



Nendila

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NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

Congratulations Mr President

Mr Sipho Isaac Mashele is the new Student Representative Assembly president.

In the recent student elections - ratified by the Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa - the Young Communist League of South Africa received 1 394 votes, the ANC Youth League 1 057 votes and the Azanian Students Convention 793 votes. The Students' Christian Organisation received 340 votes, the Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania 170 votes and the Democratic Alliance Student Organisation 13 votes.

"As an accountable student body, our goals are to have all information technology centres operational soon, to have full-time paramedics on campus and to add new books in the library. We are also working to having a backup generator on campus, to secure a water reservoir and to ensure proper security," says Mashele.

Mashele, a 3rd year LLB student, has been involved in politics since an early age, particularly in the COSAS learners movement in Mpumalanga. He enrolled at Univen in 2007.



"We will involve all students" - Newly elected Student Representative Assembly President Mr Sipho Isaac Mashele.

Univen gets tested

Hundreds of Univen students and staff members participated in World Aids Day on 1 December and had their HIV/AIDS status determined. Themed 'We are responsible' Campus Health offered free HIV counseling and testing. The health promoter and peer educators also conducted a door-to-door campaign to share HIV/AIDS information.



Know your HIV status - Staff members Mr Tshililo Manenzhe, Director Human Resources and Prof Vhonani Netshandama of the Directorate of Community Engagement also tested during World Aids Day.

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Univen and University of Virginia to work together

Closer collaboration between Univen and the University of Virginia is on the cards, following a visit by Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlana to that university recently.

"Specific outputs are an increased number of masters and PhD graduates, increased throughputs and research outputs and an increased human resources profile at both institutions," says Mbatlana.

Speaking at the University of Virginia's Centre for Global Health symposium during his visit, Mbatlana said other outputs of such a collaboration include financial benefits of subsidies and research grants, a raised profile and competitiveness of the institutions and innovative approaches to

research and innovation. "Research chairs, junior faculty mentoring and shared curricula were other benefits," he said.

"Other mutual benefits include the exchange of students and staff, an increased pool of external examiners and sabbatical leave at the two universities. The same goes for co-supervision of post-graduate students, joint research and publication, joint conferences and workshops and special categories of academics like adjunct and visiting professorships and emeritus professors."

About the role of higher education in South Africa, Mbatlana said it had to respond to regional social and economic needs and human resource

development.

"Its role is also to produce socially responsible graduates, conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation. Furthermore, it has to develop a well grounded vibrant research and development system that integrates research and training capacity with the needs of industry and social reconstruction.

"Higher education's role is also to integrate community engagement into the core business of the university, to create linkages, partnerships and internationalisation and to enhance the quality of student life," Mbatlana said.



"Institutions of higher education must respond to regional social and economic needs" - Prof Mbatlana.

Univen's Prof Roelofse teaches in Eastern Europe

Prof Cornelis Roelofse, Head of Univen's Department of Criminal Justice, lectured in several Eastern European countries recently.

His first stop was in Serbia, where he lectured at the University of Kragujevac. The theme of his lecture was 'The police is not responsible for crime prevention: a criminological theoretical assessment'.

He then delivered a paper at the Department of Police Education's Internal Affairs College in Banja Luka in the Republic of Srpska. The theme of his paper was 'The methodology of building an integrity system in institutions for corruption combating'.

The next leg of the academic trip took him to the Higher Police College in Szcztyno in Poland. He

delivered lectures on security for big events and organised crime. He was asked to join the editorial board of internal security, a peer reviewed journal of the college.

The journal appears twice a year and has an editorial board mainly from the former east block countries such as Ukraine, Poland, Russia and Belarus.

He also presented a paper at the University of Istocno in Sarajevo on South African courts.

All these invitations followed Roelofse's chairing of the international Police Executive Symposium conference on policing in Malta in March this year. The trip was extremely valuable and good relationships were fostered which augurs well for reciprocal visits in the future.



A successful lecturing tour - from left, Prof Dragan Baraveljic, University of Kragujevac, Prof Cornelis Roelofse, Prof Branislav Siminov, University of Kragujevac, Mr Goran Amidzic, Director of the Police College of the Republic of Srpska and Prof Uros Pena, Faculty of Law at the University of Istocno.

Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning launched

The Univen Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning was launched on campus recently. Officially opening the Centre, the Deputy-Vice Chancellor: Academic, Prof Xikombiso Mbhenyane said the Centre strengthens the University's ability to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

"The Centre is introducing interventions to ensure improved throughput, pass and graduation rates as spelt out in the University's strategic plan. It also gives administrative support to students and staff, including counseling and career development, provision of support and training."

The Centre comprises three units - Academic Development, Student Counseling and Develop-

ment and the Student Disabled Unit.

"Through the Centre we will ensure that students who are living with disabilities have appropriate learning equipment and that we train staff to be able to train students living with disabilities. The Centre will also ensure that student residences, the library and lecture halls are improved so as to increase the annual number of graduates," she said. Professor Emeritus Elias Bayona is the Centre's coordinator.

Mbhenyane also hosted a strategic planning workshop to facilitate the Centre's business plans. The business plan will be finalised early in 2011.



Planning the Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning's future - delegates at the recent strategic workshop.

Local scientists participate in international conference on biological nitrogen fixation

With the envisaged impact of current climate change and global warming, crop scientists are focusing increasingly on various ways to improve yields without increasing the cost of crop production, particularly for resource-poor farmers.

One such method utilises the unique ability of legumes such as the bean or cowpea types of crops to manufacture nitrogen fertilizer from the air, thus improving the fertility of soils on farms. By so doing, these legume technologies enable farmers to grow their crops without a need to buy commercial nitrogen fertilizer.

Against this background, two Univen scientists, Dr Eastonce Gwata and Prof Ochanda Ogola of the Plant Production Department at the School of Agriculture, presented papers at the international conference on biological nitrogen fixation in Cape Town recently. Only Univen, the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, the Tshwane University

of Technology and the Cape Peninsula University participated in the conference that was attended by prominent scientists from countries like Ghana, Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Australia, Finland, the United Kingdom, the USA and Venezuela.

In one of the joint presentations, the Univen scientists used soybean and cowpea as model crops that can make a difference to the rural communities in terms of food production and food security. Both Gwata and Ogola have been working on legumes for more than a decade.

Another significant highlight from the conference was the interest expressed by the Australian counterparts in collaborating with scientists from Limpopo in a project aimed at developing new pasture legumes for harsh and dry land conditions. To date, the project is using indigenous wild legume species thriving in the fynbos vegetation around the Eastern Cape Province.



Experts in their field - from left Dr Eastonce Gwata and Prof Ochanda Ogola in a legume crop field in Mpumalanga.

Funding opportunities for students and staff to Europe

The University of Venda's cooperation with the EUROSA Erasmus Mundus Partnership for Human Development makes provision for various grants in 2011.

The partnership between nine European and eight South African universities is coordinated by the University of Antwerp in Belgium. It allows for grants at masters, PHD and staff level for a period of one to 34 months. The grants will cover travel costs, tuition fees as well as a monthly allowance. Grants are available in a broad field of studies. These include Agricultural Sciences, Management Science, Education, Engineering, Health Sciences, Technology, Geography, Mathematics, Informatics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Communication and Information Sciences and Sports Science.

Of the 88 grants available for 2011, 68 are reserved for applicants affiliated with the partner universities, which means that Univen applicants, like applicants from other partner universities, stand a good chance of succeeding in their application. Only South African nationals are eligible for the grants.

More information is available on www.ua.ac.be/eurosa and from the International Relations Office on 015 962 8409 or e-mail Cornelius.Hagenmeier@univen.ac.za. Applications must be submitted before 22 December.

Univen alumni fly the flag high at the Medical Research Council

Univen alumni flew the Univen flag high at the recent Medical Research Council's research day in Cape Town.

Health research study proposals currently conducted by postgraduate students in South Africa were recently accepted by the Council's Scientific Committee for presentation. Among those, former Univen students at various institutions of higher learning showcased their research work.

Their presentations varied from studies conducted on rotaviruses by Ms Leah Nemarude, Mr Harry Ngoveni and Mr Phathutshedzo Ramudingana, on pneumonia by Ms Daphney Mutepe, on kidney stone disease by Dr Takalani Theka, and on anthelmintic infection by Dr Patience Mativandela.

Nemarude and Ngoveni received their Bsc Hons degrees from the Department of Microbiology at the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences.

They are currently enrolled for their PhDs with the MRC Diarrhoeal Pathogens Research Unit at the University of Limpopo's Medunsa Campus. The Unit's laboratory is accredited by the World Health Organisation and conducts workshops for training of fellow scientists from developing African countries.

Mutepe completed her BSc degree at the Department of Microbiology at the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences. Her current research work focuses on cigarette smoking, which is a well-documented risk factor for severe pneumococcal pneumonia. Her research was conducted at the University of Pretoria's MRC Inflammation and Immunity Unit.

Ramudingana completed his BSc Hons degree, also at the Department of Microbiology at the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences. His current research work focuses on the under-estimation of

rotavirus prevalence through rapid diagnosis by commercially available analyses. His research was conducted at the University of Limpopo's Medunsa Campus.

Mativandela completed her BSc Hons degree at the Department of Biological Sciences at the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences. She is the senior scientist at the South African Medical Research Council's TB Epidemiology and Intervention Research Unit.

Her current research work focuses on the investigation of in vitro and in vivo antituberculosis activity of extracts from medicinal plants. She also contributes to the tuberculosis operational research such as TB drug and diagnostics evaluations, both at national and international levels.

Her previous research work received international interest and has been presented in the United Kingdom and France. She studied at King's College of London, the School of Pharmacy and at the Queens University of Belfast's Department of Chemistry.

Mativandela's research was conducted at the South African Medical Research Council in collaboration with the Emory University in the USA.

Theka completed his MSc degree at the Department of Chemistry of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences. His current research work on kidney stone disease focuses on the prevalence of calcium oxalate kidney stone formation. The disease is rare in indigenous black populations and more prevalent in populations of European descent.

His previous research work has attracted international interest and has been presented at international conferences in Portugal, France, Italy and the USA. His research was conducted

at the Kidney Stone Research Laboratory at the Department of Chemistry at the University of Cape Town. Four of the oral presentations received Medical Research Council oral presentation awards. Mutepe received the 2nd prize of R5 000 for the best oral presentation in the MSc category,

Ramudingana received the 3rd prize of R1 000 for the best oral presentation in the PhD category, while Mativandela and Theka received Council oral presentation awards of R20 000 each for presenters with PhDs.



Proud Univen alumni at the Medical Research Council's research day - From left Mr Harry Ngoveni, Ms Ntevheleni Thovhogi, Ms Leah Nemarude, Ms Daphney Mutepe, Dr Takalani Theka and Mr Phathutshedzo Ramudingana.

Tourism race in Cape Town – putting theory into practice

Four teams of third year students of the School of Management Science's Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management competed in the Cape Town race to find the mother city's top tourism attractions recently.

The annual Cape Town visit is part of the Department's practical training.

Each team was given a map of Cape Town and cryptic clues to various attractions within the city. The teams had to make their way from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in historical District Six, from where 50 000 residents were forcibly removed to the Cape Flats region by the apartheid government in the 1950s and 1960s, to the Castle to find three important historic sites. These are the Military Museum, the Dolphin Pool and the sundial clock. Then to the city hall to identify a previous royal personality with connections to South Africa - Edward V11.

From there the teams had to find the Slave Lodge, now the Cultural History Museum and original brothel for the Dutch East India Company, the University of Cape Town's Michaelis Art School and then the Company Gardens, established by Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 to provide fresh vegetables and other provisions for passing Dutch ships following the spice routes.

Each group was then given its own instructions to visit sites in the Gardens, the 175 year old South African Museum, the Planetarium, the South African Art gallery, housing South African, Dutch and Flemish works of art, the South African National Library - the original home of the British governors to the Cape Colony and Tuynhuis, the State President's Cape Town office.

From here the teams followed a common theme to find the traditional flower sellers at Trafalgar Place, named after the famous naval Battle of Trafalgar between the British and the French fleets where Admiral Lord Nelson died, to the Golden Acre shopping complex where the original canals were built by the early Dutch settlers to bring fresh water off Table Mountain to the tiny village which formed the foundation of the Tavern of the Seas. The teams were then required to follow the fan route to the Green Point Football Stadium, and then to the V&A Waterfront as their final destination. They had to take photographs of all the attractions to include in the report which each team must submit as part of the tour practical administration.

The students also went up Table Mountain in the revolving cable to experience this world-renowned icon and World Heritage Site. They also visited the

Rhodes Memorial, built to commemorate the life and times of Cecil John Rhodes, a prime minister of the Cape Colony, and the Rhodes Cottage where he died in 1902. They went to the University of Cape Town campus and toured the coastal road along the Indian Ocean, through Fish Hoek and Simon's Town - named after Simon van der Stel, a Dutch governor to the Cape settlement - and safe harbour for Dutch, French and later English ships during the devastating winter storms.

At the Simon's Town naval base they saw the statue of Just Nuisance, the infamous Great Dane dog that joined the South African navy during the Second World War. Visits to other places of interest included the Koopmans de Wet historic house, the aquarium in the V&A Waterfront which houses over 6 000 species of sea life including sharks, the KWV Wine Emporium - the largest brandy distillery in the world and the Cape Town International Airport, which is consistently judged the best small airport

with under 11 million passengers a year, in Africa and the fifth-best small airport in the world.

The aim of this annual practical excursion is to expose third-year tourism students to important tourist attractions in South Africa. Cape Town is the chosen destination as six of the top ten tourist attractions in South Africa are found in and around the mother city. With ten days of practical experience, the excursion certainly brings tourism theory in close contact with practice.



Cape Town reveals its secrets - Third year tourism students experiencing tourism in Cape Town.

Univen to assist with ANC centenary celebrations

A Univen committee, headed by Dr Molapo will assist the ANC with the planning of the organisation's centenary celebrations in 2012.

At a recent meeting on campus, the ANC's Mr Aziz Pahad said cooperation with non-ANC structures is essential to ensure the success of the project.

"The ANC is planning the celebrations on an international, African and local level. The international dimension would focus on giving a positive image to the African continent, which has been marginalised for decades.

Many positive things have happened in Africa and we need to showcase these. The South African dimension includes transforming our curriculum by revisiting the country's historical legacy. The African dimension has to do with the African renewal, giving impetus to African programmes like NEPAD," said Pahad.

The meeting agreed that the project should collect material about, for example, the importance of history and revealing the unsung heroes and heroines of the struggle. The committee will also address the difficulty to access information as culturally the widows and widowers of the struggle veterans will not agree to release the materials for research and/or publications. Funding will be attended to by the provincial task team. Pahad said the aim of the celebrations is to, among others, introduce a culture of learning and to transform the curriculum.

"Furthermore, students, especially postgraduate students, must be encouraged to deal with the problem of afro-pessimism," said Pahad.



Mr Aziz Pahad.

R30 000 worth of books to Univen's School of Law

Judge Majake Mabesele donated law books worth R30 000 to Univen's School of Law recently.

A High Court judge at the South Gauteng High Court, Mabesele specialises in criminal law, water law, planning and development law, mediation

and divorce. He was also chairman of the Water Tribunal, the Tax Appeal Board and the Disciplinary Tribunal of the South Africa Football Association. Today he offers lectures to law students at the University of Venda on a voluntary basis.



R30 000 worth of legal books - Judge Mabesele oversees the storage.

Future cooperation with Zimbabwean universities

The Univen Registrar, Mr Khuliso Nemadzivanani arranged several meetings in Zimbabwe to conclude various cooperation agreements recently.

A memorandum of agreement was signed with the Great Zimbabwe University. According to the memorandum, Univen will provide training to Zimbabwean students. A memorandum of understanding was also signed which makes provision for cooperation, particularly in the areas of Agriculture and Management Sciences.

Furthermore, a memorandum of understanding was also signed with the Presidential Scholarship Programme with 100 students already pre-selected to undergo training at Univen next year. Another memorandum of understanding

was also discussed with the Women's University in Africa, in Borrowdale in Harare. The Univen Registrar will now brief the University's Management, while the Women's University in Africa would provide more information on their immediate projects and Univen's expected role.

During the visit the Univen delegation paid a courtesy visit to the Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe at State House. President Mugabe accepted an invitation to deliver a keynote address at the inaugural lecture of the Walter Sisulu Memorial Lecture series.

The delegation also visited the South African Embassy in Harare and Ambassador Makhalima said the embassy would in future like to join Univen when visiting the country's universities.

How does one deal with Zimbabwean refugees?

Alaina Varvalouca - Fulbright scholarship applicant

Since political instability and a collapsed economy began plaguing Zimbabwe in the past decade, a million people desperate for a better life have fled across the border into neighbouring South Africa.

Obtaining asylum is done through the Department of Home Affairs, but because of the tediousness of the process, many Zimbabweans wind up staying in South Africa illegally. Zimbabweans are also often blamed for rises in crime or targeted by the police.

Refugees thus face a variety of legal problems in South Africa, from seeking asylum to avoiding arbitrary arrest to their very safety. In 2008 xenophobic riots broke out around the country and many immigrants were killed.

In response, legal aid programmes and refugee rights movements have attempted to ease the legal processes and human rights issues surrounding asylum-seeking with the Department of Home Affairs or criminal detention by the South African Police Service. The legal rights of Zimbabwean refugees have become a distinctly South African issue. I propose to research the interplay between government institutions like Home Affairs and the police services and legal aid organisations that attempt to facilitate refugee incorporation into South Africa.

To what extent do these institutions work together to make the asylum-seeking process more accessible to refugees? Have legal aid groups like Lawyers for Human Rights or agencies like the United Nations High Commission for Refugees helped to combat incidences of corruption and human rights abuses in detention through monitoring and oversight? How have these same organisations changed police perceptions of Zimbabwean refugees? How can avenues of communication between the department, legal aid groups and the police be improved to target the efficient protection of refugee legal rights?

If awarded a Fulbright scholarship, I intend to publish a formal article after my time in South Africa, in addition to blogging periodically about Zimbabwean issues in South Africa throughout the year and collaborating with media outlets such as the Independent or the Zimbabwean, both of whom have published or referenced of my articles

previously.

A Fulbright scholarship would also let me build on and combine two previous projects - research on oversight bodies for the South African Police Services in South Africa, and a series of fact-finding articles I wrote from Zimbabwe for Newsweek, Time and the Christian Science Monitor.

The scholarship would provide a solid foundation for my future law and public policy work in Africa.

I will base my research at the University of Venda where Professor Cornelius Roelofse, the head of the Criminal Justice Department and a researcher on perceptions of Zimbabwean immigrants, has offered to advise me.

Musina is the port of first entry for most Zimbabweans, and thus an intense focus for human rights and legal aid groups, especially since the nearest Home Affairs refugee centre is hours away in Pretoria.

John Daniel, my advisor during my study abroad has offered to aid my project as well by linking me to contacts in various organisations. The Southern Africa Litigation Centre will also be a valuable resource. In addition to in-depth qualitative interviews, focus groups, and observations, I will also administer basic survey questionnaires.

Interview questions will include inquiries about the evolution of South Africa's institutional response to the refugee influx, civil society, legal movements, police perceptions of refugees and crime, asylum-seeking, and human rights concerns in detention.

I will also interact further with the community beyond my research, working with the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum, a human rights and legal aid group founded by Zimbabwean lawyer Gabriel Shumba, who has offered to let me work with him to formulate news releases and to conduct smaller research projects on the Southern African region's response to the refugee crisis.

Though Zimbabwe and South Africa are two distinct countries, a meaningful part of South Africa's population is now Zimbabwean refugees. This community of people has become an important one for South African law, and a viable way forward must be found.



Investigating the plight of Zimbabwe refugees - from left Prof Cornelis Roelofse, Ms Alaina Varvaloucas and Mr Cornelius Hagenmeier.

Adolf Hitler Ndhlovu has a flair for art

Adolf Hitler Ndhlovu has had a passion for drawing since a very young age. Ndhlovu is a second year Media Studies student at Univen's School of Human and Social Sciences.

"After completing matric in 2002 I could not, due to financial constraints, pursue my tertiary studies. I worked in Johannesburg for a year-and-a-half, and then joined a group of artists, working from the Giyani Arts and Culture Centre. In 2004 one of my paintings was selected for the Brett Kebble

Arts Awards. In 2007 I exhibited at the Spier Contemporary Art Exhibition in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. By 2008 I was able to pursue my degree in Media Studies as I have accumulated money through painting."

Ndhlovu is a multi-talented artist doing Visual Arts - sculpturing, painting, jewellery and handbag design as well as mixed medium art. He has a passion for performing arts which includes poetry, drama and hiphop music.



Capturing the spirit of the 2010 football tournament - Adolf Hitler Ndhlovu knows his brush strokes.

Cross-cultural experiences and lessons from participating in the Southern Africa Study Abroad course

Mavis Raphulu - Ward 29, Makhado Municipality

Between 16 May and 13 June I participated in the University of Virginia-organised Study Abroad course and represented the Amplifying Community Voices Project Foot Soldiers.

The first leg of the course was in Johannesburg. The team consisted of students from universities in Africa and the USA, and lecturers from the University of Virginia in the USA. The course was about the history of Southern African countries, particularly Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa. I learnt many things about the history of people in Africa and in South Africa, starting with the San people. The course also covered the importance of our indigenous plants, trees and some preserved at the origin centre museum in stones and supernatural animals associated with the San and how they survived.

We visited different types of museums like the Apartheid Museum, Museum Africa, the Nelson Mandela House in Orlando and the Hector Peterson Museum, Constitutional Hill and the former South African Prison. These museums show how black people were treated during apartheid.

At the Cradle of Humankind we learnt that stone tools were used to cut meat in addition to the importance of stone as a useful tool, even to cut hair. Our course included visiting universities in South Africa and Mozambique. We learnt about university departments and met various students at the University of Johannesburg, especially at the Department of Education.

I learnt about education transformation and that adult education literacy was a challenge whereby over 14 million adults in South Africa never completed their education. The government introduced the public adult learning schools and literacy programmes in the mining sector and trade union education to address this problem.

We reflected on the drop in pass rates in public schools and challenges such as sexual violence, language rights, rights of learners, protection from discrimination and education rights of refugees.

We were taught the history of coloured people, who mainly spoke Afrikaans and English. They were used as slaves in Cape Town. Most of them were Christians, had tribes such as Basters and Griquas. Their foods were ginger beer and hot Christmas buns and fish during Good Friday. Traditionally they wore black clothes during weddings and white during funerals.

At the University of Venda we were hosted by the Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation. We learnt about rural community based research. We learnt that at first we need to understand the community and must explain the reasons for our research. We need to get the views of different groups, taking into account gender and age when we collect data.

Most of Africa's rural areas are still being ignored when it comes to service delivery of water, health services, roads, houses and education facilities. We observed that the situation in Khovani Village in Mozambique was, for example, the same as in the Musekwa, Masia and Tshimbupfe villages.

Most of the Southern African countries are still using unclean sources of energy such as firewood in their daily lives. The use of candles and paraffin still cause many deaths.

Through this course I learnt that age, race, gender, class, country or university does not matter when it comes to education. I believe my own contribution will open doors for others to participate in this highly educational and transforming experience.

My personal reflections on the first month as a postdoctoral research fellow at Univen

Dr Marizvikuru Mwale

I studied at the University of Fort Hare from April 2007 and graduated with a PhD in May 2010. In October 2010 I joined Univen as a postdoctoral research fellow, hosted by the Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation - one of the first two.

This opportunity paves the way for assisting mainly postgraduate students at the Centre to be involved in community engagement and writing proposals for funding and scientific papers for peer-reviewed publications.

I hit the ground running as the Centre's team was ready with assignments for us when we came on board, broadening my horizons and career capabilities.

There are still some issues such as research fellow status at Univen and infusion into the system, that are taking understandably long to resolve. However, I am excited to be among caring colleagues who have made our stay enjoyable. At least the next crop of research fellows will find a better prepared bed to lie on once they come on board. I look forward to sharing the little I can offer and also learn from colleagues here.



Orientation for new staff members

A total of 25 new staff members received orientation training recently.

The aim of the orientation was to orientate new staff members on the policies and regulations of the University. Representatives from different departments within the University presented information about the departments.

University Registrar Mr Khuliso Nematzivhanani presented the University's vision, mission and strategic plans, while Ms Tshildzi Shirinda of the Department of Communications and Marketing explained the University's various communications channels.

The Director of Institutional planning and Quality Assurance Professor Ngobeli said Univen ensures that the programmes offered to students are of a high quality and help them to get employment. The programmes have been approved by the South African Qualifications Authority.

Univen serves students living with disabilities, said Ms Mbuva of the Disabled Student Unit. The Unit ensures that these students have equal access to the campus and that assistive devices such as Braille and tape recorders are available.

The Director of Finance, Mr Malima encouraged staff members to follow the right procedures when applying for transport, buying items, booking accommodation or other items or University services.

"Late submissions of applications may delay the process. People must keep slips if they used their own money for official services to claim afterwards."

The Assistant Registrar of Auxiliary Services, Mr Ndangi Sadiki encouraged lecturers to meet deadlines for submission of exam question papers or semester marks.

"Failure to meet deadlines means that a report will be required to give reasons regarding this matter. Lecturers must check due dates for submission of semester marks and exam question papers on the academic year plan. A Lecturer I-Enabler programme is available for new lecturers. The section also offers services such as the printing of books, lecture time tables and postal services."

Ms Nematlali of Library Services said staff and researchers can access information through both electronic and print media.

"We have books, computers and DVD's to help people find information."

The Deputy Registrar of the University Mr Humphrey Mugwedi said the University is progressing in producing masters and PHD graduates every year.

"Univen started in February 1981 with 181 students and by 2000 the number of students increased to 5 090. The student target is now 10 500. The first graduation was in 1985 with 115 graduates. This year 2 276 students graduated," he said.

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communications channel.

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Do not commit suicide because of stress

Do not commit suicide because of stress – wise words from second year student in Psychology Ms Anita Baloyi.

Speaking at the Mental Health Awareness Campaign, held at Univen, Baloyi said people must consult social workers or priests to assist them to solve their problems.

“You can also deal with your stress by managing your time, prioritising and limiting alcohol consumption.”

The theme of the campaign was ‘Appropriate mental health leads to a healthy life’ and was organised by the Department of Psychology in the School of Health Sciences.

The mental health awareness presentation focused on issues such as stress and time management, substance abuse and suicide. Poor academic performance, loss of loved ones, loss of a job and diseases such as HIV and AIDS can cause stress.

Train to combat HIV/AIDS

To help combat HIV/AIDS, Univen’s Health and Wellness Unit is conducting workshops to train life orientation educators.

As part of the MAC Aids Leadership initiative, the Unit has written a manual which was piloted during recent workshops for the Musina and Eric Louw Secondary Schools and the Makushu and Vhunwauli Primary Schools.

The expectations of the life orientation educators of the workshops were to know more about HIV/AIDS and to be able to encourage the victims of HIV/AIDS to admit that AIDS is real and they cannot be ashamed of it.

They also wished to know how to identify HIV/AIDS infected people, how to help orphans and vulnerable children and how to help learners and teachers who are infected.

The delegates agreed that more communications about HIV/AIDS is essential to help combat the disease. It came as common knowledge that truckers spend much time around Musina while

waiting for clearance to cross the border and while waiting, they would have sex partners. People also do not believe that they have HIV, but say that they have been bewitched. This makes them visit traditional healers or spiritual healers instead of going to the hospital.

Furthermore, people still believe that having sex with a virgin can cure HIV which predispose many learners to being sexually abused.

Families are silent about sexual abuse. In one family, for example, the father had sexual intercourse with his three daughters.

When the mother discovered this she just said “Ndi khotsi a vhananga, u khou vha tundela, zwo luga ngauri a ya nnda, u do sia tshedele nnda”, meaning that as the father, it is good that he is sleeping with them as he is buying the mealie-meal. If he has a partner outside, he will use the money outside.

Whilst inroads are being made, it is still a long way to start thinking of an Aids-free society.



Training the trainers- Life orientation educators at the recent workshop.

University of Virginia assists people in need

As part of a community outreach programme through the Malnutrition Enteric Diseases project, the University of Virginia in the USA assisted various people in need.

Ms Helen Mudzusi of Univen’s Campus Health HIV and AIDS Unit says the donation includes money for Christmas groceries, crayons, snacks, bath soap, indoor games, gloves, books, pencils and pens.

“The gifts will be given to 35 poor children of the Life Care Centre adopted by the Hope of Nation Church in Muledane. We visited the church during our HIV awareness campaign and realised their dire need.”

Bishop Samuel Tshabuse of the Hope of Nation Church welcomed the donation that will be put to good use.

Chancellor Motlanthe launches R2 billion fundraising campaign

Univen Chancellor, Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe launched the University’s R2 billion fundraising campaign recently.

The goals of the fundraising campaign, organised by the University of Venda Foundation, are to provide funding in three strategic areas. These include buildings - both teaching/research and learning space, human capital – specialist chairs in key areas and teaching and research equipment.

Speakers during the event included the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, Chairperson of the Univen Foundation Board, Mr Mashudu Ramano, Chairperson of the Univen Council, Ms Shirley Mabusela and Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat, who presented the University’s infrastructure master plan.

Current infrastructural developments include a new lecture hall complex, a new life sciences building, an extension to the environmental sciences building, a new student administration building, extensions to and refurbishment of the library, extensions to the School of Agriculture and a new building for the

School of Education and a new office complex.

Over the last three years the University has embarked on a restructuring and recovery process.

The Department of Higher Education and Training allocated more than R400 million to improve both infrastructure and teaching models and programmes to turn the University into a quality driven, financially sustainable, rural based comprehensive university.

The University’s Council has also made available more than R25 million for infrastructure development.

Univen would like to thank Absa, Vharanani properties, ASPEN, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, Nissan SA, PriceWaterhouse-Coopers, KPMG, Muteo, Maiwashe Construction, Prism Architects, PIB, MMS-Dri- Tech, MMS Restaurant, Black Leopards, Travel with Flair, MM Security and Kwezi V3 for making the campaign possible. Some individuals and companies completed pledge forms after the event, while others are yet to return their pledge forms.



Launching the R2 billion fundraising campaign - Univen Chancellor and Deputy President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe.

Presenting the Univen experience at the international chemistry conference

Univen’s Prof Liliana Mammino of the Department of Chemistry participated in the 11th International Chemistry Conference and Exhibition in Africa in Luxor in Egypt recently. The theme of the conference was ‘The role of chemistry in the development of Africa’.

Mammino participated with a poster titled ‘The integration of research and education as an effective option for capacity building in computational chemistry’, outlining one of the major traits of the development of computational chemistry research at Univen in recent years.

Mammino says computational chemistry is a branch of modern chemistry with a variety of relevant applications - from drug design to the design of compounds with desired properties.

“These include catalysts with specific actions or ‘green’ substances meant to replace non environmentally-benign ones. It also interfaces with nanotechnology.

“The presence of computational chemistry research in Sub-Saharan Africa is still so scarce as to be completely absent in many institutions and countries.

“The gap with other continents, including developing ones like Asia and Latin America, is huge. All of this enhances the importance of identifying capacity building options that may enable a rapid growth.”

“At Univen computational chemistry research has been built from scratch and with limited resources, but has reached interesting results, including a number of publications in international journals. Because of these characteristics, our experience is particularly apt as a reference for capacity building in other institutions in the continent.

“Experience proves the feasibility of building research in computational chemistry and identifies the approaches that can be more effective in the types of circumstances common to many African institutions.”

Mammino says that besides being a reference, Univen could take a more active role in facilitating capacity building in other institutions on the continent.

“One way is by training specialists from other African countries in a way that is specifically apt to the characteristics of their institutions. Our experience enables us to integrate the training in research with the training to be initiators and to be trainers - a combination that responds to the needs of capacity building from scratch.

“Computational chemistry is thus an ideal area for linkages and partnerships between Univen and universities in other African countries. As a first step in this direction, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Univen and the University of Nairobi in Kenya recently,” she says.