



UNIVEN values and celebrates Freedom Day amid difficult times

On Thursday, 22 April 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held Freedom Day Celebration under the theme 'Valuing our freedom in Difficult times'. This Freedom Day Celebration was held on Microsoft Teams and all University social media platforms, including UNIVEN FM from 10h00-11h30.



In his Keynote Address, Cllr Avhashoni Tshifhango, Mayor of Thulamela Municipality said this year's Freedom Day marks almost 27 years since the country witnessed its freedom in 1994. He said, before 1994, South Africans, particularly black people were living in difficult situations because they were oppressed by the apartheid government. "There was no freedom for black people, and we need to be grateful for this day and the freedom that was born on this day."

Cllr Tshifhango said even though we have freedom in our country, your freedom should be practiced responsibly, and people should always remember that no one is above the law. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa that was adopted in 1996 outlines the Bill of rights that preserve all the rights that we have as a country. He said Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights outlines the rights that comes with freedom that was born in 1994.

Among other things, he spoke about Chapter eight (8) of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa where he highlighted matters of the Judicial authority.

"For almost three decades since freedom was born, we are yet to see our country (Republic of South Africa) experiencing full freedom. We need to continue to fight for full freedom. Even though the country is experiencing challenges, there are many things that were achieved post 1994."

When concluding his keynote address, Cllr Tshifhango said the government is faced with a challenge to teach people how to take care of themselves when fighting Covid-19 pandemic. He also spoke about a young High School girl who was recently assaulted by a fellow learner until she committed suicide. He encouraged students and learners to stop bullying each other because bullying is another form of depriving another person their own freedom. He encouraged students to go and vote in order to protect their freedom and democracy.

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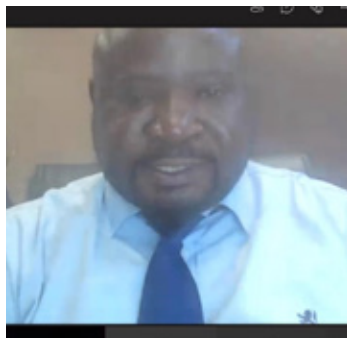
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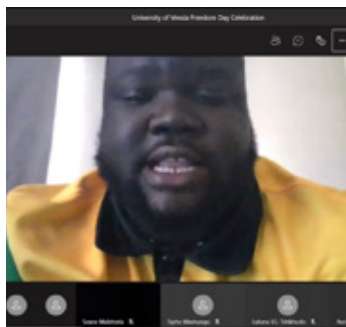
UNIVEN History Lecturer, Mr Seane Mabitsela gave an overview of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, 1948 to 1994; threats or risks during postapartheid; the definition of the concept of freedom; and the reasons why freedom should be valued. When explaining the meaning of apartheid, he said apartheid means apartness and this apartness was established by the National Party government of Malan in 1948. He said this National Party governed South Africa until 1994. "Apartheid ensured the survival and kept different races separate at all societal levels. When talking about Freedom," Mr Mabitsela said the word freedom refers to the power or right to act or speak freely. He said freedom is there even in the Holy Book, on 2 Corinthians 3: 17 – For the Lord is the spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. He said even Galatians 5:1 talks more about freedom.

"Today, in South Africa, everyone is entitled to rights and freedom set forth in the declaration Article 2; Article 13; Article 18; Article 19; Article 20 which are : everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of a State; everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and region; everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association."



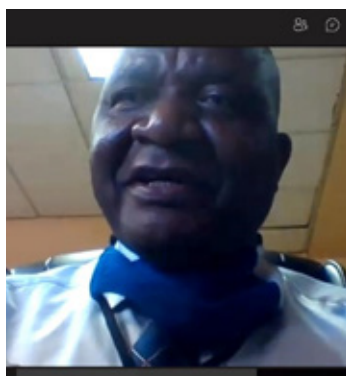
When opening and highlighting the purpose of this event, Director Student Affairs, Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo, explained why UNIVEN and the country annually celebrate Freedom Day. He further highlighted that this day is worth celebrating because the price has been paid by the blood of fellow South Africans. Mr Tshikhudo told attendees that, although South Africans are free, they should always remember that this freedom did not come inexpensive, but with a lot of sacrifices and at high price. Therefore, it should be celebrated responsibly.

Messages of support came from student political structures. Mr Sipho Mavhungu representing ANC Youth League and Mr Gudani Tshamano representing the Economic Freedom Fighters Student Command who echoed that this freedom did not come cheap, it came at a high price.



In his Message, UNIVEN SRC President, Mr Gift Chauke, said this freedom did not happen automatically but it was fought for by a lot of current and previous political activists some of whom are still alive even today. Mr Chauke further spoke about high rate of unemployment in South Africa and issues of free education. He highlighted that, "having freedom for the past 27 years, we should no longer be speaking about issues of land, poverty, free education and other challenges. We should be free from all these challenges."

He said even when we say we have freedom in South Africa, we are still oppressed. Chauke advised young leaders to check themselves on what is it that they are doing to change the situation because they still have a long way to go. He further advised them to cast their votes during election times because that is another way to make the change. "Even though you don't like politics, when you are given an opportunity to vote, go there and cast your vote to make the change that you want to see."



When introducing the Guest speaker, University Registrar, Advocate Edward Lambani said this freedom didn't come cheap, it came at a price hence it has to be celebrated every year.



When concluding the programme, Speaker of Student Parliament, Afrika Somthi encouraged young generation to practice their freedom and rights responsibly.

Message from the Chancellor of the University of Venda



May I take this opportunity to welcome you to the 2021 academic year at our University, UNIVEN. I am honoured to join the community of UNIVEN at this stage, when the global community has to adjust to what has been termed the "new normal". Please allow me to extend my deepest condolences to all who have lost loved ones to the Covid-19 pandemic and wish a speedy recovery to those afflicted.

The Vice-Chancellor has updated me on the progress made with regard to the conclusion of the 2020 academic year, which was concluded in March 2021 due to a number of challenges. I am pleased to learn that the University is now ready to commence with the 2021 academic year. I am optimistic that despite the Covid-19 pandemic, 2021 will be yet another productive academic year.

I am aware that registration for 2021 started on March 1, 2021 and was initially scheduled for two weeks but had to be extended due the request made by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. The University also took a decision to re-open the online application system for first-time entering students until 31 March 2021, to fill the remaining limited spaces in the Schools of Agriculture, Environmental Sciences, Health Sciences, Human and Social Sciences, Management Sciences, and Mathematical and Natural Sciences. Other than these challenges, everything regarding online applications and registration processes for first time entering students went well.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the UNIVEN SRC for showing exemplary leadership in ensuring that the University continued with its operations; and by allowing students to finish writing their 2020 academic year final examinations without any disruptions, despite the recent National Shutdown of tertiary institutions. I know that this could not have been an

easy decision to arrive at, because the challenges faced by students are real.

Let me express my profound gratitude to the Academic and Support staff for their dedication and for continuing to assist students to succeed in their studies. I want to commend the University Vice-Chancellor and his Management Team for ensuring a smooth registration process despite the challenges across the higher education sector and crippling national student debt. Currently, the University is owed about R92 million. Government grants remain the key source of revenue for UNIVEN. Over 11 879, which is 78% of our students, are funded by NSFAS and other government departments. About 3 459 students are in the 'missing middle category'. These are students whose family household income exceeds the maximum amount required to qualify for NSFAS but are still unable to fund university studies.

I am willing to work with all stakeholders to raise funds for the 'missing middle' students to fund their studies. I would also like to invite other more privileged contributors to do likewise because, as the African saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child. This country needs leaders. This Continent needs leaders.

As I conclude, you will recall that, at the beginning of the year 2021, the University started with the implementation of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan was developed through an inclusive process and shared with the University community and strategic stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the change that is about to take place. I urge all stakeholders to support this Plan. Change is good if it is embraced to its fullest; and it assist us to grow individually and as a University.

Once again, I wish you a very successful 2021.

Mpho Matodzi crowned Miss Limpopo Plus Size

A 23-year-old University of Venda (UNIVEN) Media Studies final year student has recently been crowned Miss Limpopo Plus Size. Mpho Matodzi was crowned Miss Limpopo Plus Size after winning a beauty contest that took place on Saturday, 10 April 2021 at Meropa Sun International, Polokwane.

Mpho's modelling journey started when she took part in Miss UNIVEN thick size in 2019 where she was crowned Miss Personality. Mpho further entered Miss Venda 2019/2020 competition where she was crowned Miss Venda Plus Size Public Choice and Miss Venda Plus Size Queen.

In 2020, she entered Miss Limpopo Plus Size where she became Miss Limpopo Plus Size Public Choice and Miss Limpopo Plus size Queen. She is currently a reigning Queen of Limpopo Plus Size.

"What motivated me to be a Plus Size Model is that growing up as a plus size, I went through so many challenges and I had to face bullies because of my body size". She added that modelling to her is a platform to show young women like herself that, being plus size should never be a reason not to follow their dreams. She continued to highlight that we are living in the era of social media pressure where young women often fall victim to the standards of beauty set by social media. "Some even forgot how to love themselves properly because of the external pressure from social media. I want to be constantly reminding these young women that, there is nothing wrong with them or with their bodies. They should love and embrace the blessing that God gave them."



Photos supplied



UNIVEN dedicates a series of Virtual Health Awareness presentations to celebrate World Health month



Photo credit: A photo from Dreamstime.com illustrating various types of exercises

On April 07 every year, the world celebrates World Health Day. The University of Venda (UNIVEN) noticed a need to dedicate the whole week to its employees and students by organising a series of health awareness presentations from Tuesday, 20 April to Friday, 23 April 2021. These series of health awareness presentations took place on Microsoft teams.

The theme for this year's World Health is 'Building a fairer, healthier world for everyone' and was launched by the South African Minister of Health Dr Zweli Mkhize on the 07 April 2021.

Why is it important for people to take care of their health? Taking better care of our bodies means increased energy levels, and a better ability to accomplish our daily goals. It means better ability to concentrate on any given task, and that our tasks will take less time to complete.

Head of UNIVEN Campus Health Clinic, Mrs Faith Mashau said our health is at the centre of our life. "Every part of your life relies on you having good health. You cannot climb higher in all the other seven areas of your life if you do not have enough physical and mental energy to devote to each of them."

The following topics were identified by Campus Health Clinic for 2021 Health awareness week: Identifying depressed students on campus; Signs and symptoms and prevention of Tuberculosis (TB); Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and Diet and lifestyle modification.

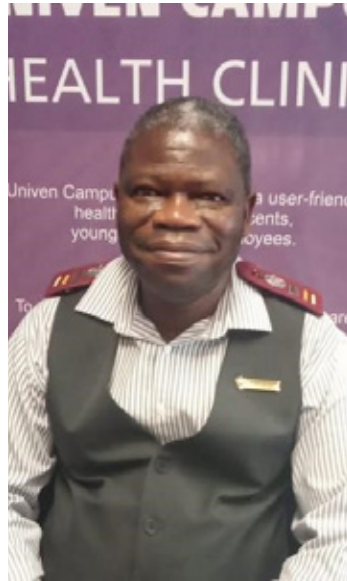
She highlighted that, the knowledge gained, and early identification of signs and symptoms could prevent infections on campus, poor performance, dropout, suicide and could further improve physical and mental wellbeing of both UNIVEN staff and students.

"Every part of your life relies on you having good health. You cannot climb higher in all the other seven areas of your life if you do not have enough physical and mental energy to devote to each of them."

UNIVEN dedicates a series of Virtual Health Awareness presentations to celebrate World Health month continued...



Mr Edward Dongola, who is a Senior Professional Nurse at UNIVEN Campus Health Clinic made a presentation on the prevention and identification of depressed students on campus, highlighting that early identification will avoid drop out from the University, prevent suicide, prevent poor performance and will improve mental health.



A Professional Nurse at UNIVEN Campus Health Clinic, Mr Joseph Neluheni highlighted the importance of identifying early signs and symptoms of TB to prevent further infection on campus since it can be treated.



A presentation on PrEP was made by Ms Maggie Hlungwani, who is an HIV/AIDS Coordinator. Ms Hlungwani indicated groups of people who qualify and those who do not qualify to get PrEP. She further highlighted about the minor side effects of PrEP.



A presentation regarding Diet and Lifestyle Modification came from Ms Tshilidzi Masia, a Professional Nurse from UNIVEN Campus Health Clinic who said living a healthy lifestyle can prevent chronic diseases and long-term illnesses.



TEMS 911 is the Emergency Medical Service provider at the University of Venda.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

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Vuwani Science Resource Centre inducts new volunteers and interns

On Wednesday, 14 April 2021, Vuwani Science Resource Centre hosted the induction for Volunteers and interns in collaboration with Community Engagement Directorate. This induction took place at Muofhe Graceland Lodge.



In his opening and welcome message, the Deputy Dean of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Prof Peter Tshisikhawe thanked attendees for considering UNIVEN as a University of their choice. He told volunteers and interns to make use of this opportunity which is intended to assist them with experience needed when applying for jobs. "Make sure that at the end of this programme you would have gained experience that will assist you in future."



A radio personality, Wonder Juniper from the University of Limpopo motivated the newly inducted student assistants under the concept of Science Communication skills where he was enlightening them about the power of Science in this modern world.



Director Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama shared with the volunteers, the importance of Community Engagement and its approach.

She urged the interns to be open-minded and be appreciative of the opportunity to be part of this session. Making an example based on Mr Juniper's testimony, that your next big break could be from anyone or anywhere. "Show everyone respect and kindness. At the elevator, school kids, the shabby looking guy, because the reward comes as a result of having touched and impacted a life. Be conscious about every interaction that you have with yourself and with your surroundings because you cannot give what you do not have," she told them.

Prof Netshandama encouraged them to check their emotions, fix themselves as their daily commitment. She said one thing she has learnt as an adult is that positivity is everything, "you can't expect to get what you can't give." She told them that, "the universe gives you what you have on your state of mind (things she wishes she learnt earlier in life). It is a lifelong commitment, and it plays a huge role in our start-up career journey. There is no skill that you will learn in 30 minutes, give yourself time."

When talking about skills, Prof Netshandama told volunteers and interns that, there is no qualification that doesn't need additional skills on completion, even if they are not related to their degree. "Mental health has become a skill mandatory for everyone to have, understand how your mind works."

She further emphasised the importance of asking questions, do not assume that you know people because they are from your community, colleagues and so forth.

When talking about how to engage with communities, Prof Netshandama highlighted that there are no blueprints but there is a set of principles anchored from respect.

Even when people do not understand each other due to language barrier and so forth respect is the language that will always be understood and felt globally. "She concluded the session by telling the interns and volunteers that, "life is tough but do not make a habit of complaining, stick it out and always look at the glass as half full."



UNIVEN Schools Liaison Officer, Mr Takalani Nyelisani gave very detailed and insightful tips about Writing skills with particular focus on CVs and Project Proposals.

"Show everyone respect and kindness. At the elevator, school kids, the shabby looking guy, because the reward comes as a result of having touched and impacted a life. Be conscious about every interaction that you have with yourself and with your surroundings because you cannot give what you do not have."

Vuwani Science Resource Centre inducts new volunteers and interns continued...



Ms Jessica Mamabolo from Vuwani Science Resource Centre gave a response to all presentations while Dr Sophie Mulaudzi from UNIVEN Department of Physics gave a vote of thanks.

Among attendees, there were twelve (12) interns from Vuwani Science Resource Centre, twelve (12) Student Assistants from Community Engagement Directorate and three (03) Postgraduate students from UNIVEN Department of Physics. The internship is externally funded by the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SASTA) and Department of Science and Innovation (DSI).



We would like to hear from you!

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#NewNormal #Covid19

1



Wear a mask

2



Wash hands

3



Keep at least one and a half metre distance from people

4



Open windows

5



Do everything possible outdoors

6



Avoid crowded spaces

7



Be quick when you are out for necessary work or errands

8



Stay at home as far as possible



If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the University Hotline by calling toll free number **0800 212 755 or email: univenhotline@tip-offs.com**

Improper conduct includes the following...

1. Financial misconduct,
2. Misuse or misappropriation of University assets,
3. Health and safety risks,
4. Plagiarism,
5. Fraud and corruption.