



# Love, loyalty and respect – that's Valentine's Day!

"Valentine's Day is when people show each other appreciation and love, they express how much they mean to each other," said a second year Bachelor of Environmental Sciences student, Makhadzi Nemakalangani.

Love, loyalty and respect were the words expressed most by Univen students on Valentine's Day 2017.

Some students described Valentine's Day as the day to spend time with your loved ones while others said it is the day to celebrate existing relationships.

"The colour of the clothes also explains the way a person feels on that day. One cannot, for example, wear brown clothes on Valentine's Day, unless the day means nothing to you," said a second year Bachelor of International Relations student, Ntakadzeni Maphulu.

"I do not see the necessity of celebrating Valentine's Day because I show love to the people close to my

heart almost every day," said second year BCom Accounting student, Unarine Mudau.

Justice Shipalana, Assistant Media and Sound Broadcasting Officer at Univen FM said that February had become synonymous with love. As part of celebrating Valentine's Day, Univen FM distributed gifts to female staff and students.

"The aim was to market Univen FM as a brand among staff members," said Shipalana.

"We believe that you should cherish your loved ones every day, but Valentine's Day is a good day to bring people together to spread the love to everyone - and a good excuse to enjoy some chocolates, of course. The gifts distributed were sponsored by Watkins Valeur."

*Calvin Mkhabela and Makhadzi Nemakalangani showing each other appreciation and love on Valentine's Day.*



*Rolivhuwa Ragwala and Unarine Mudau spent time together on campus.*



*Univen FM's Station Manager, Tshilidzi Shirinda (second from left), Fulufhelo Nonge, Grace Cibi, Sarah Mudalahothe and Portia Mugwedi received Valentines presents from Univen FM.*

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## Univen welcomes international students

Univen's Senate Hall was draped in international flags representing the countries of the students studying at the university this year.

"The cost of freedom is bitter but the fruits are sweet," said Onipe Tobiloba, Chairperson of Univen's International Student Union.

Officially welcoming the international students, Tobiloba called on them to engage in student structures, find something to do and talk to people.

Tobiloba, a master's student in Hydrology and Water Resources said: "Learn to speak local languages and you will never regret coming to Univen."

Students were introduced to the international student helpdesk, which ensures assistance in many facets of student life.

Univen's Chief Administrative Officer in the Directorate of International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire, introduced this year's buddy programme which integrates South African and international students.

Many of Univen's artistic groups participated in the welcoming programme and displayed the university's cultural diversity. All artists were Univen students under the supervision of Dr Elelwani Ramaite and coordinated by Humbulani Kwindia.



*Univen welcomes international students - Dr Segun Obadire and students.*

*Diversity in dance - students performing the Malende dance.*



# Univen is now a Smart Campus – ITS Director

“Students can now access books and other academic related services online from every corner within Univen,” says Chief Nkhumbuleni Ratshitanga, Acting Director for Information Technology Services. This came about after Univen increased Wi-Fi accessibility on campus.

“Wi-Fi coverage on campus is now at 85 percent

and we are aiming at 100 percent soon, and now it’s even faster than before. All buildings on campus have been equipped with Wi-Fi. “While there was a challenge as some devices had been stolen, fortunately the matter was reported. The head of security addressed the problem and devices are now being monitored 24/7.”

“Only people with active Univen accounts have



Chief Nkhumbuleni Ratshitanga and his team that made sure that the rollout of Wi-Fi was faultless.

access to the Wi-Fi,” said Jack Thosago, Univen’s Network Administrator. “People who are expecting visitors should submit their visitors’ names to the IT department and a temporary access to the WiFi will be granted with the hosting department’s permission. Internet access will be valid for a certain period, depending on how long the visitor plans to stay.” “New fiber infrastructure has been rolled-out to all residential areas to ensure faster network access,” said Aluwani Tshishonga, Head for Network Support. “A single mode 8-core fiber is installed in each residential area. Power-over-ethernet switches have been used to connect the access points in

completing the phase of the wireless local area network project. “A total of 473 access points have been installed around campus with an average of 5 400 devices that generate over 190 000 access requests to the internet every day. To meet the growing demand for internet, access has been increased to allow 25 000 devices. Tebello Komana, a second year Bachelor of Environmental Science student said that Univen is better than other institutions as he can access unlimited internet while on campus at any time. “I don’t have to connect my device to any cable, I just sit outside and enjoy browsing. This is one of the things I miss about Univen when I am at home during recess,” he said.

Univen students enjoying the internet at the student cafeteria.

# Sports and Recreation dedicates a week to new recruits

Univen’s Sports and Recreation Office embarked on a recruitment week recently to recruit players and athletes to join sports and recreation codes of their choice. “This orientation helps to create a hub of opportunities for participation,” says Sports Administrator, Ndiafhi Mugwedi. “Highly skilled and best performing players will be selected to represent Univen in competitive arenas such as University Sport South Africa, varsity sports competitions and cups, not forgetting regional and provincial leagues managed by sports and recreation federations.” The recruitment covered football, rugby, volleyball, athletics, netball, tennis, handball, basketball, boxing, karate, badminton, chess, aerobics, goal

ball, table tennis, dance, arts and culture, debate and indigenous games. The week was championed by student club representatives as well as student volunteers from the Centre for Biokinetics and Recreation and Sport Science. “I am happy to be part of the 2017 sports orientation, even though I have never participated in any sporting code,” said first year Bachelor of Arts in Language Practice student, Dakalo Madzhie. “This year I decided to participate because I have heard people saying exercising will help my mind to concentrate at its best during my studies.” More than 500 students were recruited from all sporting codes.



On trials - students playing chess.



Brains at work - students challenging one another.



In action - a student on trial for the basketball code.





# A new lease on life for the black rhino

Exciting new genetic research from Univen's Department of Zoology was published in the latest Journal of Scientific Reports.

The research defines new management units for the iconic black rhinoceros, a highly endangered species that has been driven to the brink of extinction due to unsustainable poaching.

The world's rhinoceros species are again on the verge of extinction. In Africa, the browsing black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) is much rarer than the grazing white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*).

This was not always the case. As recently as the 1970s, the black rhinoceros was widespread and a common sight throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa. Unfortunately, ruthless poaching for its valuable horn in the early 1980s sparked a range-wide population collapse. This was so severe that by 1992, the species could only be found in small isolated pockets in six African countries - Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

Thanks to dedicated efforts by conservation authorities and non-governmental organisations, the black rhinoceros has made somewhat of a recovery in Kenya, Namibia and South Africa, while the Zimbabwean population remains low but stable.

In contrast, Tanzania continues to lose the few black rhinoceros that it has at an alarming and unsustainable rate and the West African population in Cameroon was declared extinct in 2011. To make matters worse, very little is known about the population structure and evolutionary history of the black rhinoceros. The irony is that this very information is crucial to the successful long-term management of genetic diversity and evolutionary potential of these last remaining populations.

Furthermore, until now, black rhinoceros populations were managed on a pragmatic, but simplistic, four-subspecies scheme. It divided the vast sub-Saharan range of this species into four regional conservation units in West (Cameroon), East (Kenya and northern Tanzania), South-Central (Southern Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa) and South-West (Namibia) Africa.

Given this background, the Molecular Ecology Group of Univen's Department of Zoology, led by Prof Yoshan Moodley, teamed up with researchers from Cardiff University in the UK, along with an international team of experts, to discover how the remaining five black rhinoceros populations were related to each other, so that this information could inform conservation managers on the ground.

This was an extremely ambitious project, because the black rhinoceros is now extinct throughout much of its range. Interpreting any results from just the remaining populations would be like trying to piece together a large jigsaw puzzle with just five pieces.

So Moodley turned to museum collections in Europe, the USA and Africa, which house historical - 18th and 19th Century - collections of black rhinoceros material like skin and bones. From this, genetic material was obtained and compared to the five remaining populations for a complete species-wide picture.

The results of this study in the latest Journal of Scientific Reports show that 20th Century population collapses were responsible for the loss of 69 percent of the species' mitochondrial genetic variation. This includes the most ancestral lineages which are now absent from modern populations. Genetically unique populations in countries such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique, Malawi and Angola no longer exist.

Moodley also found that the historic range of the 'extinct' West African population actually extends into southern Kenya, where a handful of individuals survive in the Masai Mara-Serengeti ecosystem. Most importantly, the paper identifies precise conservation units that, if properly managed, will maintain the species' remaining evolutionary potential for generations to come. Since these recommendations are largely at odds with the current management scheme, it will require a complete re-evaluation of conservation management paradigms for the black rhinoceros.

Moodley and his team are presently continuing this important work at the genomic level. They are searching for signatures of natural selection which will be used to inform an integrated approach to the conservation of adaptive genetic variation among remaining black rhinoceros populations.

This study underscores the value of historic museum collections in present-day species conservation. Most importantly, it yet again highlights the University of Venda as an international authority on conservation and evolutionary genetics.

For more information contact Yoshan Moodley on 015 962 8453, 078 586 5739, Yoshan.Moodley@univen.ac.za.



**The Moodley lab** – from left Andrinajoro Rakotoarivelo, Thabang Seragke, Yoshan Moodley, Monica Hlangwani and Femi Elegbeleye.

## Impala trains Univen staff on internationalisation

Univen is a partner to the Internationalisation and modernisation programme for Academics, Leaders and Administrators (Impala), which the European Union is funding with about R13 million over three years.

The project is coordinated by the University of Antwerp and four South African partner universities - the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, the University of Fort Hare, the University of Limpopo and the University of Venda.

Univen is preparing for the implementation phase of the project.

To finalise the various project activities, Univen's Cornelius Hagenmeier, Director of International Relations and Dr Segun Obadire, Chief Administrative Officer at the Directorate

of International Relations, recently attended a steering committee meeting in Antwerp.

The activities include a fully-funded training week for 80 staff members from the four South African partner universities in Cape Town in March. Other activities include a visit to European universities to learn about their internationalisation strategies and practices, in June and July. Delegations will be led by the vice chancellors of the four South African partner institutions. A second training workshop will take place in the second semester.

"Univen's participation will develop the capacity to further advance the internationalisation of Univen's core business, positioning it to be globally competitive and locally relevant," said Hagenmeier.



## R10,5 million from CETA to benefit Univen students and unemployed youth

The Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA), committed R10,5 million to assist 365 Univen students and unemployed youth around the Vhembe District Municipality.

The money will be used for programmes like internships, bursaries, candidacy, learnerships, apprenticeships and short skills programmes.

The CETA-Univen collaboration is an outstanding project that can be replicated anywhere in this country," said CETA Chairperson, Raymond Cele.

"Let us empower the new generation and shape this country to be the way our forefathers wanted it to be," said CETA Chief Executive Officer, Sonja Pilusa.

CETA board member, Webster Mfebe said they award Univen not by favour but because of the quality of its proposals.

"This funding will greatly impact on the lives of many of our students and deserving members from rural communities," says Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat. .

"The success of our transformative agenda is largely dependent on partnerships such as the one with CETA. We enrol many bright students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds who require the support of the public and private sector to flourish in their chosen professional fields."

CETA has previously committed R22 million towards the development of a degree programme in construction technology in the School of Environmental Sciences at Univen. As part of this funding, a CETA Community Skills Development Centre was constructed, while the construction of an engineering laboratory is in the pipeline.



CETA Management and board members and the Univen delegation celebrating the well-respected donation of R10, 5 million for empowerment projects.



# APOLOGY

City Press apologises to vice-chancellor Professor Peter Mbatlana and the University of Venda (Univen) for reporting in three articles (two news stories and an opinion piece) the allegation that former dean of the School of Education, Professor Thidziambani Phendla, was charged with corruption only after she had brought a complaint of sexual harassment against Mbatlana, and that the latter had hounded her out of a job on trumped-up charges without giving her a right to reply.

City Press further apologises for omitting to report the content of a court order, specifically the fact that the agreement stipulated that all the negative statements made in the Commission for Gender Equality's report against Mbatlana be excised. This includes that there was sufficient evidence of a romantic relationship between him and Phendla.

City Press apologises for the unnecessary damage these reports, statements and omissions have done to Mbatlana's dignity and the university's reputation.

The Office of the Press Ombudsman and a panel of adjudicators also reprimanded City Press for not asking Mbatlana and the university for comment on statements that Phendla had been hounded out of her job on trumped-up charges; for largely failing to verify Phendla's version of events; and for not capturing Univen's response to the effect that charges were brought against Phendla only after she had brought a charge of sexual harassment against Mbatlana.

Other complaints, such as the reference in the opinion piece that Phendla had been vindicated by the court; the reporting that the Commission for Gender Equality's report was "scathing" on Mbatlana; that the court enforced the Commission for Gender Equality's recommendation to be implemented; and that Univen did not comply with the court order, were all dismissed.

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for the full finding

# Univen and MERCETA partner in skills development

Univen and the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (MERSETA) recently met to further explore opportunities for partnerships in skills development.

Univen and MERSETA have an existing memorandum of understanding to implement various skills development projects to empower rural learners in Science Engineering and Technology.

It also makes provision for funding of postgraduate Univen students and capacity building for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in the Vhembe District.

"Univen is to introduce engineering qualifications and will establish a new School of Engineering Sciences," says Univen's Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic, Prof Jan Crafford.

"We are exploring various options to the type, level and nature of the new qualifications and will be collaborating closely with the University of the Witwatersrand. The collaboration with Wits will include a student exchange programme between the two universities, which will result in skills transfer and multiple pathways for students into

engineering studies at both universities. We are happy to introduce these programmes but we are also concerned about funding for students who will enrol in these programmes,"

"MERSETA would like to pursue a more trans-formative approach to skills development, including the targeted training of women in engineering," said MERSETA's Chief Operating Officer, Wayne Adams. "We are also looking at science education in rural schools and bursaries for deserving students who wish to pursue a career in the manufacturing and engineering fields."

"We are 100 percent behind the new programmes that are underway and we are happy to give support to Univen," said MERSETA's Senior Manager ETQA and Partnerships, Christo Basson.

The partners agreed to explore avenues for assisting students who are doing work- integrated learning in relevant fields. It was also agreed that the student funding model explored will extend beyond just committing funding to students. The funding will also support students in life skills development, counselling and support.



"MERSETA would like to pursue a more transformative approach to skills development" - Adams.



"A new School of Engineering Sciences for Univen" - Crafford.



Partnering to enhance skills development - Univen and MERSETA delegations.



# Successful Pregnancy Awareness week

“Studies have proven that women who exercise during pregnancy experience shorter and uncomplicated labour,” says Zelda Ralubuvhi, Junior Lecturer at Univen’s Centre for Biokinetics, Recreation and Sports sciences.

Speaking at the recent Pregnancy Awareness Week, Ralubuvhi said exercising during pregnancy was once a taboo. However, healthy pregnant women now partake in a modified fitness programme as it prepares them for the demands of labour and caring for a new born.

“Every pregnancy challenge varies and requires unique medical treatment. We offered more than 25 pregnant women free pre-screening and advised them to seek medical clearance for safe participation in physical activities or exercise programmes.

Organised by the Univen Biokinetics Clinic, the pre-screening activity comprised of blood pressure screening, mass and height measurements. A physical activity readiness questionnaire and medical examination for pregnancy is a self-screening tool to start an exercise programme. It determines whether one will be safe to start an exercise programme or whether to increase one’s level of activity.

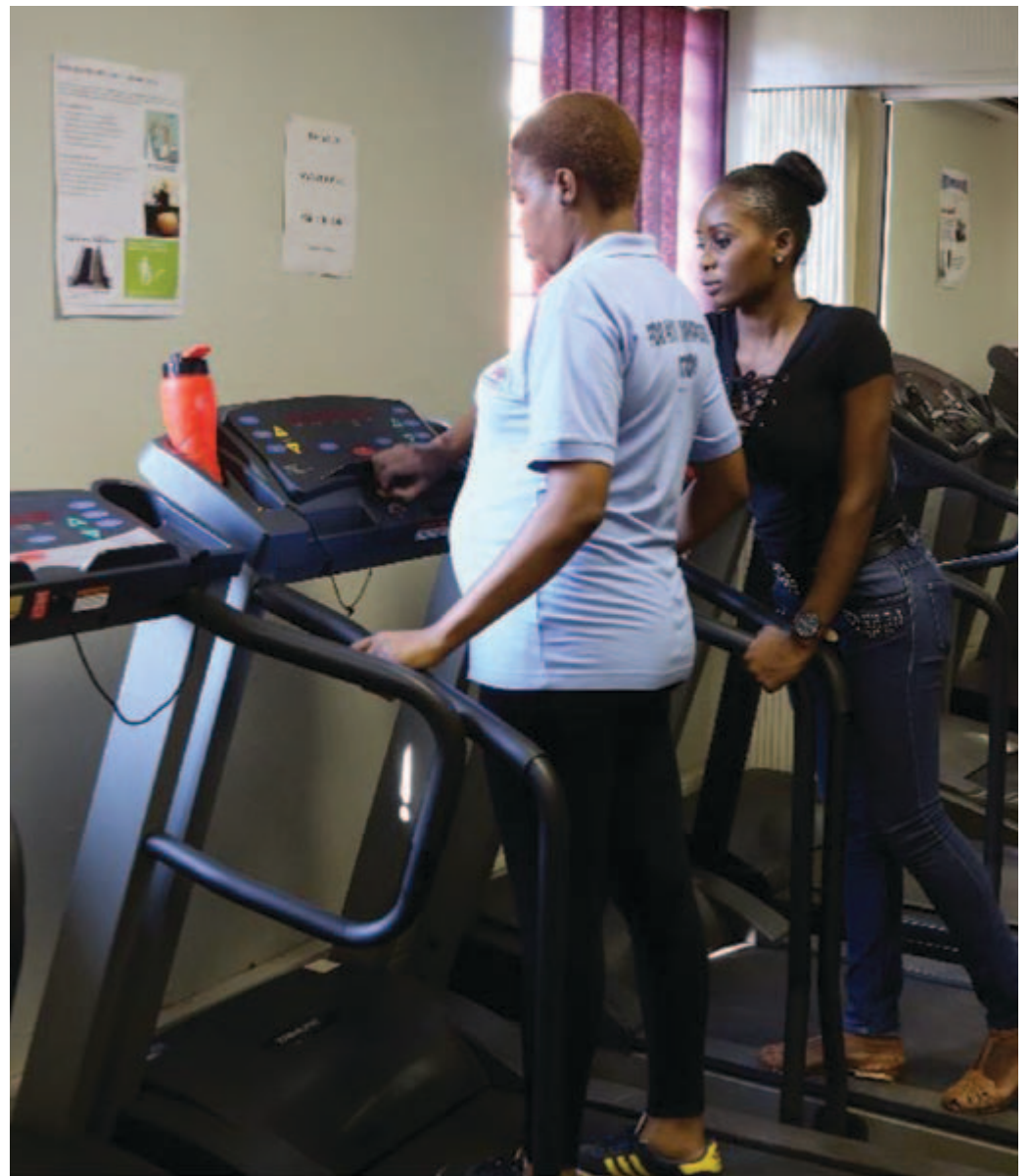
The medical examination is a guideline prior to participation in a prenatal fitness class or other exercises. These tools are incorporated into daily clinical practices to facilitate risk stratification, physical activity clearance and exercise prescription for both asymptomatic individuals and persons living with chronic medical conditions.

Gletion Mavasa, an intern at the centre, said that the awareness focused on the benefits of exercise during pregnancy.

“These include reduced backaches, constipation, bloating and swelling and improved posture by strengthening and toning back, butt and thigh muscles. It also increases energy levels, promotes better sleep, prevents excess weight gain, helps to lower blood pressure and keeps pregnant women fit and improve their ability to cope with labour. This makes it easier for them to get back into shape after giving birth.

“Pregnant women were given free exercise sessions such as walking on a treadmill for 20 to 30 minutes and flexibility exercises which improve the range of motion, prevent injuries, back pain and balance problems. Despite the fact that pregnancy is associated with profound anatomic and physiological changes, exercises bring minimal risks and have previously proved to be beneficial to most women. Women with complicated pregnancies are encouraged to engage in low to moderate levels of exercise, before, during and after pregnancy,” said Mavasa.

Aluwani Bugane, a Student Administrator who joined the programme, said there is no doubt about this programme. “Exercising during pregnancy relieve backaches. It also improves your posture by strengthening and toning muscles in your back, butt, and thighs. It reduces constipation by accelerating movement in your intestines. Since I have joined the programme, I sleep better.”



*Training for a healthy pregnancy - Gletion Mavasa giving training lessons to Aluwani Bugane.*

# Accounting Sciences accredited by CHE

Univen’s flagship programme, the Bachelor of Accounting Sciences, was recently accredited by the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education.

Offered by the Department of Accountancy in the School of Management Sciences, the degree resorts under the Univen/Thuthuka project. It has also been registered on the National Qualifications Framework by the South African Qualifications Authority.

The degree is thus now a permanent component

of the university’s programme and qualification mix. This accreditation implies that Univen is now in a stronger position to apply to the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, the premier body of the chartered accountancy profession in South Africa, for accreditation of the Bachelor of Accounting Sciences degree by 2018.

This will ultimately enhance the university’s profile and capacity to offer a recognised professional accountancy degree which forms the foundation for entrance into the chartered accountancy

profession in South Africa.

In 2017 the Department of Accountancy is expected to enrol 100 students into this programme, which is currently fully funded by the Bank Seta under the Univen-SAICA Thuthuka capacity building project. Consequently, all the students who must meet the minimum entry requirements to be admitted to this programme are offered a full bursary which includes tuition, learning material, boarding and a monthly personal allowance.

“This achievement enhances Univen’s status a step

further,” says Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbati.

“The hard work by all concerned parties over the past ten years all added up to this milestone. This includes the efforts of other schools, donations from the Bank Seta, the full oversight support from the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, the University of Johannesburg for mentorship services and the Department of Higher Education and Training’s commitment towards transformation in the education and training sector.”

***Celebrating a milestone** – from left, Prof Emmanuel Oseifuah, Head of the Department of Accountancy, BCom Accounting Sciences students with sponsors and members of the Accountancy Department and Prof Armstrong Kadyamatimba, Dean of the School of Management Sciences.*





# Univen and Belgium Campus empower local farmers

The Belgium Campus has thrown its weight behind Univen's work in support of emerging black farmers in Limpopo's Vhembe District. Univen recently entered into a partnership with the Barota Farm, a community-based farming enterprise aiming to

operate profitably and secure its workers' jobs. The two universities are developing information and communication technology tools to support agriculture. The Belgium Campus will offer assistance in IT-related interventions for Smart

Farming. "We will elevate Univen's School of Agriculture into a Centre of Excellence," said Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat. "We are committed to retrain emerging farmers to become commercial farmers," he said.



**Geared for cooperation** – front from left, Peter Mbat, Jan Rombouts and Bernard Nthambeleni. Back from left, Jannie Zaaiman, Godwin Mchau, Enrico Jacobs and Takalani Dzaga.

We would like to hear from you!

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

# All systems go - SRC workshop

Univen's Student Representative Council recently held its induction and strategic planning workshop to plan for the year ahead.

Organised by the Department of Student Affairs and the Office of the Speaker of the Student Parliament, the objectives of the workshop were to capacitate its members, to familiarise them with the policies and processes of the university and to develop a programme of action.

Officially opened by Univen's Registrar, Prof Edward Nesamvuni, he introduced delegates to principles and practices of institutional governance, with specific focus on the Committees of Council.

"You play a very important role in transforming Univen," said Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat.

"Take your leadership role seriously as it is important for institutional governance."

"Be part of the solution to Univen's challenges," said Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Prof Jan Crafford.

"Univen is growing at great strides with a total headcount of just over 10 300 in 2012 to more than 15 000 in 2017."

Various directorates and departments also made presentations. These included Legal services, Campus Protection Services, the Disability unit, Admissions and Registrations, Library Services, the Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning, Communication and Marketing, Protection Services and the Committee section.

The Student Affairs' Head of Governance, Lufuno Tshikhudo, facilitated the workshop.



**Putting heads together** – Univen Executive Management members and the SRC sharing thoughts.