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Creating future leaders

## Dr Nthambeleni is Ready to Position Univen for Impact

On Friday, 15 March 2019, the University of Venda (Univen) inaugurated Dr Bernard Nthambeleni as the 5th Vice-Chancellor and Principal. The inauguration ceremony was held at the University Auditorium under the theme 'Positioning the University of Venda for Impact'. The prestigious event was blessed by the presence of Minister of Higher Education and Training, Honourable Naledi Pandor as keynote speaker and one of the invited guests to honour the inauguration of Dr Nthambeleni as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. Other invited guests who honoured the invitation were Vice-Chancellor and Principals of other Universities such as Prof Tshilidzi Marwala and former Vice-Chancellors and Principals of Univen, Professors Muxe Nkondo and Peter Mbatlana as well as members of Univen Council.



The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Hon Naledi Pandor prefaced her keynote address by expressing a warm congratulatory message to Dr Nthambeleni as the new Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda. She wished him well in his position and in achieving teaching excellence, research excellence and in building strong bonds with the local, provincial and international communities.

Minister Pandor emphasised the significant role that Univen could play in community development regardless of it being a rural based University. She further said Univen must not just support the production of goods but must lead in

encouraging agriculture, linking it to bio-manufacturing, to value addition and then advance to Agro-processing.

Despite the challenges that Dr Nthambeleni is yet to face, Minister Pandor assured him and the University her support during her term in office as Minister. Hon Naledi Pandor concluded by saying that, "Under your guidance, the University of Venda will continue to improve its position and become a rural-based University of significance both in Southern Africa and globally."

**"Under your guidance, the University of Venda will continue to improve its position and become a rural-based University of significance both in Southern Africa and globally."**



Univen Chairperson of Council, Mr Serobi Maja delivered the welcome address and acknowledgement of guests. He gave a hearty welcome and highlighted the purpose of the gathering as being to witness the inauguration of the 5th Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda. Mr Maja further expressed that Univen has experienced and overcome many challenges and that he has no doubt that Dr Nthambeleni is set to propel Univen to new heights.



Dr Bernard Nthambeleni gave his Inaugural address as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. He thanked Council for trusting in him. He further extended his gratitude to Council members, staff members, students and invited guests for their astounding messages of support. He further gave recognition to his later maternal grandmother who was his pillar of strength. He continued to explain her as someone who played a significant role in his upbringing and made sure that he receives proper formal education. Dr Nthambeleni thanked his parents for providing physical needs, guidance and discipline. He also thanked his wife and children for their absolute support.

He acknowledged the presence and support of Honourable Naledi Pandor and cited a grant of R133 million she approved in 2006 for the University to build both student residences and staff houses. He further expressed the perpetual growth in enrolment at Univen. "There is now a need to build and advance the University's infrastructure". He explained universities as vehicles for change and Univen as one of those vehicles to provide relevant skills as part of alleviating hunger through job creation. "In the next five years, we will encourage and equip students to focus; we will move Univen in the new direction; enhance performance culture and enhance partnerships and stakeholder relations," he concluded.

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The SRC President, Tsundzuka Hakamela congratulated the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor and Principal. He wished him well in his new position and applauded him on the commitment and services he promised to render which was a direct representation of his readiness for the challenges as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal.



Message of support and congratulation also came from the Traditional Leaders' representative, Thovhele Nthumeni Masia who spoke on behalf of King Toni Mphephu Ramabulana. He said the Traditional Leaders considered it necessary to attend the event to ensure the ship of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal is steered forward and to the right direction. Thovhele Masia further expressed that this is solely because of the role that the University continues to play in the advancement of the community



Prof Edward Nesamvuni, University Registrar confirmed compliance to the Provisions of the Act and Statute prior to the reading of the inauguration oath by Dr Nthambeleni which was followed by the inauguration of Dr Bernard Nthambeleni as the 5th Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda by the Chairperson of Council, Mr Serobi Maja.

In his Vote of thanks, Prof Nesamvuni congratulated the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor and Principal. He reassured the Hon Naledi Pandor that indeed as an institution, Univen will work towards supporting their academic staff to improve their research and teaching capabilities by achieving higher qualifications.



Speaking on behalf of Staff members was Mrs Malehu Maluleke whose message was centred around moving Univen to new heights. She exclaimed that, witnessing the inauguration of the 5th Vice-Chancellor at Univen is an accomplishment to her and fellow staff members. Mrs Maluleke explained that it is indeed a privilege to have Dr Nthambeleni as a leader especially given that he witnessed the growth of Univen from humble beginnings.



Executive Mayor of the Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr Mavhungu Luruli Ramakhanya gave a congratulatory message to the University of Venda in general and on the appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor and Principal. She pledged the continued support of the district and maintenance of the relationship between Univen and the district. She further said that all research activities conducted by Univen staff has immensely contributed to the growth of the surrounding communities.



L-R: Chairperson of Council, Mr Serobi Maja; Minister of Higher Education and Training, Hon Naledi Pandor and the Vice Chancellor and Principal of Univen, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni posing for a photo during the Inauguration ceremony



Group photo of council members, academic procession posing with the Minister of Higher Education and Training Hon Naledi Pandor and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni.



Family members of the Vice- Chancellor and Principal, Dr Nthambeleni listening as he speaks



Poet rendering a poem before Dr Nthambeleni Addresses the audience



Maniini Primary School learners entertaining guests with Tshikona dance



Maniini Primary School learners performing Malende dance

# A successful Risk Management Workshop for the Risk Champions

The University of Venda's Risk Officer, Dr Tinyiko Sibiyi organized a successful Risk Management for Risk Champions workshop. A two-day workshop was held at Kruger National Park Mopani Rest Camp from 19 – 20 March 2019. Facilitated by Mr Christopher Whittle who is the Managing member of Universum Risk Advisory, the workshop was an eye opener to most of the delegates. Participants were drawn from different schools, departments and directorates within the University.

When welcoming the delegates, the Director Communications and Marketing, Dr Takalani Dzaga reaffirmed the commitment of the Executive Management in risk management matters and to facilitate capacity-building and strengthening of the risk champions. This includes the importance of equipping employees with knowledge in terms of Risk Management. Dr Dzaga said the workshop has been organised to provide an opportunity for risk champions to enhance their understanding of Risk Management in the operations of the University. He encouraged delegates to see risk management from a new perspective, participate actively in the discussions, and learn from one another. And more importantly, to bring good lessons into practice and share them with fellow colleagues at work.

Delegates acquired knowledge of the practical and critical success areas in the implementation of the effective risk management. The workshop provided opportunities for practical exercises in risk management activities. Delegates also learned how to avoid pitfalls when implementing risk management including improving existing risk management practices at the University of Venda.



Mr Whittle, the facilitator, indicated that Risk can be defined as an "Effect of uncertainty on objectives". In essence, risk management refers to the practice of identifying potential risks in advance, analyzing them and taking precautionary steps to reduce or curb the risk. The facilitator further stated that Risk management cannot be effective or implemented if the objectives are not clear. Therefore, the objectives need to be specific, clearly defined and measurable



*Delegates of the Risk Management Workshop pose for a group photo.*

in order to be achievable. During the workshop, Risk was seen as a fact of life which is constantly changing. It was also mentioned that today's economy requires institutions to identify and respond more quickly to changing risk profile.

Institutional culture was also found as crucial in risk management. The facilitator talked about the new technology which creates opportunities but on the other hand bring uncertainties that become risks to an institution.

It is vital for a university's governance structure which is Council to have capacity and an ideal framework to support the implementation of risk activities. However, Council can delegate the responsibility and accountability to management and monitor the risks management plan. It was highlighted that everyone in an Institution has some responsibility and a role to play in risk management. Hence, the role of the risk champions is to make sure that people around them understand the risk management. The presentation was well received by the Univen risk champions.



The workshop was officially closed by the Director Communications and Marketing, Dr Takalani Dzaga who expressed his satisfaction about the fact that the training had achieved its intended objectives.

In his closing remarks Mr Dzaga said "participation in this workshop would hopefully lead to the reduction of potential risks at Univen". He encouraged the Risk Champions to go back and do things differently and to educate others in their respective departments and schools. He further said that respective schools and directorates would have a template on how to constantly report on their risks. "It is my hope and belief that the out-

come of this workshop will be an invaluable contribution to the ongoing efforts to establish sound programmes for the management of risks and business continuity. I also hope that this workshop will provide an opportunity for the risk champions to assess better and to evaluate the University's performance in the areas of business continuity and risk management going forward" concluded Dzaga.



*It's a deal L-R: Takalani Dzaga, Christopher Whittle and Tinyiko Sibiyi*



*The winner, L-R: Tinyiko Sibiyi handing over a bag as a prize to Khathu Magwede who was one of the Champions*

# Photos taken at the Risk Management Workshop



# Celebration of Hope

On Friday, 15 March 2019 the University of Venda (Univen) hosted the gala dinner at 2Ten Hotel to celebrate the appointment of Univen's Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni. The formal event was graced by the presence of the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Hon. Naledi Pandor, Thovhele Nthumeni Masia, on behalf of the VhaVenda King, Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Mavhungu Luruli Ramakhanya, Univen Council members led by the Chairperson of Council, Mr Serobi Maja, Univen former Vice-Chancellors, Professors Muxe Gessler Nkondo and Peter Amunga Mbatl, academic partners led by Mr Jimmy Wayland, sponsors and many more.



Dr Bernard Nthambeleni presenting the state of the Campus during the Inauguration Gala dinner.

Univen Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni presented the state of the campus. He said in the past decade, Univen has done considerably well both academically and infrastructure wise. He indicated that, in the past five years, Univen managed to secure two Research Chairs because of its dedicated and hardworking staff members. He further expressed his contentment about Univen because of its thirty (30) rated research scientists. "What I have noticed at Univen is that most researchers have PhDs and that afford us a good chance of becoming the best University in the country in research."

Dr Nthambeleni presented the growth of infrastructure since 2010 and highlighted that this University has a high number of disabled students and Univen makes sure that the needs of disabled students are catered for both academically and in the infrastructure development. Dr Nthambeleni concluded his talk by highlighting the improvement of broadband at Univen.



Chairperson of Finance Committee, Mr Thapelo Molapo delivered the opening and welcome address. He exclaimed the inauguration dinner of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal as an exciting occasion that occurs once in a decade. He explained the inauguration ceremony as a celebration of hope because the University hopes to achieve what has been planned for the next five years.



In his Congratulatory message and word of support as peer representative, Prof Tshilidzi Marwala, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Johannesburg expressed that he is impressed with exponential growth of research output at Univen. Prof Marwala gave Dr Nthambeleni five matters to practice throughout his term as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. He advised him not to be afraid to dream; to connect with the community, Southern Africa and the rest of the world; to connect with the students; to have Knowledge production and commercialisation and to take advantage and making use of the 4th Industrial Revolution. He concluded his presentation by encouraging Univen to actively participate in the 4th Industrial Revolution agenda.

**"What I have noticed at Univen is that most researchers have PhDs and that afford us a good chance of becoming the best University in the country in research."**

# Celebration of Hope continued...

Delivering the key note address was Dr Molapo Qhobela, National Research Foundation Chief Executive Officer, who expressed his heartfelt congratulatory message to Dr Nthambeleni. He said, Dr Nthambeleni does possess a number of qualities that best qualifies him to be the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda. Dr Qhobela's address focused more on the importance of understanding the power of knowledge to change lives.

**Knowledge  
changes  
lives!**



*Mr Levy Ndou, President of Convocation, giving a Vote of Thanks.*



*Mr Serobi Maja, Chairperson of Council was the Programme Director of the Inauguration Ceremony Gala dinner.*



*Academic partners handing over painted portrait of Dr Bernard Nthambeleni to the Chairperson of Council, Mr Serobi Maja*



*L-R: Mr Serobi Maja handing over a painted portrait to Dr Bernard Nthambeleni*



*Attendees of the Inauguration Gala Dinner listening to the presentation of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni*

# Directorate of Research and Innovation (DRI) Visits Universities in Botswana

University of Venda (UNIVEN) staff in the Directorate of Research and Innovation (DRI) working on University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) steered an official visit to three universities in Botswana to foster collaborations and networking. The three universities which were visited are: Botho University (BU), University of Botswana (UB), and Botswana International University of Science & Technology (BIUST). The visit was carried out from 01 – 09 February 2019. The UNIVEN delegation was led by the Director Research and Innovation, Senior Professor GE Ekosse; and consisted of the Research Administration Coordinator, Mrs NJ Sigama; Accounts Officer, Mr B Mpukwana; Administrative Officer, Ms A Raphalalani; Accounts Officer (Intern), Ms M Ladzani, and Dr NN Bukalo who is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow working on clays and clay minerals in Africa.

The focus of the visit was to explore potential collaboration and networking areas between UNIVEN and the three universities in Botswana Viz: BU, BIUST and UB. The scope of coverage for collaborations and networking during the trip to Botswana included capacity development of researchers, recognition of excellence in research, UNIVEN research priorities, and effective and efficient management of research projects.

***Univen visits Botho University (BU), University of Botswana (UB), and Botswana international University of Science & Technology (BiUST).***



*UNIVEN delegation with staff of Botho University, Botswana*



*UNIVEN delegation with Professor Peter Mbatia at Botho University*



*Senior Professor GE Ekosse giving a Public Lecture at BIUST*

The UNIVEN Director Research and Innovation, Senior Professor GE Ekosse, also gave two public lectures to two of the three universities, and he spoke on: Learning from Research Giants of Yesteryears. In the presentation, Senior Professor Ekosse took a cursory look at selected research giants of yesteryears whose research findings have very significantly impacted the world. Special recognition was made of the works and characters of Isaac Newton, George Washington Carver, Alexander Graham Bell, Alfred Nobel, Thomas Edison, Marie Sklodowska-Curie, Albert Einstein, Jane Wright, Maya Angelou, and Gladys West amongst others.

Lessons learnt from these giants such as hard work, persistence, being focus-driven, effective time management, resilience, and perpetual great expectations, depict integral attributes for outstanding research leaders to anchor on. Benefits derived from excellent research leadership include earning respect, honour, self-actualisation, immortalisation, excellent legacy impact on developing researchers, and the propounding of knowledge for the betterment of humankind must be considered by promising researchers who would like to advance their career growth and development. The researchers in the audience were uniquely challenged not to allow political, socioeconomic, and cultural inhibitors to play down on their abilities to generate and disseminate their research findings.

**“...hard work, persistence, being focus-driven, effective time management, resilience, and perpetual great expectations, depict integral attributes for outstanding research leaders to anchor on.”**

During the visit, Senior Professor Ekosse, Dr Bukalo, and Ms Raphalalani carried out extensive reconnaissance fieldwork to better understand the kaolinisation processes of three geologically significant kaolin deposits in Botswana. These are the Kgwakgwe, Makoro and Foley deposits. The Vice-Chancellor of BIUST provided ground transportation for staff throughout the trip, and in particular a 4X4 vehicle, a driver and guide during the fieldwork.

Outcomes agreed upon by the parties concerned that will promote research in the region include the following:

- Joint grant proposals, supervision/promotion and students/staff exchanges should be regularly carried out;
- Collaborations between similar faculties/schools/directorates/centres from UNIVEN and the Botswana universities should be perpetually executed;
- Memoranda of Understanding will be established between universities where there is none, or re-established if already existing; and
- A regional research leadership workshop, which will involve the four universities and other universities in the region will be organised in the last quarter of 2019



*UNIVEN Delegation with Staff of UB Research Development*



*UNIVEN Delegation visiting laboratory facilities at BIUST*



*Senior Professor Ekosse, Dr Bukalo, Ms Raphalalani, or guide at Foley Kaolin deposit.*



# Research Leadership Workshop works towards the realization of University capacity development

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) held a special Research Leadership Workshop at The Ranch Polokwane from 28 February – 02 March 2019. The purpose of the workshop was to project vital tools for research leaders and managers at UNIVEN to utilize in enhancing activities prevailing on scientific journal articles, grant proposals, postgraduate supervision, and research mentoring; with specific reference to the implementation of the recently approved University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG). The theme of the workshop was "Working towards the realization of University Capacity Development Programme at UNIVEN.

The workshop was attended by members of Executive and Senior Management, Deans and Research Professors of Schools including staff members from Directorate of Research and Innovation (DRI).

Through a joint proposal crafted by staff in both the Directorate of Research and Innovation (DRI), and the Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning (CHETL), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) approved UCDP funding for three years covering 2018-2020 to UNIVEN.

The amount approved is R48 253 180.00, and is split annually as follows: R14 578 000.00 (2018), R16 035 800.00 (2019), and R17 639 380.00 (2020).

The funds are to be utilised in running the following five projects:

- Capacity development of university teachers and researchers;
- Enhancing student throughput and success;
- Recognition of excellence in teaching and research;
- UNIVEN priorities; and
- Effective and efficient management of the UCDP.

Each of the five projects is executed through a number of budgeted activities.

The following items were discussed in detail during the workshop: understanding the UCDP, Schools and Directorate in support of administrative processes and procedures related to the execution of UCDP, monitoring and evaluation of the UCDP using logic model and 2018 UCDP grant allocation and disbursement.



*Attendees grasping skills and asking questions for clarity during the workshop*



*Attendees of the workshop engaging during the workshop*



*Attendees of the workshop posing for a group photo*

# Students are advised to collaborate at Library

On Tuesday, 19 March 2019, the University of Venda (Univen) Library officially launched the South African Library Week (SALW) to create awareness of the importance of collaboration and partnerships between libraries for information sharing in order to enhance information experience for students and community members around Thohoyandou. The 2019 SALW was celebrated at the Library Foyer under the theme 'Collaborate at your Library'.



The Keynote speaker, Prof Peter Tshikhawe spoke about the role of the Library in advancing development within communities. He said, "Library week is a call by libraries to say here we are, come and use us." The library is calling everyone to collaborate and partner in advancing development by sharing innovative ideas.

Prof Tshikhawe advised the audience that there is a need to take one step at a time because development is a process. "It doesn't happen over-night." He also advised library staff members that communities expect high quality service and in pursuit of rendering such service, each community requires a librarian. "Univen library has librarians that comprise subject librarians to assist us to keep up to speed with what's happening around the world", he said. He told the audience that every country needs to be developed. "For us to contribute to development, we must read latest information", He said.

He also spoke about the 4th industrial revolution that is a rapid massive change that will lead to the fundamental transformation of society. He encouraged the audience to be role players in the 4th industrial revolution instead of being spectators. "We have to prepare and re-skill ourselves for the 4th industrial revolution because jobs will be lost, remaining jobs will require re-skilling and new jobs might be created because of digitization. Soon libraries will make use of robots to do various jobs". He encouraged people to be friends of the library in order to access relevant information in advancing development.

***"We have to prepare and re-skill ourselves for the 4th industrial revolution because jobs will be lost, remaining jobs will require re-skilling and new jobs might be created because of digitization. Soon libraries will make use of robots to do various jobs".***



When presenting the purpose of the day message, Ms Annah Matodzi, said Library Week is celebrated internationally by librarians and people who use those libraries. She said that this is all about rights and one of them is in the bill of rights. 'Everyone has the right to information.' She told students to feel free to come to access information at our library. "Libraries collaborate, they work together. We work together to help students who need information. Public libraries also assist learners with their homework", she said.



Mr Patrick Bopape from Limpopo Library and Information Service spoke about the importance of collaboration. In his word of support, Mr Bopape spoke about libraries in Thulamela municipality and its surroundings including the one on campus. He said their main function is to bring information to the people. Provide people with skills through technology with the aim of instilling entrepreneurship and job creation. He said libraries are a source of information even for the disabled students/visually impaired. "We have initiated a job readiness centre in the disadvantaged rural communities. They teach people on how to apply for jobs. Bopape explained that the job readiness centre has already assisted a lot of people since its inception.



Ms Dimpho Mashile, Univen masters' student gave a word of motivation. She said the library assisted her and is still assisting her in her studies because she cannot afford prescribed books, instead she uses books that are available in the Library. She said for people who are willing to learn, the University Library is always open to offer assistance where possible. She advised the audience to refrain from burning libraries. "Preserve books and take care of libraries for the coming generations."



Mr Zwivhuya Netshivhambe who is also a Univen student rendered a motivational talk. He said people should ask themselves the question: "what is it that they can offer the library". He further said the youth should read in order to keep themselves updated with what is happening globally.



*University Choir entertaining the audience during the Official Opening of Library Week*



*Some of the learners from Marude Secondary School who attended the official opening of the Library week.*

# South African Library Week speakers



*Muano Nonge from Marude Secondary School rendering a poem*



*Ms Tintswalo Pascalis Tlakula directing the programme*



*Dr Nkhangweni Patricia Mahwasane welcoming guests*



*Ms Azola Tracy Bangani gave a vote of thanks*

## IRO Departmental Workshop

The International Relations Directorate (IRO) attended their annual departmental workshop from 1 – 2 March 2019 at the Tshipise Forever Resort. The workshop was opened by Dr Obadire, the Acting Director International Relations. Other staff members present at the workshop include Mrs Nontlanhla Ntakana, Assistant International Relations Officer; Ms Suzan Sathekge, Assistant International Student Administrator; Mr Vincent Motau (intern); Mr Tsundzukani Marima (intern); Mr Promise Nyalungu (volunteer); Ms Boledi Rangoato (volunteer); Mr Wiseman Ndlovu (volunteer) and Mr Trevor Ngobeni (volunteer).

The workshop discussed the current national and international trends in internationalisation. The reflection on the strategic objective no 7 and the implementation of the business plan of the Directorate took place. The review of the five-year business plan and the operational plan for the Directorate was drafted. The report on the operation at the Help desk was discussed and the workshop agreed that the office space is very critical for the effectiveness of the Help desk. The programme of activities at the Directorate for 2019 was discussed and finalised. There was a presentation of the Directorate's Newsletter to be launched soon. Participants suggested that a mid-year review of the activities of the Directorate should be planned for proper monitoring purposes.



***The workshop discussed the current national and international trends in internationalisation.***

# UNIVEN collaborates with UL to benefit students and community members

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) is collaborating with University of Limpopo (UL) on a mandate by National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (Nemisa) to e-skill the public. The project has a potential to benefit not only UNIVEN students but also the surrounding community. UL is currently running three programmes (Digital Literacy, Unemployed Youth Programme and Teacher Programme). These programmes are not only offered to students but immensely benefiting the entire Limpopo province. Amongst those beneficiaries are people from Vhembe area, a catchment area that UNIVEN can penetrate more than UL.

After a meeting that was held at UNIVEN on 13 July 2018 between the two universities, UNIVEN took a decision to pilot the project with the Digital Literacy Programme. From 18 February to 22 February 2019, UL visited UNIVEN to train UNIVEN's prospect trainers for a digital literacy programme that will be rolled out soon at UNIVEN.

The programme doesn't specifically teach students specific computer skills but also focuses on a particular context such as an Entrepreneurship module that teaches students on how to develop a business plan while they also learn how to use applications like MS Word. Eleven students were identified from Computer Science and Information Systems as well as Business Information Systems Degrees and were equipped with facilitation skills. The training was a success and these students will train first year students on digital literacy.



Mr Hlozi Maluleke from University of Limpopo facilitates to UNIVEN trainers

The training was a success and these students will train first year students on digital literacy.



Facilitators from UL and UNIVEN's ICT Training Officer Ms Tabani Njaba (3rd from left) pose for photo with the students after training session.



Ms Tabani Njaba, training officer at Univen taking some notes during the training.

"Once planning has been finalized an invitation will be extended to the University's first year students. Those students are advised to grab this opportunity with both hands," Said Univen Training Officer, Ms Tabani Njaba.



**(Front Row) L-R:** Mr William Gafane, Ms Onndwela Mushezha, Mr Ronewa Nthatheni, Ms Tabani Njaba, Dr Farivar Rahimi, Mr Andrew Scholtz and Mr Hlozi Maluleke.

**(Back Row) L-R:** Mr Nduvho Madzivhandila, Fulufhelo Mukwevho, Mr Shylock Mapose, Ngwaneni Mathusa, Mr Mulweli Ramulifho, Mr Brian Maduvhadzi, Ms Shandukani Mashau and Mr Lufuno Tshidada

Dr Farivar Rahimi and Andrew Scholtz from UL joined the training on the last day.

# Water Research Commission (WRC) Roadshow to UNIVEN

Staff of the Directorate of Research and Innovation (DRI) at University of Venda recently hosted a delegation from the Water Research Commission (WRC) which was led by the Group Executive Manager: Research and Development (R & D), Dr Stanley Liphadzi, on a Roadshow. The Roadshow which took place at UNIVEN was twofold: first to the UNIVEN researchers and students on 05 March 2019; and secondly to staff of municipalities within the Vhembe District on the 06 March 2019. The Roadshow was opened by the Director Research and Innovation, Senior Professor GE Ekosse. In his opening remarks, he encouraged both staff and students to pay attention to the various openings available at WRC through which research projects could be sponsored.



Director DRI - Senior Professor GE Ekosse; Dean of School of Environmental Sciences – Professor John Odiyo, and members of the WRC Delegation



Senior Professor GE Ekosse giving the opening remarks during the Roadshow



Group photo of some of the participants of the WRC - UNIVEN Roadshow



Group Executive Manager: Research and Development, Dr Stanley Liphadzi actively making his presentations to the engaged audience

Members of the delegation from WRC were Dr Stanley Liphadzi- Group Executive R&D, Prof Sylvester Mpandeli- Acting Executive Manager, Ms Shirley Machelesi- Executive Assistant R&D, Ms Virginia Molose- Research Manager, Mr Tiyani Chauke- Manager International Projects, Ms Zama Zulu- Marketing & Events Officer and Mr Sifiso Mazibuko- Communications Officer.

The WRC engages both political leadership and technical teams working on water programmes to disseminate guidelines and tools in various parts of South Africa. Universities conduct research on water and water related issues. Postgraduate students work through their supervisors and promoters in various research projects sponsored by WRC. It was an excellent knowledge exchange platform for creating awareness on tools and projects relevant to municipal water services (wastewater, sanitation and drinking water), water use in agriculture, water resources management (water-linked ecosystems, hydrology, resource quality, climate change and governance).

The roadshows include the sharing of knowledge with regards to the Water Research Development and Innovation Roadmap, Water Demonstration Programme Technology and Technology Transfer. Additionally, these roadshows help to keep the Commission informed about the urgent research needs expressed by the municipalities and strengthens links both at technical and political levels.

The theme for the Roadshow was "Reflecting on Water and Sanitation Research & Innovation agenda".

**"Reflecting on Water and Sanitation Research & Innovation agenda"**

Presentations which were made included:

- Water and Sanitation Research & Innovation, Research Funding Opportunities (migration to the new system) - Dr Stanley Liphadzi;
- An overview of current and emerging Research Priorities from KSAs, lighthouses and the WRC knowledge tree;
- Water Utilisation in Agriculture – an overview;
- Water Resource Management / Alternative Water Sources / Hydrology / Climate Change /Water Linked Ecosystems;
- Water Innovations / Water RDI and
- Intellectual Property; and International Relations and Cooperation.

The Dean of School of Environmental Sciences – Professor John Odiyo shared his experience working on a number of research projects sponsored by WRC.

In making the closing remarks, Senior Professor Ekosse urged staff and students of UNIVEN to submit fundable proposals to WRC and encouraged the members of the WRC Delegation to always consider submissions from UNIVEN in a positive light.

# UNIVEN hosts delegation from Switzerland

The Swiss delegation visited the University of Venda (UNIVEN) on 1 February 2019 to explore a Swiss-South Africa Applied Research and Innovation Programme. The leader of the delegation was Ms Jacqueline Friedenthal from the Embassy of the Switzerland in South Africa. Others include Prof. Uwe Schulz, Head of International Relations; Prof. Mirko Kleingries from Lucerne University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland; Prof. Christof Biba and Prof. Frank Koch from Rapperswil University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland; Mr. Alexandre Maaza and Mr. Sakhile Dhlamini, Swiss Embassy's Science and Technology Office; Mr. Desmond Musetho from the Mphaphuli Development Trust; Mr. David Nemakonde from the South African Institute for Environmental Health; Dr Rebecca Maserumule and Mr Mbangiseni Mabudafhasi, representatives from the Department of Science and Technology's Innovation Programme. Also present at the meeting from UNIVEN are Prof Jan Crafford, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic; Senior Prof Georgies-Ivo Ekosse, Director Research and Innovation; Dr Segun Obadire, Acting Director International Relations.

Prof Jan Crafford welcomed the delegation to UNIVEN and said the meeting is long overdue. He also gave a brief highlight of the key research areas and the support of the University to mutually benefitting

partnerships. The delegation presented on university to university collaboration, training of Masters and PhD students, joint publications with the added value of having the research resulted into a project on the ground at the end of the project term. The team is planning to involve the private sector for their involvement right from the start. Prof Biba was more on a fact-finding mission but is at the same time one of the most highly regarded renewable energy innovators in Germany and Switzerland. He presented on the softorb work on renewable energy talking about the energy/water nexus outlook and the WASH moodle box bringing any time content to communities and professionals in health, hygiene and energy. Softorb seeks the production of potable water anywhere through the solar heat dehumidification of ambient air; WASH-Moodle Box as a low-cost digital educational SDG intervention; Prof Biba was looking for possible collaboration on solar electricity generation and supply for remote areas. He was part of the developers for Moodle platform which is free for academic usage and could provide an alternative system for the current very expensive Blackboard at the University. The delegation was having an outlook on agriculture and public health hopefully later in the year and of course to run a grassroots innovation challenge with the Technology Innovation Agency.



Cross-session of the Swiss delegation at UNIVEN

## Univen student is Miss South Africa Plus World Queen contestant



Precicah Shuan Shibambu (23), a student of the University of Venda (Univen) is set to try her luck again at the 2019/2020 Miss South Africa Plus World after being a finalist and first princess at the 2018/2019 Miss South Africa Plus World. The former Miss Venda Plus Size 2017/2018 and Univen Radio staff member is doing her final year of Bachelor of Arts in Development Studies in the School of Human and Social Sciences. She gives back to the community by tutoring Geography and Economics at high schools during winter school classes.

Her journey as a plus size model was motivated by the perpetual discrimination against thick women inclusive of body shaming and bullying. Precicah, who is affectionately known as Presly Lyon, took it upon herself to strive to change the status quo. On 6 April 2019, Presly hopes to be crowned Miss South Africa Plus World Queen in Bloemfontein Civic Centre which will automatically set her up for an international competition that will be hosted in Texas, Atlanta in the United States of America in 2020.

See her good works on the following social media networks:

instagram: Presly\_Lyon  
Facebook: Presly Lyon  
Twitter: @ PreslyLyon

Above: Precicah Shuan Shibambu will be one of the contestants during Miss South Africa Plus World Queen competition in Bloemfontein.

### We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communication channel.

#### Nendila editorial committee:

Mr Takalani Dzaga – Chief editor  
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Mr Peter Mashishi – Contributor  
Welheminah Semono – Intern  
Vhutshilo Munyai – Intern  
Ms Mushoni Mulaudzi – Preservation (Library)

#### Send your contributions to:

Welheminah Mabogo, Nendila Coordinator  
University of Venda, Private Bag x5050  
Thohoyandou, 0950

#### Contact Details:

Tel: 015 962 8525

Fax: 015 962 8494

e-mail: welheminah.mabogo@univen.ac.za

Physical: Office number 24,  
First Floor  
Main Administration Building  
University of Venda

**If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the tip-off hotline - 0800 212 755 / email: univenhotline@tip-offs.com**