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NRF renews Chair on Biodiversity Value and Change

"The Univen SARChi Chair on Biodiversity Value and Change has been renewed by the National Research Foundation," announced Univen's Acting Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Jan Crafford at the 45th Symposium on the Management of Biological Invasions recently.

"Four decisive reasons make Univen the logic choice to house the chair - the university boasts the presence of the Research Chair on Biodiversity Value and Change in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve, it is uniquely located in the biosphere, we have a long-standing collaboration agreement with the South African National Biodiversity Institute and furthermore, our proximity to four international borders - Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana and Swaziland."

"We find ourselves privileged when it comes to partnering with a number of institutions and organisations, not only in leading and coordinating research but in monitoring and reporting on the state of biodiversity in South Africa," said the National Biodiversity Institute's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Moshibudi Rampedi.

"This year the symposium focuses on invasions across protected areas and biospheres, invasions across national boundaries and species boundaries and the impact of invasions across sectors. Whilst

biological invasions may be unpredictable, I trust that the symposium will bring a further understanding to controlling and eradicating biological invasions due to their severe impact on aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems."

Councillor Tshimangadzo Malada said biological invasions are the second highest threat to biodiversity as well as a major threat to food and water security and to livelihoods in the world.

Cathy Vise of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve believed this was one of the many ways to bring nature and people together.

"It is important for people to learn how to live with nature and protect it."

The Dzomo la Mupo Tshigombela and Malende Dancers gave a warm welcome to the symposium participants. Their performance played an important role in showcasing the culture and pride of the Vha-Venda people.

At the awards dinner the chair of the scientific sub-committee, Dr Sheunesu Ruwanza, presented the special awards for best presentations and poster of the symposium. The best poster went to Madonna Vezi, best three-minute presentation to Lyriche Drude and best 15-minute presentation to Siphosenkosi Mbonani.

Khensani Nkhuna won the SARChi competition

45th Symposium on the Management of Biological Invasions hosted on campus

draw which was presented by Prof Peter Taylor for correctly naming the famous scientist – Prof Raymond Dart - who discovered the first Australopithecus human fossil in 1924. His bust and death mask are featured as exhibits in the new museum and research centre. Nkhuna won herself an African pot calabash.

The symposium was attended by 160 delegates. It was co-organised by Univen and the South African National Biodiversity Institute.

Prof Crafford also officially opened the new SARChi Chair centre and museum.

"This innovation will stand the university in good stead for many years to come," he said.

"Univen's SARChi Chair on Biodiversity Value and Change showcases the unique biodiversity of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve and is also a resource for student teaching and research," said Prof Taylor.

"This new centre had been planned from the inception of the Chair in 2012. Thanks to the diligence of the university management, it is now a reality."

The new centre houses natural history collections, exhibitions, a library and information technology resources and offices for interns, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students.

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It's official! - Acting Vice Chancellor and Principal Prof Jan Crafford (centre) hands over the plaque to Prof Peter Taylor (left) with Prof Natasha Potgieter looking on.



Celebrating a milestone – from left Prof Peter Tshisikhawe, Prof Stefan Foord, Prof Natasha Potgieter, Prof Peter Taylor, Prof Dave Richardson and Prof Jan Crafford.



Delegates from various participating institutions came to witness the occasion.

HAWK-Univen collaboration – great research results

“The collaboration between HAWK and Univen was mutually beneficial with more than 50 people from the university benefitting from the interaction,” says the Dean of the School of Human and Social Sciences, Prof Mokgale Makgopa.

Univen participants visited the HAWK University in Holziminden, Germany recently as part of the staff-student exchange programme that is supported by the memorandum of understanding between the two universities. The aim was to extend the agreement in 2019.

Makgopa said both Univen and HAWK are rural universities, which auger well for the welfare and benefit of students and staff.

“The question of immigrants, people living with disability and legislation in the two countries are common challenges which both South Africa and Germany are currently facing. A book will be released soon, coordinated from Univen, in which staff members of the two institutions contribute in the form of book chapters. The exchange gave both HAWK and Univen students a lifetime experience of travelling outside their countries,” he said.

“Our faculty is structured to accommodate the needs of the communities of Holziminden – focusing on management, construction and social work,” said HAWK’s Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Social Work and Construction, Dr Ulrich Hundertmark.

“This is also the particular link that connects HAWK and Univen. Our focus on research has a positive impact on the entire faculty.”

Social work and people living with disabilities were the theme for the 2018 HAWK-Univen exchange. Each group then made preparations based on the theme which manifested as a comparative study of Germany and South Africa.

HAWK students focussed on the international comparison of social work as a discipline. Univen students presented two activities - a drama on the 2018 theme and a presentation titled *Challenges faced by people living with disabilities*. Issues included the effect of people living with disabilities, challenges, South African legislation, educational aspects, cultural views and the role of social workers.

Univen staff members delivered lectures - Mr Baloyi spoke about *Early childhood development programmes: Social work services*, while Ms Mamaleka presented on *Field work practice supervision with social work students*.

Univen students visited German institutions for people living with disabilities as part of their experiential learning in Germany. These included the Unterm Regenbogen, a private school with the focus on mental development, Oase Holzminden, a day-care centre for people with psychological disabilities, Lebenshilfe Beverungen, an institution for mentally disabled adults and Ludwig-Schloemann Haus, an institution for mentally and physically disabled people and for people with multiple disabilities.

Based on the data collected, topics were identified for publication in peer reviewed accredited journals by both students and lecturers. These included – An analytical study on the transformation of



educational system of people living with disabilities after the apartheid era: A case study of the University of Venda, The effects of stigma on the growth and development of children with learning disabilities: Principal's perspectives and The impact of special schools on people living with disabilities for employment preparations: A comparative study

between Germany and South Africa.

The group also visited the German Parliament, meeting with a member of parliament of Lower Saxony of which Holziminden forms part, Johannes Schrap. Among others, they discussed the role to be played by social workers in giving support to politicians.



International business students on exchange programme to Germany

Univen, in partnership with the Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University in Heidenheim, Germany have joined in a student exchange programme.

Two honours students of the Department of Business Management, Jim Letladi Mafa and Litzeldah Matsa, are the first beneficiaries of the three-month programme.

The students are awarded a stipendium scholarship which covers flights, accommodation, health insurance and a monthly stipend up to €1000. The students will register for relevant modules and transfer their credits to Univen as stipulated in the joint credit transfer policy of the university.

The programme was advertised on the Univen website and the selection process was undertaken by the Directorate of International Relations and the School of Management Sciences.

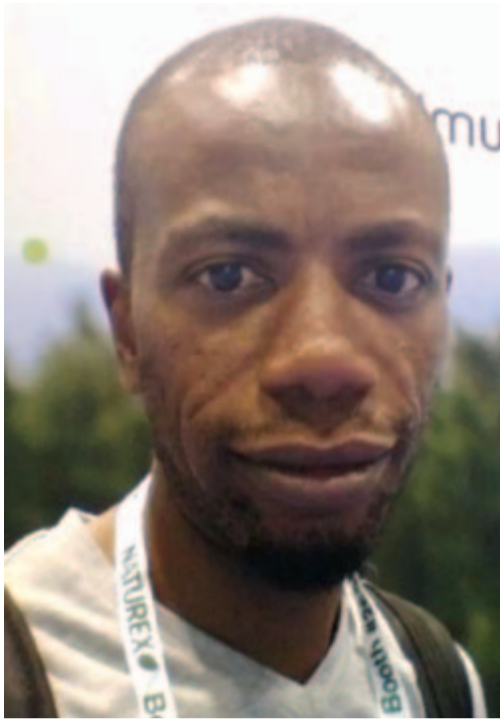
The students departed for Germany in June and will return on 15 September.



Jim Letladi Mafa and Litzeldah Matsa, exchange students in Germany.



Doing a bit of sight-seeing!



International honour for research fellow

Dr Tonna Ashim Anyasi of Univen's Department of Food Science and Technology in the School of Agriculture is one of seven young scientists across the globe to be honoured at the 19th World Congress of the International Union of Food Science and Technology.

The congress takes place in October in Mumbai, India. The bi-annual congress is organised by IUFOST, a global scientific organisation representing more than 200 000 food scientists and technologists from over 70 countries, including the South African Association for Food Science and Technology.

As one of the selected global Young Scientists, Anyasi will be inducted into the Early Scientists' Section of IUFOST and will make an oral presentation of his current research findings in line

with the Congress theme, '25 billion meals a day by 2025, with healthy, nutritious, safe and diverse foods'.

Anyasi also represented Univen at the 3rd BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Young Scientist Forum held in Durban recently. South Africa assumed the BRICS rotational presidency in January and hosted the 10th BRICS summit in July.

Anyasi obtained his doctoral degree in Agriculture in Food Science and Technology from Univen in 2015, under the supervision of Professors Jideani and Mchau. His PhD thesis was on nutritional profiling and effects of processing on unripe banana cultivars in Limpopo. It culminated in several article publications in high impact journals. In 2015, a component of his doctoral research was

published by the Mail and Guardian newspaper's Science voices. He is a National Research Foundation Y2-rated researcher and a member of the Univen Research Advisory Forum – a body on research and scholarship at the university.

He has published several journal articles and book chapters in international peer accredited journals and was awarded with the Univen Research Award for Publication in 2017.

Anyasi is a reviewer for Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley Online and American Chemical Society journals and is a member of the Institute of Food Technologists, Illinois, USA, as well as a professional member of SAAFOST.

He is a postdoctoral research fellow at Univen's Department of Food Science and Technology.

Univen student undergoes training in Belgium

Collen Precious Kelebogile Mudau, a third-year BSc Food Science and Technology student, will undergo six months' work integrated learning at UCLL Diepenbeek, Belgium.

She will commence training in January next year under the Flemish Priority Country Programme in cooperation with the Flemish Ministry for Education and Training.

The placement follows Univen's Prof Jideani's visit to Lithuania and deliberations with two staff members from UCLL. Thereafter, two officers from UCLL

visited Univen, leading to the signing of a student exchange agreement between UCLL and Univen.

Mudau's scholarship will cover the valorisation of large quantities of lactose in whey and lactic acid fermentation. The project includes fermentation techniques, whey treatment through membrane processes such as nanofiltration and analytical method development.

This project will be done in collaboration with several dairy firms and a valorisation process will be developed for different types of whey streams.

Apart from intercultural skills, other competencies include familiarisation with the working principles and use of relevant analytical machines.

The department sees this as an opportunity for further collaboration with UCLL. A student from UCLL will also visit the department for a six-month training experience.



Collen Precious Kelebogile Mudau is off to Belgium.

Complete your degrees in time!

Univen's School of Education recently hosted a seminar for master's and PhD candidates to teach them to construct successful research proposals and to encourage and supervise them to complete their degrees in the stipulated time.

Tuition concentrated on writing good research

proposals as well as effective library use.

"Great minds meet in the library," said Univen's Dean of the School of Education, Prof Mulaudzi.

"Ensure that you understand the different roles of supervisors and those of students and PhD candidates."

The school's Dr Sinthumule outlined the structure and content of research proposals - from introduction to budget outline. Dr Ramabulana presented on how to formulate a research topic and how to write the contents of an abstract. Dr Mafenya presented the formulation of the statement of the problem in research

proposals, whereas Prof Mashau's presentation was on how to search for relevant literature when writing preliminary literature review.

Mulaudzi outlined the theoretical framework, Dr Tshiovhe presented on the conceptual framework while Dr Muthambi presented research design and methodology in research.



Taking in good advice - Postgraduate students, PhD candidates, research supervisors and promoters at the workshop.



Univen and Virginia's collaboration growing by leaps and bounds

"The collaboration between Univen and the University of Virginia of over two decades empowers both universities to achieve set goals in terms of human development," says Univen's Acting Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Jan Crafford.

"Almost all Univen's schools are involved in this collaboration and the two universities are ready to strengthen this long-lasting network."

This year about 20 students and staff members of the University of Virginia were on campus to conduct research together with Univen students.

"We have a goal-orientated interaction, negotiated collaboration and partnership between the university and its communities," said Univen's Community Engagement Director, Prof Vhonani Netshandama.

"We encourage communities to forward us their research problems. This will help us to find solutions to the problems that our communities are facing. We develop multicultural understanding and respect for local knowledge and differences within communities. Work with the communities as they are a very important stakeholder in the research activity," she said.

"This collaboration will continue to have a good impact in many people's lives," said the representative of the visitors from the USA, Prof Karen Ingersoll.

"The collaboration will continue to expand in the health field. It is helping students academically and socially and will continue to improve the lives of many people in years to come."

"You need to help our people in deep rural villages on how to protect themselves from diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV," said Univen's Student Representative Council Minister for

Information, External Affairs and International Relations, Mokgaphane Mapaseka.

"We have extra-mural activities from which the visiting students can learn. We have cultural groups in which you can learn how to dance, cook, greet, but also learn about the traditional dress code."

The orientation programme was organised by the Directorate of International Relations.

The Acting Director: International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire said that both staff and students of Univen are always willing to work with the

University of Virginia students every time they visit. He introduced them to the social integration programmes of the directorate, such as the Buddy programme, the country's independent days and the internationalisation evening.

"Talk to us at the directorate for any assistance you may need to make your stay a remarkable one," he said.

The visitors were given pamphlets with information, including basic local languages. They were also taken through some phrases on how to greet in Tshivenda.



"Welcome to Univen" – Crafford.



Prof Karen Ingersoll, Prof Vhonani Netshandama and Dr Angelina Maphula.



"Venda has a wealth of cultural offerings" – Mapaseka.



Participants at the orientation.

Univen participates in IMPALA steering committee

Univen participated in the steering committee to coordinate the final phase of the IMPALA project at a recent meeting at the University of Bologna in Italy.

The IMPALA project of European and South African universities and educational organisations responds

to the international needs of the higher education community. It further develops and modernises internationalisation strategies at South African universities. The training prepares historically disadvantaged universities in South Africa to participate on an equal basis on the international higher education scene.

Univen's Acting Director: International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire represented the university. The meeting focused on project outcomes, including administration and finances, dissemination and sustainability. Each institution presented their products, which were also displayed at the venue. Univen displayed outputs on strategies

and site visits, summer schools and short term programmes, internationalisation of the curriculum, project writing and management and the mobility toolkit.

Participants were requested to improve on their deliverables for a final submission by August.



IMPALA steering committee members in Bologna.



Products from partner universities.



Univen at Commonwealth Youth Work Education Consortium

Univen was represented at the recent Commonwealth Higher Education in Youth Work Consortium technical workshop in London. The Dean of the School of Human and Social Sciences, Prof Mokgale Makgopa and the Head of the Department of the Institute for Gender and Youth Studies, Dr Reymont Raselekoane, participated in the workshop. The aim was to establish the consortium that was initiated at the 19th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers in the Bahamas in June 2015. During the Commonwealth Youth Work Conference in March 2016, 16 universities became members. The initial participating universities were Botswana - Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning, Guyana - University of Guyana (Turkeyen Campus), India - Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Jamaica - University of West Indies, Kenya - University of Maseno, Kenya - University of Nairobi, Malawi - University of Malawi, Malta - University of Malta, Namibia - Namibia College of Open Learning, Pakistan - Allama Iqbal Open

University, Sierra Leone - University of Sierra Leone, South Africa - University of Venda, South Africa - Open University of South Africa, Sri Lanka - Open University of Sri Lanka, Uganda - Makerere University, United Kingdom - YMCA George Williams College and Bangladesh - Bangladesh Open University. The consortium was formally launched by the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, at the opening ceremony of the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, in Kampala, Uganda on 1 August 2017. The consortium is a network of leading institutions engaged in the education and training of youth workers and policymakers. They share perspectives and experiences. The consortium technical workshop develops a roadmap for the implementation of the Youth Work Degree Project. It also explores research partnering with other universities in the Commonwealth. By offering a degree, it also ensures that academic institutions across the Commonwealth globally increase access to youth

work education and training. The need to enhance youth work education and training comes as many Commonwealth countries are experiencing a bulge in their youth population. Therefore, young people are potential opportunities and risks related to large populations that are increasingly being recognised. "The consortium also supports higher education institutions to create or upgrade youth work qualifications," says the Director of Youth at the Commonwealth Secretariat, Katherine Ellis. "It also creates collaborations for research and sharing of good practice, case studies and tools from the field. This collection of knowledge will be a rich and constantly renewed resource of material on youth work education and training. It will be underpinned by evidence and rights-based youth work principles that will ensure global relevance and responsiveness to the needs and rights of young people." The Univen delegation shared the university's position with regard to the BAYID degree and the options for Univen in the consortium's degree project. Univen emphasised the need for more

collaboration in research among Commonwealth higher education institutions. Univen also stands to gain from the consortium by using some of the modules for certificate and diploma qualifications. Since Univen has been classified as a comprehensive university, it is required to offer both vocational and academic qualifications. The impact of Univen on youth work issues has been felt and acknowledged by the consortium's technical workshop delegates. As a result, this event has also attracted attention of the delegates from the Universities of West Indies and Malawi to the youth studies degree as well as the master's degree which are currently offered in the Institute for Gender and Youth Studies. Dr Brian Belton from YMCA George Williams College in the UK and Prof Tim Corney from the University of Victoria in Australia also expressed interest in working with Univen on youth work research.

Univen signs MoU with Shoolini University

Witnesses at the signing ceremony.

Univen and the Shoolini University in India recently signed a memorandum of understanding. Prof Ram Prakash Dwivedi, Director International Affairs and Dr Rozy Dhanta, Assistant Director of International Affairs welcomed the Univen delegation. "Shoolini University has produced 49 patents in the fields of engineering, biotechnology and health," said Dwivedi. "We are a highly specialised university, among the best universities in India."

"Both universities share several commonalities which should be explored," said Prof Takalani Mashau of Univen's School of Education. "This memorandum of understanding should be made active in all relevant areas." Adv Thanyani Mphephu of the Legal Services Directorate signed the memorandum on behalf of Univen, while Prof Dwivedi signed on behalf of the Shoolini University. Dr Segun Obadire, Acting Director of International Relations signed as witness for Univen.



Dr Segun Obadire, Adv Thanyani Mphephu, Prof Ram Prakash Dwivedi and Dr Rozy Dhanta during the signing ceremony.



Funding visit for postgraduates

To enhance Univen’s postgraduate funding programme, a grant delegation recently visited university donors.

The Director of Research and Innovation, Senior Professor Ekosse, Grants Administration Officer, Mr Lesufi and Research Assistant, Mrs Nemphagane visited the National Research Foundation, the Council for Geoscience, the Water Research Commission and the National Intellectual Property Management Office.

The delegation followed up on previous research administration, management and leadership engagements and solicited continued support for postgraduate students and researchers.

The outcome of the meetings included a possible increase in the numbers of grants and the presentation of campus tailor-made workshops by National Research Foundation staff for winning grant proposals.

The Council for Geoscience is committed to working with Univen to ensure that the existing memorandum of understanding is fully operationalised.

The Water Research Commission visit strengthened the mutual working relationship of research and innovation. It was agreed that both institutions take leadership in organising research and related ventures such as joint workshops, conferences and congresses and the funding of research projects.

The visit to the National Intellectual Property Management Office covered the relationship of the two organisations’ researchers and operational matters documents such as Cost to Company certificates and workshop organisation.

Senior Professor Ekosse is a panel member of National Intellectual Property Management Office, appointed by the Minister of Science and Technology.



From left - Mr Lesufi, Ms Van Wyk, Mr Tlowana, Senior Professor Ekosse, Mrs Nemphagane and Ms Mashiloane



From left - Mrs Nemphagane, Dr Liphadzi, Senior Professor Ekosse, Ms Machelesi, and Mr Lesufi.



From left - Mrs Nemphagane, Mr Jase, Ms Ngoasheng, Ms Phiri, Senior Professor GE Ekosse, Dr Faul and Mr Lesufi.

23rd International workshop on quantum systems in Chemistry, Physics, and Biology

Hosted by Univen, this workshop will bring together researchers from around the world with cutting-edge contributions to a broad range of quantum systems. The workshop will be held in the Kruger National Park’s Mopani Camp from 23 to 29 September. For more information visit <https://sites.google.com/view/qscp-2018>.

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

We would like to hear from you!

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