



Bela-Bela property association empowers Univen students

Six Univen students recently completed part of the requirements for their Work-Integrated Learning Programme through a joint project between the university's School of Agriculture and the Bela-Bela Communal Property Association.

This project entails a month-long programme that exposes final year students to the day-to-day work environment in the agricultural sector and its industries. It assists the association to identify research needs related to its production challenges.

"We chose the association because of its willingness to avail poultry facilities and train the students," said Univen's Technician at the Department of Animal Science and Work-Integrated Learning Programme Coordinator, Kgabo Mahlako.

"Students focused on the daily management of laying hens. They learnt to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. I believe this will be a long lasting collaboration."

The facility has eight-layer laying houses with a capacity for 15 000 laying hens each. This company produces up to 200 000 eggs daily. These are collected by Eggs per eggs which grades, packages and supplies eggs to chain stores like Pick n Pay, Shoprite and Checkers.

"With its different approach to business, the Bela-Bela Communal Property Association is the best performing association in the country," says the Limpopo Department of Agriculture's Kenneth Moloiwane.

"Univen has turned this association into an institute of learning and we also learned many things from these students."

"Students must now plough back into their communities the work experience that they have accumulated," said the association's chairperson, Jerita Mabula.

"Teach other students what you have learned. We



Proof of integrated training – Students who successfully completed their training.

thank Univen for bringing disciplined, determined and hardworking students to us."

The Chief Director of the National Rural Youth Service Corps, Ambassador General (Retired) Fumanekile Gqiba, representing the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform, applauded the collaboration between Univen and the association.

"We came, we saw and we are impressed. Partnerships like these open internships and work opportunities for many graduates."

Joseph Mashosho of the Bela-Bela Restitution Forum said this collaboration should carry on for generations to come. "Thank you to Univen for the partnership and the trust."

"I am happy for the opportunity to learn," said final year student, Fulufhedzani Sibanda.

"Seeing most of the things being done mechanically has increased our love for agriculture."

"I am inspired to start my own poultry business and empower generations to come," said another student, Murunwa Makhamedza.

"This collaboration is an eye-opener for both Univen and the association - it teaches students how to behave and treat fellow colleagues in the workplace," said a lecturer in the Department of Animal Science, Justice Netshipale. "This partnership will bring change in the lives of Univen students."

"I am proud that the association is 100 percent black-owned and has the capacity to train a black child on how to run a poultry business," said the Director of Mahlohonolo Investment, Barrington Mabuela.

Read inside

Valentines' Day means spending quality time together	2
Biomass waste can generate cheaper electricity and create jobs	2
Commercialising research output to create jobs	3
Univen welcomes HIV prevention pill	3
Univen participates in internationalisation workshop	4
Empowering researchers through grant proposal writing	4
Univen and University Colleges Leuven-Limburg reach new heights	5
Exchange students introduced to the District Department of Education	6



Working at the coalface.



Newly laid eggs from the stalls to be packaged.

Overseeing the transportation of freshly laid eggs.



Well deserved – Students, lecturers and stakeholders after the certificate ceremony.



Students in working gear.



The proud executive committee of the Bela-Bela Communal Property Association.

Valentines' Day means spending quality time together



Nthabiseng Maudi and Kenny Mbogazi celebrated Valentine's Day.



Best friends - Lesego Mapheto and Neo Bango on Valentine's Day.

Every 14 February, across the globe, candy, flowers and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint, and where did these traditions come from?

Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, originated from a Western Christian feast day honouring one or two early saints named Valentinus. Valentine's Day is recognised as a significant cultural, religious, and commercial celebration of romance and romantic love in many regions around the world, although it is not a public holiday in any country.

Different people have different views about this day and students of the University of Venda also expressed their opinions.

Kenny Mbogazi, a third level BCom Accounting student and Nthabiseng Maudi who is currently studying third level in BCom Human Resources Management, are of the opinion that Valentine's Day should not be celebrated. They said two people who love each other should celebrate the love they have for each other every day. "They should not wait for this day in order to celebrate because love is what brings them together."

Lesego Mapheto, who is doing her second level in Bachelor of Education, has a different opinion and she said Valentine's Day should be celebrated, to show that both partners appreciate and acknowledge each other. "As long as this day exists, it is there to be celebrated," she said.

Neo Bongo, a second level Bachelor of Education student said that, to celebrate this day does not mean that people should spend a lot of money at fancy restaurants or buy expensive goods for each other. "This day means spending quality time together."

Bongo further said that this day is not only for romantic lovers, but also for friendships.

Vanessa Tshivhula, a second level BCom Human Resources Management student, doesn't celebrate Valentine's Day. "I am here to study, not for romantic relationships," she said.

Biomass waste can generate cheaper electricity and create jobs

A workshop to generate cheaper electricity and create jobs was recently held by Univen, the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, the South African National Energy Development Institute and the IBERT Biogas Company.

This first-ever Limpopo agro-industrial biogas training workshop debated project procedures and approvals, quality features and case studies to generate electricity from biomass waste.

"This training should enhance the green growth in waste management," says Univen's Senior Lecturer and Researcher, Dr David Tinarwo.

"It should also ensure that conversion of waste to energy is mainstreamed into the waste management strategy of Limpopo. It should also stimulate the adoption of market-based agro-industrial biogas technology in local municipalities,

underpinned by the effective and efficient use of renewable energy."

"As biogas technology is cheaper than coal-generated electricity, it could solve many problems for the country," said a Water and Sanitation Lecturer at the University of Limpopo, Trevor Mulaudzi.

"Universities serve large communities, thus there is a big potential to produce biogas from food waste, human excreta and grass cuttings. Biogas digester is a container where you accumulate your waste and let it ferment. As it is fermenting, it produces methane gas which can burn as energy and is converted into electricity," he said.

Prof Joseph Francis, Univen's Director of the Institute for Rural Development, presented on 'Monthly leaning of citizens' minds for a sustainable clean environment.'

He emphasised the creation of awareness among citizens and securing their involvement in maintaining a clean physical and psychosocial environment. This awareness would serve as the foundation for sustainable people-centered development.

"Training is relevant and it came at the right time, as the introduction of the biogas initiative is likely to create jobs," said Francis.

"There are very few biogas producers in the country," said the Assistant Director of the Vhembe District Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Shavhani Neluvhola.

"This training should also be provided to the youth of this district because it can create job opportunities for many people. It is likely to contribute to raising the standard for living of people."

"There are many places in the Thulamela Local

Municipality that produce methane," said a Superintendent for Environment and Waste Management at Thulamela Municipality, Vhutshilo Ravele.

"The municipality is exploring alternative ways to produce energy instead of depending on coal-generated electricity. We should use this opportunity to conserve the environment and also create many job opportunities".

"This training showcased the biogas technology and experience relevant to South Africa," said IBERT Chief Executive Officer, Otto Hager. "Biogas relies on natural processes and can present many opportunities."

"The workshop equipped me with much relevant information – I aim to start a company to generate biogas, using recycled waste materials," said participant Ditebogo Rametse.



Learning about biogas – IBERT trainers and trainees.

Commercialising research output to create jobs

“There is a need to translate knowledge into products and services - we have a lot of research output on our shelves, but we are not commercialising it.”

So said Dr Christopher Gadzirayi of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Education and Extension in the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Science at the Bindura University of Science Education in Zimbabwe.

Speaking at a recent seminar at Univen on the commercialisation of research output from higher and tertiary institutions, Gadzirayi said commercialising research is really no different from commercialising anything else.

“Except that it is perhaps more difficult because of the steps required to turn basic research into something practical. Another reason is because in most cases we will look for a market for a product, rather than designing a product to fit an established, or obvious market.”

The seminar, hosted by Univen’s School of Agriculture as part of a project between the Bindura University of Science Education and Univen’s

Department of Animal Science, was co-funded through a CSIR-SANBio-BioFISA II partnership programme.

“We can reduce unemployment by commercialising our research outputs. We must add value to our communities. If we commercialise our research, we can create many jobs because this will bring new entrepreneurs,” said Gadzirayi.

“Commercialising research will drive Africa’s socio-economic transformation, add value to communities, engender inclusivity of the research output from universities in student entrepreneurship and generate spin-off companies.

“Commercialisation of research is done by the selling of patent rights and products and licensing intellectual property rights, among others.”

Gadzirayi cited a project to commercialise an affordable, viable, sustainable and competitive chicken feed within Zimbabwe and South Africa.

“The objective is to commercialise Moringa oleifera as a partial substitute for soya cake in Zimbabwe and South Africa. This will help produce commercially low cost chicken feed, reduce the use

of synthetic feed additives, penetrate the chicken feed market, improve health performance of broilers and improve the quality and taste of broiler meat.

“The production of commercial poultry meat is expanding in the Southern African Development Community region at 58,6 percent for Zimbabwe and 66,4 percent for South Africa. There is tremendous scope and opportunity for the poultry industry to make profit, but this is adversely affected by constant increases in the prices of protein feed sources.”

Gadzirayi has published more than 50 research articles, a text book on supervisory management and two book chapters on information communications technology in agriculture and worldwide innovations in extension.

He is a specialist in Animal Production, Education and Extension, with a special interest in the commercialisation of university research outputs. He is currently on a month-long academic and research visit to Univen’s Department of Animal Science.



“Commercialising research output can create many job opportunities” – Gadzirayi.

Univen welcomes HIV prevention pill

The Univen community will now have access to the HIV prevention medication called Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, PrEP.

The university is one of seven nominated as a pilot site to determine the impact of PrEP on the burden of HIV. Other universities are the Nelson Mandela University, the Rhodes University, the University of Limpopo, the University of the Free State, the University of Zululand and the Vaal University of Technology.

“South Africa has the largest HIV epidemic in the world, with 6,8 million people aged 15 to 19 living with HIV, representing 19 percent of the global HIV burden,” said Higher Education and Training HIV/AIDS Programme Provincial Coordinator, Moabelo Shibashiba.

“To intensify HIV prevention, the programme, in partnership with the Department of Health, is rolling out PrEP to 12 clinics at the seven universities. PrEP is a preventive treatment in which people at very high risk of HIV infection take anti-HIV medicines daily to lower their chances of getting infected. PrEP is now a universally accepted prevention methodology. If taken daily, PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90 percent.

“Make use of a combination of prevention methodologies by combining condom use with PrEP. PrEP is not 100 percent effective and therefore, it is not a silver bullet. Like any other anti-retroviral treatment, it must be taken consistently to be effective. PrEP should not be seen as a substitute to our traditional HIV prevention strategies. But it should be seen as an additional strategy to prevent people from acquiring HIV.”

Shibashiba said PrEP may cause short term side effects including nausea, tiredness, gastrointestinal symptoms and headache.

“These side effects are typically experienced by one-in-ten people during the first few weeks of the drug usage. However, they are not permanent. Our programme believes that PrEP will ensure that

students graduate alive and also prepare them to live a meaningful and healthy life after graduating,” said Shibashiba.

“PrEP should be taken daily at the same time as a family planning pill,” said the Chief Director of Vhembe District Health Services, Robert Sirwali.

“From the day a person starts using PrEP medication, it will take seven days for the pill to be effective.

“Continue using condoms whenever you engage in sexual activity as it prevents pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. Everyone should undergo a HIV test before starting to use PrEP. When on the treatment, repeat the test after three months. PrEP reduces the risk of HIV before exposure,” said Sirwali.

“It is advisable for the population in Vhembe, including the Univen community, to know their HIV status. The major challenge facing the testing rate in our district is men and male students who are very reluctant to undergo a HIV test. The university and the Department of Health need to intervene and come with strategies and tactics to convince them to get tested,” he said.

“The majority of people between the ages of 15 and 24 are HIV positive in South Africa, despite the availability of widely distributed condoms and health education,” said a Senior Lecturer in Univen’s Department of Public Health, Dr Takalani Tshitangano.

“PrEP is the cure that can end HIV infections. We should thank our government for this kind of innovation. The government has realised that many factors beyond people’s control might be interplaying, putting many people at risk of contracting HIV. They decided to try PrEP to protect everyone who is HIV negative.”

Currently PrEP is being provided through a limited number of sites. The Vhembe District has two sites - Univen and the Musina boarder post at North Star Alliance.



“PrEP will ensure that students graduate alive” – Shibashiba.



“PrEP should be taken daily” – Sirwali.



“PrEP is the cure that can end HIV infections” – Tshitangano.



Univen staff and guest speakers during the PrEP launch.



Mahuma's Get Down Productions entertaining the audience.



People came in numbers to attend the PrEP launch.



Univen participates in internationalisation workshop

Univen staff members attended the recent IMPALA workshop at the University of Limpopo, which was coordinated by the University of Antwerp in Belgium.

The Univen delegation was led by the Acting Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Jan Crafford, Prof Ainamensa Mchau, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Prof Takalani Mashau of the School of Education.

Prof Crafford outlined the mission and vision of Univen, academic projects, the university's growth in student headcount enrolment versus growth in academic staff from 2008 to 2016, the increase in research output from 2008 to 2014 that is projected to 2017 and growth per capital research output.

The Director of the Internationalisation Office at the

University of the Free State, Cornelius Hagenmeier, said that institutions must set their own targets for internationalisation.

"These should include targets in annual performance plans that are submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training. Financing and accountability is the major challenge for equitable access and quality of higher education in South Africa. This results from a lack of funding framework for relevant capacity development. These may be difficult challenges for institutions which are still at the early stages of the process of internationalisation," he said.

Hagenmeier is the former Director of International Relations and IMPALA Coordinator at Univen.



Presenting on Univen - Prof Jan Crafford.



Cornelius Hagenmeier sharing his inputs to add value to the workshop.



Anders Ahlstrand of the Swedish Council for Higher Education during the presentations.



Univen staff members participating during the SWOT analysis.



Participants after a successful IMPALA training workshop.

Empowering researchers through grant proposal writing

There is competition for limited research funds, which is increasingly intense at all universities.

Hence, to secure funding, it is essential that applicants pay attention to the craft of writing winning research grant proposals.

The recent research grant proposal writing workshop is an initiative that Senior Professor Georges Ekosse, Director of Research and

Innovation, set as an annual research activity. It empowers researchers in preparation for funding opportunities.

Ms Dube and Mr Lotz of the National Research Foundation were the principal facilitators of the workshop, highlighting the importance of the grant application review process and the different stages involved.



Highlighting the grant application process – from left Dr Sotshangane, Mr Lotz, Ms Dube, Senior Prof Ekosse and Prof Bessong.



Workshop participants with Senior Prof Ekosse and facilitators from the National Research Foundation.

Univen and University Colleges Leuven-Limburg reach new heights

University collaboration provides a huge amount of opportunities for students and staff. It also offers research opportunities, cultural awareness and international experiences, including opportunities for study abroad programmes, staff and student exchanges.

This resonates well with Univen and the University Colleges Leuven-Limburg, as they expand their existing collaboration.

Delegates from the two universities recently discussed the expansion and strengthening of their existing collaboration.

“We promise to fully support expansion efforts, which I believe will positively impact our research

output,” said Univen’s Acting Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Jan Crafford.

Univen’s Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic, Senior Prof Base Khoza, discussed the collaboration on Health Sciences programmes.

“The partnership, which started in 2011, now also includes the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and the Belgium Campus, Pretoria,” said the Acting Director of International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire.

“The exchange programme is being implemented in the Department of Early Childhood Education in the School of Education and is doing very well. The plan is to expand and strengthen the

existing collaboration by diversifying into various other fields to optimally spread the gains of our collaboration. This year we have three students from the University Colleges Leuven-Limburg who are currently working at the Tshishonga Primary School in Thohoyandou until May. Their participation will contribute to the improvement of the standard of education in schools in the area,” he said.

An International relations advisor in the Faculty of Management and Technology at the University Colleges Leuven-Limburg, Chris Huybrechts, explained the South African projects.

“We also offer short international programmes.

The participation of Univen representatives at the workshops on SmartCities in April and the summer school from 27 May to 16 June in Hasselt, Belgium will be an important starting point for future collaboration.”

“Through purposely focusing its research, innovation and enterprise to impact on its town, a tertiary institution becomes a ‘university town’,” said the Dean of the School of Environmental Sciences, Prof John Odiyo.

Present at the presentation were academics from the Schools of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Agriculture and Education.



The University Colleges Leuven-Limburg delegation and Univen staff.



In jovial mood – from left, Segun Obadire, Greet Raymaekers, Chris Huybrechts and Prof Jan Crafford.



“We wish to strengthen this collaboration” – Obadire.



“We also offer short international programmes” - Huybrechts.



The Dean of School of Environmental Sciences, Prof John Odiyo, making inputs during the meeting.



Greet Raymaekers, and Chris Huybrechts (middle) during the laboratory facilities tour visit led by Prof Wilson.



Exchange students introduced to the District Department of Education

Three exchange students of the University College Leuven and Limburg in Belgium recently joined Univen for teaching practice until May.

The students were accompanied to the district by Dr Segun Obadire, Univen's Acting Director, International Relations together with their mentors, Rendani Makhwathana and Shonisani Mulovhedzi of the School of Education.

Students were introduced to Dr Tshiphiri Luvhimbi,

Head Curriculum Advisor at the District Department of Education who promised continued support of the district for the programme.

They were then taken to the Tshishonga Primary School in Thohoyandou where they will be carrying out their teaching practice for the next few months. The pupils, teachers and principal at the school promised the necessary support during their teaching practice.

Earlier, the students were introduced to the Head of Department of Early Childhood Education in the School of Education, Prof Ndileleni Mudzielwana. They also met with the Dean of the School of Education, Dr Peter Mulaudzi, who encouraged them to be hardworking, respectful and responsible. He advised them to inform their mentors about their movement all the time and report any problem encountered immediately.

The students, Loes, Sarah and Chiara, expressed

their delight about the hospitality they received since they arrived at Univen and promised to do their best to contribute to the improvement of the standard of education in the district.

The collaboration between the two universities started in 2011 and has grown with leaps and bounds, now also featuring the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and the Belgium Campus, Pretoria.



Dr Tshiphiri Luvhimbi (4th from right) and the Principal of the Tshishonga Primary School (4th from left) meet the students.



Showing the students around - Prof Mudzielwana (right) with the students.



Learners of the Tshishonga Primary School greeting the delegation and students from Belgium.



Loes, Sarah and Chiara meet grade 2 pupils.

We would like to hear from you!

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