



University of Venda

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Nendila

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

The class of 2014

Univen rewards top students

Obert Bore, a third year student in Law, Thakhani Ravele, a second year Bachelor of Science student and Yamukela Bam, a first year student in Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting were Univen's best performing students in 2014.

Together with 76 other best performing students, these three students were rewarded for outstanding performance as part of the Vice Chancellor's Student Academic Excellence awards programme.

"Excellence in your academic performance today

will stand you in good stead when you compete for jobs and other advancement opportunities in this very competitive global arena," says Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatl.

Rewarding the students during the official opening of the 2015 academic year recently, Mbatl said students should take advantage of the university's great facilities and related infrastructure to excel on their academic journey.

"These facilities include the roll-out of student tablet pc's to registered students who meet the approved criteria. The student tablet project complements the existing computer laboratories and enhances the quality of teaching and learning, research and innovation.

"The university will also embark on the 'Next generation of academics programme', appointing young academics into the university's professoriate. Supported by the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Education and Development and Training Practices Sector Education and Training Authority, the programme will provide training, mentoring and support, ultimately absorbing them as academics."

The Director of the Centre for Higher Education Teaching

Top of their class - Yamukela Bam, first year student in Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting, Obert Bore, third year student in Law and Thakhani Ravele second year student in Bachelor of Science.



"Excellent academic performance today pays off tomorrow" – Prof Peter Mbatl.

and Learning, Dr Clever Ndebele said the best performing students shared financial rewards worth R300 000.

"Twenty percent of the award is in cash with the remainder going towards tuition fees, book vouchers and accommodation, depending on the student's choice. The foundation year and first year students received R8 000 each and a certificate, second year students received R9 000 each and a certificate while third year students received R10 000 each and a certificate."

Since the inception of these awards, called the Thudwa awards, (Thudwa is giraffe in Venda - the one that is taller than trees) in 2013 to date, the largest number that continues to receive awards is females.

"R300 000 in reward money well spent" - Dr Clever Ndebele.

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The cream of the crop – 2014's best performing students.



Singing the praises of the Class of 2014 – the Univen choir.



Univen SRC to sign performance agreement

“Leadership is a collective, not a singular activity. It is not management and is rooted in service.”

This according to Univen’s new Student Representative Council President, Mpho Mutobvu. Speaking at the new council welcome function, Mutobvu said the council will sign a performance agreement to show commitment to its term of office.

The outgoing Speaker of Parliament, Ms Padi, advised the incoming speaker “to enjoy the

parliament, forget where political parties were from and treat them as parliamentarians.”

Univen’s Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali, said being elected into a position of leadership is an honour and an expression of confidence and trust from the majority of students.

“They voted you into power to safeguard their interests in pursuing and completing their studies in record time. It is your responsibility to exercise discretion in pursuing these expectations that are

legitimate and in line with the laws of the country and in line with the rules and procedures of the university. Ultimately, you should ensure that whatever you do is done for the greater good of our students and the university as a whole.”

He thanked the council for supporting the project to provide tablets to students in 2015.

“Univen is one of very few universities implementing such a project. Use the tablets well to enhance your education.”



“Leadership is rooted in service” - SRC President, Mpho Mutobvu.



Working together - outgoing and incoming SRC leadership.



“Treat political parties as parliamentarians” - outgoing Speaker of Parliament, Ms Padi.

Dzaga is our man

Best spokesperson in higher education in Limpopo

Univen’s Director of Communications and Marketing, Takalani Dzaga was awarded the best spokesperson in the category Institutions of Higher Learning in Limpopo.

Dzaga was honoured at the first Limpopo Media and Communicators awards recently.

• **Univen congratulates its chief editor and urges him to keep the communications flow going!**



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From high school to tertiary education

“The decisions you make and the actions you take during the first year of university will have a major impact on the rest of your university experience.”

So said Univen’s Student Representative Council President, Mpho Mutobvu, at the official opening of Orientation 2015 on campus recently.

“The orientation programme is crucial to first-time entering students since it is a transition from high school to tertiary education. The first few weeks on campus are extremely critical for all new students. It is during these weeks that the future of most of the first-time entering students will be determined. Most of the students who drop out experienced challenges during their first year due to failure to handle pressure at tertiary level. Students spent most of their first few weeks at varsity being frustrated without knowing anything about university life,” he said.

He shared strategies and tips to help new students survive and thrive during their first year of study.

Officially opening Orientation 2015, Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic: Prof Jan Crafford, said students must adjust themselves wisely in the transition from school to university.

“The main purpose of orientation is to provide new students with the information, support and resources necessary to begin their academic journey.”

“The University of Venda is privileged to welcome 3 600 first-time entering students, drawn to Univen by its myriad degree programmes, its outstanding academics and its growing reputation across South Africa,” said the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Operations, Dr Jannie Zaaiman in his welcome address.

“Thank you for making Univen your university of choice,” he said.

Financial Aid Manager, Mrs Mukhathu Ngobeni, highlighted the procedures on how to apply for the Vice Chancellor’s Merit bursary, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and other bursaries.



“The decisions you make in your first year will have a major impact on the rest of your university experience” - SRC President Mpho Mutobvu.



“Adjust wisely from school to university” - Prof Jan Crafford.



“Thank you for making Univen your university of choice” - Dr Jannie Zaaiman.



“Make use of the Univen infrastructure” - Mrs Mukhathu Ngobeni and Mr Cornelius Hagenmeier.



“Approach the office of International Relations when you encounter problems with, for example, the issuing of study permits or with providers of medical insurance,” said the Director of International Relations, Mr Cornelius Hagenmeier.

“The directorate is also responsible for internationalisation and the promotion of international opportunities.”

Dr Clever Ndebele, Director of the Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning, said the centre

initiates, co-ordinates and promotes programmes and services to address the challenges facing academics and students in achieving expected outcomes of teaching and learning in higher education.

Students were addressed by a number of knowledgeable senior managers in different departments who shared services available to students on campus.

These included Prof Vhonani Netshandama of



“Its good to be at Univen”

the Community Engagement Directorate, who spoke about student support services and the acting Director of Student Affairs, Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo, who highlighted facilities like the Campus Health Clinic, sports and the HIV/ AIDS programme.

The Director in the Office of the Vice Chancellor, Dr Clarence Tshireke, wished the students well in their academic journey so that they could graduate in record time.

A job well done

Univen pays homage to its council

“The past five years Univen’s committed and loyal Council members provided oversight, guidance and wisdom that translated into the impressive growth in terms of the core business and the operations of the university,” says Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali.

At a farewell function for Council members who completed their term of office recently, Mbatlali said even the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, was equally impressed by the stability on campus and singled out the Council for a job well done.

“Because of dedicated Council members, we made strides in ensuring that students graduate with quality degrees,” said outgoing Chair of Council, Shirley Mabusela.

“We have excellent academic staff and management. We are celebrating the work that we have all done. The Council was successful because of the good working relationship between management, unions, staff and students. I thank the student leadership for their cooperation and ensuring that for students to be eligible for election to the Student Representative Council, they should have obtained a pass rate of at least 80 percent.”



“A committed and loyal Council provided oversight, guidance and wisdom” - Prof Peter Mbatlali.



“Because of dedicated Council members, we made strides in ensuring that students graduate with quality degrees” - outgoing Council Chair Ms Shirley Mabusela.



The outgoing Council.

Univen the only university in a UNESCO biosphere reserve

“The University of Venda is the only university situated in a UNESCO biosphere reserve,” says Univen’s Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic: Prof Jan Crafford. Officially opening the 41st South African Association of Botanists conference hosted

by Univen, Crafford said “our geographical location gives us a competitive advantage in biodiversity studies in general and botanical studies in particular. “Our Botany Department has always had a particularly strong focus on Ethnobotany, because

of the rich cultural heritage of indigenous medical plant use among the VhaVenda.”

Themed ‘Sustaining Biodiversity’, the four-day conference saw national and international plant scientists share ideas on current research



“Univen has always focused strongly on Ethnobotany, because of the rich cultural heritage of indigenous medical plant use among the VhaVenda” – Prof Crafford.



developments in the field. These included Botany gurus like Prof Antony Cunningham, an Adjunct Professor from the University of Western Australia, Prof William Bond of the University of Cape Town, South African Environmental Observation Network Chief Scientist, Prof Sandy Van Vuuren of Wits, Prof Kevin Balkwill, South African Association of Botanists President, Dr Christopher Johnson of Stellenbosch University, Prof Johannes Van Staden of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Prof Marlon Meyer of the University of Pretoria. The conference gave Univen and the Vhembe District the opportunity to showcase plant science research activities. The rich body of indigenous knowledge within the region plays a pivotal role in the promotion of conservation initiatives within the context of a biosphere reserve as envisaged by UNESCO.

A vibrant audience at a vibrant conference.



A diligent local organising committee under leadership of Prof Peter Tshisikhawe (front left).



Univen students came, looked, listened and learnt.

The 2015 Student Representative Council

 Mutobvu Mzimela Mpho President	 Mbebe Noxolo Kindness Deputy President	 Ncuthuluze Zondi deputy secretary	 Mukwevho Calphas Lembede Secretary	 Malumane Tiens Minister of Finance	 Matlale Martha Mphethedi Minister of Arts & Culture	 Ngomeni Trevor Legal, Policy & Constitutional Affairs	 Mphaphuli Tshifhiwa Minister of Education	 Meteta Abel Munyaradzi Minister of Information
 Mathebula Marcia Minister of Housing	 Sikiwari Tshivhasa Tshedza Minister of Sports	 Nihulane Moshudu Charlotte Minister of Gender & Disability	 Mudau Prince Minister of Health	 Osielele Olujam Agbolahan Post Graduate Chairperson	 Letwaba Paledi Speaker	 Dikiza Celemusa Blessing Deputy Speaker	 Munyangane Oscar Chairperson of Health	 Obet Bore Chairperson of Law
 Nnegga Nkhumeleni Cathbert Chairperson of Agriculture	 Mavhuru Blessing Chairperson of Environmental	 Chauke Kihluka Cliff Chairperson of Mathematics	 Manganyi Ntsako Sydwell Chairperson of Management	 Ngonyama Tranaman Chairperson of Education	 Munyembani Ashley Chairperson of Human & Social Science	 Delushi Lufuno Disabled Council	 Ndlovu Bondani Sandile Chairperson of HRC	 Netshishivhe Miranda Chairperson of SRCC

Together we can make it

"All what we have achieved this year wouldn't be possible if it was not for your commitment and dedication," Acting Vice Chancellor and Principal, Dr Jannie Zaaiman told Univen staff and management at last year's year-end staff function.

He awarded 58 staff members in recognition of their dedication, loyalty and service. A total of 32 people received awards for ten years of service, 16 for 20 years of service and ten for 30 years of service. The university also bid farewell to 17 retirees whose service ended in December 2014.



You served Univen well – bidding retirees a good future.

Awarding dedication and hard work – 58 staff members received long service certificates.



Never too old to join the digital world

An 82 year-old councillor, Luvhimba David Mpondo of the Mutale Municipality, together with the Mayor of Mutale Municipality, Councillor Athongozwidivha Sarah Rambuda, were among the municipality's 40 councillors who joined the digital world after completing a basic computer training course.

The course was conducted by Univen's School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences. The six-week basic computer literacy training forms part of the university's outreach programme where communities, students, councillors and unemployed people are trained to better their lives and to be abreast with technology.

"Knowledge of the use of computers for councillors will open many doors," says the Dean of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Prof Natasha Potgieter.

"I trust that the training benefits Mutale councillors in their administrative duties such as typing and sending information through the internet. We are training communities, students and councillors computer skills, equipping them with digital knowledge."

Mr Wiseman Mpusola, a final year student in Bachelor of Sport Science and Leisure studies, who is visually impaired, was part of the group receiving certificates.

"Visually impaired people can also operate a computer. We do it differently but at the end of the day we get the same results," he said.

Equipped with digital knowledge – celebrating Mutale councillors, members of the community and students.



A star student – at 82! - Councillor David Mpondo and the Mayor of Mutale Municipality, Councillor Athongozwidivha Rambuda.



5th International symposium on infections on campus

Univen's Department of Microbiology, in partnership with the Univen HIV/AIDS Unit, hosted an international symposium on opportunistic

infections in HIV/AIDS, parasitology and medicinal plants recently. The focus was to make people aware of common opportunistic infections in

HIV/AIDS, and the use of the medicinal plants to control these infections. Dean of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Prof Natasha

Potgieter, says the symposium makes people aware of the scourge of HIV and Aids and how best we can deal with this pandemic.



Conference delegates got opportunistic infections informed.

Univen Director of Finance joins Auditor General SA

After serving the University of Venda for four years, the Director of Finance, Mrs Nthanyiseni Dhumazi, joins the Auditor General South Africa as a business executive in Polokwane.

Dhumazi, a chartered accountant, joined the university in 2011, after serving PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

"Mrs Dhumazi is a confident person who was an

integral part of the university's senior management," says Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbati.

"She made sure that funds were utilised in an

efficient manner and the university consistently received unqualified audit financial reports."

"It has been a wonderful four years and I do not regret being part of Univen. Leaving Univen was not an easy decision for me, but one that was necessary and had to be made. I thank Univen for trusting me to serve in a critical position," said Dhumazi.



Bidding farewell to a dear colleague - Mrs Nthanyiseni Dhumazi (front middle) with colleagues of the Finance Department.

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communications channel. Nendila editorial committee –

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