudia

“Boeta, dankie van BSS se kant vir die jaareind funksie, Ons groep het dit geweldig baie geniet en het die funksie geweldig baie waardeer.

Alta - Wow well done! Dankie Alta, vir al die reëlins dat als so goed kon afloop, vir al die rond- hardloop Saterdag om te sorg dat elkeen gelukkig is en als moet gebeur soos beplan. Die kos was

heerlik, die vloesof verversing ‘voucher’ uitstekende idee. Dankie baie. “  
Groete Mari

“Alta baie baie dankie vir ‘n uiters suksesvolle funksie. Ek waardeer dit baie.” Boeta

### More photos

- [Link 1](#)
- [Link 2](#)
- [Link 3](#)





# Seasons

## Greetings

## To all our colleagues

After a long turbulent year we would like to reconfirm our commitment to develop best in class information and communications technology to enable and support the core business. As the new structures unfolds we will engage with you to make sure we deliver the IT promise. Have a blessed festive season, rest well and come back with renewed strength.

FROM ALL OF US AT IT@NWU

### Meet our staff:

• [Link 1](#) • [Link 2](#) • [Link 3](#) • [Link 4](#)



# Personalia

take a minute

to reflect...



## Achievements

Congratulations guys on your success! You have made us all proud. Keep up the good work!  
**IT@NWU**



## Congratulations

Happy Birthday to our extraordinary colleagues who had celebrated a birthday, working with you guys are a great honor and a joy!  
**IT@NWU**



## Retirement & Resignation

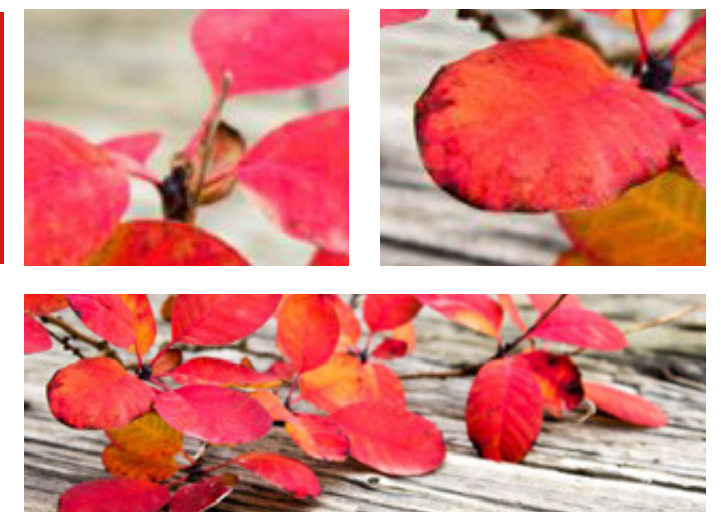
- **Aldine Oosthuyzen**
- **Rosina Kganticoe**

It is hard to say goodbye to a colleague, but we wish you well on your future endeavors!  
**IT@NWU**



## Condolences

Our deepest sympathy to you and your family for those of you who had suffered a loss. Our hearts go out to you in your time of sorrow.  
**IT@NWU**







Should you wish to provide us with feedback, feel free to drop us  
an email at  
**[talk2IT@nwu.ac.za](mailto:talk2IT@nwu.ac.za)**