

Umgeni Water and UKZN pool resources in water management

SUPRISE MAZIBILA

UMGENI Water has ploughed R1,5 million into the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) for a new project aimed at researching and developing water resource management.

The joint project, known as the Umgeni Water Chair of Water Resources Management, "will help the university to find solutions that will be of immense importance to Umgeni," Umgeni Water CEO Mzimkulu Msiwa told *The Witness* yesterday at the Principal's Dining Room on the university's main campus.

Umgeni Water, the largest water utility in KwaZulu-Natal, has a 25-year-long relationship with UKZN in teaching, research, community outreach and technical services, it said in a media statement.

"Both parties will derive mutual benefit from the establishment of the Chair. It will promote study and research in water resources management and further the interaction between academic institutions and the industry," it said.

"The endowment will be used to address areas of concern that have been identified by Umgeni Water, and produce



PHOTO: SUPRISE MAZIBILA

Umgeni Water CEO Mzimkulu Msiwa (left) hands over a R1,5 million cheque to University of Kwazulu-Natal vice-chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, at the Principal's Dining Room on UKZN's main campus yesterday.

qualified professionals who can pursue careers within the water sector in South Africa."

UKZN vice-chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, appeared delighted at the new partnership between academia and industry as he gave a welcome speech.

"We hope Umgeni will serve as an example to other industries," he said.

Makgoba said water is a scarce resource and should be prioritised to save lives on the planet.

Umgeni Water will annually, for a decade, plough "an inflation-linked annual amount of R1 500 000" into the project. Of that money, R200 000 might be reserved as a bursary fund for students.

The project will run under UKZN's Faculty of Engineering.

"The Chair will be filled by a high-profile academic who will contribute actively to university-wide water-related teaching, training and research initiatives, which in turn will be closely aligned with and add value to the core business of Umgeni Water."

Makgoba declined to comment when approached by *The Witness*.

