Your achievements represent hope – Motlanthe

"Against the spectre of ongoing challenges in the field of tertiary education in our country today, your achievements represent hope," said Univen’s Chancellor and former President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe.

Confering degrees to Univen graduates at the recent September graduation ceremony, Motlanthe said this hope would be realised when tertiary education is rid of the current spectre of violent protest and all the stakeholders come to the table to find each other.

A total of 580 students graduated during this ceremony. This included 29 doctoral degrees, 101 masters degrees, 84 honours degrees, 195 general academic 1st Bachelor degrees , 164 professional 1st Bachelor degrees and six post-graduate diplomas or certificates.

"If students are not able to study because of unaffordable fees in this day and age of a knowledge-based economy, it can only mean stagnation for the country as a whole."

"I am encouraged by the increasing contribution that Univen is continuing to make to the achievement of the country’s national goals of development and reconstruction. Over the years, the work of this university has contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of not only the region but the entire nation - and continues to do so."

"Education remains a critical tool in equipping humanity with the intellectual, specific and creative means to make our world better. We look to education for the betterment of humans."

"There is a notable increase in the number of doctoral graduates. This is impressive - let us pray that nothing can stop us from being the best. Your achievements will make a difference in South Africa against poverty, inequality and unemployment. Contributing to the success of our nation, and helping others in your families and communities, is the most fitting way to thank your parents, families, and sponsors for having sacrificed so much to get you here," he said.

"In the past ten years Univen has made huge efforts to create a dignified learning environment for its staff and students," said Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbati.

"Huge efforts have been made by our professors and teaching and research staff to ensure that Univen produces quality graduates who are ready to work. As part of the university’s curriculum transformation, we have introduced new degree programmes, including the introduction of new engineering and allied health sciences degree programmes in the near future."

"This university has a new institutional culture embraced by its staff and students who focus on the institution’s core business. In ten years I have witnessed substantial growth in many important indicators for a vibrant and healthy university. This growth did not happen randomly, but through careful planning with a clear vision. We celebrate these achievements and realise the need to constantly keep our eyes on the ball to ensure even greater success in the future," said Mbati.

Among the 29 doctoral graduates was Dr Muendi Tshililelwa Sigidi, with a degree in Microbiology. The title of her study - 'Selection and evaluation of ten medicinal plants used in the Vhembe district for life-threatening infections' - which constitutes Indigenous Knowledge Systems, coincided with heritage month.

The findings of her study indicated that the majority of traditional medicine is indigenous knowledge-based and the pharmacological activities of plants are solely understood by traditional healers. The aim of her study was to investigate the anecdotal claims by traditional healers to treat HIV/AIDS.

Caiphus Mukevevo, former SRC Secretary General, graduated with an honour’s degree in Environmental Sciences. Shonisani Masutha, former SRC Deputy President, graduated with a master’s degree in Public Health. Thifhelimbilu Dongola, a Univen Campus Clinic staff member, graduated with a master’s degree in Nursing.

Dr Sminy Moziyona Minah Jonas posthumously graduated with a doctoral degree under the theme ‘A model for the development of women in construction in the Limpopo Province of South Africa’. Jonas was a senior manager at the Department of Public Works. She was responsible for women empowerment and wellness. She was passionate and concerned about a serious lack of growth and development of women in the construction industry. In 2013, she published a peer-reviewed research article ‘Sustainability of women-owned construction enterprises in South Africa: a burning issue in the path to career and success for women in science’. She had presented her work at four international conferences.

Thifhelimbilu Dongola, Shonisani Masutha and Caiphus Mukevevo.

Dr Muendi Tshililelwa Sigidi.
Wrap the wide arms of the law around those who need it – Law conference

“One would like to see the arms of the law bringing relief to those who grieve and those who are vulnerable,” says South Africa’s Deputy Chief Justice, Raymond Zondo. Officially opening the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges, 13th conference in Polokwane recently, Zondo said: “How do we make justice to be accessible to women, poor people and senior citizens who are getting grants?”

“How do we make sure that access to justice does not depend on those who are rich and educated? The Constitutional Court seeks to protect those who are vulnerable. Today we have a judiciary which is inclusive of all blacks, whites and women. However, we still need to increase the representation of women in our various courts,” he said.

“Women judges have contributed to progressive jurisprudence in South Africa,” says President of the association, Judge Shane Kgoele. “Women judges give back to society and contribute to the conditions of change towards them? With our partnering universities we must make women feel there is hope and we must take away their resentment.

“We cannot achieve this alone, we need men to help us. Not only do we need men that help us to deal with gender based violence, but we also need men who empower women.”

“One should not hide behind culture and religion to express beliefs that are discriminatory,” said Justice Thapelo of the Supreme Court of Appeal. She highlighted the rights of vulnerable groups such as those affected by HIV and tuberculosis, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

“Women, gays, lesbians and disabled people continue to be victimised in this country. It is going to take the whole society to overcome these challenges.”

“We have many challenges in our society - but we have to acknowledge and pay tribute to many women who fought for their rights and our democracy,” says the Minister of Justice, Michael Masutha.

“Women in the judiciary and legal practice should work hard to bring transformation in the legal field. Despite 23 years of our constitution, we still have women who are excluded, including women in the judiciary. Overcoming this challenge is going to take the whole of society. We cannot leave the struggle for women alone - it should be a collective effort. Women should invite men as it would not help to talk about finding solutions without men and boys being present to hear the grievances of women.”

“Women who are already practicing and attached to the Department of Justice should make sure that women and children are free from victimisation,” said the Minister in the Presidency responsible for Women, Susan Shabangu.

“Decision makers in the justice system must make sure that the vulnerable are protected. Failure to protect them will result in us being hardly judged by future generations. Women judges’ most important role is to work for civil societies to protect women’s rights, especially in rural communities. Women in rural areas need to be informed about their rights and young girls should be taken to school until tertiary level. We can never achieve this alone, we need to collaborate and form chapters or organisations like this to achieve this transformation,” said the minister.

“The number of women has increased in the judiciary,” said Justice Sujata Manohar, a retired Judge of the Supreme Court of India and a retired member of the National Human Rights Commission of India.

“In most countries women were not allowed to practice in the legal field. It took a long time for women to be allowed into this field. Women were not included in the term ‘person for admission to practice law in many countries, including India, South Africa and the United States. Women who are already in power should help other women to gain power.”

“We will indeed balance gender scales in the judiciary during our lifetime, but a lot still needs to be done,” said the President of the Supreme Court of Appeal, Justice Mandisa Maya.

“It is through the support of fellow women and my hard work that I was appointed in this position. Women should never sabotage one another but they should support each other if they want to achieve. “Other than the financial benefits and the status that comes with the profession, I wanted a career that would allow me to defy the negative connotations that are associated with growing up in the township,” said Pheladi Rakhundu, a 26-year old graduate from Mafikeng in North West. She recently obtained an LLM from the University of the Free State. She is currently completing her practical legal training at the Potchefstroom Law School.

“Even as a young girl who had been presented with the opportunity to attend a private school, I took the liberty to break away from the stereotypical expectations and the limited career options of either becoming a teacher, nurse, or social worker. Instead I saw a career in law as a stepping stone that would allow me to be an advocate of change in my community and a career that creates a platform to constantly learn and grow.”

Delegates heard papers being presented on topics that affect society on a daily basis. These included legal analysis of the concept of child pornography and exposure of children to harmful content. It also included a national action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the mentoring of young women by the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges.

Other topics were economic transformation for women, mobilising positive masculinity to wrap the arms of the law around those who need it, transformation of the judiciary and challenges in the implementation of Customary Law and customary marriages.

Under Customary Law presenters delivered papers on the true colours of polygamy in South Africa. Other papers included the challenges faced by women who are married under ‘Gnyalilela lapa’ – customary marriages and the legal conundrum brought by the recognition of the Customary Marriages Act, 120 of 1998 and its impact on women. Another theme was transformative constitutionalism.

Among the speakers were academics from the Universities of Limpopo and Venda, including Deon Annette Lansink, Zama Mopa and Dr Lucille Maquebe. Other speakers included Adv Teresa Mugaza who is currently employed by the IDLO in Libya, Angela Kamau who is a recent graduate of the Strathmore University of Law School in Kenya and Justice Jozi Kallapen and Justice Themba of the Constitutional Court.

Other delegates included judges of the Supreme Court of Appeal and the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Faith Muthambi.

A meeting of minds - attendees of the 13th Annual Conference of the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges.
Univen hosts Ubuntu seminar

Munzhelele

"We thought it was going to be the rainbow child but it was not. Our problems have proved themselves to be eminently unqualified to be the midwives to its birth."

"Gender discrimination seems to be still present in society. It is a challenge," says Univen's Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Prof Jan Crafford, when officially opening the recent Ubuntu seminar on campus.

"Do not start a business only after obtaining your degree, fail then learn from it, later you will be able to make commodities, to command a sector."

"Do you think Univen will ever be able to teach Mathematics and Sciences in Thivenda?" - Motsei.

"You cannot do bad and expect to feel good" - Netshandama.

"Do not wait for others to uplift you, do it yourself" - Radzilani.

"Multitask as part of your ability towards success" - Motsei.

"Gender and woman equality are in line with rights" - Mahhunga.

"Will Univen ever be able to teach Mathematics and Sciences and Engineering in Thivenda?" - Mahhunga.

"Frantz Fanon's writings on erotic transformation and its significance to revolution have often been downplayed. This is because of what are seen as controversial statements about intersexual relations, homosexuality and his purportedly infamous comment that he knows nothing about a black woman."

"The list of the speakers at Ubuntu seminars over the last five years represents the who’s who of current African scholarship, thinking of black consciousness, liberation and decolonisation," he said.

"Our problems are serious. We sometimes believe we are entitled to be educated without the right qualifications, this has to stop."

"Never give up, even when days are dark and gloomy," says the Executive Mayor of the Vhombre District Municipality, Florence Radzilani.

"Gender discrimination seems to be still present in the organisational hierarchy," says, a magistrate at the Sibasa Regional Court, Mashudu Munzhelele.

"We are immersed and part of shaping. Therefore, Fanon's own writing on decolonisation and erotic transformation can certainly be understood in relation to Ubuntu."

"The state constitutes itself as a nation but this does not reflect a true picture of the nation," says the Director of Humanities at Rhodes University, Prof Michael Neocosmos.

"As we know, violence against women is a serious problem in South Africa. Under Ubuntu this cannot help but affect the entire network of forces in which"

"To celebrate women’s month, the Black Management Forum Student Chapter in Limpopo, in collaboration with Univen’s School of Law, recently hosted a seminar on gender based discrimination and women empowerment on campus.

"Women should have decision making power in families - Munzhelele

"Women should ensure that they fight all sorts of discrimination based on gender and physical challenges," says Univen’s Director of Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Nethanda.

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NRF equips postgraduate students with science writing skills

“Research students need to use a certain language so that those they present to understand them. Students have different kinds of dissertations and they are from different universities which are not the same in terms of disciplines and programmes. Students sometimes get lost in the mist of simple English writing when they do their research. Workshops like this one help them in terms of guidance for research writings.”

“The workshop helps to differentiate between scientific and social research. It also identifies problems that students come across while doing their research. Choosing a title rationally, not emotionally, will greatly increase your chances to complete your studies in time. Select a topic that will enable you to identify a problem from which you can write a good dissertation,” he said.

“Before choosing a topic, I have to identify my strength and resources so that I can have a good journal that will be accepted during presentations,” said Lutendo Mudzielwana, a Biological Sciences master’s student of the University of Limpopo.

“I did not only gain presentation and writing skills, but I also learnt that I cannot conduct research on my own. I should collaborate with other people and ask for help where it is needed,” he said.

The workshop was attended by postgraduate students from the Universities of Venda and Limpopo.

Choosing friends can be as instrumental as choosing a career

“Not all friends have our destiny at heart,” says Prof Mokgale Makgopa, Univen’s Dean of the School of Human and Social Sciences.

“Parents should not choose careers for their children. This could discourage children to even apply or focus during studies. Parents should support their children’s career dreams.”

He said children should identify their own role model and mentor from whom they can learn the trade of the career they aspire to.

“Identify the role that you want to play in developing yourself with people who will motivate and inspire you. It is critical in your career choice that you identify the role that you want to play in developing your own community,” said Makgopa.

“Do not undermine local institutions in favour of institutions away from your homes,” says Univen’s Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbati.

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“Nurture your entrepreneurial dreams through secondary school and college or university studies,” says KJ Maphoto of the Greater Tzaneen Economic Development Agency.

“This will help improve your future aspirations. Do not be frustrated by the unemployment rate in South Africa - instead, consider self-employment.”

Delegates from Masvingo University visit Univen

“Delegates from Masvingo University in Zimbabwe paid a visit to Univen recently to benchmark the processes of examination and other ways of how to manage a University. “We are willing to help you as far as much as we can to make yourselves at home,” said Univen’s Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbati.

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ETDP-SETA Internship programme ends well

With youth unemployment being a sensitive issue in South Africa, getting an internship is a huge milestone as it gives the youth the capacity to learn and gain work experience.

The Education, Training and Development Practices Sector-Education and Training Authority (ETDP-SETA) is one of the sponsors that joined hands with Univen to eradicate unemployment and empower the youth.

At the farewell function interns were reminded how to apply for jobs, how to conduct themselves at a job interview and how to be good and reputable employees.

Univen’s Training Development Practitioner, Louisa Mariba, told interns to apply for as many jobs as possible to increase their chances of being employed.

“However, never apply for a job that you do not qualify for,” she said.

“This is a bitter sweet farewell - I will miss the work environment,” said Wangi Nkwu, Urban and Regional Planning Intern.

“My highlight was forming part of the task team that is developing the Univen Engineering faculty. Whilst I am saddened by the fact that my internship has come to an end, I am hopeful for a brighter future,” she added.

Information Technology Intern, Patala Naliyabanu, expressed her gratitude towards the internship opportunity.

“I had an amazing experience and I learnt a lot of things like problem solving and dealing with client,” she said.

Recognisation of prior learning open day

Institutions of higher learning recently exhibited their offerings on the recognition of prior learning at the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs open day.

Recognition of prior learning recognises prior learning obtained via informal means such as work experience. This recognition should assist candidates in identifying the type of evidence, how much evidence, and the quality of evidence. Candidates’ special needs are catered for as long as the principles of assessment and assessment criteria standards are upheld.

“Institutions should offer formal training and compliment work experience to employees who wish to improve their education,” says the Deputy Director General of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, MG Makoko.

“Government departments and municipalities need to anchor employees to compete for available vacancies. It is worrying to see some of them feeling discriminated, not even making it to the shortlist simply because they do not possess the minimum required qualifications. Some of these employees have served in these positions for more than ten years.

“Many government departments and institutions and certainly many corporates are led by people who have important skills, acquired during their employ but not backed up by any formal qualifications. Some of these people have been with these companies for longer than ten years and perform very important and strategic roles in their organisations.”

“Univen has a policy for recognition of prior learning through which candidates may also be admitted as students,” says Univen Schools Liaison Officer, Takalani Nyelisani.

Fundi donates R50 000 to deserving Univen students

“We want to make life simple for students who are finding it difficult during their studies, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds,” says Fundi Chief Executive Officer, Amasi Mwela.

Announcing that Fundi will donate R50 000 to Univen towards financial needy students, he said, “We believe that this money will make a huge difference to some of your students.”

Univen will identify 100 students who will receive R1 000 per month in voucher form to buy groceries from Shoprite.

“It takes the whole community to raise a child and everyone can perform well if they do not worry about what they are going to eat after class,” said Mwela.

“Your funding is spot on,” says Univen Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbati.

“We still have students who are in need of this kind of contributions, and thank you for thinking about us. The money will be used in a proper way and deserving students will be identified by our Finance Department,”

“We will soon put this invitation by the department as part of our priority agenda to explore feasible partnerships,” says Univen Registrar, Prof Nesamvuni.

“This will fulfill two of our main responsibilities - training and community engagement. Univen is well positioned to fulfill a greater part of our National Development Plan by engaging with local and provincial government on matters that will elevate our role in the country and the Southern African Development Community region.”
Learning about biological invasions.

"Invasion of ecosystems is a major threat to biodiversity and economic livelihoods in South Africa," says the Director of Invasives Monitoring and Reporting at the South African National Biodiversity Institute, Dr Sebatiwele Rahlao. Speaking at the Univen public lecture recently, Rahlao said that species have been moved from one place to another due to the advancement of the transportation system.

"Many of them are alien species. Invasive plants have devastating impacts on water supply. However, many alien species are beneficial. Almost all agriculture and forestry in South Africa are dependent on organisms deliberately introduced by human beings. These include wheat, maize, sheep and eucalyptus which are considered alien species. Many species are also introduced for horticulture, aquaculture and man-culture, or kept as pets.

"The challenge is to preserve the benefits from these introduced species, while limiting potential negative impacts from invasions that might result as a consequence," he said.

"Negative impacts of alien invasive species include the reduction of water runoff and groundwater recharge. Ultimately, reducing the water supplies of already water-stressed farms, towns and cities, species that invade rangelands reduce their capacity to support livestock. It, therefore, has an effect on the people that depend on the livestock production. Many other invasive alien plants and animals impact negatively on biodiversity. These include services that diverse natural ecosystems provide, ranging from ecotourism to harvesting food, firewood, cut flowers and medicinal products. The cost of controlling these species is substantial, and can be ill-afforded given the demand for other services."

Rahlao said that some animals die because of eating invasive species.

"There are more than 200 species in the country which include pine and wattle trees. Community members must be educated about alien species. SANBI and Univen are planning to host a biological invasion symposium next year."

He encouraged students to apply for bursaries that are available at SANBI.

"Priority is on the historically disadvantaged universities," he said.

The public lecture, titled ‘The first national status report on biological invasions in South Africa’, was organised by the School of Environmental Sciences.

National Science Week empowers surrounding communities

"The future of South Africa and the African continent is dependent on the next generation," says Univen’s Dean of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Prof Natasha Potgieter.

Addressing the audience at the National Science Week at the Vuwani Science Resource Centre, Potgieter said it is our duty to develop the next generation of talented scientists and entrepreneurs.

"They need to take up the opportunity to create new technologies and innovative solutions for the pressing problems facing our communities today. The Vuwani Science Resource Centre is making a huge contribution to this in the country. The centre is involved in projects that create awareness of the value of science and technology and the role it plays in ensuring sustainable community development engagements."

National Science Week is an initiative of the Department of Science and Technology. It celebrates various role players conducting science-based activities during the week. National Science Week is run in all nine provinces simultaneously at multiple sites per province.

"One of the biggest challenges in our country is to increase the number of female scientists,” said Univen’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, Prof Jan Crafford.

"Female learners should study science and mathematics to make this innovation possible. National Science Week has in the past years been presented during Woman’s month. It might be a sign that we need to link it with women of this country."

"Thank you to the students of the University of Warwick for their assistance, especially those who help secondary school teachers with science and mathematics."

Jason Chang, representing students of Warwick University, said he is not a scientist but he is very privileged to help learners to realise their dreams.

"When you travel around, identify science because almost everything is science,” says the Head of the Department of Physics in the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Dr Eric Maluta.

"Even our forefathers were scientists because of the way they used to start a fire before inventions of match sticks. Never undermine traditional leaders and healers because they know more than we do and they might help us in the future.”

Robert Chikhwama of Indigenous Knowledge Systems Documentations said science is not only about machinery, even the indigenous way of doing things can be regarded as science.

"Applying for 2018 enrolment at Univen and become one of the best products that Univen has produced so far,” said Univen’s Director of Communications and Marketing, Takalani Dzaga.

"Applying at Univen has been made even simpler as you can now use your cell phones to submit applications.

Univen recently hosted the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) Thuthuka Maths development camp for 150 matric learners selected from the Vhembe and Mopani Districts.

Over the years SAICA camps were held at the University of Limpopo, but was extended to Univen to market particularly scarce skills in areas such as Chartered Accountancy, Actuarial Science and Engineering.

Now SAICA, with universities, run maths development camps country-wide. The camps are facilitated by SAICA and appointed service providers. The service providers include inspirational speakers, educators, students’ mentors and presentations by educational institutions and professional organisations. Presenting professional bodies include audit firms PWC, KPMG, actuarial firms and the Auditor General.

Mpho Makana, a grade 12 learner at Thohoyandou Secondary School says the camp is good and important to her.

"I have learnt a lot from the mentors and the information they presented to us. It is a good experience and meeting new people was fun.

"There is a critical shortage of skills in South Africa, especially those that require good pass rates, for example, mathematics, science and accounting.

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"Preserve the benefits from introduced species, while limiting potential negative impacts" - Rahlao.

Univen hosts SAICA-Thuthuka Maths development camp

Univen officials with learners representing their schools from communities around Thohoyandou and Vuwani.

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"I have learnt a lot from the mentors and the information they presented to us. It is a good experience and meeting new people was fun.

"There is a critical shortage of skills in South Africa, especially those that require good pass rates, for example, mathematics, science and accounting," says SAICA National Building School Project Manager, Umlaw Thandani.

“So SAICA and the Universities of Limpopo and Venda found it fit to support learners in need,” says Gisani Nematobonbi, a learner at Thohoyandou Secondary School.

Nematobonbi said he learnt that a group is better than an individual.

"I have also learnt how to maintain the standard in the career path of a chartered accountant."

"I have learnt from my mentors” – Makhari.

"There is a critical shortage of skills in South Africa" - Thandani.

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"There is a critical shortage of skills in South Africa" - Thandani.

"I have learnt from my mentors” – Makhari.
New Earth Sciences degree on the cards

“We intend to introduce a new Bachelor of Earth Sciences degree programme in Hydrometeorology,” says Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbati. Officially opening the South African Society for Atmospheric Sciences (SASAS) conference recently, Mbati said this would integrate meteorology and hydrology modules with applications to water management.

“The Disaster Risk Science degree should be of interest, considering that more than 90 percent of natural disasters in South Africa are related to extremes of weather, climate and water,” Mbati said. This would integrate meteorology and hydrology modules with applications to water management.

“Univen also plans to establish a research group on meteorology, climate science and air quality, following the successful model of the Climate Systems Analysis Group at the University of Cape Town. The Limpopo region is of special interest to atmospheric scientists because it is a drought prone region where El Nino impacts are most significant. Some of the wettest stations in the country are found in the Soutpansberg mountain range in the north-eastern escarpment, where seasonal rainfall often exceeds 2 000 mm.

“We have 15 graduate students participating in this conference who will present their research and also learn from more experienced experts,” said Mbati. The conference theme, ‘Challenges of a warming planet’, was specially chosen following the recent record warming in 2016, 2015 and 2014 became the hottest years globally since instrumental records began more than 150 years ago.

SASAS stimulates interest and support for all branches of the atmospheric sciences in Africa. This is achieved by encouraging research and education between organisations and institutions interested in the science of the atmosphere.

“Peer reviewed conference proceedings over the past seven years has improved the quality of South African atmospheric science research,” said the president of the society, Prof Skukumel Venkataraman.

“Air pollution is a major problem of the new millennium and human activities are playing an increasing role in the cycling of trace gases in the atmosphere. African atmospheric temperatures are projected to rise rapidly under low mitigation climate change futures, at 1,5 to 2 times the global rate of temperature increase,” said Prof Engelbrecht, a Chief Researcher of the South African Weather Service and SAP.

“African atmospheric temperatures are projected to rise rapidly under low-mitigation climate change futures, at 1.5 to 2 times the global rate of temperature increase,” said Prof Engelbrecht, a Chief Researcher in the National Research and Environment Unit of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

“This high regional climatic sensitivity in combination with the relatively low adaptive capacity implies that the global climate change mitigation effort is of crucial importance to Africa. In particular, the Paris Agreement aims to keep the global temperature increase during the 21st century below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. Global temperatures have risen by about 1°C since the industrial revolution and this change may be attributed to the anthropogenically enhanced greenhouse effect. The collapse of Lenin’s ice shelf has occurred in a part of Antarctica that has warmed significantly in recent decades.

“Strategic increase in the number of high fire-danger days, very hot days and heat-wave days are projected across the African continent under 3°C of global warming. Risks for drastic rainfall reductions and drought in Southern Africa are higher under 3°C than under 2°C of global warming,” he said.

“During the warm Miocene and Pliocene epochs, vast sub-tropical regions had enough precipitation to support rich vegetation and fauna,” said Prof Natalie Burls of the Centre for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Studies at George Mason University in the USA.

“Only with global cooling and the onset of glacial cycles some three million years ago, towards the end of the Pliocene did the broad patterns of and semi- and sub-tropical regions become fully established.”

Burls’ research focused on improving the understanding of the key processes determining the earth’s climate and climate variability on a variety of timescales ranging from seasonal to decadal to much longer geological scales.

“Southern Africa is essentially a narrow peninsula-like landmass bordered to its south, west and east by oceans,” said Prof Chris Reason of the Department of Oceanography at the University of Cape Town.

“its termination in the mid-ocean subtropics has important consequences for regional climate since it allows the strongest western boundary current in the world ocean to be in close proximity to an intense eastern boundary upwelling current. Unlike other western boundary currents, the Agulhas retro-reflects south of the landmass and flows back into the South Indian Ocean. This leads to a large area of anomalously warm water south of Western Africa that may influence storm development over the southern part of the landmass as well as seasonal rainfall.

Reason’s research interests include Southern Hemisphere climate variability and change, ocean and atmosphere modelling, mesoscale meteorology and severe weather and the physical oceanography of the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

“Near-term climate prediction is progressing to become a more prominent component of climate projection,” said Stefano Canadie, a PhD student at the University of Cape Town.

“Concurrently, multi-year drought and extreme heat occurring across multiple climate zones of Southern Africa emphasises the potential impact over this region of seasonal to decadal-scale variability.”

Univen PhD candidate Nkosinathi Xulu’s presentation focused on present and future variability in the Indian Ocean Mascarene High.

“The study investigates the spatio-temporal variability of the Mascarene High over the Southern Indian Ocean on weather and climate over Southern Africa at intra-seasonal, seasonal, inter-annual, multi-decadal and event-time scales. The anomalous 2016/17 rainfall season was influenced by development of the tropical cyclones and La Nina conditions in the Pacific,” said Univen Honours student, Zwichelangeni Thwamandale.

“Tropical cyclone Dineo was dominant over Southern Africa during the late summer season, resulting in devastating impacts in the Limpopo valley. The 2016/17 rainfall season was however, not the wettest season on record. The El Nino Southern Oscillation affects rainfall distribution through the seasonal, sub-seasonal, and inter-annual timescales over Southern Africa.”

A PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Willard Zvarevashe, presented on time series analysis of rainfall data at Cape Point using the empirical mode decomposition.

“The global temperature is increasing at an average of 0.13 degree Celsius per decade since 1990. South African rainfall and temperature is influenced by several climatic variables. Many methods have been used to identify the impact of the climatic variables but have underlying assumptions such as linearity and stationarity of the data. The conference also coincided with a day of meteorological significance as 22 September 2017 was the spring equinox in the Southern Hemisphere. On this day the sun’s disk is directly overhead the equator heralding the approach of the new summer to Southern Africa. Weatherman Mr Joel Guy Chabata of eNCA and eTV presented on the challenges in communicating climate change and global warming.

“Broadcast meteorology has held an important position in many societies around the world since the arrival of radio and television. Many radio listeners and television viewers have always accepted broadcast meteorologists as authorities in their field, thereby helping them to easily and effectively communicate weather projections to their audiences.”

“With climate change and global warming having become a global reality and topical issue, broadcast meteorologists have found themselves having to disseminate information on these topics to their audiences in one form or the other. Climate scientists often communicate their findings in journals and conferences which the general public has limited access to.”

Awards for best poster and oral presentations went to honours students Kgabe Lamola of Univen and Matshidiso Mogale of the University of Pretoria and PhD students Mthetho Sovara of the University of Cape Town and Thabo Malgoale, masters student at the University of North-West.

The conference was attended by about 100 delegates from 16 institutions, including international delegates from Australia and the USA. It was co-sponsored by the Alliance for Collaboration on Climate and Earth Systems Science, the South African Weather Service and SAP.

The 2018 SASAS annual conference will be held in KwaZulu-Natal. Univen students and supervisors.

“We intend to introduce a new Bachelor of Earth Sciences degree programme in Hydrometeorology.”

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**Love, don’t kill women - Legal Dialogue**

As part of celebrating women’s month, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, in partnership with Univen’s School of Law hosted the Legal dialogue on sexual harassment on campus recently.

The dialogue was part of the department’s annual Access to Justice Week which provides access to justice for women throughout the country.

“Women and children are being killed and raped by the people whom they love,” says guest speaker Director-General, Advocate Vusi Madonsela.

“Sexual violence is a phenomenon that affects all of us. Our streets are becoming unsafe for women and children during the night. Work together to combat sexual violence in the communities. We need to have a no tolerance environment for sexual harassment,” says Madonsela.

“Univen is a no tolerance environment for sexual harassment,” says the former Director of Univen’s International Relations, Cornelius Hagenmeier.

“We promote gender equality and empower the female members of our university. We will not rest until sexual harassment ends. We have to work together to educate our students, schools and stakeholders that sexual harassment has no place in our society. We need to sharpen the consciousness whereby every member of the university community and the communities in which the university is embedded, knows and understand that this is off limits. We have to work together to take a stand wherever we see any manifestation of sexual harassment,” he said.

The South African Police Service advised people to avoid being alone at night and to have voluntary groups to educate each other about rape.

“This dialogue will help to devise strategies to eradicate sexual violence that is happening in almost every community,” said the Director of the Gender Directorate at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Ntibidi Rampete.

“Boys and girls should be taught not to violate other people’s rights. We must stop blaming the victims and making jokes about rape. People should host anti-rape protests and men should advocate against women violence. Put programmes in place that fight against gender violence as it has negative results in the community and the country as a whole.”

“Many women are being raped and killed - relationships are becoming so violent,” says the department’s Adv Praise Kambula.

Femicide is taking away the lives of many women. We have devised with an anti-femicide movement to stop femicide. We are not born to be killed, but to be loved,” she said.

Representatives of Legal Aid South Africa, the National Prosecuting Authority and the Limpopo Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex movement were among the people who attended the dialogue.

A unified community against sexual harassment.

**School of Human and Social Sciences adds books of indigenous knowledge**

“Two books were published in 2017, Creating knowledge in Africa by Kwesi Kwaa Prah and Batubatse - their history and traditions by Advocate Seshai Shai,” says Univen’s Dean of the School of Human and Social Sciences, Prof Mokgale Makgopa.

Speaking at the recent Univen Batubatse book launch, Makgopa said through these publications the authors wanted to make a contribution to African scholarly research which is scarce globally.

“We would like to make a laudable contribution to the pillars of excellence in teaching, learning, research and community engagement. We would like to see ourselves developing a legacy and footprint of promoting scholarly communication, as well as elucidating and articulating our contribution to global knowledge.”

“The author Ponele Seshai has given us a splendid insight into the history, culture and identity of the Batubatse people,” says David Hilton Barber.

“This resonates with the Eskia Mphahlele Centre for African Studies which hosts a qualification in indigenous knowledge systems.”

Academics, students and story tellers celebrating African books.
Limpopo hosts research seminar

Research is an integral tool in the transformation of society. It should benefit and change peoples’ lives. The Limpopo Provincial Government, in collaboration with the University of Venda and the University of Limpopo, hosted the second Limpopo Provincial Government Research Seminar recently.

Themed ‘Catalysing Socio-Economic Transformation through Research, Development and Innovation’, the seminar highlighted that South Africa has since democracy made remarkable strides in terms of political transformation.

It is, however, apparent that the pace of socio-economic development is not impressive. It is for this reason that this year’s seminar brought together practitioners and scholars to reflect on the past and present fundamental issues that have delayed the socio-economic transformation agenda. This move is geared to tap from research, development and innovation to fast-track socio-economic transformation in Limpopo and South Africa as a whole.

“We want to ensure that our province is well-marketed as a tourist destination. We want to ensure that many tourists enjoy the offering. Many tourists will create jobs.”

“We need to establish a solid partnership with research and academic institutions, particularly those in Limpopo,” said the Director-General of the Limpopo Provincial Government and Administration, Nape Nchabeleng.

“We need more research on industrialisation,” he said.

“There is an urgent need for all public sector institutions to make adequate budgets available for research,” said the Acting Head of Limpopo University’s Department of Cultural and Political Studies, Dr Kgotsho Tsia.”

“This is crucial for the sustainability of research collaboration between universities and the clients that we wish to serve in rendering research and advisory support. There is a serious need for related quarterly activities like colloquia, working groups and study groups to achieve goals and objectives.”

School violence under the spotlight

For many children, the biggest threat to their right to education is not discrimination or lack of access to schools, but violence within or near their schools. This undermines their ability to learn, puts their physical and psychological well-being at risk and often causes them to drop out of school entirely. These abuses include ongoing use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure, violence and harassment against sexual and other minorities and widespread sexual violence against girls by their fellow learners and teachers. Furthermore, it includes bullying among learners and the risk of sexual violence against girls travelling to and from schools. Fulfilling children’s right to education entails not only the presence of schools and teachers, but also ensuring an environment that allows them to learn under safe conditions.

Univen in partnership with Evangelische Hochschule Nurnberg and local schools’ representatives recently held a school leadership workshop.

Officially, opening the workshop, Univen’s Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic: Prof Jan Crafford said that violence has become too characterised in communities.

“This is a serious psycho-social problem. We must come up with ideas to solve the problem. We want to eliminate violence in our schools,” says the Chief Education Specialist for Institutional Development and Quality Assurance in the Vhembe District, Rambani Munchukela.

“Violence can play a debilitating role in schools. We are aiming to have a 90 percent matric pass rate this year and this can prevent us from achieving this. We do not have psycho social support in our department, therefore, it is difficult to deal with the issue of violence.”

“We must eliminate violence in schools” – Crafford.

“We want to eliminate violence in our schools” – Munchukela.

“We want to eliminate violence in schools” – Magoro.

“We want to eliminate violence in schools” – Tooley.

“We want to eliminate violence in schools” – Shai.

“We want to eliminate violence in schools” – Nchabeleng.

“Let’s invest in the future of people” – Singh.

“Establish a solid partnership with research and academic institutions” – Nchabeleng.

“Market Limpopo as a tourist destination” – Musitha.

“Establish a solid partnership with research and academic institutions” – Tooley.

“Research contracts should stay within the universities in Limpopo” – Elose.

“Research contracts should stay within the universities in Limpopo” – Musitha.

“Establish a solid partnership with research and academic institutions” – Tooley.

“We should eliminate the violence in our schools” – Magoro.

“We must eliminate violence in schools” – Azwinndini.
Services SETA introduces bursary at Univen

"The Services SETA is a public entity that funds students and facilitate skills development in the country," says Basani Sithole, Bursary Manager at the SETA's bursary services. Speaking at the introduction of the SETA's bursary scheme on the Univen campus, Sithole said they have a mandate to ensure that the economy has the right skills for youth to be employed after obtaining their qualifications. The programme is offered in collaboration with Univen's Department of Human Resources and the Financial Aid Office.

"Be serious about your studies and make sure that you pass all your modules. We will help as long as you maintain a 100 percent pass rate."

The bursary pays for students at all study levels - from undergraduate to a doctorate. It also covers tuition fees, books, accommodation and food.

"We are not the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, but sisters to it as we all get money from the Department of Higher Education and Training," she said.

"The difference is that it is not a loan but a bursary. You don't have to pay back the money and you are not obliged to go and work for a certain company after obtaining your qualification.

"We will award the best students and try to find a job for these students."

"Now I know that if one has failed a module before being funded by the Services SETA, it will not affect their funding strategies – they offer a bursary not a loan," says Munzhelele Pandelani, a funded Univen student.

Second year students of Univen's Department of Social Work recently took the oath before starting with their work integrated learning schedule.

The 86 students are placed in social work service rendering agencies for experiential learning.

Taking the oath is part of the requirement of the programme endorsed by the professional body, the South African Council of Social Service Professions. The oath is based on the Social Work Code of Ethics.

"The society we live in, is full of cracks and needs someone to fill these," says Univen's Dean of Human and Social Sciences, Prof Mokgale Malgopa.

"The oath binds students to adhere to the code of conduct and professionalism."

"Through your conduct and hard work, the social work profession can be on the map," says a social worker of the Department of Social Development, Thomane Gomba.

"People's adversities can be challenged through the quality of services they render - they leave a footprint for those who follow."

"The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving and peoples' empowerment," says the Head of Univen's Department of Social Work, Dr David Mogorosi.

"The principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. Be careful about the use of technology and social media to share or gossip about private matters or divulge information about clients. Be careful about other people's privacy," he said.

"Getting all the facts" - students who are funded by the Services SETA.
The constitution guides citizens—Manohar

"It is no longer the responsibility of the state alone, but also of corporations, non-governmental organisations and communities to respect the rights of others," says Justice Sujata Manohar.

Delivering the Univen public lecture titled 'Human rights - Entitlement of a civilized world?' recently, Manohar said the right to freedom of speech is contrasted against patriotism and sycophancy.

"It has become more important to ensure that the law enforcement machinery of the state is respected and enforces the bill of rights found in the constitution. The right to education requires an adequate number of accessible schools, trained teachers and books, and it is also equally important to ensure that the budget of the country must have a human rights perspective. The legislature also needs human rights. Family laws need to be re-examined and laws need to have in-built mechanisms for their implementation."

She said the right to development is aimed at creating a society where everybody has a right to lead a life with dignity, a right to shelter, food and clothing.

"Each individual has the right opportunity to use their talent and intelligence for the betterment of mankind. If corporate social responsibility is made effective for promotion and protection of human rights, the country will get much needed financial support for its work in the area of human rights. Let's balance national security with human rights," she said.

The public lecture was the culmination of a series of events undertaken by the School of Law over the past few weeks. These included the co-hosting of the Conference of the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges with the University of Limpopo and the 2017 Ubuntu seminar.

"Univen has received conditional re-accreditation of its LLB programme—it has been a long journey for the School of Law," said Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof Jan Crafford.

"Human rights is equity to mothers—love—it is unconditional and human rights should be unconditional. We cannot have a civilized world without human rights," says the Vice Dean of the School of Law, Prof Ian Crafford.

"Judges must interpret law in a way that will make human rights a reality. Our country needs judicial activism."

"Univen has received conditional re-accreditation of its LLB programme"—Crafford.

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"Our country needs judicial activism"—Lutula.

"Individuals should respect the human rights of others"—Manohar.

Univen six project connects students with the global world

A community-based rural and regional development network which connects grassroots communities, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and the University of Venda (Univen) in Southern Africa, was formed at Univen recently.

The network is also designed to develop a model for addressing rural research-based master’s and PhD studies in rural development. This National Research Foundation-funded project is implemented in collaboration with Univen’s Fort Hare campus and the North West University’s Mafikeng campus. Two universities in Zimbabwe are also expected to come on board soon.

The project leader is Univen’s Director of the Institute for Rural Development, Prof Joseph Francis. He was assisted by Univen’s Former Director International Relations, Cornelius Hagenmeier, in designing the project. "Univen understands internationalisation as a core driver of institutional transformation," says Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbati.

"We place considerable value in innovation to achieve internationalisation and rural development. The participation of beneficiaries like community members and stakeholders, in shaping the direction of the project is essential. This initiative would enhance the image of Univen and strengthen its rightful position as a catalyst for connecting rural communities in the Southern African Development Community to the global and international community."

"Internationalisation can make a significant contribu- tion to the transformation of higher education and rural development," says Francis.

"We will expose students and the grassroots community members so that they strengthen their international competencies, thereby empowering them for success in this age of globalisation. Interventions included travelling seminars and homestays. Travelling seminars encouraged students’ academic work and will be organised in collaboration with partner universities, rural communities, government and non-governmental organisations. On the other hand, homestays will involve placing students and grassroots community members even beyond regional borders." Francis said another element of the project is human capital development.

"Through funding by the National Research Foundation, 30% of the students per year, five research masters and four PhD candidates will receive bursaries. An international conference will be held where the work done will be shared. There are also plans to expand the project to include more universities and sustaining its impact and benefits beyond the three-year funding period," said Francis.

Messages of support from the two collaborating universities were read during the launch.

"The rapidly evolving challenges that our communities face mean that educators need to continuously think outside the box when designing training programmes for future agents of change, our graduates," said the North West University’s Director of the School of Agricultural Sciences, Prof Victor Mlambo.

"I am quite certain that we will reach great heights." In response to the project, Wiseman Ndlouv, PhD in Rural Development candidate, said students would do all in their power to make it a success.

"This is a unique initiative – like a furnace used in the production of high quality steel."

"The study is on-going in its attempts to identify the beneficial organisms responsible for the bioremediation process and to optimise the operating conditions of the bioreactor and hydraulics. It is partly funded by the Technology Innovation Agency of South Africa."

"I am quite certain that we will reach great heights." says Francis. "Our country needs judicial activism."
Univen launches first-ever educational entrepreneurship week

“Enactus Univen in collaboration with Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education and Univen’s Department of Business Management recently launched the first-ever entrepreneurship week.

“Do not wait for someone to give you opportunities - create opportunities for yourself,” says the Head of the Department of Business Management and Enactus Co-Faculty advisor, Dr Richard Shambare.

“We must educate students about entrepreneurial paths and alert them about advantages and opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is a career that grants you a brighter future than just being an employee - it has many benefits.

“Start your own businesses and experience entrepreneurial life while you still have time and support from the university,” says Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Prof Ian Crafford.

“Enactus has already paved the way for you, instead of being stressed by writing your CV you should be drafting your business plans and start thinking about putting it into effect.”

“Stop the habit of waiting for a job - start your own business” - says the Project Manager of Entrepreneurship Development at the Department of Higher Education and Training and a founder of AfriLead, Dr Notor Clarke.

“Help each other and share ideas about how to become great entrepreneurs and how to exchange services among each other. Let us not waste time help each other to grow in this industry. It is all in our hands and we can do it.”

“Let us be positive in life and study to gain self-confidence and become disciplined, not to wait for other people to employ us,” says SRC President, Mandla Shikhwambana.

Univen male employees get life hints at Men’s Health Day

“If you think you have a good wife, consider yourself as being blessed,” says Adv Vuhashilo Nange.

Speaking at Univen’s Men’s Health Day workshop, Nange said “Give your woman the assurance of love that she has never received from any man. Nowadays it is difficult to find a good caring wife.”

At the workshop Univen men were educated about the risks that they take for granted and that could be avoided.

“A good wife also deserves to be protected with a will because things might go wrong if you die without it. A will fulfils your wishes because the way things are in your household will change dramatically when you die. Let us all do the right thing while we are still alive.

“Avoid keeping secrets from your spouses when drafting a will. Cohabiting for a long time may result in long-life partners having shares in assets when they pass on, regardless of whether they are married or not.”

“Some diets can be harmful for men,” says Dr Khathutshelo Hadzhi of the University of Venda.

“The rate of obesity is increasing rapidly in South Africa. It is not a sign of wealth but it could be as a result of illness that you might not be aware of. Eat proper and healthy food. Eat only when you are hungry and drink more water than other drinks.

“Substance abuse leads to student drop out and to engagement in violence. If we are not responsible, we will experience challenges.”

“Let’s improve productivity from today,” says Takalani Thabo of the Department of Communications and Marketing.

Warwick University students made impact on local schools

“Enactus Warwick University students made impact on local schools during a presentation on financial management, time management and leadership.”

“Consult with us if you experience difficulties,” says the Chief Administrative Officer in the Directorate of International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire.

“We increase international research collaboration and we expose students and staff to global development trends. Take advantage of international scholarships that are available.”

A Sociology student from Warwick University, Carl Rowlow, said that they have learnt so much, including the culture and structure of education in the country.

“We thank the university for a warm welcome. We are looking forward to make many friends and enjoy our teaching experience.”

We would like to hear from you!

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