

For immediate release:

26 October 2023

Umalusi mourns the death of Dr Fred Calitz

Umalusi is deeply saddened to learn about the passing of Dr Fred Calitz on 20 October 2023 aged 87. Dr Calitz served as the Executive Officer of the South African Certification Council (SAFCERT), which was the forerunner to Umalusi.

Dr Calitz and his team established and maintained a system to ensure the integrity, quality and standard of the Senior Certificate (SC) and technical college exit certificate examinations. In support of the country's educational transformation agenda, Dr Calitz deployed his expertise during the period when SAFCERT's role as a quality assurance body was redefined post-1994. This required of the SAFCERT management under the leadership of Dr Calitz to re-conceptualise the narrowly focused quality assurance approaches and processes in order to respond to broader educational changes.

To enable a smooth transition between his retirement in February 2000 and the taking over of Dr Peliwe Lolwana as the new Executive Officer, Dr Calitz agreed to stay on for another three months until the end of May 2000. After his retirement as the Executive Officer, Dr Calitz served as a member of the Audit Committee and Statistics Task Group of the SAFCERT until Umalusi took over at the beginning of April 2002.

The work done by Dr Calitz and his team laid the foundation upon which the current Umalusi quality assurance frameworks rest. Given his expertise in statistics and commitment to quality assurance, Umalusi appointed Dr Calitz in July 2005 to undertake a study intended to establish which of the requirements to pass the SC were unmet by candidates. Based on the research findings Umalusi provided advice to the Department of Education on what interventions it could develop to support improvements in the system.

Reacting to the sad news, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, Chief Executive Officer of Umalusi, said: "Death has robbed us of a colleague I have known for 25 years. I first met Dr Calitz in 1996 when I was working in the North-West Province as Chief Education Specialist for Examinations. I then worked with him in the SAFCERT Council in the early 2000s. Dr Calitz has not only etched his name in the annals of South African history of education; he is an outstanding figure in the quality assurance of assessment landscape. He remarkably used his statistical acumen to carefully craft tried and tested approaches to ensure assessment standards."

Dr Calitz visited Umalusi on two occasions in 2021 after the relaxation of the Covid-19 regulations. The purpose of his visit was to share his insights with Umalusi management regarding the statistical formulae that Umalusi uses to standardise examination results. Umalusi credits Dr Calitz for spending every single day of his adult life thinking about how best to improve the quality assurance processes and approaches for the benefit of South Africa's general and further education and training. The sector has lost a committed South African.

The Umalusi Council, under the chairpersonship of Professor Yunus Ballim, and the management of Umalusi express their deepest condolences to the bereaved family, friends and colleagues of the late Dr Calitz. Professor Ballim said: "I am profoundly saddened by the passing away of Dr Fred Calitz whom I did not have the opportunity to meet. His outstanding contribution to the South African education system, for which Umalusi is grateful, has been widely acknowledged by many academics. May the Calitz family be comforted."

Media enquiries:

Biki Lepota

Senior Manager: Public Relations and Communications

Biki.Lepota@umalusi.org.za

Cell: 076 920 6184