



Universities of Venda and Mpumalanga in the process of signing a MoU

On Friday, 07 June 2019, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) Management met with the management of the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) to discuss possible areas of collaboration, particularly in Research, Innovation and Technology Transfer; Student Governance, and Agriculture. This meeting took place at the Univen Council Chambers.

UNIVEN team was led by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal: Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, and other members were the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic: Professor Jan Crafford, the University Registrar: Professor Edward Nesamvuni, Director Research and Innovation: Senior Professor Georgelvo Ekosse, Dean School of Agriculture: Professor Jude Odhiambo, and Director Student Affairs: Lufuno Tshikhudo. The UMP delegation was led by its ViceChancellor: Professor Thoko Mayekiso, and other members were Director of Research Management: Professor Phindile Lukhele-Olorunju, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences: Professor Moses Mbewe, and Director of Student Affairs: Dr Paul Maminza.

During his Opening and welcome message, UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Nthambeleni presented an overview of the University in terms of proximities, and its vision and mission. He took them through the University's Schools, departments and various structures that form this institution. Dr Nthambeleni further presented UNIVEN's Enrolment figures, academic divisions, directorates, and units of the University. He said the University has an enrolment of 3 660 first time entering students and is seated at a total of 16 651 students.

While taking them through an overview of UNIVEN, Dr Nthambeleni presented its success rate and the per capita research output from 2013 to 2016. Among other things, Dr Nthambeleni presented the Institutional distribution of NRF Rated Researchers in RSA Universities in 2017. He said UNIVEN was awarded two NRF South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) Chairs and told the delegation from Mpumalanga that this is not an easy task because it comes after very tough work as it is awarded to the deserving individuals.

He presented the University's income and expenditure for the year 2016. Dr



Nthambeleni said UNIVEN is not well funded when compared to other historically disadvantaged universities. He presented infrastructural development and said the University has received several funds to better the lives of students during the previous years. "However, despite these investments on infrastructural development by government over the past ten years the University is still in dire need of more infrastructure. Upon the completion of current new student residences, the University will accommodate 26 % of its student population of 16 651."

He presented new buildings that are still under construction and those that have been completed. He told them that UNIVEN is one of the universities with a huge number of students living with disabilities. "Over the past six years, UNIVEN installed 20 standby generators between 200 and 630 KVA and there are water reservoirs that can last for up to 36 hours in terms of water supply." He also presented the current infrastructural projects which have now been completed while others are at an advanced stage.

When talking about the available broadband at UNIVEN, Dr Nthambeleni told the delegation from UMP that in terms of broadband UNIVEN is sifted quite well. "UNIVEN has a tablet handout project that is funded by the university and students. Ensuring a safe and secure campus, he said the University is in the process of implementing the Integrated Security Masterplan. In terms of protection services, it has the state-of-the-art control room where almost all corners of the University are under surveillance." Dr Nthambeleni said UNIVEN and UMP should be offering solutions to the farms around them due to their geographical locations. These institutions should take advantage of these farms around them.

Director: Research and Innovation, Senior Professor Ekosse presented Postgraduate supervision, collaborative research and postgraduate performance, and technology transfer at UNIVEN. He said in terms of masters and doctoral research, UNIVEN is doing well. He continued to present research publications outputs of South African universities.

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The UNIVEN team.

He said UNIVEN has not done badly as a University because the research output is good as compared to most South African historically disadvantaged public universities. In enhancing research at UNIVEN, Senior Professor Ekosse said there are more than 62 adjunct professors who assist with research, postgraduate supervision, and journal publications. He presented the research and innovation events and training workshops and programmes that are conducted through the Directorate of Research and Innovation, and UNIVEN's current research niche areas.

We run international research conferences. We have developed good partnerships such as the one with Walter Sisulu University (WSU) in South Africa and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) in Kenya and told the visitors that this is a very successful partnership. Senior Professor Ekosse continued to say that in order to fit in well, a university needs to be part of the 4th industrial revolution. He said researchers at UNIVEN have recently generated several patents. "Research collaborations are very important and boost universities. It can either be with other institutions of higher learning, communities, companies or government." He also spoke about NRF Rated Researchers that UNIVEN currently has and told them that there is a need to utilize the tools of the trade which will bring improvement in the postgraduate programmes, and research and publications.



Professor Thoko Mayekiso, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mpumalanga said in terms of the presentations made by both Dr Nthambeleni and Senior Prof Ekosse, UNIVEN and UMP can do quite well if they could consider collaborating on many areas of mutual interest because they are both comprehensive universities. She expressed that; Work Intergrated Learning is what is needed in order to produce employable graduates.



"Research collaborations are very important and boost universities. It can either be with other institutions of higher learning, communities, companies or government."

Universities of Venda and Mpumalanga in the process of signing a MoU continued...

Professor Mayekiso gave an overview of the University of Mpumalanga which started in 2014 but officially launched in October 2015. She presented UMP's vision 2022 and told the attendees of the meeting that UMP strives to be an African University by leading in creating opportunities for sustainable development through innovation. She presented the Missions and values where she said UMP is committed to excellence, integrity, diversity, collaboration, adaptability, relevance and inspiration values. She continued to say that UMP strives to offer quality educational and training opportunities that foster the holistic development of students through teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and engagement, in collaboration with strategic partners.

"The University of Mpumalanga is committed to offer its students a life changing experience through high quality curricula and Co-curricular programmes." She presented their graduates attributes which are: respectful, responsive and responsible. "We want our students to be innovative and entrepreneurial, to be sound and discipline, confident and effective in communication. We want them to be ethically and socially aware change agents."

She presented their niche areas which are on Agriculture, Hospitality and Tourism, Information Communications Technology, and Education where she said their enrolment in 2014 was 189 students and this year, they are seated at 3400 students. "The qualifications that are offered by UMP include diplomas, bachelor degrees, advanced diplomas, honours and masters degrees. Prof Mayekiso presented the list of international partnerships that the University has. She said they also have African partnerships and South African partnerships.



Professor Moses Mbewe, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences at UMP presented the possible areas of collaboration in Agriculture. He presented the schools that are found in the Faculty of Agriculture which are: School of Agricultural Sciences, Biology and Environmental Sciences, Chemical and Physical Sciences and Computing and Mathematics Sciences which offers diploma in ICT. He further presented all programmes or qualifications that are offered by UMP.

"These are the areas that we need possible collaboration with Univen," he said. He continued to say that they have 8 Agricultural programmes offered at UMP. He said UMP has partnerships with various game farms that take students for Work Integrated Learning. "There are number of areas that we can sit down and talk about possible partnerships looking at the qualifications that both universities have."

"There are areas under computing and mathematical Sciences in which the UMP is working with the Provincial Department of Agriculture where students are taught how to use technology in agriculture. I think there are many areas in which we can collaborate. Our students have not yet experienced problems in terms of employment. They are being absorbed by these organisations where they do their Work Integrated Learning."



Professor Phindile Lukhele-Olorunju: Director of Research Management from University of Mpumalanga said they need to show students and staff members the importance of doing research. She said most of UMP's staff members are studying towards postgraduate qualifications. "We are trying to make our academics to be well qualified, academic staff need to have Doctoral qualifications. In terms of research we have policies that supports this idea."

"We encourage our staff to develop themselves. We have good collaboration from international bodies. Currently UMP has 14 NGAP Lecturers in various programmes who are all doing PhDs." She indicated that under development studies, UMP have agreements which allow researchers to work together. "We have links that ensure that we grow as a University. We want to have strategic partners such as Univen. We have 5 postdoctoral employees and majority of them are funded by UMP. A lot of people are interested in working with us that is why UMP is not struggling in terms of attracting employees." She mentioned that UMP has 5 NRF Rated Researchers. "Your (Univen)'s research output is very interesting and encouraging including the research chairs that the University currently has."

It was indicated that indicated that UMP owns a hotel that also assists the University to generate income.



UMP Director of Student Affairs, Dr Paul Maminza, said as a University, they also ensure that there is quality of student life in their campuses. He continued to mention that; within Student Affairs they strive for quality of student excellence. "Our aim is to have a functional student leadership, we need SRC that strives for contribution towards developing the university." He further expressed that; the management of their University have monthly meetings with SRC to discuss some of the possible contributions that will ensure that their University is driven in the right direction. "We provide opportunities for the SRC to go out to other countries to learn how other students from various countries behave. It should not be about protesting all the time, they need to know other ways of bringing positive change for all students, they need to contribute in the growth of the university. When they are away, they learn how other students do much of work with little resources that they have."

He explained that their students are encouraged to participate in sport and their soccer team is being promoted to the SAB league because it has topped the league that it was participating in. Dr Maminza told Univen management that the

National Lottery awarded 27 Million to improve their sporting facilities and their University is about to launch an 8-track field of athletics which was constructed with the money donated by the National Lottery. "The funding from lottery was for all sporting activities that are found at the UMP."

When talking about the issue of student accommodation he said UMP currently has 611 beds on campus. In August they will be adding another 217 beds to the number that they already have. "Accommodation residences in Siyabuswa Campus have computer labs where students can study at any time of the day."



Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo, Director Student affairs said that the Student Affairs plays a very big role in the University. He continued to mention that historically disadvantaged Universities are struggling with the growth in terms of intake due to limited space of both classes and accommodation, not excluding offices for staff members. "There are lot of areas where we can engage in terms of sports collaboration. In terms of student leadership, we need to collaborate so that SRC members can learn a lot from each other." He said in terms of gender UNIVEN has put in the policy that it should be 50/50 of gender balance.

Mr Tshikhudo touched the matter of student tablet projects because students come from different backgrounds hence the University and SRC decided to contribute certain amount to help students from poor background as well and all first entering students get these tablets. "In terms of accommodation, Mr Tshikhudo told the visitors from UMP that the University has a policy when allocating rooms that are found on campus. He said students who are performing well academically are allocated rooms before the average students." We are hoping that by next year we will be able to accommodate more than 10 000 students on campus which is more than 50% of the University's enrolment."

In discussing the closure and way forward, Dr Nthambeleni said that Universities owe it to themselves that there is need to produce future leaders. "We need to do our level best in making sure that we produce the best. We need to collaborate in order to learn from each other. He supported the presentation of UMP of making sure that they expose their SRC members to the environment of other international universities. This assists them in coming up with fresh minds and approaches towards challenges." Even on research he said there is need to collaborate especially on the supervision of postgraduate students. A document will be exchanged before the day of signing a MoU which will lead to the development of MOAs.

The Vice-Chancellor of Mpumalanga University said they are ready to sign the MoU. "What is left now is that we draft it and UNIVEN delegation visits UMP where this MoU will be signed."

UNIVEN Launches a Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation Community Engaged Research Project

The University of Venda launched a Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation community engaged research project on 14 May 2019 at the Research Conference Centre. The launch was attended by invited students whose activities, organisations and societies are entrepreneurial in nature as well as Stakeholders from municipalities, SEDA Thohoyandou Business forum and all interested organisation around Thohoyandou. Director of Community Engagement, Professor Vhonani Netshandama in her capacity as the NFR supported project leader of a project entitled, developing a Socially Innovative and Entrepreneurship culture through Community Engagement, A case of UNIVEN, unpacked the background of the project and pointed out its imperatives. Netshandama unveiled two broad aims underpinning the project. Firstly, the need to investigate the role that community engagement can play in developing entrepreneurship and social innovation initiatives in Vhembe District – And since the Community Engagement functions of a University is performed by students and staff, the project would provide an opportunity for students to develop the graduate attributes required for the job market. She further emphasised that “this should also serve as learning platforms for work integrated learning for Univen students.”

Secondly, to create a point of intersection for the efforts of the municipalities, civil society, government, businesses and the University community to develop an entrepreneurial culture in the University and its surrounding. To her, the approach is one “vital path for responsible citizenship towards the development of Thohoyandou as a healthy University town.”

Some of the key points highlighted by Netshandama were “staff and students have to be socially entrepreneurial and innovative, have business mindset, coupled with a service-delivery/servant spirit”, she said. Enterprise development and entrepreneurial skills should form part of the academic value chain. For example, Entrepreneurial development should be incorporated into the curriculum. Community engagement initiatives could be both scholarly, innovative, entrepreneurial and service oriented.



Above: The Director of Community Engagement

“staff and students have to be socially entrepreneurial and innovative, have business mindset, coupled with a service-delivery/servant spirit”

UNIVEN Launches a Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation Community Engaged Research Project continued...



Dr Robert Martin, DVC Operations, UNIVEN

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Operations, Dr Robert Martin, outlined the proposed 'UNIVEN rejuvenation plan'. He indicated that the University intends to strengthen influence on building the entrepreneurial culture within the University staff and students' engagement by capitalising on collaboration in the Quadruple Helix nexus. UNIVEN has to strengthen entrepreneurship education and research; the government should provide the support through different implementation arms; the business environment should be onboard and the role of communities on entrepreneurial development must be outlined and acted upon. An important factor is a push to reduce barriers to student entrepreneurship on campus, he said. He maintained that Social Entrepreneurship Development programme will offer good platforms for young entrepreneurs to showcase their innovation that could be supported to operate within the University and beyond.

Furthermore, he alerted the students to be on the lookout for the UNESCO supported programmes for entrepreneurship education and development.



Mr Donald Hlongwane, Business Advisor, SEDA

Mr Donald Hlongwane, Business Advisor, SEDA supported that students with innovative entrepreneurial ideas should be assisted to develop them. There are numerous opportunities available for young people interested in entrepreneurship. He alluded to the fact that lack of information has been an issue. Skills development amongst young people is another constraint. Hence, there should be support mechanisms to leverage these issues and enhance entrepreneurial activities. He lauded the initiators of the launched project and pledged support to ensure sustainability of the project.

Mr Gideon Ramulifho, Coach UNIVEN Tennis Club purported that it is important to enhance entrepreneurial development. However, the development must start with the management. Those at the forefront of the programme should improve their minds before they attempt to decolonise the minds of others. He mentioned that there is a huge problem with our education system. He suggested that every student should undergo a compulsory entrepreneurial



Mr Gideon Ramulifho, Coach UNIVEN Tennis Club

course, possibly for six months, irrespective of their disciplines, before completing a degree. Through this, people will acquire skills that may help them identify an innovation to hold onto while they are in transition to the labour market.



Mr N. Makhavhu, Practitioner LED, Vhembe District Municipality

Mr N Makhavhu, a practitioner from the Local Economic Development (LED), Vhembe District Municipality, mentioned that "our educational system is such that everyone thinks of what the society holds for the graduates." The minds need to be decolonised from the in-depth point of view such that young people begin to see and understand the reality of life. "The pedagogy must be reformed to produce skilled and competent graduates that will not add to the existing unemployed at the labour market." Mr Makhavhu joined others to stress the need for a wide range of awareness and capacity building in whichever way possible.



Mr John Mudau, CEO UIGC



Cross-session of the participants during the project launch

UNIVEN Launches a Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation Community Engaged Research Project continued...

Dr John Mudau, the CEO of the Univen Innovative Growth Company (UIGC) PTY (LTD) implored students to build career path along with entrepreneurship, mapping out that the population is growing, things are getting tougher and only innovators may earn a better living in the emerging society." As a way of motivating young individuals, he said, his Company has introduced entrepreneurship foundation scheme where innovative entrepreneurs could compete and be awarded grants for entrepreneurial activities.



Mr Ishmael Lwara, a PhD Candidate, UNIVEN

Ishmael Lwara, a PhD candidate in Rural Development, whose research is on entrepreneurship raised student concerns in fourfold:

- Firstly, poor entrepreneurial environment and stringent university policies that favours well developed entrepreneurs than the students;
- Secondly, lack of innovation development hubs/offices/labs on campus;
- And thirdly, perceptions and general lack of support during student life on campus as well as the;
- mindset of handouts and entitlement of most youth.



Cross-session of participants during the event

Mr Lwara draws inferences on two empirical concerns that social entrepreneurship should address. Firstly, "parents, for sociocultural factors and lack of education want their offspring to build a career in the elite disciplines and pensionable jobs. Hence, the place of entrepreneurial activity is totally ignored." In other words, there is a huge need for awareness programmes. He also emphasised on the frustrating policies and poor entrepreneurial environment that deter entrepreneurial development. Lwara suggested empowerment initiatives and policy reviews to provide a stable entrepreneurial environment for students. He concluded by stating that UNIVEN has a role to play in developing its students.

Mr Tshedza Sikhware, a master's in political science student, suggested the need for robust researches on entrepreneurial projects. He confirmed that entrepreneurial

activities are pivotal economic resource that should be harnessed to meet the development pace in South Africa. Hence, the university is saddled with huge responsibility of graduating entrepreneurs who can provide job opportunities and not employees. This sentiment was deliberated by many other students in attendance.

Whereas, some postulated skills advancement and capital, many concur that entrepreneurial culture is lacking from childhood. Therefore, rather than starting at institution of higher learning, there is a need to look at ways in which entrepreneurship education could start at primary schools.

The launch was followed by a few days of formal coaching in which students were encouraged to generate business ideas and solicit support from respective units in the University and beyond.



Mr Tshedza Sikhware, a Masters in Political Science student, UNIVEN

Chemistry Department Conducts Safety Seminar to Create Awareness

On Wednesday, 29 May 2019, the University of Venda (Univen)'s Department of Chemistry in the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences held the Safety Seminar to create safety awareness to chemistry postgraduate students who are conducting their research and experiments in the laboratories. This safety seminar took place at the Research Conference Centre.

The goals for this seminar were to help chemistry postgraduate students to follow proper procedures when working in the laboratories; to properly store and handle chemicals and reagents; make them aware of the dangers that might occur in the laboratory and the use of safety equipment in the laboratories; make them aware of the steps that should be taken in case of an emergency that might save a life and to be able to follow emergency preparedness plan in case of fire.



Chemistry Postgraduate students, Vhembe district Municipality fire safety staff and Univen staff members posing for a photo after fire safety demonstration

Chemistry Department Conducts Safety Seminar to Create Awareness continued...



When opening and welcoming guests, Dean of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Prof Natasha Potgieter thanked organisations that came to educate Univen students and staff about the dangers of chemicals and how to handle them. She encouraged postgraduate students to take note of everything as this would help them in avoiding unnecessary incidences that might put their lives at risk. "Make this a fruitful venture and let us continue to value events like this because they don't usually present themselves." Prof Potgieter also mentioned that chemicals are not only found in the laboratory, we also use other chemicals at our homes on daily basis and we need to be careful and know how to handle them but to do that, we need trainings like this.

They advised postgraduate students to know the emergency safety signs and what they signify or resemble. The two touched a matter of Emergency Action Plan (EAP) where they advised the audience to know basic emergency measures and first aid for chemicals in the eyes.



Vincent Lotter from Lasec demonstrated the way in which anything is possible in the lab and told students to never mix chemicals that they are not sure of because those chemicals could explode and burn them or even the whole building. He demonstrated about the safe storage of flammable solvents in the laboratory. Lotter said storage of flammables within the lab becomes more common and people should be careful when working with or handling those kinds of chemicals.



Dr Lutendo Chester Murulana and Dr Nikita Tavengwa Lecturers in the Department of Chemistry spoke about Chemical spillage, signage and waste management. They said the University, its staff and students should work together in making sure that laboratories and all buildings are always safe. They also told postgraduate students to report dangerous goods in the laboratory. "If you suspect that something is malfunctioning in the lab please report it."

They also taught them about proper and safer ways to use the laboratory instruments or housekeeping. Under this topic, the two doctors spoke, and tackled matters related to species that are hazardous; safety in the laboratory, occupational Health and safety act (OHASA). "There are specific Personal Protective Equipment that you need to wear before you enter the laboratory even when you are not going to touch any chemical, always be careful". They taught students about how to handle flammable chemicals.

Dr Murulana and Dr Tavengwa said in case of spillage, there are seven steps to be followed. They said one should assess the risk, select PPE, confine the spill, stop the source, evaluate the incident and implement clean up, decontaminate and complete required reports.

He displayed various classification of flammable liquids and taught them on the possibilities of preventing explosive atmosphere. He said ventilation is the key. He also told them to always take a note and be aware of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHASA) everywhere they go.



On behalf of Chemistry postgraduate students, Raymond Tshiluka, Chemistry PhD candidate spoke about awareness from current hazardous incidences. He advised students to take what they have learned from this safety seminar seriously because those

things will help them not only in the lab but also in life. He warned them to never take those teachings for granted. "Never enter the lab without a lab coat on and never handle chemicals without gloves and eye goggles because PPE is very important for your health and that of others. Let us get our degrees while we are still in good conditions."

Mr Hendric Sibara, from Vhembe District Municipality Fire Station presented about Fire Safety. He said students have a tendency of destroying fire extinguishers and all safety equipment when they are on strike. This is a very serious activity that is harmful to all students and might catch up with them sooner or later. What you do today



Regarding the Emergency Medical Services was Dr Khathutshelo Norman Hadzhi from Eagle 911 who handled the first aid demonstration. He presented on the Lab Safety where he said the University should have a policy on the safety of the laboratory. He said in emergency, we talk about prevention not responding to the incidences and accidents. Dr Hadzhi told the audience that fire extinguishers should be serviced and there should be someone assigned to monitor them especially the expiry date.

"Before you enter any lab, check the surroundings, assess the area, look for things that you might need to use in case of emergency. Check where the exit is." He encouraged them to always wear PPE before they enter the lab and warned them to wear it properly. "Wear proper shoes. First aid should be first. Before you enter the laboratory, you need to be inducted." He told lecturers to never allow students to enter laboratory without proper PPE and to make sure that their Laboratories have safety kits. "There is a need for students to do CPR course because this course will make first aid easier for students in case of emergency."

He thanked the University for inviting them to talk about safety at Univen.



might affect other people's lives in future. He spoke about methods of extinguishing fire. Mr Sibara said there are four methods of extinguishing fires which are smothering, starvation, cooling and chemical reaction inhibition and encouraged students to know at least what to use to stop the fire from doing more harm. He said that, during emergency, they should dial the number 10177 and, on the cellphone, they should dial 911.



Mr Hendric Sibara during the fire safety demonstration

Chemistry Department Conducts Safety Seminar to Create Awareness continued...



Vote of thanks was rendered by Mr Takalani Phosiwa from Maintenance section of Facilities Management Department. He thanked all students and organisations that participated in this programme.



Guests from other organisations that participated, chemistry postgraduate students and Univen staff listening to the presenters



Group photo of attendees of the safety seminar

**Council
on Higher
Education
encourages
UNIVEN to
always strive
to produce
the best
graduates**

A delegation from the Council on Higher Education (CHE) Support visited the University of Venda on Thursday, 06 June 2019. Led by the Chief Executive Officer of CHE, Prof Narend Bajinath, the delegation included Dr Sanele Nene Researcher: Institutional Audits Directorate and Ms Olivia Mokgatle Director: National Standards and Review. The purpose of the visit was to familiarize the University with the motion of anticipated audit by the CHE. Some of the matters considered during the visit included

potential challenges that the University could be confronted with in terms of its performance particularly in respect of the production of quality graduates, the quality of qualifications offered, maintenance of quality teaching and learning, infrastructural development, University governance, but above all, the audit of University programmes was the primary reason for the visit. The meeting was held at the University's Council Chambers.



From L-R Ms Olivia Mokgatle (Director: National Standards and Review), Dr Bernard Nthambeleni (Univen Vice-Chancellor and Principal), Prof Narend Bajinath (CHE CEO) and Dr Sanele Nene (Researcher: Institutional Audits Directorate)

Council on Higher Education encourages UNIVEN to always strive to produce the best graduates continued...

During his opening and welcome remarks, UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni expressed his appreciation for the visit by the delegation from CHE and pledged the UNIVEN's commitment to incorporate all the inputs made by the delegation and effective implementation of all the recommendations made. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University, Dr Nthambeleni further thanked the delegation from CHE and told them that UNIVEN highly regard this visit and will make sure that the University complies with the rules that governs the quality of qualifications offered at UNIVEN.



Dr Nthambeleni further confirmed that the University Management would proactively come up with a plan to overcome the challenges. He said this plan will ensure that the University continues to produce the best graduates and will also enable the institution to sustain itself. "Another factor that will assist UNIVEN to move forward is to ensure that all key positions are filled. We view the audit as something that is intended to make us a better institution. We shouldn't see the audit as a threat that is aimed at identifying our shortcomings that could lead to the withdrawal of certain programmes or qualifications. We should not only comply when the institution is about to be audited. The audits should be conducted to sustain the University and to make the institution one of the best in the country."

"Although there is still a need for improvement, UNIVEN is doing its best in terms of infrastructure development. He concluded his talk by mentioning that UNIVEN is committed to improve its financial position and that the University will make sure that all the challenges are attended to.



CHE Chief Executive Officer, Prof Narend Bajinath explained that, their view is that the University will benefit greatly through the CHE audits. He mentioned that all institutions should meet the requirements and certain standards because compliance will make sure that institutions produce quality graduates that are employable.

He stated that, out of 26 public institutions there are those that are doing well. According to him, most historically black institutions are faced with several challenges. "Irrespective of the challenges that they are faced with, these institutions should make sure that quality education is being provided at all times. We don't want to be in a situation where employers choose not to employ your graduates because of matters that can be avoided." He encouraged UNIVEN

Management to always strive to produce the best graduates because employers talk among each other about the type of graduates that institutions produce. "We don't want to be in a situation where UNIVEN graduates are being sidelined or rejected by employers. Continue to produce employable graduates."

CHE CEO stated the importance of having an effective internal quality assurance system. He said their job as CHE is to make sure that an institution qualifies to offer these programmes. "We assess whether an institution has what it takes to offer those programmes."

"We are not here as the police, but we are here to assist you, to support and guide you to be the best or to at least be on the same standard with other institutions. It is important to start early and make sure

that you are well prepared before the audit takes place. Don't wait for us to come first so that you can start preparing, give yourselves time to prepare for our visits. Let us all work towards a common goal which is to meet the required standards."

In his concluding remarks, Prof Bajinath said in order to overcome all the challenges, UNIVEN should work as a team. He thanked UNIVEN Management for a warm welcome and the hospitality. He further encouraged UNIVEN to continue doing well and preserve the University's reputation.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, Prof Jan Crafford said, irrespective of all the challenges highlighted, UNIVEN is doing its best to make sure that it produces the best graduates.



Dr Kholofelo Mothibi, Deputy Dean of the School of Law commended the team that audited the standard of LLB programme at UNIVEN. She said, "through the audit, the current standard is exceptional. The

UNIVEN LLB degree is fully accredited by the HEQC. However, the main challenge that need to be given attention in the School of Law is the matter of space".



Ms Olivia Mokgatle, Director: National Standards and Reviews said they found it very useful to assess institutions of higher learning because this helps most institutions to detect problems that they might not be aware of and as a result, institutions get an opportunity to tackle such challenges. "After the audits, we share with the respective institutions, areas that need to be improved. Trends across the sector and across the institution enable institutions to reflect or detect the errors which can be tackled at a later stage." She said when auditing programmes at these institutions, they use the national benchmark standards to rate the quality of a programme. Ms Mokgatle further explained that, this allows them to look at the institutional capacity to offer a certain programme.



The Dean of the School of Human and Social Sciences, Prof Mokgale Makgopa commended the role of CHE in terms of assisting institutions to offer quality programmes. He thanked the senior management of the University for their hard work.

"The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) is fully accredited. Hence, we have received conditional accreditation for Master of Social Work (MSW) with two short term conditions from CHE. We are committed to address all matters identified to ensure that we receive full accreditation," he concluded.



A group photo of Univen Senior Management, Quality Assurance and CHETL staff members as well as delegation from CHE

HR staff members attends a national human resource management standards workshop

The University of Venda (Univen) Human Resource Department, OD and Training unit coordinated the National Human Resource Management Standards Workshop from the 23-24 April 2019 at Council Chambers.



The training was intended to inform the Human Resource Staff members on the new SABPP strategic vision culminated in the rebranding of SABPP and the "setting HR standards" tagline as the main strategic focus of the work of the HR professional and quality assurance body.

This workshop was attended by 24 HR staff members and 2 staff members from UIGC who showed interest in gaining knowledge and skills when it comes to National Human Resource Management Standards.

Maphutha Diaz, National Human Resource Management Standards facilitated the training. He spoke about the functions of the National Human Resource Management Standards and the opportunities or actions for improving performance against the standard elements as they could apply to the organisation. He said it is a duty for the HR practitioner to know all the 13 HR standards so that they can make changes and improve their knowledge and skills and also to have the good customer relation. He further indicated that the HR practitioner should know the University Strategic Plan and also take into consideration the HR management system standard model for South Africa.

Diaz advised the HR practitioners to have more knowledge on what they are doing and also read their policies within their organisation in order to provide more information regarding Human Resource Management. He said that the duties of HR practitioner to give their employees all information they are in need of for smooth running of the institution. Mr Maphutha made a very helpful presentation on Human Resource Management Standards and he gave each participant a file with learner guide and group work. At the end of the training, participants were given evaluation forms in order to assess the effectiveness of the training as well as to rate the training facilities and logistical arrangements.

The participants managed to complete the evaluation form.

The training was a success as most of the participants showed their satisfaction and sincere appreciation for the training on the evaluation forms. However the training should take at least 3-4 days as there are 13 HR standards to be explained in detail. Due to the limited time frame and other commitment in HR department, the facilitator squeeze more HR standards into two days.

Ground-breaking research from the Department of Zoology modifies our understanding of the evolution of species.



Photo by: Prof. Peter Ryan, Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town

The evolution of species is a topic that has intrigued humankind since the idea was first proposed by Charles Darwin in 1859. The process by which species evolve is known as speciation, and although our understanding of this process has come a long way since Darwin's time, his basic idea still holds true - that species evolve through descent from a common ancestor, very much like how the branches of a tree all stem from a common trunk. The branches of this evolutionary tree signify the lines of descent, and the leaves and small twigs attached to the branches represent all the different species. Yet, the idea that a species could evolve through the mixing (or hybridization) of two different species goes completely against Darwinian thinking, and is an almost completely foreign concept in the animal kingdom. How could two different twigs on our evolutionary tree fuse together and form a third twig? The most famous biologists of the 19th and 20th centuries frowned upon this idea for several reasons. Firstly, species are not supposed to be able to breed together with other species - they are said to be reproductively isolated. Secondly, if two species are adapted to different environments, then any offspring they produce would be an intermediate mix of both species characteristics, and therefore not adapted to either of the parental environments. And lastly, in the rare cases when the first two reasons are fulfilled, what is stopping a successful hybrid between two species from breeding with members of either parental population and so disappearing as fast as it appeared in the first place?

This week, a team of international researchers led by Professor Yoshan Moodley of our own Department of Zoology, publish a paper in evolutionary biology's most acclaimed journal - Molecular Biology and Evolution. In this paper, they show that two species can indeed hybridize naturally in the wild to give rise to a third species, thereby fundamentally altering our understanding of the evolution of species. In this extremely rare case of hybrid speciation, Prof Moodley's team show that two species of subAntarctic seabirds with different feeding strategies and reproductive seasons, have hybridized to create a new third species, with an intermediate feeding strategy that allows it to feed more efficiently than either of its parents, and an intermediate reproduction time that does not overlap with the breeding of either parent. This forces the new hybrids to breed only amongst themselves, thus maintaining the newly evolved species as completely separate from its parental species. This finding yet again draws the world's spotlight to the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences and showcases the University of Venda as an international centre of excellence in evolutionary biology.

"Salvin's prion (*Pachyptila salvini*) is capable of flying thousands of kilometres across the vast expanses of the Southern Ocean, where it breeds on sub-Antarctic islands such as South Africa's Marion Island. Research led by UniVen's Department of Zoology used molecular genetics to identify Salvin's prion as a rare hybrid species.

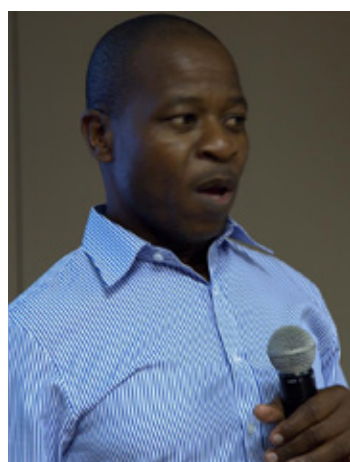


Group photo of attendees of the workshop

Live within your Financial Means

"It is important that you live within your financial means and not beyond your financial means". These are the words by Mr Mlungisi Mashinini of IEMAS during the Personal Financial Management and Stress Management workshop which was organised for UNIVEN employees by Human Resources Directorate. The workshop which aimed at the financial well-being and employee wellness programme, was held at the University's Research Conference Centre on Wednesday, 12 June 2019.

Mr Mashinini advised employees to buy only when there is a need and not a want. He indicated that it is important to exercise discipline in terms of finances. In his talk Mashinini gave reasons why most of the people are financially failing, which is mainly due to lack of knowledge on financial management. He mentioned that today people want to have everything without having plans and goals.



As he continued with his presentation, Mr Mashinini advised employees to save in order to have peace of mind and that savings can lead to improved spending patterns. He encouraged people to buy houses than cars which quickly depreciate. Mr Mashinini also talked about the power of a signature and advised that before signing anything or a contract, people should first understand or seek help. He also touched on the importance of insurance and pointed that it is better to protect those whom you would leave behind and the assets that you worked so hard for.

In his conclusion, he made mentioned of the importance of having a will in place whilst still alive. Mr Mashinini advised people to get a professional Financial Advisor in order to make informed decisions.

Mr Mlungisi Mashinini was accompanied by his colleague, Mr Jacob Shipalana.



Ms Ntsundeni Mulaudzi from Careways spoke comprehensively about the Stress Management. She explained different types of stresses and how to manage stress.

Ms Mulaudzi explained stress as the body's method of reacting to a condition such as a threat, challenge or physical and psychological barrier. She indicated that stress is dangerous and can lead to depression. Most of the people are in denial and they do not seek help, as a result, they end up losing their lives. She advised people to seek help before it is too late.

She further explained the concept of stress management, which is a wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's level of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for improving everyday functioning. Stress produces numerous physical and mental symptoms which vary according to an individual's situational factors such as financial problems, career, relationship problems, academic schedule, health problems and personal habits.

She concluded her presentation by outlining the stress management techniques which include time management, personal responsibility, thinking positively, having faith, setting goals, effective communication, solving problems and staying physically and mentally healthy. She told the audience that stress has a way of destroying people's organs inside and can also bring illnesses some of which can be chronic.



When welcoming the audience, the Director Human Resources, Mrs Uanda Ndou stated that be the best version of yourself as this makes an impact to the next person. She highlighted that the best version of ourselves make productivity to go up. She indicated that this kind of sessions are organised to help employees to understand that money is working for them. She encouraged employees to attend such workshops as they are designed to help them in managing their financial well-being and wellness.



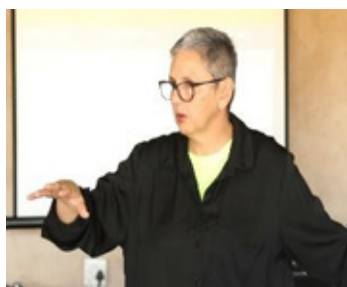
Mr Lufuno Netshifhefhe, Head: Quality Assurance, proposed a vote of thanks while Ms Nkhangweleni Mudau, Employees Health and Wellness practitioner facilitated the programme.



More Staff members get insights on what community engagement scholarship is all about



Workshop participants listening to the facilitator of the workshop



On 12 and 13 June 2019, Community Engagement Directorate hosted a workshop to make University of Venda (Univen) staff aware and understand the relevance to practice and to work with communities. This workshop took place at Porche Villa Hotel, Muledane.

The workshop facilitator, Ms Cuzette du Plessis from University of Limpopo, Rural Development, and Innovation Hub (RDIH), advised the participants to take time to know the communities before starting a community engagement project. "CE activities should be relevant and responsive to both the communities and the students," she said. Ms. du Plessis used pictures and video clips to kick-start conversations about worldviews and philosophies, asking the question:

- What world views/philosophies/ attitudes are reflected in the pic/clips?
- To what extent will these world views strengthen or weaken decolonized practices in TL, Research and CE?

She further encouraged participants to find out from community members, issues that they feel strong about because that can help an engaged scholar to change their thinking about what's important. "Be able to manage realistic expectations and always remember that community engagement should be an integrated academic core activity". "Think of CE as a pizza. She argued that students and community members should be involved in Community Engagement to be integrated core academic activity. She emphasized the need for engaged conversations, which she said is an integral ingredient of CE in higher education, particularly as ideas and practices have to be engaged and critiqued.

"Community engagement must be student centered and there is a need to create a context for students to think out of the box."

Participants also discussed key principles to be considered before embarking on community engagement projects. The overview of community engagement, national and international trends; the idea of an engaged University and community engagement as integrated scholarship. The proposed partnership with Marude was at the centre of the discussion about what might be the flagship CE project of the University.

Prof Vhonani Netshandama, Director: Community Engagement also emphasised that academics should be more creative about engaging students for better graduates' attributes. "We need to rethink and shift towards giving our students an opportunity and responsibility to play their roles." Learning should be engaging. As much as students learn from lecturers, lecturers should also learn from students. Undergraduate students are smarter than we give them credit for. Prof Netshandama further re-iterated the plea for more academics to engage Marude high school through the office of Community Engagement. She concluded her talk by advising participants to create an enabling environment for participation of students to bring fresh ideas"

Group exercises were also used to make participants understand and relate to community engagement concepts and dynamics. Groups also had an opportunity to plan possible community engagement projects for the school and or department. Each participant was asked to reflect about what could be the "entrance point" for scholarship of engagement.



Attendees sharing opinions during group exercises

Dr Emmaculate Ingwani, a senior lecturer at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, shared with participants the spatial planning work that she is doing at Marude with a group of URP students. She indicated that she and her students have already visited Marude several times and that various stakeholders are involved in the project amongst others, Univen staff and students, Thulamela, GIS in Environmental Sciences, Community Engagement Directorate,

Ngovhela community, and Marude secondary. Students work in groups and will be expected to provide a comprehensive report upon completion, which will be evaluated accordingly. One of the research questions the students are asking is, "How can we come up with better Marude in terms of settlement?", "If Marude is the neighbor of a top-notch university in Limpopo province which is UniVen, what type of school is it supposed to be?" She asked.



Above is Dr Emmaculate Ingwani from the School of Environmental Sciences, Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URP) presenting a project she is involved with together with the URP students at Marude Secondary School

More Staff members get insights on what community engagement scholarship is all about continued...

Dr Ingwani's initiatives was laudable. Other participants indicated that they were inspired by her initiatives.

Dr Mushaphi, the Deputy Dean of the School of Health Sciences gave a word of appreciation to the facilitator. She said that when she came to the workshop, she had a different view about community engagement. She encouraged others to go back and share the experiences and lessons with colleagues. Participants echoed the appreciative sentiments and requested that the conversations should continue at school boards and acknowledge the potential that CE has in addressing various aspects of the academic core project.



Participants posing for a photo with the facilitator



Dr Lindelani Mushaphi handing Ms. Cuzette du Plessis a present of appreciation



Prof Nalovu Lonias, Dean of the School of Law contributing at the workshop



Professor Peter Tshisikhawe, Deputy Dean, School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences



Staff members become health and wellness ambassadors and are ready to educate fellow colleagues

Wellness is an active process of becoming aware and making choices towards a healthy and fulfilling life. There are however many health-related risks that most people might not be aware of. To embrace employee wellness, the University of Venda (Univen) held an Employee Health and Wellness Champion Development workshop. The workshop was held from 19-21 June 2019 at 2Ten Hotel under the theme 'Embracing who you are and who you can become!'.

The Aim of this workshop was to provide staff with the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and an attitude that will enable an individual to champion employee health and wellness.



According to the Workshop facilitator, Mr Alan Brand who is an Employee Wellness Consultant and Specialist Trainer from Positive Alive, the objectives of the workshop were to enable employees to understand and identify the concept of employee health and wellness; to assist them when applying the principle underlying critical thinking to create a paradigm shift enabling the employees to focus on a range of health and wellness topics and issues including chronic and non-communicable diseases affecting wellness at work; these wellness champions will share their knowledge with colleagues in order to create a healthier workplace. The workshop



Attendees of the workshop listening to the facilitator

has further assisted attendees to be able to apply the principles of time management and strategic planning. "Your role is now to go out there and advise people about health-related matters because people are making wrong choices out there," he said.

The three-day interactive workshop was targeted at Peer Educators, Champions of wellness, Employees, Unit Managers and Supervisors. Twenty-five (25) Univen staff members attended this workshop. They were given projects to work on individually and in groups.



When welcoming workshop attendees, the Director Human Resources (HR), Mrs Uanda Ndou told the participants that, employees are her best assets, she needs them at work healthy (physically, emotionally, financially), because that is when they are most productive. She pleaded with the wellness champions to partner with her in changing the mindset that the Employee Health and Wellness Programme (EHWP) is for employees with problems. The EHWP is designed to promote holistic wellness and work-life balance.



Workshop participants posing for a group photo

Staff members become health and wellness ambassadors and are ready to educate fellow colleagues continued...



Workshop participants listening to the facilitator, Mr Alan Brand.



Staff members working in groups

UIGC works with government institutions and municipalities to empower young people who have business ideas



In celebrating 25 years of democracy, Vhembe District Municipality in partnership with Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda), Univen Innovative Growth Company (UIGC), Madzivhandila College of Agriculture, Makhado Municipality, Collins Chabane Local Municipality, Northern Technical FET College and Phalaphala FM hosted the awards giving ceremony. This awards giving ceremony took place on Friday, 14 June 2019 at Malamulele Boxing Gym under the theme 'Celebrating youth activism'.



Dr John Mudau, CEO of UIGC mentioned that government institutions and municipalities need to start supporting young people. He said UIGC is going to partner with municipalities to make sure that young entrepreneurs realize their dreams. Dr John Mudau called upon young people who have business ideas to contact UIGC because UIGC is ready to partner with them. He continued to say that those who have projects in this district should consider partnering with UIGC in growing those businesses. He said the awards under UIGC category at this stage were only open to registered Univen students. "We have partnered with other institutions such as SAB foundation, SEDA, DHET, and Vhembe District Municipality. As a University, we are deeply committed to work with young people in the District."

"Students who made it to the top ten of the competition won themselves R10 000 each while position one walked away with R60 000, position two R30 000 and position three was awarded R20 000." Ms Khavhatondwi Netshiheni obtained position one, Ms Mabatho Nkoko was on position two while Mr Ephraim Kgatla obtained position three. These are staff and students at UNIVEN who have bankable ideas. The money is meant for them to improve and implement

their innovations. The total prize money from UIGC Innovation Competition was R300 000 which was further matched by another R300 000 from SAB Foundation to make the total prize money R600 000.00. The winners will also receive 12 months business mentoring and coaching from Seda, said Dr John Mudau.

Mr Marcus Mukumela from Seda told the audience that Seda feels honored to have this kind of event where we support young people with small businesses. He said as Seda they turn ideas into businesses. "We strive for Job creation. We have partnered with Univen's UIGC which is fully behind us." He encouraged people to turn ideas into money making skills so that there can be job creations. "We are going to commit ourselves to support these emerging business partners." He told them to keep up the good job as he congratulated all participants and told them to never give up especially those who did not win this competition. "We will make sure that your ideas are protected, and that the products are in good packaging and we will assist you to access funding so that you can grow your businesses." Mr Mukumela summed his talk by mentioning that Seda is going to have trainings that are aimed at teaching business minded people about how to start and sustain businesses.



UIGC works with government institutions and municipalities to empower young people who have business ideas continued...



Mr Justice Mphaphuli from Vhembe Youth Council said young people are looking for employment from our government and this is the right time that the government create job opportunities for these young people. Mr Mphaphuli also beseeched municipalities to take care of young people by assisting them to realise their dreams. He said as the youth in Vhembe district, they don't want government organisations that buy young people alcohol but those that support and empower young people by providing necessary tools that will make sure that they make a living out of those tools. He encouraged young people to stand up and create jobs for themselves and the generations to come.



Cllr Grace Machovani rendered a brief summary of the criteria considered when entering the competition. While rendering the item, she encouraged young people to go to school because that will assist them to realise their dreams. She also said this competition was for young South Africans with identity documents who are aged between 18-35. Those who obtained position one in this category walked away with R120 000, position two R60 000 while position three were awarded R20 000 each winner in all categories.



UIGC awards winners with Dr John Mudau (second from far right) and Dr Thakhani Takalani on the far left



Mr Samson Mantsha from Madzivhandila College of Agriculture assured those who entered the competition that judges were guided by items on the score sheet and were fair. He said judgment of the awards in all categories were not motivated by politics or any geographical factors. "It was not easy to choose the best winner hence the scores have a very thin marginal difference," said Mr Mantsha.

Mr Khuliso Muvhango from Enterprise Development who is also one of the winners of the competition in the year 2018 said winning this competition has assisted his company to grow. He said his company employed 60 people and after winning the competition he has managed to increase the number of employees to 110 employees. "When we started this company, we strived to solve problems that the country is faced with. There are lot of problems that need to be solved and youth need to realise those gaps and make a living out of them." He said they also help people who are business minded by providing guidance and trainings on how to start and sustain businesses.

Mr Muvhango told the audience that, in business we fail and let failures be motivations. He told young people not to blame other people for their failures and told them to be patient. "learn how to sell your concept or your product. learn how to market your product. use the available tools to market your concept or product. Invest in yourself, stop misusing money unnecessarily because in business we invest not to show off. Start a business with the little that you have," he said.



Motivational Speaker, Captain Michael Manganyi said it was in his young years as a pilot when he realised that there are lot of things that are needed in aviation that one can make money from. He told the audience that airports have a lot of business opportunities. He encouraged them to take control of everything that happens in their lives. "Be able to identify whether your

dreams are in line with the community's visions." Mr Manganyi said he has mentored 50 young pilots so far. He urged leaders, both in government and private sector to give support to young people. He also mentioned that young people cannot start businesses without money.

He told youth to have passion for anything that they want to do. "Be able to utilize the little you have in order to start and sustain your businesses. Start small but have a dream to grow big, strive for excellence and achieve bigger things." He said aviation is expensive but once you are qualified, you will be paid a good salary. "Not every single person who comes in your life will give you good advises. Be selective, be able to detect which advises are good for you and those that are not good."



Vhembe District Municipality's Acting-Executive Mayor, Robert Magada said the youth of Vhembe District have the capacity to develop and lead the economy of this country. "Success in business requires courage and working many long hours of unrest. We believe that investing in our youth is crucial in our country's economic development." The Executive Mayor said that the future of Vhembe District is very bright with this kind of youth. He assured the youth that the government will provide necessary support by making available necessary tools to emerging businesses to boost their dreams. "Our main objective is to encourage youth to eradicate unemployment in this country."

UIGC works with government institutions and municipalities to empower young people who have business ideas continued...



Panel of judges who were adjudicating the awards winners of the competition



Collage photo of the overall winners in different categories



Attendees of the awards giving ceremony at Malamulele Boxing gym



Danny K - Programme director of the event

UNIVEN graduate is appointed Minister of Justice and Correctional Services



It is no surprise that Lamola rises to this new and demanding position. During his student days, coming from the rural Mpumalanga Province, he served as the President of the Student Representative Council in 2005, the same year he graduated with a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree to prove the old student adage 'We can learn and lead at the same time'.

Twelve years later, on the 26 August 2017 in Burgers Park Hotel, Pretoria, Lamola made a comeback and was elected unopposed as the Chairperson of UNIVEN Gauteng Alumni Chapter. In his inaugural speech, he accepted the mandate with humility, emphasised teamwork and reminded his team that it is a call to help the current students, the majority of whom come from poor families, to realise their childhood dreams.

In his interview on Phalaphala FM, Current Affairs programme produced by Owen Muebi and the team, Lamola revealed that UNIVEN was his first higher education institution to

attend after matric and is also where he cut his first political teeth.

'I want to thank UNIVEN for producing me as a leader. During my tenure as the President of the Student Representative Council, I was given enough support from both the students and management,' said Minister Lamola.

He promised that he will make time once settled to meet with the University of Venda School of Law and together forge areas of strategic partnerships.

"Ozzy Chairman Mao as Ronald was affectionately known, was a disciplined, militant and radical student leader yet humbled and principled. He would always consult and lobby his fellow cabinet members in the SRC before he can take a decision. Within the student ranks his personal warmth, humanity and a magnetic charisma had earned him the respect and love of all who had come into contact with him.

Univen Alumna is the First South African to qualify as Psychological Autopsy Investigator



Photo supplied by the University of Limpopo (UL)

Ms. Elelwani Muthivhi, who graduated Bachelor of Psychology and Master of Arts degrees from the Department of Psychology, University of Venda, currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Psychology at the University of Limpopo was certified by the American Association of Suicidology at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Washington DC. The association is a leader in the

advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in the prevention of suicide through research, education and training as well as the development of standards, resources and support for survivors.

Ms. Muthivhi is the first South African to qualify as Psychological Autopsy Investigator.

The Department of Psychology, University of Venda is proud of her and congratulates Ms. Muthivhi for this great achievement.

We witnessed his success when he became Branch Chairperson of South African Student Congress at UNIVEN and later Provincial Chairperson of South African Student Congress, Limpopo Province. He is a tried and tested leader who is destined to success in his new role as a Minister of Justice and Correctional Services," said Advocate Tokyo Nevondwe who served with Ronald in the then SRC as Deputy Secretary General (interview with UNIVEN Alumni News).

**"We're confident that
you'll continue to work
hard and make a
great impression that
will last"**

In a congratulatory letter to Minister Lamola, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Dr. Bernard Nthambeleni said "The University of Venda Community is delighted to hear of your appointment and look forward to working closely and strengthen the cooperation between your Ministry and the University.

We are certain that under your great leadership, wisdom and guidance, the Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services will strive to much greater heights and achievements, more especially effective contribution to a just, peaceful and safer South Africa.

We're confident that you'll continue to work hard and make a great impression that will last", concluded Dr. Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda. Mr. Lamola's appointment confirms UNIVEN's motto of Creating Future Leaders.

UNIVEN Held a Consultation Meeting with NRF Regarding Postgraduate Student Funding Policy to be Implemented During the 2021 Academic Year

On Wednesday 19 June 2019 UNIVEN held a consultation meeting with the NRF regarding the postgraduate student funding policy to be implemented in 2021 academic year at UNIVEN. From 2016 the NRF initiated a process for developing NRF Postgraduate Student Funding Policy which aimed at enhancing the equity of postgraduate access, success and throughput. This consultation meeting was specifically to have engagements with the Deputy Vice Chancellors; Director of Research and Innovation; Deans and Deputy Deans of Schools;

Researchers/Postgraduate Office staff to enable the university management plan accordingly. In his opening and welcome remarks, the DVC, Academic: Prof Jan Ernst Crafford asked all participants to share the information that they will learn from the NRF with other colleagues.



L-R: Dr Priscilla Mensah (Director: HICD) and Dr Romilla Maharaj (Executive Director: HICD)



Prof Jan Ernst Crafford, DVC, Academic

In their presentation, Dr Romilla Maharaj (Executive Director: HICD) and Dr Priscilla Mensah (Director: HICD), highlighted it well that successful implementation of the new policy will require a partnership between NRF and Higher Education Institutions HEIs.

During the facilitation of the discussion, Senior Prof GE Ekosse, Director of Research and Innovation pointed out the fact that the implementation of the new system at UNIVEN would only be possible if this policy takes effect with the 2020 Call for Applications for Honours, Masters and Doctoral student funding with the first cohort of students to be funded under the new policy in the 2021 academic year.



Senior Professor GE Ekosse, Director of Research, UNIVEN

UNIVEN would ensure that all Honours, Masters and Doctoral studies applications, inclusive of the grade marks for the major subjects in the final year of study, are submitted before the end of each academic year to enable the NRF inform students of the outcome of their applications before the end of the year. Ensuring that the necessary infrastructure and processes are in place is the key requirement from UNIVEN in order to implement this policy appropriately and successfully.

Enhancing the equity of postgraduate access, success and throughput.



The Deputy Vice Chancellor; Deans and Deputy Deans; Research/Postgraduate Directors; NRF Designated Authorities; Financial Officers at UNIVEN

Vuwani Science Resource Centre hosts its first ever Eddy Covariance Flux Measurements Winter School

Vuwani Science Resource Centre under the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences of the University of Venda launched the first ever International Winter School on 'Eddy Covariance Flux Measurements'. This winter school was launched and held at the Vuwani Science Resource Centre from 10-14 June 2019. The winter school provided various sessions with opportunities for technicians, students and early-career researchers such as MSc and PhD students as well as postdoctoral researchers to learn more about different aspects of greenhouse gas monitoring in Africa with emphasis on the Limpopo Region.

The focus of this Winter school was on measurement techniques providing the students with theoretical background and hands-on sessions in setting up Eddy Covariance flux measurement instruments and processing its related data streams. The course aimed at supporting young researchers in initiating new research projects and taking better advantage of existing research infrastructures and environmental data sets.

The Winter School was organized by partners from the EMSAfrica project (Ecosystem Management Support for Climate Change in Southern Africa) and the EU Horizon 2020 project SEACRIFOG (Supporting EU African Cooperation on Research Infrastructures for Food Security and Greenhouse Gas Observations). The course was led by Dr Christian Brümmer from the Thünen Institute of Climate-Smart Agriculture, Germany and Dr Gregor Feig from the South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON).

Dr Christian Brümmer said "the Vuwani Science Resource Centre of the University



First Class: Participants of Winter School attending their first class in the computer room

of Venda is successfully cooperating with partners from the EMSAfrica project and hosts one of the few flux towers measuring the land surface-atmosphere exchange of carbon dioxide and energy on the African continent". He further said that Flux towers are part of a global observation system for greenhouse gases and help understand the local, regional and global carbon cycle. Furthermore, "these kinds of measurements are fundamental to understand the impact of climate change on the carbon dioxide exchange with the atmosphere on the longer term", added Dr Christian Brümmer.

The Winter School, in combination with the flux tower operation, is a landmark in the Centre's engagement in bringing the next generation of leading scientists on track to tackle upcoming environmental challenges and for being involved in cutting-edge research collaboration on climate change related topics.



The Eddy Covariance Flux tower at Vuwani Science Resource Centre

The UNIVEN Department of Physics's Niche research is based on renewable energy. So, this collaboration enhances our research skills. The winter school is crucial since it teaches our students and staff how the tower operates and how to use the data effectively. Continuous Eddy Covariance flux measurements will enable us to make a contribution to the understanding of the carbon cycle in typical Limpopo landscapes. This provides invaluable data for the estimation of terrestrial carbon budgets of Africa, which is lacking continental-scale observation networks of greenhouse gas measurements. The winter school enabled us as the Department to find collaborators such as EFTEON, SAEON, SASSCAL and others for the understanding of our ecological system.

Effective use of the Eddy Covariance flux tower data needs the involvement of researchers from different schools of the University of Venda, like Agriculture, School of Environmental Sciences and Mathematical and Natural Sciences.

In addition to introductory lectures, several activities were done throughout the week like hands-on training on the operation and maintenance of the tower as well as various biometeorological measurements, ecological data analysis using R- Programming, etc. As one of the objectives of the Vuwani Science Resource Centre is to reach the public

community, on Thursday 13 June 2019, there was an engagement with the community through Phalaphala FM. The importance of the tower to the community and the need of understanding climate change in South Africa context was discussed.



During the Official Opening of the Eddy Covariance Flux Measurements Winter School, Dean of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Prof. Natasha Potgieter thanked the attendees and the organisers of this Winter School. She further thanked sponsors from Germany and told them that UNIVEN values their visit and attendance. Prof. Potgieter concluded her talk by encouraging the attendees to acquire as much knowledge as they can so that they can share with those who couldn't attend this winter school and the generations to come.



Dr Christian Brümmer (left) and Dr Gregor Feig (right)

Vuwani Science Resource Centre hosts its first ever Eddy Covariance Flux Measurements Winter School continued...



Dr. Mari Bieri, project coordinator, Thünen Institute of Climate-Smart Agriculture



Some of the team members which visited Phalaphala FM, from left Dr. Mari Bieri, (Thünen Institute of Climate-Smart Agriculture), Mr. Wonder Juniper (Phalaphala FM), Dr. Eric Maluta (Vuwani Science Resource Centre), Dr. Johannes Beck (SASSCAL, Namibia), Mrs Humbelani Thenga (CSIR)



Winter School attendees and UNIVEN staff members posing for a group photo at Vuwani Science Resource Centre outside the computer room



Univen staff members and attendees of the Winter School listening to Prof Natasha Potgieter during the official opening ceremony

Vuwani Science Resource Centre hosts its first ever Eddy Covariance Flux Measurements Winter School continued...



Hands-on training during the winter school



Hands-on training during the winter school

Work hard and add value to the development of the University of Venda



The newly employed staff members at the University of Venda (Univen) were encouraged to work hard and add value to the development of the University. The Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL) led by the Director of the Centre, Prof Nancy Mutshaeni, organized an induction workshop for new staff members. A two-day workshop was held at 21en hotel in Sibasa from 28 - 29 May 2019



On behalf of the Director of CHETL, Prof Nancy Mutshaeni, Dr Mary Masehela who is the Head of Academic Development Unit welcomed the participants. In her welcome address she indicated that the workshop was aimed at sharing teaching and learning practices in the context of Univen. She also indicated that the workshop created an opportunity to learn from one another innovative ways of teaching in higher education. Dr Masehela also mentioned that academics should be concerned about

how people perceive them based on the products that we produce as a University. The workshop further created an opportunity to share theoretical frameworks and policies that could positively impact on the performance of academics. Dr Masehela shared how the Univen CHETL as a directorate is structured. She introduced the new staff members in all the four units that are found at CHETL as follows: Academic Development Unit; Disability Student Unit; Student Counselling and Career Development Unit as well as eLearning Unit.

The Seminar was conducted by two representatives from the University of Free State (UFS), Prof Melanie Walker and Dr Mikateko Hoppener. Prof Walker is the SARCHI Chair Director of Higher Education and Human Development Research and Dr Höppener is a Senior Researcher in that directorate. The two presented on progress made in their research project called Miratho. Miratho, is a Venda name referring to informal bridges that are constructed by communities during times of floods. Miratho project aims to "investigate how intersecting and complex biological, socio-economic, policy, and educational



factors enable or inhibit pathways for rural and township youth from low-income households to get in, get on, and get out of higher education". The seminar was an eye opener to everyone. Attendees got to realise the hardships that students encounter as they navigate university spaces. The research was conducted on students who are at tertiary institutions who are experiencing socio-economic challenges as they navigate the higher education space

with the hope of changing their situations after graduation. They said, lecturers should sometimes put themselves into student's positions when making decisions about the future of students. They explained the hardships those students go through on a daily basis. They indicated that these students also have difficulties in accessing educational resources and technology. They also spoke about the capability for epistemic contribution.

Work hard and add value to the development of the University of Venda continued...



During the workshop, Dr Fhatuwani Ravhuhali and Mrs Hlayisani Mboweni Pakata's presentation focused on Being and becoming an academic at Univen (reflections on the self and practices). Accordingly, a UNIVEN academic should know and position himself or herself in order to serve the institution in accordance with the vision and mission of the University. With regard to the presentation on Higher Education Context and UNIVEN Teaching and Learning policies Education discourses such as decolonization, internationalization, Africanisation, perspectives, academics were engaged on reflecting on various Higher marketisation, academisation, 4th Industrial Revolution, globalisation, and what these discourses mean to their teaching, student learning and assessment. Apart from that, academics had group presentations on key UNIVEN teaching and learning policies such as Learning and Teaching Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching & Learning Policy, E-Learning Policy, and Assessment Policy.

Dr Ravhuhali and Mrs Mboweni also presented on assessment, teaching and learning strategies for the Univen context. The presentation focused on allowing academics to draw and reflect on their own personal experiences of assessment as students and as academics, and most importantly how they are changing their negative experiences of assessment (if any) into positives for their students as a way of sharing good teaching, learning and assessment practices.



Mr Sam Mugandani from the Center for Biokinetics, Recreation & Sport Science spoke to participants about Understanding university students in the late adolescence and imaging adult stages. His presentation provided opportunities for academics to have an understanding of the various developmental stages of their students and how they can maximize their learning once they become well conversant with the kind of challenges each stage encompasses.



In the afternoon of day one, Prof Makonde Makatu from the School of Health Sciences highlighted on how they found Problem Based Learning (PBL) working towards the development of their students



The Head of Disability Unit, Dr Tshifhiwa Mbuvha highlighted on Understanding students with Disabilities. She advised the participants to look at student holistically, be it health or physical



There was a presentation from Student Counseling and Career Development Unit by Dr Violet Mathye. She described the Unit as a core partner in teaching and learning



Mr Willy Xazela, Head of E-Learning Unit shared what the Unit is responsible for in enabling lecturers to reach out to students through technology, especially the Learner Management System that Univen has adopted, the Blackboard



The Chief Administrative Officer of CHETL, Dr Phelley Lavelhani handled evaluation process, whereby all participants evaluated the induction workshop

Work hard and add value to the development of the University of Venda continued...



During the induction workshop, the new staff members were also afforded an opportunity to raise challenges which they have already encountered since joining the University of Venda



The Director of CHETL, Prof Nancy Mutshaeni (far left) poses for a photo with L-R: Dr Mikateko Hoppener, Prof Melanie Walker and Dr Mary Masehela

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