



Africa Day - showcasing African unity in diversity

The Univen community celebrated Africa Day on 24 May.

Themed 'Showcasing African unity in diversity', the main attractions were Univen arts groups and a debating competition.

"Univen is a university in transformation which is strengthening its position as locally relevant but globally competitive," said Univen's Director: International Relations, Cornelius Hagenmeier.

"The Univen community appreciates and celebrates its diversity as one of its core strengths. This celebration was an expression of the spirit of ubuntu which prevails at Univen and unites the university community."

The Univen debating fraternity and the Model United Nations explored whether Africa had improved since the continent committed to unite on

25 May 1963, the day the Organisation of African Unity was founded. The Univen debating society, which presented the argument that Africa then had been in a better state, won the contest.

Wiseman Ndhlovu and Nyeleti Mboweni presented a quiz in which they tested the audience's general knowledge of Africa. Those who answered the questions correctly were rewarded with African tokens.

Nomagamaphelile Bam, in white Xhosa attire, won the competition for the best dressed person wearing traditional attire.

The celebration was organised jointly by the Directorate of International Relations, the Student Representative Council and the Univen International Student Union.

Swati and Venda cultural dance groups performing.



SRC Deputy Secretary General, Tshepo Raseala, facilitated the debating competition.



"Univen is locally relevant but globally competitive" – Hagenmeier.

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Tendani Mutavhatsindi makes it against all odds

Some give up on their dreams due to financial constraints, but the thought of giving up never crossed Tendani Mutavhatsindi's mind.

He believed that education is the key to success. As it is often said, a poor background motivates.

His pain was put to ease during the recent Univen graduation ceremony, when he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree. However, there was more joy in store for him, as he was also named the

best student in Mathematics.

"I am really surprised as I was not expecting this, but I believe is through my hard work and dedication," said the 21 year-old who hails from Vhurivhuri Village. He encouraged students to work hard so that they can excel in their studies.

"If you have a bad attitude towards Mathematics, you will not make it. A positive attitude and hard work is the key. Education unlatches many job

opportunities. I hope it will help me to get my dream job," said Mutavhatsindi.

Several students received a school medallion. They were Fulufhelo Powrdness Tahulela, School of Health Sciences, Mulamuleli Tshitangano, School of Environmental Sciences, Zandile Petronella Khoza, School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Mushe Magoro, School of Management Sciences, Tshepo Pholo Raseala, School of Human and Social

Sciences, Khuthadzo Ngoma, School of Agriculture, Olufunmiyalo Tenidade Obadire, School of Education and Rufaro Emily Chikuruwo, School of Law.



The winners - From left, overall best student in the School of Health Sciences, Tahulela Fulufhelo, Overall best student in the School of Environmental Sciences, Tshitangano Mulamuleli and Overall best student in the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Khoza Zandile Petronella.



A proud moment - Tendani Mutavhatsindi and his mother.

The Univen schools' kings and queens

It was a great experience for most of Univen's first year students – the crowning of Mr and Miss Univen Schools.

The winners take care of most of the school projects, especially community outreach projects.



The School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences' queen and king (middle couple) are Nevhutalu Rotondwa and Makhani Murendeni.



Thulani Adonai and Vongani Dumela are the School of Management Sciences' king and queen.



For the School of Health Sciences the king is Lwazi Mhlongo and Amanda Sejaphala is the princess.



The School of Law's queen is Madihlaba Kgothatso (far left) and the king is Mulalo Rambau (centre) with Lerato Masenamela the first princess.



In the School of Education, Mhlongo Mumsy is the first princess, the queen is Noxolo Sihlangu and Mokalapa Potego the second princess.



In the School of Human and Social Sciences, Fortune Sambo is the first prince, Sandani Mulisa the king, Tshivhase Rotshidza the second prince, Nsuku Chavalala second princess, Mamafha Lindelani queen and Fhulufhedzani Tshisevhe the first princess.



For the School of Agriculture, Moalamedi Masechaba is the queen and David Makhanya the king.



In the School of Environmental Sciences, Emmanuel Mirenzheni is the first prince, Mureri Gundo the king and Ntwanano Baloyi the queen.

"While we search for faces, of course intellect and personality come into play as well," said the SRC Minister of Arts and Culture, Lerato Sebe.

"The event allows young people to discover themselves and be proud of who they are. The winners must do their level best and represent their schools well."

Fhulufhelo Khobo, Miss Univen 2016/2017, congratulated the winners and wished them well in taking up their duties as representatives of their schools.

"You hold a title of determination and confidence. Hold on to that spirit and never give up," she said.



Contestants greet the audience.

Orientation programme empowers interns

“Put theory into practice, as we want to equip you with skills,” said the Director of Human Resources at Univen, Tshililo Manenzhe.

Speaking at the recent interns-orientation programme, Manenzhe said internships offer graduates an opportunity to enter the workplace.

“It offers practical experience. Be marketable and have personal objectives in life. Your CV should be aligned to the job that you are applying for and should you need any assistance in drafting your CVs, I am happy to assist.

“The Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority and the National Research Foundation are doing a very good job for graduates. Make use of the information.

“Start applying for permanent jobs while still doing your internships. We do not expect you to finish your internship tenure. We must get notifications that you got permanent employment before the end of your contract.”

“Be able to adjust your personality at the workplace and work very hard,” said the Head of Communications and Marketing, Sharon Mashau.

“Be flexible as it will help you to make it in life. Have self-confidence and be tough. The sky is the limit. Have a positive attitude and you will succeed in life. Place your work experience before money. Good things in life do not come easy,” she said.

“Take this internship seriously,” said the Head of Organisational Development and Training, Patrick Rachidi.

“An internship is a good way to start your career. Treat your internship like a permanent job by always behaving ethically and professionally. Always be on time for work and do not take an extended lunch. Give notice of your absence in advance. Do not only concentrate on the work you do, also focus

on the way you carry out your duties. Prove to the employer that you are the best in your field. Use this internship to lay the foundation.”

Speaking on behalf of the SASSETA internship programme, Lorraine Matjila said that Univen should place interns at the correct departments.

“Interns’ timesheets and monthly reports must be submitted on the 15th of every month. Every intern should complete a timesheet daily so that we can see the progress.”

“I want to learn everything in the office and acquire skills in office administration,” said an intern in the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Khodani Nemukula.

“This includes taking minutes and preparing agendas for meetings. Before I complete my internship, I believe I will be ready to handle a permanent job.”



“Internships offer an opportunity to enter the workplace” – Manenzhe.



“Hard work is the recipe to succeed” – Mashau.



“Treat your internship like a permanent job” – Rachidi.



“Submit your work to line managers on time” – Matjila.



Khodani Nemukula wants to master office administration skills.

Developing inter-cultural competencies

Connecting Univen students and local communities with the global world is central to internationalisation.

An important aspect of this is the creation of opportunities for Univen students to develop intercultural competencies through interaction with their international counterparts in educational programmes.

A recent workshop of members from the Virginia Technical College of Engineering in the USA and Univen’s Institute for Rural Development explored how these competencies can be acquired. Postgraduate students from various Univen schools and visiting Virginia Tech students and academic staff members participated.

Through facilitated group interactions, participants defined the concept of intercultural competencies and considered strategies to enhance their attainment. The groups conceptualised how homestay programmes for international students could be utilised to develop such competencies in students and grassroots community members. Similar workshops will be facilitated in some grassroots communities of the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and North West. The results will be used to develop a model for homestays for rural development.

The Director of the Institute for Rural Development at Univen, Prof Joseph Francis, facilitated the programme and Dr Elewani Ramaite–Mafadza, the Manager of Univen’s Indigenous Music and Oral History Project, introduced the group to the rich Venda culture and heritage.

The workshop was a component of a national project, ‘Internationalising postgraduate training and grassroots social change’. It is implemented by the Institute for Rural Development, the Directorate of International Relations, the University of Fort Hare and the North West University. The project will be formally launched on 6 July.

First graduates in Primary Healthcare and District Health Services Management

The first cohort of postgraduates in the diploma in Primary Healthcare and District Health Services Management graduated at the Univen’s recent autumn graduation.

This NQF level 8 qualification is one of the programmes offered by the Department of Public health since January 2016. It is a one-year programme aimed to bridge the knowledge and skills gap of the graduates employed in the districts with limited public health management training.

It also acts as a feeder programme for the Master of Public Health programme in the department by providing important training to students with health and allied health background, who could not obtain an outright 60 percent in their honours degree to qualify for admission into the programme.

Prof Coplan speaks Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika

The Univen Library Hall was abuzz during the recent lecture series of the School of Human and Social Sciences.

Speaking at the lecture series, Professor Emeritus in Social Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Prof David Coplan, said the song “Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika (God Bless Africa), has come to symbolise more than any other piece of expressive culture the struggle for African unity and liberation in South Africa,

He said the song’s popularity extends beyond the borders of South Africa and the confines of the liberation struggle that it so actively animated.

“Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika, known as the African as well as South African national anthem, occupies a field of experience and practice at the intersection of public religion and popular culture.

“It was composed as a form of blessing, and the hymn offers a message of unity and an exhortation to act morally and spiritually on behalf of the entire African continent.

“Anthropology is about social relationships and their representations. We must explore culturally mediated relatedness. Graduates in anthropology must bring their deeper understanding of structure and agency to their research.

“Piracy is a huge problem in the music industry and so far, nothing can be done to combat it,” Coplan said.

“Once a pirate, always a pirate. People like what they like. That approach can never stop people from listening to international music. They can simply divert and play music from their memory sticks. Supporting local content starts within the inner self. If people are not willing to buy, then there is nothing to make them buy local music. We just need someone to educate them about the importance of buying and supporting local music. Africans produce good music, but our people do not support it. Instead,

they pirate it.”

Coplan has been researching and writing about South African performing arts and media since 1976. He is the author of numerous publications, including most notably ‘In Township Tonight! South Africa’s Black City Music and Theatre 1986’, revised, enlarged and published as the second edition in 2007.

A Doctor of Philosophy student in African Studies who specialises in music, Thulani Zulu, said he believed the other contributing factor is the language that our people use when singing.

In response, Coplan said language usage is not the issue, because in the past we had experienced artists like Brenda Fassie and Ladysmith Black Mambazo who used to score big whenever they released albums.

“The biggest challenge is the introduction of the internet. America has advanced internet usage, but piracy is not as bad as in Africa. We need to educate our societies about these challenges that are bothering us. If there is enough funding for music in our country, we will have good music.”

Coplan is also a specialist in the ethnographic history and performance culture of the Basotho of the southern part of Africa. His related works include in the Time of Cannibals: The Word Music of South Africa’s Basotho Migrants (Chicago 1994), and the film Songs of the Adventurers (Constant Spring Productions 1986).

He frequently talks on South African radio stations and appears on television as an art, culture and media commentator. He has also written extensively for the popular media and has a general readership beyond academic publishing. He frequently lectures on media issues at scholarly conferences, to the general public and to the private sector.



“We must explore culturally mediated relatedness” - Coplan.



“Language usage is degrading the standard of South African music” - Zulu.

Prof Masoga captures minds

“When I came up with the expression ‘making fish understand its water’, I knew that different people would invariably interpret it in different ways,” said Prof Mogomme Masoga.

Speaking at his recent professorial inaugural lecture, Masoga said this diversity is unavoidable for many reasons, especially people’s culturally-entrenched background.

“The title ‘Making the fish understand its water: Reflecting on Africanisation, indigenous knowledge and decoloniality of our time’ asserts the need for people to be cognisant of their most fruitful environment. The title simply means to teach the fish to understand and be aware of its needs for survival in the water as its habitat.

“The title was directed at Africans, urging them to understand their own context at their disposal. For over a century, colonial structures militated against the utilisation of indigenous knowledge systems.

Africa has rich cultural practices that can benefit us all, if taken seriously. My approach attempts to regard and treat local communities not as end-users of education, but also stakeholders in education, in education production.

“African cultural values, beneficiation and value, packaged in information knowledge systems, cannot be taken for granted because African communities are living libraries. The language debate in Africa has had some negative implications on the African cultural belief system. The education system in Africa should consider some education reforms. These comprise the use of local indigenous languages such as Tshivenda, Sesotho, Xitsonga, IsiZulu and Shona in learning subjects like Mathematics, History, Geography, Biology and Sciences at secondary and tertiary level. It is not that Africans are not good enough to grasp what they are being taught, but it is because scripts are examined and marked on the grammatical

correctness in English as the so-called official language to convince examiners.”

Univen’s Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat, applauded Masoga for realising the dream for all Africans.

“We need to stand united to conquer and reclaim our continent,” said the Premier of Limpopo, Stanley Mathabatha.

“As Africans we need to know where we come from to know where we are going.”

“Decolonisation is possible but there are other things that should come into play,” said Univen’s Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic, Prof Jan Crafford.

Speaking at the dinner, Crafford said we first need to understand where we are coming from and come up with proper approaches before we act.

“We first need to understand coloniality, pre-coloniality and post coloniality. How do we

decolonise education if it is still in a colonial language? This should be the point of departure for decolonisation.”

Brenda Zwane, a student doing a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations rendered a poem titled ‘African child’. The poem complemented Masoga’s lecture.

The lecture was attended by, among others, the Premier of Limpopo, Stanley Mathabatha, the MEC of Sport, Arts and Culture, Onica Moloi, the Acting Executive Mayor of the Vhembe District Municipality, Councillor Tshitereke Matibe, the Mayor of Thulamela Municipality, Councillor Avhashoni Tshifhango and Emeritus Professor David Coplan, who presented a series of lectures in the School of Human and Social Sciences as well as world renowned scholar, Prof Kwesi Prah, the founder and the Director of the Africa-wide Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society in Cape Town.



“Take Africa’s rich cultural practices serious” - Masoga.



“We need to know where we come from” - Mathabatha.



“We need to understand our historical development” – Crafford.



“African child” – Zwane.



Seen at the lecture – from left, Prof Kwesi Prah, MEC Onica Moloi, Prof Peter Mbat, Premier Stan Mathabatha, Prof Mogomme Masoga and Prof Jan Crafford.

Student exchange in early childhood education flourishes

Univen’s Department of Early Childhood Education, in the School of Education, continues to successfully implement its student exchange programme with the University College Leuven Limburg.

In the first semester 2017 the Department of Early Childhood Education is hosting two cohorts of exchange students at Univen for training in teaching practice and undertakes work-integrated learning in Mvudi and Tshiluvhi Primary Schools close to the campus.

The first group was hosted in February and March. The team, led by Prof Ndileleni Mudzielwana, structured activities to ensure that the students benefit from the exchange.

Meetings in which the visiting students shared their perspectives with local students, were organised. For example, in a talk delivered to students in the Bachelor of Education (Foundation Phase) (BED-FP) programme, they introduced the Belgian approach to remedial teaching, methods and strategies to Univen students.

Contact with the Belgian students is also of great benefit to the primary schools, their learners and teachers.

“During teaching practice, the exchange students modelled good practice of teaching learners with reading problems by dividing them in small groups to give them individual attention,” said Mudzielwana.



The Vhembe District welcomes the first cohort of exchange students.



Working together - Prof Mudzielwana welcomes the first cohort of 2017 exchange students Marijke Debacker, Michelle Lambrechts, Inne Volkaerts and Tine Coenegrachts.

“The Belgian students apply the Thrass method, teaching handwriting, reading and spelling skills. The students practiced the one-on-one or the one-on-four method of teaching reading and spelling skills for remedial learning.”

Each student has a mentor who regularly visits and provides support. The dedicated mentors are Mrs Mulovhedzi, Mrs Makhwathana, Ms Cassim and Dr Sikhwari.

Mentor Mrs Mulo-vhedzi takes notes while one of the exchange students assists the learner.



Thuthuka beneficiaries awarded

“This celebration of achievement serves as inspiration, especially to those students who may have resigned themselves to a priceless level of performance,” said Mutondji Mashamba, a Financial Accounting lecturer at Univen.

Speaking at the recent Thuthuka awards ceremony, Mashamba said the awards stimulate academic excellence by rewarding deserving students for their outstanding performance.

“It is about deserving students taking stock of their results of labour, attitude and motivation, and most importantly for all students to affirm and seek inspiration for future awards.

“We thank the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants for sponsoring the winning students. I congratulate all our dedicated, hardworking students for their achievements. I trust that this prize-giving ceremony will encourage you to further scale up your work.”

“SAICA supports students to grow the pipeline of the profession,” said the organisation’s Transformation and Growth Senior Executive, Gugu Makhanya.

“We initiated capacity building programmes for historically disadvantaged institutions across the country to obtain SAICA accreditation and ensure a sustainable channel. This would provide students with scarce skills programmes. Univen is one of the identified universities.

“Transformation of the profession and taking on our nation-building responsibility was a no-brainer, but a responsibility well embraced. This was made possible by key strategic partners as programmes like these require resources like the University of Johannesburg experts. This university helped universities like the Universities of Limpopo and Fort Hare and we hope that Univen will follow next year.

“Thank you to BANKSETA for financial resources – please continue to fund the project and the students until they become chartered accountants.”

Tshilidzi Mudzuli, a third level student and Thuthuka beneficiary, said Thuthuka became a relief.

“Many of us have grown through Thuthuka and if we were trees we would be reaching the moon by now. Assisting students to dedicate themselves towards their studies is of great importance as it encourages them to do better.”

“Look beyond salaries - also look at ways of creating employment for other people by starting your own businesses,” said Work Integrated Learning Manager, Simile Dhlamini.

“Chartered accountants are in demand so accounting students should venture into taking up this profession.”

“Univen is in need of funds and the number of the needy, yet deserving, is increasing every year,” said SRC President, Mandla Shikwambana.

He thanked all sponsors and funders.

In total 52 students received certificates of appreciation for their hard work. Among them was Phindile Ngubane, Phuluso Muligwe, Livhuwani Neswiswa and Migingiriko Nkuna who were the best performers in level one to level three. Ngubane and Muligwe were the overall best performers in the first year level, Neswiswa the overall best performer in the second year level and Nkuna (in absentia) the best performer in the third year level.



“The awards stimulate academic excellence” – Mashamba.



“Taking on our nation building responsibility was a no-brainer” – Makhanya.



“Students dedicated towards their studies is of great importance” - Mudzuli.



“Start your own accounting firms” – Dhlamini.



“Thanks to our sponsors” - Shikwambana.



A line up of achievers - Phindile Ngubane, overall best performer-first year level, Phuluso Muligwe, overall best performer-first year level and Livhuwani Neswiswa, overall best performer second year level.



“We appreciate your hard work” - SAICA Project Director Matsotso Tsoaledi.



We thank our sponsors - Representatives of the Department of Accountancy, SAICA, BANKSETA, Student Representative Council, Work Integrated Learning and award winners.



If you tell your mind that it is possible then it will be possible - Phathela.



“Disability is not a limitation” – Mbuva.

Participate in sports, even if you are physically challenged - Minister

“It is possible to participate in sports, even when you are physically challenged,” said Univen’s Minister of Gender and People with Disability, Ndamulelo Phathela.

Speaking at Univen’s recent fitness exhibition, Phathela encouraged people with disabilities to participate more in sports and not limit themselves because of their physical appearance.

The event was themed ‘Bridging the gap between sports and people with disability’.

“Everything is in the mind, if you tell your mind that it is possible then it will surely be possible.”

“Disability is not a limitation but a mere difference of physical appearance,” says Dr Tshifhiwa Mbuva, Head of Univen’s Disability Unit.

“Think about yourself before you can think about what other people will say - this will help you to live healthy lives.”

“Sports is part of what we need to do to bring social cohesion in society,” said Tshitereke Matibe from the Office of the Executive Mayor.

“The Office of the Executive Mayor has a budget for people with disability who are interested in sports. Approach us if you need funding for sports gear and traveling expenses.”

“We need students with disability to participate more in student councils around campus,” said the Deputy Chairperson of the Disability Student Unit, Musa Sekgobi.

Rapson Rambuwani performed a few of his well-known songs. Other entertainers included the Electro general group that performed dance routines.

Thapelo Mazwi, who is doing a master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning, shared a poem dedicated to people with disability.



Singing and dancing in action.



“We need more students with disabilities in student councils” – Sekgobi.

Applauding Univen's role in community development – Chief Nelwamondo

“Work hard to access those things which will help you succeed, do not wait for things to happen by miracle,” said Chief Nelwamondo.

Speaking at the recent Lwamondo Royal Council Career Awareness and Community Day for about 200 grade 12 learners of Lwamondo, Makhado, Shondoni, Luvhaivhai and Ndaedzo, Nelwamondo said elders must also lead by example for children to learn from them. Learners should consider studying scarce skills and applying them.”

“Life today is not the same way as in the olden days,” said the Development Officer at the Univen Foundation, Bally Makhado.

“Things have changed. Life today needs education if you want to survive. Employers need skills and competencies because the world is very competitive.”

“Apply on time - know your goals and have strategies on how to achieve them,” said Univen's Assistant Schools Liaison Officer, Justice Lebopa.

“Use the Univen services to drive you to your future destiny.”

“Education is one of the major keys for your success, so stick to everything which was shared with you,” said the representative from Dzondo Circuit, Naphtal Ramawa.

“Changing your background is in your hands,” said Dr Thizwilondi Mudau, from the Office of Gender and Youth Studies at Univen.

“The rights that you have should go with responsibilities.”

Representatives from SETAs and SANRAL explained programmes that they offer, including skills development and bursaries.

Univen's application forms for admission and residence, the prospectus and NSFAS brochures were distributed.



Eager for information - learners listening attentively.



“Do not wait for things to happen by miracle” - Nelwamondo.



“Have strategies to achieve goals” - Lebopa.



“Education is a major key to success” - Ramawa.



Learners at the Univen stall to gain from study information and application forms.



“Look at what the Services SETA has to offer” – Mbambale.



“How can HWSETA assist?” – Reve.



SANRAL at your service – Sentletse.

Non-communicable diseases contribute to high death rates



Gletion Mavasa checking the blood pressure of Ntsako Chauke.

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is one of the most prevalent non-communicable diseases responsible for high death rates in South Africa.

According to Ntsako Chauke, a master's student in Public Health at the Department of Public Health in the School of Health Sciences, blood pressure mostly rises and falls throughout the day.

“It can lead to serious health complications such as aortic dissection, heart diseases, dementia and mild cognitive impairment if it remains at its peak level for a very long time. There are no specific symptoms for hypertension. Most people do not realise that they have it even though they experience general symptoms such as recurring headache, shortness of breath and nosebleeds. It can only be identified through screening.”

He said the exact cause of hypertension is not known, but there are several factors which were found to be responsible for this medical condition.

“These factors include stress, obesity, substance abuse, ineffective lifestyle and too much salt in your diet. Hypertension can be controlled and treated. People should ensure that they contact a qualified and reliable medical practitioner who can prescribe the most effective medications for the condition. One can prevent hypertension by changing your lifestyle - eat healthy food, quit or reduce smoking and exercise regularly.

“Community members, including Univen students and students from other universities should be equipped with health education. This will help reduce the prevalence of hypertension and prolong the lifespan of the South African population.”

We would like to hear from you!

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