



UNIVEN cautions the University community about Coronavirus

It was during the month of January 2020 when the World Health Organisation (WHO), China country office flagged the discovery of a virus, known as the Novel Coronavirus. This virus can spread from animals to human beings. Coronavirus is very contagious and spreads from one infected person to another through coughing and sneezing, including close personal contact. The infected person presents cold like symptoms (symptoms like those of influenza or flu) and respiratory tract illnesses. Coronavirus has since spread at a high pace globally.

Since the emergence of Coronavirus in China, South Africa has recorded over 100 confirmed cases (at time of going to print). "Never before in the history of our democracy has our country been confronted with such a severe situation," South African president Cyril Ramaphosa said when he addressed the nation on 15 March 2020.

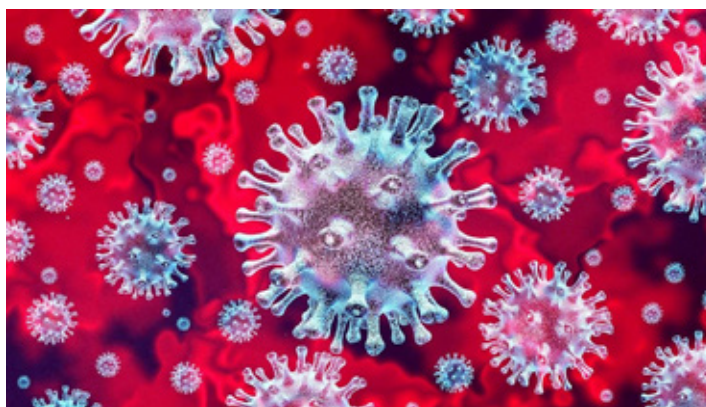
The University of Venda (UNIVEN) encourages members of the University Community who are experiencing similar symptoms and those who suspect that they might be infected with the Coronavirus to visit their doctor immediately or call the South African **COVID 19 HOTLINE 08000 29999** for assistance.

Signs and Symptoms of Corona Virus

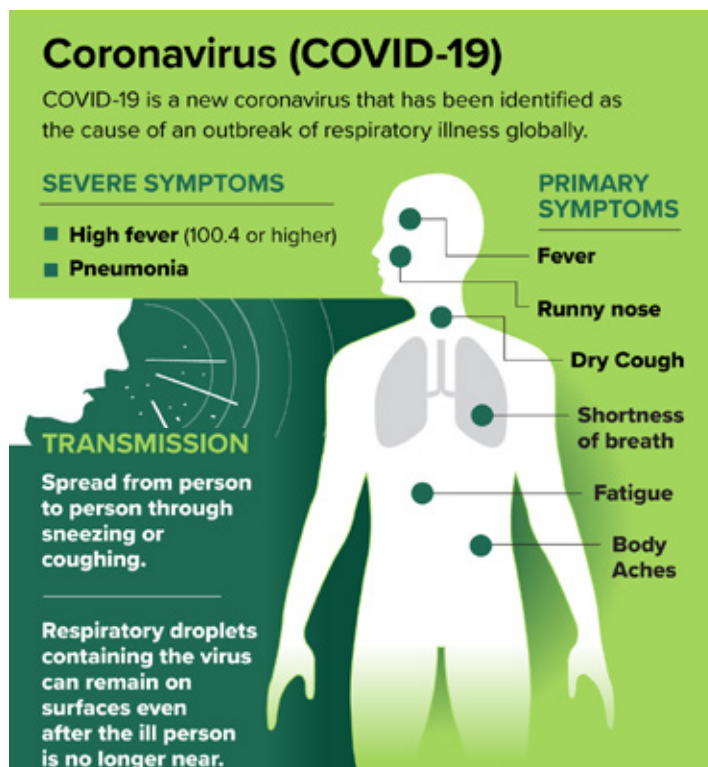
- Fever, sore throat
- Coughing and sneezing
- Difficulty in breathing
- Runny nose and headache
- General feeling of malaise

People who are most at risk

- Those with weak immune system
- The elderly and young people
- People who are crossing borders/visiting countries with outbreaks
- People who are working at Harbours, airports and borders between countries
- A close physical contact with a confirmed patient who has corona virus
- Healthcare workers who have been exposed to patients with severe acute respiratory infections
- Touching contaminated objects and not washing hands.



Picture of Coronavirus seen from a scanning electron microscope.



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UNIVEN Welcomes New Council Members



Thursday, 13 February 2020 was another important milestone in the history of the University of Venda as the new Council of the University participated in a very successful induction workshop. The new Council comprises of a host of experienced and capable members who are committed to take the University to another level.

The Induction workshop took place at Euphoria Golf and Lifestyle Estate, outside Mookgophong. The purpose of this Induction workshop was to share and educate Council members about the roles and responsibilities of council in the institutions of higher learning and what is expected from them as council members. The Induction session received presentations from Dr Phillia Vukela, Director University Governance Support from the Department of Higher Education and Training; Mr Ahmed Essop, Consultant and Research Associate from Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Staff and Students, University of Johannesburg; Mr Nishan Pershad from Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC);

Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Jan Crafford Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, Dr Robert Martin and Adv. Edward Lambani, Acting University Registrar.

The new Council comprises of a host of experienced and capable members who are committed to take the University to another level.



When addressing Council members, Dr Phillia Vukela, Director University Governance Support from the Department of Higher Education and Training spoke about the Cooperative Governance; Roles of councils in the higher education sector; Governance of Universities; Institutional statute and rules; Responsibilities of council in the higher education sector; governance of resources (human, finance and infrastructure); Public Accountability; Council Performance; Delegation of Authority; Governance vs Management; Composition of Council; Council Membership; competency framework for a council; competency framework for individual members of council; expectations of councils and its members; Council Committees; Minister and Council Relationships; Competency

framework for the Chairperson; Ministerial directive; Appointment of Independent Assessor (IA); Functions of IA; Appointment of an Administrator, Guidelines of Good Governance; Current and Future Projects.

Dr Vukela said, "Section 21(1) stipulates that the council of a public higher education institution must govern the public higher education institution, subject to the Act and the institutional statute." She further explained that the council should always make sure that the institution is well managed. Council should be able to oversee and monitor the academic activities of the University.

He further spoke about the operations of the University and how a University should be managed. "The council should make sure that it protects the institution from outside operational interferences." He also indicated the difference between the duties of Council members and that of Executive/ Senior Management. "As Council Members, you have an important role to play of protecting, supporting and acting in the best interest of the University. It is your duty to operate as the overseers of the University". Mr Essop said the Council should ensure that an institution is run ethically and is always financially sustainable.



Mr Ahmed Essop, Consultant and Research Associate from Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Staff and Students, University of Johannesburg highlighted that the society is entrusting that you will be able to take care of the University's resources. "This is about how to manage the finance, infrastructure and the rest of the resources of the University."



Mr Nishan Pershad from Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) presented about University Council Governance. He indicated that a University should stick to its ethics, vision and mission in order to achieve its intended goals. Some of the issues he touched on included Integrated Governance Framework; Risk Management; Leadership and Ethics and Governance of Risks.

UNIVEN Welcomes New Council Members continued...



Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal gave a high-level overview of the University of Venda: historical background of the University, achievements and its operations including the new strategic direction of the University.

Among other things, Dr Nthambeleni spoke about the current status of the University of Venda; current Senior Management Structure; Review of UNIVEN Strategic Plan 2016-2020; the University's Context; positioning UNIVEN for impact; UNIVEN strategic Plan 2021-2025; new Vision and Mission; Strategic Thrusts and Strategic Objectives 2021-2025; Infrastructure Development and completed buildings which include lecture halls, offices, standby power generators, water reservoirs and student residences including Buildings that are still under construction.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal indicated that the new strategic plan 2021-2025 is yet to be approved by Council in April 2020 and submitted to DHET in December 2020. "This will enable the University to be able to start to implement the new Strategic Plan 2021-2025 from the beginning of the year 2021", concluded Dr Nthambeleni.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, Prof Jan Crafford among other things spoke about what the University will focus on henceforth. He said some of the focus include Ministerial Targets for Enrolment; Growth in Student Enrolments vs Growth in Academic Staff 2011 to 2020; UNIVEN size and shape directive from DHET; How Student Enrolments and Size and Shape determine Funding of the University; Ministerial Targets: Teaching Output; Student success rates from 2012-2018 (Ministerial target); Research at the UNIVEN; Ministerial Targets: Research Output; Research Publications Output 2008-2018; Growth in weighted per capita Research Output (including Masters and PhD Graduates). Prof Crafford further talked about Journal Publications Outputs by index between 2013 and 2014. Community Engagement Flagship Projects (Mukondeni Women Pottery Project and Vuwani Science Resource Centre) are some of the projects that Prof Crafford spoke about.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor Operations, Dr Robert Martin talked about the Operations Division and Directorates under his Division that are Human Resources,

Finance, Facilities Management, Information and Communications Technology (ICT); Student Affairs and Protection Services. He also highlighted their main challenges and mitigation factors thereof. He further spoke about the Operations Division plans.



Acting University Registrar and Director Legal Services, Adv. Edward Lambani spoke about the Composition of Council; Functions of Council; Election of Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Other Office Bearers of Council; Duties of Secretary of Council. He said Council operates through committees and currently UNIVEN has six existing Committees which are: Executive Committee of Council (Exco); Audit Committee; Finance Committee; Human Resources Committee; Student Affairs Committee; and Appeals Committee.

During the induction workshop, the fundamental role of Council was made very clear. The Council, through its oversight and governance role is expected to be the pillar of strength in the University.

The importance of understanding the roles and responsibilities of other stakeholders in the management of the University was noted. Understanding of these roles would enable Council to work smoothly with other internal stakeholders to ensure the growth, effective management and development of the University.

Let's work together in achieving the University's strategic thrusts – New UNIVEN Chairperson of Council



It was during the special meeting of University of Venda (UNIVEN) Council that was held on Friday, 14 February 2020 when Mr Juneas Lekgetha was elected as the New UNIVEN Chairperson of Council. This special meeting was held at Euphoria Golf and Lifestyle Estate in Mookgophong. In his message to the University community and its strategic stakeholders, Mr Lekgetha thanked the Council members of the University of Venda for electing him as their Chairperson and for showing their confidence in him. He further explained that he is very familiar with the activities of the University and its purpose in the community of Limpopo and the country at large.

"The University of Venda is a modern institution serving the future generation of the Republic of South Africa. Our role as the Council is to ensure that this University fulfills its mandate and contribute to the seven (7) developmental principles of the country as stated by our state President, the Honourable Dr Cyril Ramaphosa in his 2019 State of the Nation Address. He explained that his role as the Chairperson of Council is to ensure that the Council is working towards its mandate using the best technology and best practices. "We must ensure that we share the values of the University with the community in which we exist and continue spearhead and support initiatives that are meant to uplift the young generation in these communities. The University aims to be a global leader in knowledge management and leadership." He encouraged the University community and its strategic stakeholders to ensure sterling contributions to the advancement of the University of Venda and work together in achieving the University's strategic thrusts.

Mr Lekgetha is currently the Executive Chairman of Borutho Group.



Executive Committee of Council Front row L-R: Evans Selomo, Ndanduleni Makhari (Deputy Chairperson of Council), Juneas Lekgetha (Chairperson of Council), Dr Bernard Nthambeleni (Vice-Chancellor and Principal) and Beauty Mufheiwana. Back row L-R: Bhukumuzi Thompson, Mapotene Mangena, Dr Ryneth Mbhele, Dr Oscar van Heerden, Thovhele MPK Tshivase and Adv. Edward Lambani

GladAfrica Foundation Trust and University of Venda launch GladAfrica Epilepsy Research Project (GERP) worth more than R3m.



On Wednesday, 12 February 2020, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) signed a Memorandum of Agreement with GladAfrica Foundation. The GladAfrica Epilepsy Research Project (GERP) grant worth more than R3m, has been awarded to the UNIVEN's School of Health Sciences for a period of four years.

This partnership will benefit the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces since the research will be conducted in communities within these two provinces. The signing ceremony took place at UNIVEN Sports Hall.

This four-year partnership will research the effects of epilepsy in order to develop an awareness programme, cultural congruent intervention programme and epilepsy life skills manuals (for primary and secondary schools) for the affected communities of Limpopo and Mpumalanga. This initiative has been endorsed and supported by Epilepsy South Africa.

This initiative is in line with the GladAfrica Foundation Trust's social investment programme of action which seeks to, among others, empower previously disadvantaged communities by providing them with information and tools that can improve the quality of their lives.

Epilepsy is one of the health conditions that remain highly stigmatised within our communities. It is a condition that can affect anybody, old or young as it has no boundaries. According to Epilepsy SA, epilepsy affects 1 out of 100 people and about 66% of the underlying causes of epilepsy are unknown (idiopathic epilepsy). People who suffer from epilepsy are often ignored by their families and communities due to lack of understanding of this health condition. There is a need to destigmatise epilepsy and raise awareness on its causes and medication options applicable to different types of epilepsy.



Mr Noel Mashaba (Left) and Prof Jan Crafford (right) during the signing of the MoA



Mr Noel Mashaba exchanging MoA with Prof Jan Crafford

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, Prof Jan Crafford voiced that this project which has been awarded to the School of Health Sciences made UNIVEN proud. It is a very important project for us as UNIVEN because it even came at the time when we are reviewing our new Strategic Plan 2021-2025. "I can assure you that this partnership will fit well in this new strategic plan because it talks about research and improving the lives of our people. We thank GladAfrica Foundation Trust for trusting in us".

Co-Chairperson of GladAfrica Foundation Trust, Mr Noel Mashaba who is one of the people living with epilepsy explained that epilepsy is a very painful disease to live with. He said he previously experienced several epilepsy seizures which were painful because he would even bite his tongue as a result of seizures. Mr Mashaba further expressed that people who are living with epilepsy seizures don't live freely because it can attack you at any time anywhere. "Today what is happening here is a dream coming true because I wanted research to be conducted and bring results about epilepsy", said Mr Mashaba.

Mr Mashaba alluded that the biggest problem with epilepsy is not a disease but the knowledge about this disease. "This is a global burden yet there is little knowledge about it." He said that the breakthrough about himself is when he got the little information about epilepsy. "It is for this reason that we as GladAfrica Foundation Trust approached UNIVEN to conduct research about epilepsy. We need information about the impact and what needs to be done in order to deal with this scourge".

Mr Mashaba encouraged researchers to collect as much data about epilepsy as they can, especially in rural communities. He thanked Prof Rachel Lebesse for engaging with him regarding epilepsy. He further thanked UNIVEN for agreeing to this partnership.



Dr Lufuno Makhado, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Public Health, School of Health Sciences, who is also the Project Leader introduced the project research team. He explained that there are seven postgraduates students who are currently funded by GladAfrica Foundation Trust to conduct research about epilepsy in Limpopo and Mpumalanga. This Launch was also attended by community members from some of the villages where the research is being conducted.

GladAfrica Foundation Trust and University of Venda launch GladAfrica Epilepsy Research Project (GERP) worth more than R3m continued...

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Below are pictures of other speakers during the signing ceremony:



Representatives of the University Management and Staff, GladAfrica Group and Foundation Trust Executives, GERP team and partnering stakeholders posing for a photo

Every day is a valentine's day according to Former UNIVEN SRC President Tsundzuka Hakamela

On Friday, 14 February 2020, some of the University of Venda students took the time to express their love to their partners during Valentine's Day. The day is celebrated annually across the globe, it celebrates romantic love, making it a popular day for couples to spend time together. This day is associated with red hearts, flowers and exchanging of gifts between loved ones.

Although people have different views about this day, UNIVEN students expressed their opinions regarding this day.

According to the former UNIVEN SRC President Tsundzuka Hakamela, Valentine's Day is a special day that unites the loved ones and it is an important day for couples to remind each other about the love that they have for each other.

"Every day is a valentine's day when you're in a relationship, but 14 February has been marked on the calendar as a special day, thus we should celebrate it as such."



Former UNIVEN SRC President Tsundzuka Hakamela and his partner Hlengiwe Bila.

"Valentine's day is important because it symbolises love through the exchanging of gifts, but it doesn't necessarily mean love can be bought through gifts" said Hlengiwe Bila, BEDTEF final year student. She further said that Valentine's Day shows one that they are appreciated and loved.

Given Khoza third year student studying BSCPC defined Valentine's Day as a day in which people are verbally and non-verbally expressing their love to their partners. "People should not only celebrate love on a specific day, but it should be an everyday habit."



UNIVEN lovebirds



Given Khoza and Busisiwe Mbuyisa.

Busisiwe Mbuyisa third year student studying BSCMP said that the love and warmth in our households is enough to declare everyday a Valentine's Day "We're African people and in Africa we celebrate love every day. If it was up to me, there wouldn't be a Valentine's day because everyone should appreciate their partner everyday" she explained.

Collaboration in sports successfully bears fruits

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) Sport and Recreation Unit under the Student Affairs Department in collaboration with the 2019/20 SRCC (Sport, Recreation, Culture Council) and SRC Minister of Sport and Recreation successfully organized the recruitment drive for prospective players and athletes who wish to participate in sports, recreation, arts and culture activities at the University of Venda. The event was held on Thursday, 13 February 2020 at the Sport Hall Parking lot.

Members of the organizing team comprised of Mr. Ndiafhi Percy Mugwedi (Sports Administrator), SRC Minister of Sport and Recreation (Mr. B.J. Mangeni), the SRCC members namely; Miss R.W. Mthombeni (Chairperson), Mr. R.V. Nemahagala (Deputy Chairperson), Mr. M.I. Manzini (Secretary) and Mr. M. Maedza (Project Officer). The organizing team worked collectively with representatives from various sports,

recreation, arts and culture teams and groups at the University of Venda.

The sports, recreation, arts and culture recruitment drive was graced by performance exhibitions and participation in various activities by senior players and athletes who demonstrated various sports specific skills, cultural dances, drama activities and poetry. Sports and recreation activities included; aerobics, athletics, badminton, Basketball, Body building, Boxing, Chess, Cricket, Dance, Football (soccer), Karate, Netball, Rugby, Tennis and Volleyball. Goalball was the only adapted sport inclusive of students living with different forms of disabilities and those without disabilities. Arts and Culture groups include Debate Fraternity and UNIVEN Arts Society. In total over 300 students registered to show interest of joining various sports, recreation, arts and culture teams and groups of their choice.



Percy Mugwedi (left) with the 2019/20 SRCC and SRC Minister of Sports



Display of sports specific skills by netball team

The purpose of the recruitment drive was aimed at drawing the interest and attention of prospective players and athletes who are keen to participate in various sports, recreation, arts and culture teams and groups of their choice. The target group was primarily first entering students who considered the University of Venda as their university of choice to study and other senior students who were not participating in other activities.

“Taking into account the diversity and increase on the number of University of Venda student population groups, it is very important to provide them with various sports, recreation, arts and culture activities that would provide opportunities for social cohesion, interactions and networks and more importantly using these activities for maintenance of cultural and group identity”, said Mr Ndiafhi Percy Mugwedi – Sports Administrator.

The recruitment drive for various sports, recreation, arts and culture teams and

groups is an annual initiative of the Sport and Recreation Unit under Student Affairs. This is a support programme that enhance the quality of student life outside of the classrooms. Over the years, participation into various sports, recreation, arts and culture activities has been beneficial in producing great future leaders among students competing in respective categories and portfolios at provincial, national and international spheres.

“The Sport and Recreation Unit would continue to provide students with various opportunities to participate and compete with their peers from other universities at different levels of competitions and tournaments. Through this recruitment initiatives, the Sport and Recreation Unit wishes to have depth of players and athletes in various sports, recreation, arts and culture teams and groups. This is part of the strategy to introduce among other programmes the Residence Leagues”, said Mr Ndiafhi Percy Mugwedi – Sports Administrator



Group of students displaying equipment for various sports

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Collaboration in sports successfully bears fruits continued...



Group photo of the organizing team with UNIVEN Arts Society



Display of sports skills for various sporting code(s)



Prospective players and athletes visiting recruitment desks

Developing Leadership in Research Ethics



A group photo of workshop participants and facilitators

Ethical conduct involves doing the right thing, and research ethics focus on the moral principles that individuals must uphold in conducting research.

It is for these reasons that the HIV/AIDS and Global Health Research Programme (HAGH), School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, in fulfilling its role in developing a solid research leadership culture, organized a workshop on applied ethics in research on 20 - 21 February 2020. The workshop was facilitated by the Office of Research Integrity

of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), under the aegis of the Research Capacity Development Initiative of the SAMRC.

Workshop participants covered the key aspects of Principles in health research, Human dignity and vulnerable populations, Research on Animals, Data management, Scientific misconduct, and the legislations and guidelines on protection of personal information. Workshop participants included researchers and postgraduate students from

the departments of Microbiology, Public Health, Advanced Nursing Science, Nutrition, and members of the Human and Clinical Trials Research Ethics Committee of UNIVEN. Prof Pascal Bessong, Professor of Microbiology and Global Health, and Convener of the workshop, emphasized that researchers have the obligation to develop and demonstrate ethical leadership in their investigations and in human capital development efforts. Workshop facilitators included Dr Seeiso Koali, Prof Shenuka Singh, and Ms Sumaya Behardien.

Ethical conduct involves doing the right thing, and research ethics focus on the moral principles that individuals must uphold in conducting research.

Doctoral Candidate discovers unusual Bio-Inoculant



Ms Francina Bopape in front of her greenhouse at the Agricultural Research Council – Roodeplaat (Pretoria). The pigeonpea seedlings in the background were used for trapping the soil bacterial strain

A final year doctoral candidate in the School of Agriculture, Ms Francina Bopape recently discovered a novel type of soil bacterium which has huge potential for producing organic nitrogen fertilizer. Because of its novelty and significance, the finding was published by the American Society for Microbiology in January 2020. It was deemed necessary to announce the information to the international research community through the specialist scientific journal called Microbiology Resource Announcements (MRA 9(2) e01122-19).

Part of Ms Bopape's research project is aimed at helping small-scale farmers who produce bean crops. Some field crops, particularly the bean types such as soybean and others are unique in the sense that they take up nitrogen gas (from the air) and convert it into nitrogen fertilizer. In general, all field crops require this fertilizer for growth and ultimately the production of grain yield. It is for this reason that farmers apply commercial chemical nitrogen fertilizer (which is quite expensive) on crops. However, the bean types of plants can circumvent the need for this expensive fertilizer if they are grown in a soil that harbors indigenous bacteria (called soil Rhizobia) which then form small round structures on the roots (called nodules – see insert) which enable the manufacturing of the organic nitrogen fertilizer by the plant. During planting, commercial farmers often mix (or inoculate) the bean seed with commercially available soil bacteria in order to enhance the subsequent manufacturing



Root nodules (round brown structures) on pigeonpea seedlings able (left) and unable (right) to manufacture organic nitrogen.

of the nitrogen fertilizer by the plants as they grow from seedlings to adult plants. This means that, farmers save on the cost of inputs for producing the crop.

Using local soil samples, Ms Bopape trapped the indigenous soil bacteria in the seedlings of a bean type of plant called pigeonpea. She then harvested the nodules and squeezed out the bacteria in the laboratory before purifying them for the next stage that identifies the genes that are responsible for the nitrogen fertilizer manufacturing process, among other genes. Contrary to the currently available information, the novel strain of

bacterium involved did not possess the common key genes found in other Rhizobia that are necessary in the process of nitrogen fertilizer manufacturing, suggesting that there is an alternative method.

The main supervisor, Prof Easton Gwata in the Department of Crop Science commented that, the results from Francina's work have several positive implications particularly for bio-inoculant technology. The next step in the study is to understand the mechanism at work in the strain before attempting its genetic enhancement for the benefit of farmers.

UNIVEN'S Mannnda Ndou Makes it into Famelab National Competition

Mannnda Ndou, a Masters student from the Department of Zoology will be representing UNIVEN at the National Semi-final of the International Famelab competition this April.

The qualifying heats were hosted late last year by Univen's Zoology Department with support from the SARCHI Chair. A team from Famelab (Sthabile Mazubane and Robert Inglis from Jive Media Africa and Michael Ellis from the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement) visited UNIVEN to facilitate regional heats of the Famelab competition as part of the Zoology Department's Annual Research Day for postgraduate student seminars on Friday, 22 November. Participants from other departments in the School were invited and about 25 contestants were provided with excellent practical training by the Famelab team on the previous day, Thursday, 21 November on how to deliver powerful scientific presentations. They were taught that the three key qualities for a good presentation are clarity, content and charisma! Each student prepared brief three-minute "elevator pitches" to present the key findings of their research.

The following day, Famelab coordinated the competition for the best student presentation which formed a qualifying heat for the 2020 semifinals and finals competition. The judges were Mrs Bibi Linden from Lajuma Research Centre, Prof Safi Traore from Microbiology

and Dr Colin Schoeman from Zoology. The competition had two rounds; the best students from the first round were selected to give their presentations a second time, from which the final winner was selected. The event, which was highly participative and enjoyable, was won by Mannnda Ndou from Zoology, who will be funded to be part of the 2020 Famelab semi-finals and finals which will take place at Future Africa in Pretoria from 21-23 April 2020. The national winner will be sponsored to participate in the international competition to be hosted in Britain.

In 2017 the international winner was a South African.

Good luck Mannnda, make us proud!

"Science, when it is well done, can influence a sector. When it is well done and well communicated, it can change the world". So, said Tshiamo Legoale, a South African who was the 2017 international winner of the Famelab competition. The British Council in collaboration with Jive Media Africa and the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) deliver the Famelab competition in South Africa. Famelab has been described as the "pop idols" of science! It enables students and researchers to better communicate so as to effectively reach wider public audiences, translating the importance of their findings to society.



The three top contestants: Mannnda Ndou (overall winner: middle), Dawn Cory Toussaint (second place: left) and Francois Meyer (third place: right)



Judges of the Famelab regional competition hosted by UNIVEN's Zoology Department

"Science, when it is well done, can influence a sector. When it is well done and well communicated, it can change the world".



Judges, students and supervisors at the Famelab competition

HR staff ready to train University staff members on the Automated Performance Management System



The Executive Management Committee agreed that the University will roll-out the Automated Performance Management System for the academic year 2020 and 2021 performance cycle in the first quarter of 2020. It is for this reason that the ICT Department provided the training to Human Resources (HR) staff members who began training all University staff members from Monday, 24 February 2020. This training of HR staff members took place at the University's ICT 2 Lab on Wednesday, 19 February 2020.

The HR Department in collaboration with ICT Department will conduct the Automated Performance Management System User

Training from Monday, 24 February 2020 until Friday, 28 February 2020. The system training is aimed at capacitating all staff members of the University of Venda to be able to conclude their performance agreement for 2020, performance cycle. All staff members are expected to attend this training for them to be able to conclude their performance agreements for 2020 performance cycle by 17 March 2020.

For more information, please contact Mrs. Louisa Mariba- 8530, Ms Lethabo Phaswana- 9229 or Mr Esrom Phungo- 8208 in the Human Resources Department.



Dr Ngwako Stephen Sebopetsa receives three teaching awards

A UNIVEN alumnus, Dr Ngwako Stephen Sebopetsa, who is a Principal of Rathaga Primary School in Mopani East District has recently received three teaching awards. In 2019, Dr Sebopetsa took position one in the Lifetime Achievement category at Circuit and Provincial levels. He continued to compete under the same category at National level where he took position three during the prestigious occasion that was held at Soshanguve East Secondary School in Pretoria on 15 February 2020. This awarding ceremony was also broadcast live on SABC 2.

Dr Sebopetsa obtained his Masters and Doctoral degrees in Educational Management from the University of Venda in 2013 and 2018 respectively. In 2015 he co-authored a paper on his Master of Education (M. Ed)

dissertation with his supervisors, Dr Ndanganeni Florence Litshani and Prof Ndileleni Paulinah Mudzielwana. In 2016, Dr Sebopetsa published a book 'Conversation with myself' while studying towards his doctoral degree. He is setting up a study club at his area to assist teachers and principals to keep abreast with curriculum and management issues. Moreover, Dr Sebopetsa is working with his promoters, Prof Takalani Samuel Mashau and Dr Ndanganeni Florence Litshani to develop a proposal to solicit funds and mobilise support for that study club. Dr Litshani from UNIVEN School of Education said that the School is proud of Dr Sebopetsa who continues to make an impact in the communities out there as a life-long learner.



Indigenous Knowledge in the 21st Century Conference



Dr S L Kugara (BIKS Senior Lecturer, Nyoni Tsakani Emmarencia (BIKS student) and Mr T J Makhankhe (BIKS Lecturer)

Two students and two staff members from the Centre of African Studies (Indigenous Knowledge Systems) attended a Conference on the Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Intellectual Property Rights in Africa and the World (IK 21) which was hosted by the Faculty of Arts, Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa from 08 - 11 November 2019. This was a conference held in celebrating the International Year of Indigenous Languages and Nelson Mandela's legacy of advancing social inclusion.

The purpose of this conference was to bring a diversity of scholars and practitioners together to explore, debate and discuss indigenous knowledge and its' relevance to epistemology and society. A related purpose of the conference is to continue South Africa's journey to deepening inclusivity in learning and research. To begin with, the humanities and social sciences were explored to inspire a global conversation on the role of IKS in society. The conference discussed how IKS might be vital to the positive management of diversity in Africa and the world. In challenging times, there is a need for scholars and practitioners to become more aware of IKS and to use it to resolve some of the world's most pernicious problems.

The UNIVEN staff and students presented the following papers that are being finalised for publication in DHET accredited journals: An appraisal on the views of African traditional healing training: A case of VhaVenda, Limpopo Province; Knowledge Management: Preserving, Managing and Sharing Indigenous Knowledge through Digital Library; An exploration into the significance of preserving indigenous architecture for future generations among the Vatsonga speaking people of Siyandhani village; Exploring the buying and selling of African traditional medicine as a livelihood strategy for Vhavenda in Thulamela Municipality; and the implications of modernising cultural heritages: A case of Nandoni.

In addition, Ms Nyoni, who presented on the significance of preserving indigenous architecture was invited to come and give a lecture for the history of architecture at the university of Nelson Mandela. Various links were proposed with other universities and institutions present to cross pollinate ideas in the field of IKS with UNIVEN leading since it has a degree offered in IKS. Mr Ndou who presented a paper on the implications of modernising cultural heritages expressed his joy for being part of the conference. "As an aspiring Indigenous Knowledge Practitioner and Researcher, attending the conference

was an eye opener. It challenged the way I think, how I intend on bringing change in my field and also identifying some of the areas that are key for a practitioner to take note of. Much appreciation to our Dean, Head of Department and our lecturers who slaved tooth and nail preparing us."

In Africa and the world, indigenous communities produce knowledge that is apparent in sustainable technologies, healing approaches, medicinal knowledge, legal frameworks, languages, philosophies and values, pedagogies, aesthetic and architectural practices.

Research in the humanities and social sciences contend that the protection and advancement of IKS is extremely complex. Protecting IP and foregrounding indigenous knowledge forms risks exposing sacred practices, the ossification of intangible heritage and the promoting of intellectual knowledge bearers. The conference was partly diverted and gave UNIVEN staff and students a platform to take them through the BIKS degree curriculum. This attracted much attention and various institutions vowed to either visit the institution or collaborate with the Centre for African Studies to learn broadly about IKS.

As an aspiring Indigenous Knowledge Practitioner and Researcher, attending the conference was an eye opener. It challenged the way I think...



Mr Unarine Ndou (BIKS student) and Traditional Leader of the First Nations

STEP Project Trains New Certified STEP Trainers

New batch of academics and Administrative staff participated in the Train the Trainers (TTT) workshop organized by Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) coordinators between 21 and 24 January 2020. The participants were drawn from Schools of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Management Sciences, Human and Social Sciences and Records Management. They were trained by Ms Carina Bohlayer, STEP Project Coordinator and Mr Jakob Weers, STEP trainers from Leuphana University in Luneburg, Germany.

The programme was declared open by Dr Segun Obadire, Acting Director International Relations. He encouraged participants to take full advantage of the training to be able to impart knowledge to the students they will be training on different aspects of how to become an Entrepreneur. Also, in attendance during the workshop were four Research Assistants from UNIVEN and Leuphana University who will be assisting with research and support for the project. STEP project will

be training 100 students on how to start their own business and the principles of running a successful business. The programme would have another 100 students for control and research purposes during the 12 weeks of training. Certificates were issued to all the trainees at the end of the 4 days workshop.

STEP project will be training 100 students on how to start their own business and the principles of running a successful business.



Carina Bohlayer and Jakob Weers facilitating the TTT workshop



Some of the participants at the STEP TTT workshop

UNIVEN Strengthens its Relationship with UNESCO

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni had a very productive engagement with the Secretary General of the South African National Commission for UNESCO, Mr Carlton Lufuno Mukwevho. The meeting took place on Monday, 24 February 2020 at UNESCO Office in Pretoria. The meeting was primarily intended to strengthen collaboration between UNIVEN and UNESCO.

During this meeting, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Nthambeleni had the opportunity to extensively share the University achievements and its strategic direction, positioning the University of Venda for impact. The South African National Commission for UNESCO Secretary General, Mr Mukwevho shared UNESCO's overwhelming objectives and vision. Mr Mukwevho was extremely thrilled about the Vice-Chancellor's visit, more especially considering his very tight schedule. According to Mr Mukwevho, the Vice-Chancellor's visit was a clear demonstration that UNIVEN highly esteems UNESCO. Both parties expressed their commitment to work together in an endeavour to change people's lives.



The meeting was followed by the Vice-Chancellor's courtesy visit to the Minister of Basic Education, Hon Angie Motshekga.

Both UNIVEN and UNESCO expressed their commitment to work together in an endeavour to change people's lives.

Left: Minister of Basic Education, Hon Angie Motshekga in conversation with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UNIVEN, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni



UNIVEN's Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni (third from right) handing over a token of appreciation to the South African National Commission for UNESCO Secretary General, Mr Carlton Lufuno Mukwevho (third from left)

UNIVEN students urged to strive for excellence in business

On Thursday, 13 February 2020, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) Directorate of International Relations hosted UNIVEN Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) opening ceremony at the University Auditorium. This programme has provided more than 100 students training on how to start and sustain their own businesses.

UNIVEN hosted this day in partnership with Leuphana University of Lüneburg, German Commission for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and South African National Commission for UNESCO and is funded by the BASF Stiftung (German-based charitable foundation).



A representative from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Germany, Mr Florian Schmitt expressed that they will patiently work with students in order to reach their goal of positioning Entrepreneurial for impact. Schmitt explained that the aim is to create access to provide quality entrepreneurial skills needed. We want to change students' mindset and to enable them to stop thinking about job seeking and become job creators.

In his opening and welcome remarks, Director: Institute for Rural Development Prof Joseph Francis said that with the direction of Strategic Plan 2021-2025 that the University is taking, the STEP programme has already embarked on a journey to produce graduates that are business minded.

"This programme aims to produce entrepreneurs. We want our students to reach out to the society and impart the same knowledge and skills that they have learned in order to influence the society by converting ideas into businesses."

"We want our students to reach out to the society and impart the same knowledge and skills that they have learned in order to influence the society by converting ideas into businesses."



Mr Linda Dhladhla, a Consultant from Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) assured the attendees that he has attended this opening ceremony to ensure that the institution has the right equipment to help students to walk their journey into business market. He added that the EDHE 2020 competition will give one of the students the amount of one hundred thousand Rands (R100 000) to start his/her own business.



"The Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA)'s mandate is to facilitate the formation of small new businesses. The University is going to produce more skilled business people in which new ideas are going to be implemented during the training, and the availability of funding which completes the role of SEDA," Said Mr Marcus Mukumela, Manager at SEDA who also said that they support the STEP initiative and they will be available when needed.



Ms Carina Bohlayer from Leuphana University of Lüneburg explained that the objective of STEP programme is to train students on how to start a business and to sustain it. We give students an opportunity to start their own businesses.

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communication channel.

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