



BIOGRAPHY

PROFESSOR SUREN SINGH



Professor Suren Singh assumed the position of Lecturer in September 1997 at the former M.L. Sultan Technikon now Durban University of Technology when research was still at its infancy. He graduated with a PhD from UKZN in 1998 and his arrival brought a much-awaited impetus to research at the then Technikon, and within a period of five years, he was able to establish a core research group in Industrial Biotechnology and achieved a Y2 - NRF rating in 2002 and a C1 - NRF rating in 2007 and 2012.

He currently heads a very young and vibrant Enzyme Technology Research Group, which focuses on the production and application of thermostable enzymes important for the food, detergent, textile pulp and paper industries and the environment. This research is important in establishing biological alternatives to current chemical methods. In order to follow ever-evolving trends in enzyme technology, he expanded his projects to investigate directed evolution techniques for the improvement of the catalytic efficiencies of enzymes and their applications.

In 2000, he was one of thirteen participants chosen world - wide from developing countries to attend a course on Industrial Biotechnology at the German Centre for Biotechnology in Braunschweig. Prof Singh's research over the past 15 years has always attempted to push the boundaries, and his group has produced numerous "world firsts" with his *hot loving fungus* *Thermomyces lanuginosus*, the genome sequence being one of them.

In a duration of eight years (1998 - 2006), he moved up the ranks from Lecturer to Full – Professor and has served as the Head of the Department of Biotechnology and Food Technology at DUT for more than 10 years (since 2000) and as Acting Executive Dean of the then Faculty of Engineering, Science and the Built Environment for 19 months (2004 - 2006). Through his position as Head, he has contributed significantly to creating a culture of research, garner substantial external support for research projects, significantly increase the number of postgraduate students, improve staff qualifications and catalyse research output. This has placed this department as the lead research department within the Faculty of Applied Sciences and DUT for more than a decade. Through his own initiatives and funding drives, he has ensured the acquisition of excellent infrastructure and equipment at DUT. To date he has attracted over R20 million in funding from the DUT, NRF, DST and other international and industrial sources. His recent acquisition of more than R20 million through the DoHET Infrastructure funding together with DUT to construct state of the art labs for his Department demonstrates his leadership. Networking with numerous national and international scientists from Austria, Germany, Portugal, United States, Slovakia, Australia, Brazil, India, Malaysia, Sweden, China, has been his strength, and his NRF Bilateral agreements with Sweden (2006 – 2009) and China (2008 – 2014) valued at more than R1.5 million, are testimony to this.

Prof Singh has consistently built up an impressive publication track record in high impact factor journals (IF average of 3), with more than 50 papers published in international journals since 1999 with an H-index of 20. As research leader, he has presented papers at 32 International conferences across the globe and as well as at numerous national and regional conference meetings. In terms of building research capacity at the DUT, he has hosted and supervised 13 postdoctoral candidates, successfully supervised and graduated 5 doctoral and 15 Masters students. Currently he is supervising 18 Masters and 3 Doctoral candidates. In recognition of his NRF rating and research activity for the period 2005 – 2008 Prof Singh was given the Vice Chancellors Research Award and also awarded DUTs Researcher of the Year for 2009/2010. Prof Singh also held the positions of Vice – President (2004 – 2006) and President (2006 – 2009) and Treasurer (2009 – 2010) of the South African Society for Microbiology (SASM). He also served as Chair of the KZN branch of SASM for seven years (2000 – 2007). Prof Singh is also an active member of several national and international scientific professional bodies and has also served as chair of numerous regional, national and international conferences held in South Africa since 2000. In addition to high-level catalysis, Professor Singh has completed several marathons, and the comrades marathon in 2002. He also has an intense passion for road cycling and has completed nine Cape Argus Cycling races as well as several national cycling races to date with a sub 3h for 100km races becoming the norm.