

Nendila

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA



University of Venda
Creating future leaders

Thank you for making Univen a success

“Univen developed a new institutional culture focussed on the academic core project and remained calm when almost all institutions were in crisis.”
This is according to Univen’s Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlana.

Speaking at the 2016 year-end function, Mbatlana thanked staff, students and structures, in particular NEHAWU, for a peaceful year, despite many challenges that enveloped universities.
“The challenges included the #FeesMustFall protests and accompanying debate. Thank you for

making Univen a success.”
Mbatlana honoured 87 staff members in recognition of their dedication, loyalty and service to the university. Thirteen of these were pioneers as they had started working since the birth of Univen in 1982. The categories of the awards were 10, 20 and 30 years of service.

Mbatlana said huge infrastructure developments of some R1,5 billion took place over the past nine years.

“Upcoming projects which will kick-start next year include a new building for the School of Human and Social Sciences, a staff recreational facility, a house of prayer and a new multipurpose hall for graduations and other activities.

“Univen experienced sterling academic growth, including in research output and excellent student pass rates. In 2016 our research output was close to 0,8 per capita units and we graduated 29 doctoral students,” said Mbatlana.

“Thank you for your time and contribution to develop the university and transform it into what it is today,” said Victor Sigama of the Human Resources Department.

“Thank you for taking care of us and ensuring that our pensions are well invested,” said Simon Nembudani and Maria Ndou on behalf of the retirees.

“May all staff members have a happy Christmas and a prosperous new year,” said Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Prof Jan Crafford.



30 years - employees who served the university for 30 years, with Takalani Dzaga, Prof Jan Crafford and Prof Peter Mbatlana.



20 years - employees who served the university for 20 years, with Takalani Dzaga, Prof Jan Crafford and Prof Peter Mbatlana.



10 years - employees who served the university for ten years, with Prof Jan Crafford, Takalani Dzaga and Prof Peter Mbatlana.



“You helped to develop Univen into what it is today” – Sigama.



“Thank you for taking care of us” - Maria Ndou and Simon Nembudani.

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Univen empowers communities to improve quality of life

Univen ran a successful parallel session on community engagement at the recent Fifth African Higher Education Week and the RUFORUM biennial conference.

Univen's Director of the Institute for Rural Development, Prof Joseph Francis, showcased the engagement work that foster and sustain social integration and improve academic performance and community development.

In his opening address, the university's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat, who chaired the parallel session, said Univen believes to be at the centre of tertiary education for rural and regional development in Southern Africa.

"The Institute for Rural Development was established to spearhead the implementation of social emancipation and development activities. Furthermore, our Vuwani Science Resource Centre champions the popularisation and teaching of science and maths in local secondary schools. Such flagship initiatives are included in our strategic plan 2016-2020 as we consolidate our gains in community engagement."

Chief (Hosinkulu) Njhakanjhaka said that local communities and leaders yearned for reciprocal relationships with universities.

"Univen was exemplary and a role model. The university ran many initiatives central in improving peoples' livelihoods. Open communication, trustful relationships, mutual respect, the deployment of experts who implement programmes and encourage community members to champion their own development were the critical ingredients of successful engaged work," he said.

Univen's Dr Segun Obadire said the Buddies programme was a major initiative as it built and sustained social cohesion among students.

Dr Makondelele Makatu said the School of Health Sciences embraced and applied problem-based learning in its teaching and learning programmes.

"Problem-based learning entailed students learning by discussing and finding solutions to real life challenges. In this process students and facilitators serve as co-learners, co-planners, co-producers and co-evaluators of learning."

Dzikamai Musarurwa and Mpho Netshisumbewa jointly presented on developing a culture of entrepreneurship in rural communities through student-initiated projects. They focussed on Enactus at Univen and how these students were promoting entrepreneurship in various communities in the Vhembe District. Univen's support made its work possible. The audio-visual presentation indicated how Enactus members participated in a national inter-university competition in which it won awards in various categories.

Prof Francis presented on the Amplifying Community Voices programme, which the Institute for Rural Development has been developing since 2006. He used games, cartoons, photographs and statistics to demonstrate the development of democracy in rural communities.

A lecturer of the Institute for Rural Development, Mushaisano Agnes Mathaulula said the Amplifying Community Voices programme built, promoted and nurtured social cohesion through sports and theatre community activities.

"These actions were closely-aligned with the celebration of national and international holidays. The Amplifying Community Voices Students Association also shared its work under the mentorship of the association's leadership."

Organising Secretary Mushe Brownley Ramulongo and Treasurer Mukhethwa Patience Mannzhi explained how they mobilised students for responsible social action.

"Although the programme encountered numerous challenges, it still had various successes and was making inroads in various communities. It is a unique opportunity that helped students to become socially responsible. They learnt new things and transformed into better citizens who value people and society," they said.

"The programme was also applied in partnership with the Sibasa Circuit of the Department of Basic Education in a schools survey of food gardening," said Univen's Dr Beata Kilonzo.

"This was possible through funding from the WesBank Foundation through Tshikululu Social Investments. The community-based research gave rise to a model of a school food garden, serving as an open laboratory for learners. Moreover, it was a research and innovation platform for university students, academics and communities."

"Apart from empowering communities, Amplifying



Univen Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat and Director of the Institute for Rural Development, Prof Joseph Francis.



Chief Njhakanjhaka and Mafanedza Rosemary Mufamadi.



Dr Makondelele Makatu and Dr Segun Obadire.



Mpho Netshisumbewa and Dzikamai Musarunwa.



Prof Godwin Mchau.



Dr Beata Kilonzo.

Community Voices, championed its own development, said ward councillor Mrs Mufamadi.

"People no longer blamed the municipality for their predicament but that they should work closely with the municipality to solve local challenges."

Univen's Dean of Agriculture, Prof Godwin Mchau said all the inputs would help the university to focus on existing programmes and new initiatives.

Various delegates expressed their views of the parallel session.

"I am impressed by what I witnessed. It is important to link all this good work with the curriculum of the university," said Moses Waswa of the RUFORUM Secretariat.

"Throughout the conference we handled ourselves very well and showed great team spirit," said Mpho Netshisumbewa of Enactus.

"One could not believe that the team was comprised of different individuals representing different organisations. As undergraduate students, we were very skeptical about taking the stand and presenting. However our leader, Prof Francis managed to calm our nerves by making jokes and that really made me and my fellow students to calm down and I think we presented very well. The presence of Vice Chancellor, Prof Mbat, at our side event really made a huge impact. We had to pull all stops to show him that indeed his students were taking giant steps in terms of community engagement."

"The conference was an eye opener," said Dzikamai Musarurwa.

"There are a lot of community engagement initiatives at Univen which are not well marketed. If these initiatives are marketed most students will benefit from them towards self-development and the communities around."

"For me as an undergraduate student, the major highlight was presenting at a national conference in front of vice chancellors, professors and other senior academics," said Patience Maanzhi.

"It was exciting and appreciable having our vice chancellor from start to finish," said Prof Francis.

"The presentations that Hosinkulu Njhakanjhaka and Mafanedza Rosemary Mufamadi as community leaders delivered in a very eloquent manner proved that indeed we are a community-engaged university. Anyone who cared to notice, could see that we were like a well-knit family."

"During my presence here I have been listening attentively to the discussions presented here and I find it worth taking back home," said Hosinkulu Njhakanjhaka.

"I believe when we go back home we will be better informed on how to partner with universities and other stakeholders represented here to bring development to our communities."

"There were people who mistakenly came to our hall but couldn't leave because of what was happening," said Amplifying Community Voices Students Association Organising Secretary, Brownley Ramulongo.

"As a student I always thought an undergraduate cannot present in an international conference but this opportunity proved me wrong. It was also my first time being in the company of the vice chancellor and senior academics for so long."

"The participation of the international audience in our parallel session was very helpful as we harvested inputs that will fine tune our community engagement approaches," said Univen Lecturer Mathaulula.

"The conference exposed us as emerging researchers to a professional gathering and

provided avenues for strengthening communication of university-community based research."

"It was evident that the four pillars of community engagement at the University of Venda are interrelated and interconnected," said Senior Lecturer Dr Makonde Makatu.

"It was also evident that community engagement is not only implemented by staff members, but also students who also take leadership of their projects seriously and successfully. Students are active and confident in what they do, with and to different communities."

"Based on our experiences we need to develop models that can assist management to deal with student issues," said Dr Obadire of the International Relations Directorate.

"It demonstrated to other universities how Univen deals with issues affecting its students and staff in a humane and respectful way."

"I believed more than what I hoped for," said Susan Sathekge, of the International Relations Directorate.

"It must be because we planned together what we wanted to do and how to do it. Participants were fascinated with our way of engaging."

"I have also realised that once people have done something on their own, they claim ownership of the product and they also safeguard it," said former ward councillor, Mafanedza Rosemary Mufamadi.

"I urge members of the Institute for Rural Development and Community Engagement to constantly share the good stories with the Department of Communications and Marketing," said Takalani Dzaga, Director of Communications and Marketing.

In so doing the information could be shared with both internal and external stakeholders."

“Taking the university to its rightful owners – grassroots communities”

Khalirendwe Makheda, Media and Publications Intern

“I had the privilege of witnessing the birth and launch of this association and I am proud to see it blossoming today,” said Minister of Communications, Faith Muthambi.

Muthambi was addressing Univen students, staff and representatives of various communities at the recent implementation of the Amplifying Community Voices programme.

“I believe that an honest and open environment such as the one you have created can bring out the best in people and instil confidence in another person as he/she mellows up and become special, valuable and precious. I concur with Lila Watson who said ‘if you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up in mine, we can work together’. Modern trends in rural development emphasize that nothing about us, without us is a cardinal and fundamental guide.”

Amplifying Community Voices is a voluntary and charitable Univen student-based organisation, established to promote democracy in rural communities. It adheres to the principles and philosophy of the Amplifying Community Voices as stated in its charter of positive values.

“The organisation aims to take the university to its rightful owners - the people in rural communities,” said the organisation’s Organising Secretary, Mushe Brownley Ramulongo.

“Apart from facilitating community engagement platforms in rural communities, it also deploys students from various disciplines to conduct career guidance in rural areas. The campaigns create awareness among learners on how to have a fruitful life through awareness of the challenges associated with substance abuse, HIV and AIDS as well as on the need for good leadership.”

The Univen association is affiliated to the programme implemented by the Institute for Rural Development and was established in 2012.

Univen’s Director of the Institute for Rural Development and founder of the programme, Prof Joseph Francis said the programme promotes responsible citizenship through improved understanding of community development among students and youth in rural communities.”

At the function students who participated throughout the year received certificates as a token of appreciation. Among the guests were the Univen Director of Student Affairs, Dr Catherine Selepe, Mafemani Eric Baloyi, former Speaker of the Thulamela Municipality Council, Musanda T Mphaphuli of Mbahe village and the Chairperson of Tshikonelo Drop-in Centre. Also attending were Nndoweni Malala of Murongwe Enrichment Projects, the Chairperson of Adopt a River Froum for the Thohoyandou/Makhado Region, the Chairperson of the Adopt a River Froum for the Malamulele Region and two teachers and 18 learners of the EPP Mhinga High School in Malamulele.



“An honest and open environment bring out the best in people” - Muthambi.



““Taking the university to rural communities” - Ramulongo.



The father of Amplifying Community Voices, Prof Joseph Francis.



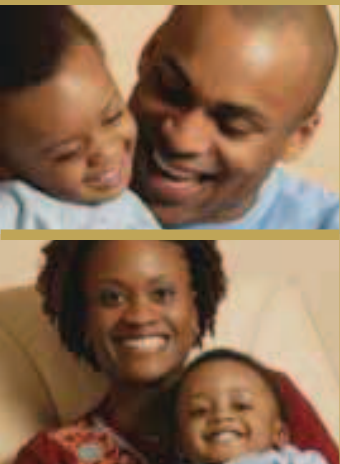
Learners from EPP Mhinga High School and Amplifying Community Voices members.



A proud moment - Ellewani Maduwa (second from left) receiving his certificate of participation with Minister Muthambi.



Sharing the occasion - some attendees at the function.



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University of Venda

Absa settles tuition fees for Univen students

Absa, one of South Africa's leading financial institutions, has donated R500 000 to Univen to assist with the fees of 21 deserving students.

Univen made the funds available to well-performing students in the School of Management Sciences, who were in need of financial aid. The scholarship amount was shared among 12 students in BCom Accounting, six students in Cost and Management Accounting, and three students who are doing BCom in Economics. The funds were allocated to cover outstanding academic fee balances, but do not cover any allowances like books and meals.

One of the beneficiaries is a final year student in BCom Accounting, Mushavhelafhi Emmanuel Matumba, who said he is very excited after receiving financial assistance to settle his account.

"I was owing R19 000, of which I have not even paid a deposit. I was just focusing on paying my accommodation and buying food. My family background is not good and I cannot afford paying tuition fees, but what Absa did for me is a miracle. I wish if they could also appoint me when I finish my degree to implement my skills in their company," said Matumba.

Head of Citizenship at Absa, Sazini Mojabelo, said they recognise the importance of education and skills training to socioeconomic development throughout Africa.

"This is one of the three pillars of our shared growth strategy that we launched earlier this year, where we committed R1,4 billion to education and skills training across Africa over the next three years.

"As part of this commitment, for 2016 we have invested R49 million mostly in historically black universities in South Africa. R23 million is for tuition fees for the 'missing middle' reaching approximately 550 students, including 112 scholarships awarded to children of Barclays Africa staff.

"The bank has observed with great concern as various universities across the country experienced sustained student protests for free education. In some universities the 2016 academic year is in danger of being lost. We empathise with the plight of students whose parents are not able to fund their university education. While the government annually allocates billions of Rands to provide access to higher education, it is clear that more needs to be done.

"Absa further calls upon students and universities to do everything they can to save the current academic year. Should this year be lost, it will be very difficult to accommodate new students next year, further compounding the problem of access to higher education. Education is the foundation of social and economic development. The inequalities of our society place a responsibility upon all of us to find an equitable funding formula. Priority must be given to deserving students who do not have the means to pay some or all of their tuition fees. We are also mindful that the challenges in education are broad and not limited to financial barriers to entry into higher education. The basic education system is critical to the success of the post-school education. We recommit ourselves to continuing to work together with governments and other stakeholders to secure quality education to Africa's young people to support economic development," said Mojabelo.

Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali said the money contributed by Absa changes the lives of students.

"The fact that the majority of our students come from needy socio-economic backgrounds, this funding will play a major role in shaping their future. It will also serve as a motivation among students' performance. We also call upon other companies to follow suit to deal with the financial challenges which is one of the burdens of success among students."

Univen holds prayer session for 2016 final exams

Univen recently held a prayer session for the 2016 exams.

Attended by students, staff members, different student church choirs and pastors, including representatives of the South African Council of Churches and the Higher Education Parents Dialogue - Limpopo Chapter.

The theme of the prayer session was based on II Chronicles 7:14 - "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land".

"We are a wounded nation and we need healing of the Lord, we are here to say God we have messed up, forgive us," said Noluthando Pendu.

"The spiritual demons are very active now and this is that time of the year when they want to demolish the good future of some students. Students are edged to believe in God and pray so that nothing can stand in their way while writing exams."

Pastor Mamello Moilwa encouraged students to read their books and believe that God will intervene and help them through.

"Never jump the process, read the books and ask God to assist you. Student life can only be enhanced through inviting God to be part of the daily plans of a student. Any plans without God's intervention will remain empty," he said.

Student Representative Council President, Mashudu Nthulane said the main aim for students is to study.

"Students need to put their education first and ensure that when they leave they have achieved all their goals. They should not be deterred by anything, they are going to write exams and pass. Even those who received low marks, should work harder and get 60 percent," she said.

This was not an ordinary day as the prayer session was also for the #FeesMustFall protests that are happening around universities in South Africa. Attendees prayed for mercy to help people who are in power to listen and respond to these strikes so that universities can be saved.

The prayer sessions are included in the Univen calendar that is approved by Senate, and are conducted twice a year. This year's session also included praying for stability in the institutions of higher learning and for South Africa politically, socially and economically.

Messages of support came from Rev Monegi, representative of the South African Council of Churches who encouraged students not to waste time, but to study and prepare for their exams.

"We support students in the #feesmustfall campaign, however the council does not condone the violent act of burning the universities' properties."

Rev Nedohe of the Higher Education Parents Dialogue said that South Africa needs to decolonise education.

"We need an education that will make sure that it does not only teach us about our minerals but rather how to process those minerals."

Dr Randitsheni, Dean of the Evangelical Lutheran Church prayed for South Africa, while Rev Masesele prayed for the higher institutions, while Pastor Mavhungu prayed for support during exams.

Among others. The Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Victory in Christ choirs entertained the audience. The closing prayer was by Rev Mawedzha of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Pastor Mamello Moilwa sharing the word of God during the prayer session.



Deputy president seen at youth development and career expo

"The government is always ready to develop learners after postmatric education," said Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Speaking at the recent youth development and career expo at the Nkawkankwa Stadium, Ramaphosa said if one comes from a poor family, the government will give opportunities and make sure that the doors of learning are always open.

"We do this to increase the number of skilled people in our society. You need to target scarce skills. Ask from companies and mentors about skills needed in our country and economy, find out about skills needed in Limpopo, ask where is our economy going and choose according to skills needed which will enable you to get a job".

More than 3 000 learners visited the various stalls

of 100 exhibiting institutions from the private and public sector to access knowledge about higher education, bursaries and knowledge about important lifestyles to make the right career choice.

"Visit the National Student Financial Aid Scheme stalls to apply for funding. This career exhibition comes as a response to many youth who reported that they can't access information about studying at tertiary institutions. We want to empower young people, particularly from very far rural areas, to equip them with knowledge so that they can get on with their own life and be able to embark in a career that can make them successful."

He encouraged youth to have integrity and be an example of people with good practice within their community and to avoid relying on stealing and

lying for survival. He warned female youth to stay away from blessers as they are abusing the youth.

"#blessers must fall," Ramaphosa said.

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Mduzisi Manana encouraged youth to participate in apprenticeship, learnerships and internship to acquire skills.

"If you didn't get admission at universities, use community and Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges. If you know that your parents cannot afford to pay for your studies, visit the National Student Financial Aid Scheme to learn how you can apply for funding. Education is another way to fight poverty and unemployment in our society."



This is me! - Ramaphosa with Nendila portraying him during the September 2016 Univen graduation ceremony.



Gaining information about Univen - Assistant Schools Liaison Officer, Justice Lebopa addressing learners.



Univen graduates reaching new frontiers and building its reputation

Univen graduates are waving the Univen flag very high. At the age of 28 years - the youngest, doctor since the university's inception, Vhahangwele Masindi has done it at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

He received the award for being the best Emerging Researcher for 2016 at the CSIR's excellence awards.

Earlier this year Masindi received another award of an emerging researcher at unit level from the Hydraulic Infrastructure Engineering group. In 2015, he received a Murray and Roberts award for the best technology he developed for mine water treatment.

In 2014 Masindi received a professional accreditation from the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions as a professional natural scientist. He has been appointed as a research associate in the University of South Africa.

Masindi is the co-founder of EMEM Environmental Service and has been doing work for several companies and government agencies. He has published numerous papers in accredited journals, books, chapters and filed two international patents jointly with Univen and the CSIR in the USA, Canada and Argentina.

He aims to establish himself and become a determined entrepreneur who is willing to give back to Univen by employing its graduates.

Masindi is a graduate from Univen's School of Environmental Sciences, graduating with all his degrees – a bachelor's and MSc in Environmental Management and a PhD in Environmental Sciences.



Developing wine – using available technology

Tsietsie Ephraim Kgatla, a PhD candidate in Food Science and Technology and lecturer in Food Chemistry at Univen, focuses in his research on the development of nutritious indigenous food, using simple and available technology.

Nendila spoke to Kgatla.

Tell us about yourself.

My name is Tsietsie Ephraim Kgatla. I am a PhD candidate in Food Science and Technology at Univen's School of Agriculture. I have a BSc in Food Science and Technology and a masters in Nutrition.

Why did you choose the study of wine?

The global wine industry is worth billions of Rands. However, climate change could have a critical impact. Doubtless, the impact of global wine production on the world economy is undeniable. However, human generated greenhouse gas emissions in the form of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are resulting in changes to the climatic patterns beyond natural background rates. Global warming can influence not only the process of berry formation and ripening, but also the chemical composition of grapes and the changing of wine-growing regions. The shift in global warmth patterns may move premium grape growing regions out of areas currently devoted to that activity and may cause a shift in current grape variety cultivation.

The process of global warming is not uniform. Sub-tropical land areas and an increase in precipitations in more northerly latitudes and the equator will register greater warming over land, with greater warming at the higher latitudes. Especially in the Northern Hemisphere climate change would influence the entire winemaking regions. Some of them may become completely inhospitable to grape production.

Current research suggests possible and simple strategies to consider a wild fruit variety for wine making. Research has shown that some specific indigenous and wild fruit varieties are less susceptible to drought, heat stress, pest infestations and diseases and are therefore more suitable for the predicted climate.

What was your focus on your study?

The development of a new wine product. The study has also carried the physicochemical analysis of the fruit to determine the fermentable sugars, characterised fruit colour, analysed phytochemical components and engineering properties of the fruit for wine processing. I also studied microbiology to identify and isolate the specific microorganism to use for fermentation of this specific fruit for wine fermentation. The study has carried several chemical analyses to characterise the wine quality, sensory profiling, characteristics and non-sensory properties of developed wine.

What could the benefits of your study be?

The development of wine from wild fruit study explores how scientific and technological approaches can be used for optimal production of quality shelf stable wine towards value addition of wild fruit, thus reducing the major problem of post-harvest losses. Wine processing is done for these reasons - to decrease post-harvest losses and extend shelf life, to create variety and hence

widen the market and to add value, thereby generating extra income. It also creates new investment and employment opportunities and support local small-scale industry through the demand for equipment required for processing, preservation and packaging.

However, to predict quality product recognition it is important to study the market system. Market systems are important for the wine producer, consumer and policy developer in decision making for commercial wine production. Currently wine demand is moving toward consumption patterns characterised by the pursuit of both healthier and more hedonistic lifestyles. Moreover, public opinion is trending toward responsible consumption of alcoholic beverages because of public health recommendations and national campaigns against alcohol abuse. Market trends are predicted to change in the near future because, after the consumer orientation towards the demand of barrel-aged and well-structured high alcohol wines, a new enthusiasm towards light wines that are low in alcohol is arising.

The production of wines with reduced ethanol concentration is an important aspect of wine production that is currently in high demand. Wines that are perceived as healthier, more favourable excise rates for lower alcohol products and changing attitudes of consumers regarding the social consequences of excessive ethanol consumption are just some of the attitude drivers for lowering ethanol levels in wine. These considerations to high alcohol levels in wines stimulate great attention in improvement of the technologies for reducing alcohol content of wines by conserving organoleptic balance, flavour and high quality. There is thus a need to develop value added products to enhance utilisation and minimise losses. To identify wild fruit which can tolerate and adapt draught or to develop a wine with low alcohol content is a bonus.

Are new research, application, technology, trends in the food industry a scientifically original?

The study consists of scientific substantiation of the chemistry method for amelioration of the kinetics, rheology, electromagnetic of fruit quality and functional properties of red dry wines with alcoholic content. Scientific substantiation is based on the results of theoretical and experimental investigations. This denotes a variation of physical-chemical colour, sugars, minerals, phenolic, proteins, polysaccharides, electrical conductivity, microbial quality wine composition and amelioration of the sensory and non-sensory properties. Scientific novelty will be confirmed if there is a favourable decision of patent issuance of fruit variety and specific yeast obtaining of natural wines.

What scientific challenges are solved?

The study results are applied to the wine industries, wine decision making and the wine industry globalisation. The health of low alcohol consumption enhances the knowledge to consumers in wine life style and the reduction of alcohol abuse. This is a wine marketing opportunity for low alcohol or natural red developed wine.



"We need to live and work in environments where we can practice healthy behaviours and obtain quality food" – Kgatla.

What is the sensory evaluation of wine or why do people taste your developed wine?

This project focused on the developing of wine, characterising wine properties, profiling sensory and consumer wine tasting and a non-sensory analyses to understand how consumers make wine choices. It also focused on the relative impact of sensory and non-sensory factors. The purpose of sensory evaluation or wine tasting today is to determine the relative importance to wine consumers of sensory and non-sensory attributes on liking and choosing wine. The methods used are science-based and validated against actual potential market and on consumer attitudes towards the taste or packaging of wines. The project will then demonstrate to the wine developer that consumer responses can be anticipated to change the product and its marketing. By doing so design products can more likely succeed in the competitive wine market.

What are your future plans after your PhD studies?

Apart from the patent issuance, I think this is a good foundation to establish a niche area research and collaborate with different departments such as Soil, Horticulture, Engineering, Nutrition, Consumer Science, Agricultural Economics or Agribusiness Management. Research institutes such as the Agricultural Research Council, the CSIR, and the Department of Science and Technology also come to mind. With the support of the university it is also possible to establish a food science shop unit with the department. A science shop is a unit that involves researchers, students, the community, industry, farmers and professionals to solve a real problem using different approaches. Creating these healthy environments for people of all ages will require their active involvement in grassroots efforts. Private citizens, community leaders, health professionals and researchers will need to work together to make the changes that will allow such environments to flourish.

Food science is a multi-disciplinary field of study and the creation of a science shop approach may also influence positive growth of research output as many disciplines will be involved. I am convinced that we need to live and work in environments where we can practice healthy behaviours and obtain quality food and medical care. Social, cultural, physical and economic foundations are important factors in the overall health of the community. We must use our resources to increase the availability of healthy foods to ensure a healthier life.

Maphweli flying a Univen flag at Palackeho Univerzita in Cech Republic

Poverty is an evil thing that lead some of the South African youth to drop out from school and give up on their dreams.

But for Rudzani Bernard Mamphweli who grew up in a rural village called Tshitavha in the Nzhelele area it is a different story - although he was raised by a single and unemployed mother and he had to travel about four km to school.

A disadvantaged background was never an obstacle for Mamphweli to achieve his goal as he passed his matric with flying colours.

"Despite the challenges of travelling long distances,

I was a student who took school work seriously and that is why I passed my matric very well, he says.

He then enrolled for a bachelor's of Social Work at Univen in 2010. After completing his junior degree, he enrolled for a honours in sociology in 2015.

"I was lucky that I got scholarship from the Limpopo Department of Social Development because my mother couldn't afford to pay for my studies."

While he was busy with his honours sociology, he applied for European Union funded scholarship to study towards a master's in Europe.

"I couldn't believe it when I received and e-mail

informing me that my application was successful and I had to fly to the Czech Republic - it was just a dream come true."

Mamphweli is currently studying towards a master's degree in International Development studies at the Palackeho Univerzita in Cech Republic.

"My message to other South African youth, especially those who are from a disadvantaged background is that they must work hard, dream big and make use of whatever opportunity that comes their way. I urge all postgraduate students to apply for international scholarship as the opportunity helps to broaden one's horizon."

Developments at Univen demonstrates a highly commendable leadership - HETN Chairperson

Infrastructural developments and the stability at Univen demonstrate the type of leadership which is highly commendable," says the Chairperson of the Higher Education Transformation Network, Lucky Thekiso.

"The university indeed has a very good story to tell, which is worth sharing with other institutions as part of benchmarking for best practice. We shall share what we have experienced here with the Minister for Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande," Thekiso said.

Thekiso led a delegation to Univen recently to experience Univen's achievements over the past ten years.

The meeting was followed by a campus tour to

current and completed projects as well as the staff housing project in Sibasa.

"We appreciate the good work that the university is doing and we encourage you to keep up the good work. We will continue providing the necessary support to Univen," said Thekiso.

"All these had been possible because of the commitment of senior management team, staff and students as well as the support from our Council and the Minister for Higher Education and Training," said Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlana.

First-hand experience of the developments at Univen the past ten years.



French-South African Institute on Agriculture meets at Univen

"The work of the French government in contributing to the growth and development of South Africa's economy by increasing capacity-building for citizens is laudable," says Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlana.

Mbatlana welcomed delegates of the French-South African Institute on Agriculture's third steering committee meeting at Univen recently.

Univen is part of this tripartite collaboration between the University of Fort Hare and the University of Limpopo which resides in the Department of Food Science and Technology in the School of Agriculture.

"Sustainable diets with low environmental impacts contribute to food and nutrition security," said Prof Nicole Darmon from France.

"Such diets contribute to a healthy life for present and future generations."

Univen's Director of Research and Innovation, Prof Georgess Ekosse said that projects on fruits processing could be developed to expand the collaboration.

The next steering committee meeting will be held at the University of Limpopo.



Discussing matters agricultural - delegates at the French-South African Institute on Agriculture steering committee meeting.

Univen and Botho University exchange programme concluded for 2016

Univen's student exchange programme for 2016 was recently concluded as staff and students returned from Botswana and the Botho University students departed from South Africa.

The exchange programme is offered in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences.

Five students from the Botho University studied at Univen for one semester, while five students from Univen travelled to the Botho University in Botswana to continue their study there.

The students will receive credits for their participation in the student exchange. Recounting their experiences in Botswana, the representative of the Univen students, Lidovho Nkhumeleni said they are very happy with the way they were treated during their stay.



Dean of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Prof Natasha Potgieter, welcomes the Botho exchange students to Univen.

"We will miss everyone we had contact with in Botho University."

The representative of the Botho University students, Lebogang Mlambo said the support they received for their studies and the warmth from both staff and students at Univen were reassuring.

Simultaneously with the student exchange, a staff exchange commenced. Takwirara Tafireyi, an academic from Botho University, has been teaching Computer science at Univen, while Kudawaishe Madzima visited Botho University.

In 2014 Univen adopted an international joint degrees and credit transfer policy, which provides the framework for the implementation of the student exchange.



Sharing the experience - participants in the student and staff exchange programme and staff members.



The Univen group - Boitumelo Letsogo, Botho University and Dr Segun Obadire.



The Botho University group.



"Focus on the commercialisation of indigenous knowledge rather than on a better understanding of indigenous knowledge itself" - Pandor.



"Continue teaching indigenous languages" - Thovhele Ratshibvumo 11 Rambuda.



"South Africa should now fight the more insidious apartheid of knowledges" - Visvanathan.



"Improve the socio-economic conditions of people in very rural areas" - Sekoati.

Pandor opens indigenous knowledge systems conference

"We must focus on the commercialisation of indigenous knowledge rather than on a better understanding of indigenous knowledge itself," says the Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor.

Officially opening the first-ever indigenous knowledge systems conference held at Univen recently, Pandor said a humility approach is similar to a sustainable development approach to emerging technologies. "This is the approach to take to indigenous knowledge."

Indigenous knowledge refers to local knowledge that has been passed on orally from generation to generation.

The conference, themed towards the science and technology of humility in South Africa, is a collaboration between the Department of Science and Technology and the South African research chair initiative (SARCHI) in Development Education hosted by the University of South Africa.

Pandor said a technology of humility approach asked who would benefit and who might be hurt.

"This is opposed to the current dominant mode of scientific thinking, a command-and-control approach to scientific innovation.

"While wealth creation was essential to redressing historical injustices, indigenous knowledge was not only useful in creating value, but was also a way of being, thinking and feeling. South Africa's indigenous knowledge systems policy was adopted in 2004, after which an office was established to protect, develop and manage indigenous knowledge systems. This has been challenged as Western and in need of decolonisation.

"This conference is an opportunity for a critical engagement with the current policy on indigenous knowledge in South Africa. How can we bring indigenous knowledge and science together

better? It is aimed at igniting conversations about the future of indigenous knowledge and creating dialogue to generate new knowledge and train new cohorts of researchers.

"At this conference delegates should discuss how technological development should take into account the many different viewpoints on science and collective learning," she said.

The SARCHI chair at Unisa, Prof Odora Hoppers, encouraged scientists to question the dominance of western knowledges.

"As scientists we cannot go to the public and work with the communities with arrogance. Indigenous knowledge co-exists in public without duress. It is about the expansion of the knowledge paradigms." Hoppers was responsible for the development of the concept paper for the conference.

Thovhele Ratshibvumo 11 Rambuda, also a Univen Law student, said the university should continue teaching indigenous languages to preserve the knowledge which is disappearing.

"South Africa had fought apartheid, it now needed to fight the more insidious apartheid of knowledges," said Prof Shiv Visvanathan, of the OP Jindal Global University in New Delhi.

"As a people, no community is complete without the other. No society is complete in itself. The other opens us, enlarges us, without the otherness of the other, the self is incomplete and even vulnerable. What is true of society is true of knowledge.

"There were no lesser forms of knowledge, only a common in which each kind of knowledge had its place. There was no failed society or failed knowledge which deserved to be eliminated. We all should join in a festival of humble knowledges, with ethics a part of science. No culture should be museumised and technology not subject to cost-benefit analyses."

"There was an increasing realisation among researchers, developmental agencies, policy makers and academics that African indigenous knowledge was an under-used resource in Africa's developmental process," said Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlana.

"Learning from what local communities already knew created an understanding of local conditions and provided an important context for activities designed to help them. Univen is one of four institutions offering a Bachelor of Arts in indigenous knowledge systems. We are looking forward to the first cohort of students graduating next year."

"The conference would have tangible outcomes to improve the socio-economic conditions of people in the province, especially those in very rural areas," said Limpopo's MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Seapara Sekoati.

"Highlighting indigenous knowledge systems has a unique role in the development of our country," said the Chief Executive Officer of the National Research Foundation, Dr Molapo Qhobela.

"We manage and support knowledge production and human capacity development in all fields of science and knowledge, including indigenous knowledge systems. We facilitate and support

researchers and knowledge holders in the systematic investigation and development of indigenous knowledge systems."

Topics included the development of herbal formulations to treat diseases such as HIV, sexually transmitted infections, cancers and hypertension. Presentations included the use of medicinal plants in healthcare and beauty among Xhosa people. It also included presentations on the conservation of soil and water and the improvement of crop yields in spite of the current erratic rainfall.

Other presentations included indigenous knowledge systems rights and dignity, law and commercialisation, interfacing with research and development, pharmacokinetic herb drug interaction involving African traditional medicine, finger print analysis and in vitro metabolism studies. Indigenous knowledge systems and technological innovations on livelihood based handicrafts among rural women in the Eastern Cape, the Honey bush commercialisation community development project, the protocols and guidelines for ethical research engagements with local communities on African traditional medicine and healing practices in the North West were also presented.

Researchers, students and knowledge holders presented their work, discussed the challenges they had experienced and shared best practices.

The conference was organised by the National Department of Science and Technology in collaboration with the University of Venda, Unisa and the National Research Foundation.

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Welheminah.Mabogo@univen.ac.za



"African indigenous knowledge is an under-used resource in Africa's developmental process" - Mbatlana.



"Highlighting indigenous knowledge systems has a unique role in the development of our country" - Qhobela.



"We cannot work with the communities with arrogance" - Hoppers.

Univen partners with Tshakhuma Community Trust

History was made when the people of Tshakhuma witnessed the launch of an ownership and management partnership of the Barrota Farm between the Univen Innovative Growth Company and the Tshakhuma Community Trust recently.

"Barrota Farm, in existence since 1936, was originally viable but had in the recent past experienced a significant decline in profitability," said Chief Madzivhandila.

"This was mainly due to a lack of adequate business and financial management skills. However, since the Univen Innovative Growth Company came on board, the situation was back to normal."

"We are committed to working closely with the communities we are close to – hence our collaboration with the Tshakhuma Community Trust," said Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali.

"Our experienced academics and researchers' contributions will be invaluable in the success of the partnership. I call on the School of Agriculture to make the farm an extension of our experimental farm so that undergraduate and post-graduate students could use it for experiential learning activities. My wish during my lifetime is to witness the university use its extensive intellectual human resource capacity to make an economic impact on its communities. This initiative has been precisely this dream come true."

"It takes visionary leaders to ensure that Univen remains relevant to the community that it serves," said Vhembe District Municipality Councillor, Mavhungu Luruli-Makhanya.

"This initiative contributes towards the economic development of local communities close to the university."

"Univen and the Univen Innovative Growth Company will make sure that they empower the community of Tshakhuma," said the company's Chairperson, Patjane Moloisane.

Employees of Barrota Farm.



Unveiling the Barrota Farm plaque - Chief of Tshakhuma and Councillor Mavhungu Luruli-Makhanya.



"We will empower the community of Tshakhuma" – Moloisane.



Cutting the ribbon – Councillor Mavhungu Luruli, Chief Madzivhandila, Dr John Mudau, Councillor Grace Mahosi, Prof Peter Mbatlali and Univen Innovative Growth Company Board Chairperson Patjane Moloisane.



Learning from the educators - learners from the Dimani Secondary School with Councillors Mavhungu Luruli-Makhanya (left) and Grace Mahosi (second from left).



Team Nendila – delivering Nendila 2016 to you!

For the team who delivered Nendila to you in 2016 – it was always a pleasure!

All the best to the interns. We trust this was a meaningful year and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours. Looking forward to bringing you next year's Nendila.



Takalani Dzaga - Chief Editor



Welheminah Mabogo - Editor



Takalani Thabo – Contributor



Ndivhuwo Mukwevho - Contributor (Intern).



Khalirendwe Makheda - Contributor (Intern)



Ntsieni Sirwali - Contributor (Intern)

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Nendila is your communications channel. Nendila editorial committee –

Mr Takalani Dzaga – Chief editor

Ms Welheminah Mabogo – Coordinator

Ms Mushoni Mulaudzi – Preservation (Library)

Send your contributions to: Welheminah Mabogo, Nendila Coordinator, University of Venda, Private Bag X5050, Thohoyandou, 0950

Tel 015 962 8525, Fax 015 962 8494

e-mail: welheminah.mabogo@univen.ac.za

Office number 24, first floor Main administration building

If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus – contact the tip-off hotline - 0800 212 755, e-mail univenhotline@tip-offs.com