

## Media Release

### For immediate release

## GCU celebrates 10 years of Rail partnership with Transnet, the University of Johannesburg and the CIRO

- Graduation ceremony in South Africa marks a decade of a unique railway education partnership between Scotland and Africa
- More than 1100 employees of Africa's largest freight rail company have graduated with awards from Glasgow Caledonian University
- GCU Chancellor Dr Annie Lennox records special video message for graduates

**[Johannesburg, 05 October 2022]** Glasgow Caledonian University today (WED) celebrated its unique 10-year partnership with Africa's largest freight rail company Transnet.

The University hosted a graduation ceremony in South Africa for the latest cohort of employees who have achieved awards from GCU as part of a unique work-based education programme delivered in partnership with the University of Johannesburg and the Chartered Institution of Railway Operators (CIRO).

To date, 1,145 Transnet employees have graduated with Masters and Undergraduate awards in Railway Operations Management, as a consequence of substantial investment by Transnet in the education and mobilisation of its workforce. A further 600 Transnet employees are continuing their studies.

Today's graduation ceremony, held in the Transnet Esselenpark campus in South Africa, marked 10 years of this industry specific suite of qualifications designed to build knowledge and skills in how to operate and understand the railway. The graduation gathering of 1000 people also marked a joyous reunion as partners and graduates came together for the first time since early 2020.

Fiona Stewart-Knight, Assistant Vice-Principal Business Partnerships at GCU, said: "Our Transnet graduates deserve huge congratulations for their academic achievements after such a challenging combination of work and study during the last two years of Covid restrictions.

"As the operator of South Africa's Freight rail network these graduates are a key part of the workforce that kept goods and the economy moving during lockdown while switching to remote working and study online.

"This 10-year partnership continues to innovate and grow, we look forward with enthusiasm to the next chapter of this collaboration."

Sizakele Mzimela, Chief Executive of Transnet Freight Rail, delivered a rousing leadership speech at the graduation ceremony. "Those graduating today are commended for taking advantage of this unique opportunity to improve their skills, for their perseverance and dedication. I implore them to share their new-found knowledge and skills with their fellow colleagues. This will help us build a collective knowledge base to support growth, innovation, and collaboration," she said.

The procession was led by GCU Principal and Vice-Chancellor Professor Pamela Gillies CBE with guest Professor Daneel Van Lill, Executive Dean of the University of Johannesburg.

The anniversary was marked with a special video message of congratulations from GCU Chancellor, activist and philanthropist, Dr Annie Lennox OBE.

This international project is connected to GCU's work as Scotland's largest provider of Graduate Apprenticeships delivering nine industry programmes, in subjects ranging from cyber security, data science and software development to engineering design manufacture delivered to over 300 employers in Scotland and over 700 graduate apprentices.

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