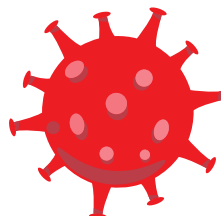




University of Venda
Creating future leaders

UNIVEN produces hand sanitiser and surface disinfectant to minimize the spread of Coronavirus on campus



The University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences through the leadership of the Dean, Prof Natasha Potgieter has recently put together a Hygiene team that is made up of staff and students from Four (04) University departments to come up with a response to mitigate the effects of Coronavirus. The team is made up of members from the University's departments of Microbiology, Chemistry, Biochemistry and Botany and so far, hand sanitiser and disinfectant have been produced and more volumes are anticipated.

Prof Natasha Potgieter said that the University management saw a need to produce these sanitisers internally for the benefit of the University's staff and students and to minimize the exposure of the University community of contracting this novel Coronavirus. Prof Potgieter stated that the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences have the expertise and both the staff and postgraduate students were eager to get involved in this project and wanted to do their part in combatting the spread of the virus. She said it is important that people become aware of their behaviour and be proactive by always carrying the hand sanitiser with them and use it as often as possible after visiting the bathroom, touching door handles, touching money and any other object that might be touched or handled by several people.

The hand sanitiser is made from ethanol, glycerol and essential oils (sourced from different plants) to keep your hands moisturised while disinfecting them. The surface disinfectant is a diluted hydrochloride solution and is used to disinfect windows and working surfaces. The University is in the process of looking at the potential of making these products available to the community at a reasonable price together with proper hygiene education brochures as part of the community engagement activities and social responsibility.



Some members of a hygiene group busy producing sanitiser and surface disinfectant at the Lab



Prof Natasha Potgieter (2nd from left) and UNIVEN hygiene group that produces sanitiser and surface disinfectant posing for a photo

Read inside

UNIVEN produces hand sanitiser and surface disinfectant to minimize the spread of Coronavirus on campus	1
UNIVEN partners with UNIDO, GEF, CDM and Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries to empower Limpopo youth	2
'Socio-economic development cannot take place without peace and stability' - DIRCO Deputy Minister	5
SRC plays a very important role in the Governance of the University	6
A workshop to improve database of African languages is currently underway at UNIVEN	7
ELEPHANT project kicks-off to empower South African research	8
UNIVEN staff visit UCLL, Belgium	9
UNIVEN participates in AIEA Conference	10
UNIVEN participates in USA IVLP on Demand	11
Messrs Thaba and Mangeni are to serve at the USSA Limpopo Provincial Committee	12
Sustaining Quality Teaching and Learning in the COVID-19 era	13
Artificial Intelligence coming to the University of Venda	13
UNIVEN hosts Stijn Callewaert from UCLL, Belgium	14

UNIVEN partners with UNIDO, GEF, CDM and Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries to empower Limpopo youth

From 13-17 March 2020, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) in partnership with United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), Capricorn District Municipality (CDM) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) held a combined workshop that was aimed at awareness raising and training of officials. These officials were coming from departments of Local Economic Development, Agriculture, Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism. Fifty-seven (57) young men and women were trained to be biogas operators and technicians in waste to energy conversion technology.

These young men and women were drawn from four District Municipalities of Mopani (Maruleng), Sekhukhune (Fetakgomo - Tubatse), Waterberg (Mogalakwena) and Capricorn (Polokwane). The workshop was held at Makgoba Community Hall in Ward

29 of Polokwane Municipality, few kilometers outside Polokwane City. The first day of the workshop was on the general biogas technology basics, with the remaining four days dedicated on a more focused training of the youth on household biogas digesters implementation and entrepreneurial promotions among the youth.

The training included theory behind biogas digesters, designs of biogas digesters and practical skills on how to construct and install household biogas plants. The training also covered all aspects around maintenance of the biogas digesters, the use of biogas, proper handling and use of the effluent as well as the health and safety concerns inclusive of methane leakage and the necessary measures needed to identify and resolve problems. In addition to community training, the project seeks to carry out a short awareness training workshop directed towards officials from local private and public sectors.

UNIVEN is contracted to work on the capacity building and technology support system component of the main project. Moreover, the main aims of this project are to strengthen the institutional capacity as well as addressing the insufficient technical capacity through skills training, awareness raising and the development of knowledge products, in support of reducing risk of industry of waste to energy conversion. The project will form the base for the enhancement of sustainable development through environmental conservation and improved socio-economic conditions while addressing climate change mitigation. This project will further contribute and enhance the adoption and utilization of biogas technology in rural communities by increasing level of awareness, improving knowledge and skills of community residents, local authorities, private sectors, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. Most importantly, the project will promote local production of biogas technology.

The main aims of this project are to strengthen the institutional capacity as well as addressing the insufficient technical capacity through skills training, awareness raising and the development of knowledge products, in support of reducing risk of industry of waste to energy conversion.



Workshop attendees listening to the facilitators

UNIVEN partners with UNIDO, GEF, CDM and Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries to empower Limpopo youth continued...



Workshop attendees posing for a group photo outside the hall in which the workshop was held



According to Dr David Tinarwo who is a Renewable Energy, Sustainable Technology Consultant and Senior Physics Lecturer at UNIVEN's School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, this workshop aims at training young adults who are interested in farming, becoming technicians, plumbers and brick layers. He said the project got support of an amount of R600 000 from the Capricorn District Municipality for piloting this project in selected communities around Makgoba village. "It is up to us as project leaders, participating youth and community members to determine whether this project becomes a success or not." He said there are possibilities that this project can create many jobs for young people in our rural communities.

"It is up to us as project leaders, participating youth and community members to determine whether this project becomes a success or not."



this project can create a good number of permanent jobs if it becomes a success.

Ms Modjadji Rangwato who is an Air Quality Officer at Capricorn District Municipality said, depending on the success of this project, there are possibilities of further funding in the next financial year, and that this project can create a good number of permanent jobs if it becomes a success. She advised the workshop attendees to make sure that this project becomes a success.



Mr Nokwazi Moyo from UNIDO gave a historical background of what biogas is and further explained the importance of why South Africa should start this kind of projects. He said in South Africa there is an appetite for biogas and Limpopo was chosen as a province suitable for biogas generation. "UNIVEN has done well so far in this project and by bringing together the trainers that have been trained to train others and become professionals." Mr Moyo indicated that the project nationally has four components namely: Capacity building and Technology Support System; Biogas Market Development and Regulatory Framework; Technology Demonstration; Scaling up and Monitoring and Evaluation.

in South Africa there is an appetite for biogas and Limpopo was chosen as a province suitable for biogas generation.



Prince Monyai who resides at Makgoba village is one of the local workshop Facilitators. Monyai said the emergence of this workshop will assist a lot of South Africans, especially Limpopo residents because the country is currently faced with load shedding. He said this project will bridge this gap by producing a lot of gas that will be used by citizens of this country to cook even in the absence of electricity. Monyai further indicated that this project has brought hopes to jobless young people of Limpopo Province. "They will gain a lot of experience and make sure that this workshop becomes a success." UNIDO is working in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries; Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (MRE) and other entities in implementing the project entitled 'Promoting organic waste-to-energy and other low carbon technologies in small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) scale, that is, accelerating biogas market development in South Africa'.

This project will produce a lot of gas that will be used by citizens of this country to cook even in the absence of electricity.

UNIVEN partners with UNIDO, GEF, CDM and Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries to empower Limpopo youth continued...

The project further seeks to promote market-based adoption of integrated biogas technologies in small, medium and micro-scale enterprises in South Africa in line with the country's drive to promote the development of the renewable energy sector and the green economy. This will be achieved through Capacity building and biogas technology support; Market development and Regulatory Framework; Technology demonstration and Scaling up.

The project also contributes to the enhancement of adoption and utilization of biogas technology in rural communities by increasing level of awareness, improving knowledge and skills of community residents, local authorities, private sectors, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders.

Biogas is a mixture of gasses formed when organic matter such as biomass, manure, municipal waste and green matter etc. is broken down in the absence of oxygen. Gasses produced through this anaerobic digestion process are primarily methane and carbon dioxide and if these are combusted with oxygen, this leads to an energy release of heat that may be converted to electricity or the gas that may be compressed into fuel.



Peet Sleyen (2nd from left) and Mark Tiepelt (2nd from right) were presenters during day one of the workshop



Group photo on day two (2) of the workshop



Thumbs up for the project by facilitators and participants of the workshop

'Socio-economic development cannot take place without peace and stability' - DIRCO Deputy Minister



On Friday, 13 March 2020 the University of Venda and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) hosted a Symposium under the theme "South Africa's Priorities as Chair of the African Union (AU)". The Symposium took place in the Senate Chambers. The aim of the event was to contextualise South Africa's Chairmanship of the AU, stimulate debate on international obligations and national domestic priorities as well as to give participants a platform to interact with the Deputy Minister regarding matters of international engagements between the country and the world at large.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, Prof Jan Crafford while giving welcome remarks appreciated the presence of the DIRCO officials, UNIVEN staff and students. He said "This is one kind of a vital event that we are able to share ideas as academics on the development of the country and I would like to urge you all to pay a kind attention to the keynote address and fully participate throughout the event."



The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini, who gave the keynote address said that the symposium is a measure of their keen interest to expand the knowledge base about the continent's political governance systems as well as the strategic direction it has chosen to take.

South Africa is concurrently Chairing the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the AU Committee of Heads of State on Climate Change (CAHOSOCC). The Chairmanship also coincides with the final year of South Africa's non-permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The Deputy minister mentioned that holding chairmanship positions means that as a country, South Africa will be compelled to redouble efforts to build strong, sustainable and resilient regional and continental mechanisms that would support the national efforts to deliver durable, and inclusive economic opportunities for people, in particular women and youth. It also means that we need to serve as a buffer against unrest, instability, terrorism and violent extremism on our continent.

"South Africa's goals for the African continent are the resolution of conflict and building a framework in which socio-economic development can take place. As you well know, socio-economic development cannot take place without peace and stability," she added

When concluding, the Deputy Minister re-emphasised that "We are alive to the fact that advancing to our defined vision both as a country and the continent is impossible if our people are left behind. I am therefore confident that we will emerge the richer for it, as the description of the audience here covers a wide range of stakeholders, mostly and in this regard correctly so, from civil society."



In response to the keynote address, one of University of Venda students Tshedza Sikhwari outlined the major priorities of South Africa as a chair of the African Union which is to continue with the process of resolving conflicts, tackling gender equality, climate change, promoting and supporting economic integration across the continent as well as boosting commerce through the creation of a new continental free trade.

"South Africa's goals for the African continent are the resolution of conflict and building a framework in which socio-economic development can take place."

SRC plays a very important role in the Governance of the University



SRC members posing for a group photo with Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo and Ms Esther Mashavhanduna

On Thursday, 05 March 2020, The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni met with the SRC as part of stakeholder engagement. This meeting took place at Porche-Villa Hotel. Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo, Director Student Affairs said the purpose of the meeting was to introduce SRC members to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal because he hasn't met with SRC members since they were elected. Dr Bernard Nthambeleni wanted to know the ministers as he has already met with SRC President and the Secretary General on several University gatherings such as the Induction of new Council members.

During the meeting, Dr Nthambeleni shared with SRC members the 2021-2025 University Strategic Plan which is due for approval by Council in April.

"We need to make sure that the University's focus is on students. The primary focus of the University is to produce quality students who will be competitive in the corporate world. We want our graduates to excel during job searching and in entrepreneurship."

Dr Nthambeleni explained the importance of ensuring that even first year students are taught by Doctors and Professors.

Dr Nthambeleni highlighted to the SRC members the four strategic thrusts which are: Student Centeredness and Engaged Scholarship; Entrepreneurial University; Governance for Outstanding Scholarship; and Linkages, Partnerships and Internationalisation.

"We need to train our students to start businesses. We are also working with other universities who are already ahead with entrepreneurial activities", said the Vice Chancellor and Principal

He said UNIVEN wants to make sure that its governance system supports the mission and vision of where the University wants to go. "Even our budget should indicate or guide us in the direction of where we want to be. The element of internationalisation should also not be lost along the way. We need to expose our students to the world. We need to take them to places outside the country to enable them to learn how students in other Universities do things."

He spoke to SRC members about matters related to NSFAS funding and how to fund the missing middle students through various SETAs and sponsors. "The government is really committed to assist our University." Dr Nthambeleni indicated that the SRC plays a very important role in governing the University. He advised them that their leadership should not end at the University but should also make an impact out there when they leave the University. "We recognize your roles as student leaders. Don't look at yourselves as leaders only at UNIVEN, look at it as being a leader even outside this University. He concluded his talk by advising them to protect the value of our University's qualifications and to protect the value of our brand.

"The primary focus of the University is to produce quality students who will be competitive in the corporate world."



The SRC Secretary General, Yanda Mxaku in his response to what the Vice Chancellor has highlighted said the University should not be a space to learn and graduate, instead students should be given a chance to get experience.

Mxaku also touched on the University infrastructure that needs to be maintained so that it could last long. He acknowledged that there are lots of challenges that the University need to address and with time, the SRC and the University Management will work together to overcome such challenges.

Some members of SRC expressed that there is a need to build proper channels to interact with the Management of the University and hopefully this meeting is the beginning. They also mentioned that the matter of outdated books in the Library should be given the attention it deserves.



SRC members engaging with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

A successful workshop to improve database of African languages



Workshop participants posing for a group photo outside the University's Art Gallery

Language is important in every aspect of our lives because it allows people to communicate in a manner that enables the sharing of common ideas. Likewise, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) is currently the only institution that teaches more languages than any other University in South Africa.

To reinforce these facts, the School of Human and Social Sciences' MER Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Arts and Culture has organised a Linguistic workshop that took place from 02-13 March 2020 at the University's Art Gallery. This workshop focuses on syntactic microvariation of six (6) Southern African Languages, five of which are taught at the University of Venda. During the two-week period, 142 syntactic parameters will be documented by a collaboration between members of the MER Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Arts and Culture and a team of researchers from Japan, United Kingdom (UK), and Bloemfontein.

The current improvement focus is on Siswati; Tshivenda; Sepedi; IsiNdebele; Xitsonga and Southern Sotho languages. Young researchers from the Centre will assist staff members during the documentation project.

The outcome of this workshop is expected to produce a comprehensive document that is composed of a comparable set of data that encompasses languages in southern Africa. This workshop is co-sponsored by JSPS's Core-to-Core Program: B. Asia-Africa Science Platforms, and the Dean's office of the School of Human and Social Sciences.



Workshop participants listening to the opening remark by Prof Mashige

Language is important in every aspect of our lives because it allows people to communicate in a manner that enables the sharing of common ideas.

ELEPHANT project kicks-off to empower South African research



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) is one of the partners in the Erasmus+ ELEPHANT project of which the Kick-Off meeting took place from 11-13 February 2020 at the "Future Africa" Conference Centre of the University of Pretoria. It included the formal appointment of the Steering Committee under the chairmanship of Prof Victor PMG Rutten of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University, Netherlands and supported by Prof Anita Michel from the Onderstepoort Faculty's Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases; Prof Alessandra Scagliarini, Director International Relations, University of Bologna, Prof Natasha Potgieter; Dean School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences; Dr Segun Obadire, Acting Director International Relations; Prof Afsatou Traore, HoD, Microbiology and Prof Lourens

Swanepoel, Senior Lecturer, Zoology. The event was opened by Prof Stephanie Burton, Vice-Principal: Research and Postgraduate Education of the University of Pretoria. The project funded to the tune of €1 million, commenced on 15 January 2020 and is scheduled to end on 14 January 2023.

The EU-funded ELEPHANT project was granted to a consortium consisting of six South African and two European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) namely Utrecht University in the Netherlands and the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna in Italy. The six South African HEIs are the University of Pretoria, the University of Venda, University of Limpopo, University of Mpumalanga, University of Fort Hare and the Southern African Wildlife College.

The consortium is led by the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University. Associate partners, National Wildlife College, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (DAFF) and others will also contribute to the project and may benefit from its outcomes.

ELEPHANT (Empowering Universities' learning and research capacities in the One Health approach for the management of animals at the wildlife, livestock and human interface in South Africa) is co-financed by the Erasmus+, KA2 Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) and aims at contributing to poverty relief, through the empowerment of South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) by boosting their innovation and research capacities in the One Health context, that should result in a more effective science-based health management at the interface between human, wildlife, livestock and environment. The partners' country for the ELEPHANT project is South Africa, which has the third richest biodiversity in the world, along with a rich diversity of cultures, landscapes, climates, agricultural and land use types. The resulting variety of livestock keeping practices, together with the increasing overlap of agriculture and wildlife settings place local scientists in a privileged position for conducting and benefiting from integrated research that is of clear importance to the country.

Management of zoonotic diseases at human-domestic-wildlife interface in such areas clearly requires a One Health (OH) approach to reconcile the interest of local communities and wildlife conservation. In these settings, farmers experience large livestock losses due to mortality from diseases and predation by wildlife. These losses are negatively impacting food security (i.e. access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food) and on food safety (protected from foodborne illnesses). South African scientists and policymakers have thus the greatest opportunity and responsibility

to take leadership of OH initiatives and develop institutional frameworks and research programmes to tackle these complex problems, where people's lives are intimately related to the health and productivity of livestock and the natural environment including wildlife.

The main beneficiaries of the project will be post-graduate students and researchers that will adopt a One Health methodology in research having the possibility to participate in mobility periods and operating in international contexts. It is expected that these beneficiaries will then implement the new skills to improve community-based programmes. University of Venda (UNIVEN) is particularly focused on researches on human wildlife conflict, food safety and food security. At UNIVEN the target will be researchers, post-graduate students (MSc, PhD, and Post-doctoral) who will benefit from the One Health training programmes. Other participants on the project from UNIVEN are Prof Joseph Baloyi, HoD Animal Science, Dr Jethro Zuwarimwe, Senior Lecturer Institute for Rural Development and Dr Takalani Tshitangano, HoD Public Health.

Some of the partner representatives at the Kick-Off meeting for Elephant Project The University of Pretoria (UP) is a highly ranked university in research, with a strong background in the area of OH, being part of other networks dealing with the topic in Africa. UP was also involved in One Health Training and Leadership (OHTL), a community based human and animal infectious disease risk mitigation programme whose good practices will be shared within the network. Target beneficiaries in this institution will be researchers and PhD candidates that will have the opportunity to widen their perspectives tapping into discipline-based expertise from the other partners to broaden research approaches and questions as well as increase their opportunities for community based participative activities.



Prof Afsatou Traore, HoD Microbiology; Prof Natasha Potgieter, Dean School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences and Dr Segun Obadire, Acting Director International Relations at the Kick-Off Meeting

UNIVEN staff visit UCLL, Belgium

University of Venda (UNIVEN) staff members visited the University College, Leuven and Limburg (UCLL), Belgium between 22 and 29 November 2019 to strengthen and further develop the existing student exchange programme. The staff members are Prof Mokgale Makgopa, Dean School of Human and Social Science; Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi, Dean School of Health Sciences, Prof Ndileleni Mudzielwana, HoD; Dr Shonisani Mulovhedzi; Ms Rendani Makhwathana, Early Childhood Education. Prof Afam Jideani, Food Science and Technology visited between 7 and 14 December 2019. The delegation was welcomed to UCLL by the President Marc Vandewalle who expressed his delight for the visitors and the progress in the collaboration between the two universities.



The delegation was engaged in various programmes and activities on different campuses of UCLL in Leuven and Hasselt. The Coordinator of international office, Mieke Clement gave summary on how internationalisation operated. She explained that the vision of the University is to ensure and strengthen the quality of education programme in order to illustrate the importance of teacher education in UCLL. She also discussed about the overarching theme where they believe in transdisciplinary learning methodology. They trust that student learn with, from and about one another to facilitate collaboration in practice. She also put more emphasis on service learning that lead to serving, reflecting and learning how to teach in the classroom. There were visits to three Early

Childhood Education organisations centres within Belgium.

One of the meetings attended was the evening with the parents and students who are heading for their internship in various countries around the globe. This meeting was held at the Limburg campus. During this session delegates from various institutions and ambassadors meet prospective students and parents, share some information about their institutions and countries on several issues such as possibilities for train, ship transportation, supervisors, accommodation and manuals or guidelines for students on internship. This session was coordinated by Stijn Callewaert, International Relations officer and Programme Manager for Social Education.



UNIVEN participates in AIEA Conference

The Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) Conference 2020 was held from 16-19 February 2020 at the Marriott Hotel at Woodley, Washington DC. The Conference brought together close to 1000 participants comprising Senior International Officers (SIOs) and Administrators from all over the world. The theme of the conference was: Rethinking Comprehensive Internationalisation for a Global Generation.

There were presidential dialogues on International Education presented by President Makola Abdullah, Virginia State University, President Brenda Allen, Lincoln University and President David Wilson, Morgan State University. There were many other overarching topics such as Diversity and Inclusion in a Global Context; Purposeful Global Engagement; Building partnership and Developing agreements with foreign institutions; and many others. The conference was attended by Dr Segun Obadire, Acting Director International Relations through a partial sponsorship of the US Embassy in South Africa. Participants at the AIEA shared success stories and best practices about the disciplines that are best suited for partnership; the models that work best, and how they are initiated and sustained.

They also identified obstacles to partnership and how it could be addressed constructively, and what will be needed to work around it. It also generated ideas for future action and further resources needed; and the reasonable goals. It identified members from each of the interested parties to form a working group for more detailed discussion.

Many possible partners were met at the conference including Prof Jose Jackson-Maleta, Michigan State University; Mark Carr, US Department of State; Prof Heike Michelsen, Cornell University and Dr Coleman Jordan, Morgan State University and many others.

The theme of the conference was: Rethinking Comprehensive Internationalisation for a Global Generation.



Some participants at the Conference



Cross-section of participants at AIEA conference

UNIVEN participates in USA IVLP on Demand

The United States wants to greatly expand partnerships between U.S. and African universities to strengthen Africa's educational institutions and enhance their role as instruments of national development. Such cooperation will also promote the western model of academic freedom, which is under increasing threat across the world. The African diplomatic corps in Washington is keenly interested in building stronger university-to-university ties and eager to create links with U.S. higher education administrators. The State Department hosted an invitation session on Wednesday, February 19 for AIEA member universities' senior international officers (SIOs); members of the African diplomatic corps; and representatives from the Bureau of African Affairs, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, USAID, and other federal agencies. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy chaired discussion on the Overview of US Federalism, US - Africa Academic Exchange programmes and STEM focused partnerships. The International Visitor Leadership Programme

(IVLP) on Demand Programme is a State Department programme resource that provides opportunity to supplement and arrange additional programing following the AIEA conference.

The IVLP on Demand programme focused on institutional partnership initiatives and individual professional interests. The programme started from 20-26 February 2020 and accommodated delegates at the Residence Inn by Marriot, Washington DC and Home2 by Hilton Hotel, Atlanta Georgia. The programme was sponsored by the United States Department of State Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and it was arranged by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

The IVLP on Demand programme invited representatives from seven universities in South Africa (University of Pretoria, Rhodes University, University of Fort Hare, University of Venda, University of Zululand, Central University of Technology and Mangosuthu University of Technology).



Some of the delegates with Atlanta Urban Agriculture Group



SA delegates and hosts at the IIE office, Washington DC



Participants at the National Science Foundation, Virginia

University of Venda (UNIVEN) was represented by Dr Segun Obadire, Acting Director International Relations. As its main objective, the discussion shared information among U.S. universities, African diplomats, and the U.S. Government to develop a joint, strategic approach that will promote U.S.-Africa faculty and student exchanges including developing joint degree programmes that have Africans complete their programme in their home country; encourage joint research, especially in agriculture, given that Africa's population will double by 2050; conduct training on all aspects of university administration; and explore other areas of cooperation, including public-private partnerships (PPP). Emeritus Prof David Kraybill, who is completing a book project on UNIVEN in RuForum sponsored Internationalisation good practices from Africa was linked with the US-SA HE Network for possible collaboration during the meeting.

The IVLP on Demand programme also included arranged visits to different universities and institutions for possible collaboration and networking in the US. They provided the flight and necessary accommodation for participants from South Africa in both Washington DC and Atlanta, Georgia. The IVLP on Demand programme was able to achieve the following interesting objectives:

- It promoted US-South Africa faculty and student exchange programmes as many universities and institutions were visited. Some possible collaborations were initiated at the George Washington University (GWU) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) where various opportunities including STEM scholarships and international opportunities through the US-Saudi Arabia initiatives
- It facilitated joint research, especially in agriculture, food security and STEM. The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, University of Georgia (UGA) established over 104 years ago is a well-structured land-grant university. There are various research collaborative opportunities with the University and many others including the Georgia Institute of Technology, (Georgia Tech); Spelman College; Georgia Gwinnett College; Morehouse College, Kennesaw State University, etc.
- It explored public-private partnerships, with an emphasis on commercialization, technology transfer and job creation. We were able to connect with The Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program (CADFP); The Agricultural Transformative Initiative Fellowship and Scholarships Fund (ATISF); EducationUSA; Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Programme; Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education (ARCHE); and many others.

Messrs Thaba and Mangeni are to serve at the USSA Limpopo Provincial Committee

On Thursday, 05 March 2020, the University Sport South Africa (USSA) held its Limpopo Provincial general meeting. This meeting was held at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) Student Centre and was attended by representatives from UNIVEN, University of Limpopo, University of Mpumalanga, Tshwane University of Technology (Polokwane Campus, Emalahleni Campus and Mombela campus).

During the meeting, elections of the USSA Limpopo Provincial Executive Committee were conducted to elect members who will serve the organisation for the next three years (2020-2022). It was during this meeting where Messrs. Patrick Thaba and Bafana Mangeni were elected to serve at the USSA (University Sport South Africa) Limpopo Provincial Committee. Mr Thaba who is a Sport Officer and Coordinator of the Sport and Recreation at UNIVEN and currently serving as a member of the USSA HEADs of Sport Forum was elected as the Chairperson of USSA Limpopo.

Mr Thaba expressed that being elected as the Provincial Chairperson will assist the University in positioning itself as an agent of change and transformation in university sports and recreation. He said this will further provide an opportunity for UNIVEN to obtain full representation as an associate member of the District Sports Confederation (DISCOC) and the Limpopo Provincial Sport Confederation (LIMCOC).

Mr Bafana Mangeni, who is the SRC Minister of Sport and Recreation serving on the 2019/20 SRC cabinet was elected as an additional member. He voiced that he is grateful of the opportunity given to him



Delegates during an elective meeting at UNIVEN Student Centre

and he will use this opportunity to learn and contribute effectively on the development of the university sport and recreation in the Province representing UNIVEN.

UNIVEN Sport and Recreation Unit under Student Affairs Directorate, is an affiliate of the National University Sport South Africa (USSA). USSA is a national controlling body responsible for coordinating students sport activities at national, regional and international elite competitions across the 26 affiliated member universities in South Africa. Annually, students from these universities compete during winter and summer tournaments.



Mr Patrick Thaba (right) and Mr Bafana Mangeni (left)

SOUTH AFRICA ON CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN

"The nation-wide lockdown is necessary to fundamentally disrupt the chain of transmission across society."

WHATSAPP SUPPORT
0600 123 456
EMERGENCY NUMBER
0800 029 999
sacoronavirus.co.za

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE What is a lockdown?

A lockdown is an emergency protocol that requires South Africans to stay at home except for essential purposes. Grocery stores, pharmacies, banks and other essential industries will remain open. All non-essential activities are suspended.

The full national lockdown will begin at **midnight on Thursday 26 March**, and will continue for **21 days**.

STAY SAFE - STAY AT HOME
Please take care, look after yourself and your loved ones and best of luck with all the challenges you may encounter.

Encouraging words from the President's speech...

"In the days, weeks and months ahead our resolve, our resourcefulness and our unity as a nation will be tested as never before.

I call on all of us, one and all, to play our part.

To be courageous, to be patient, and above all, to show compassion.

Let us never despair.

For we are a nation at one, and we will surely prevail.

May God protect our people.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.
Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso.

God seën Suid-Afrika.
God bless South Africa.

Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika.

I thank you."

Cyril Ramaphosa
President of South Africa

CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING (CHETL) ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (ADU) and E-LEARNING UNITS

Sustaining Quality Teaching and Learning in the COVID-19 era

In response to the unprecedented break that the University had to face due to the Covid-19 pandemic, CHETL - ADU team has developed a protocol aimed at accelerating quality teaching and learning at the University of Venda. The protocol guides both academic staff and students in continuing with support and development services from Academic Development Unit during and maybe beyond the COVID-19 period. There are suggested practices that are recommended by ADU which include e-mentoring, e-tutoring. This is critical in the sense that vulnerable first entering students might find themselves confused and lost in their studies. Regarding academic staff development, online evaluation of lecturers by students should take precedence in the development of academic staff. While other support and development programmes for staff might take place online on request at this stage, we commit ourselves to customise all existing material for online provision because online might be the future practice. This is the time for normalising the unusual. So, we are ready to face the challenge.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

MenTuts

1. E-mentoring and e-tutoring to be encouraged in all modules that have MenTuts. MenTuts are expected to continue giving support to their mentees or tutees during this time.
2. Where possible please create videos or audio sessions of sections that students find difficult in their various modules. Post these on the most preferred technology that is used for learning by the students.

3. Please note that you are not allowed to share a video or any other learning material with your group without the approval of the module lecturer though.
4. Gather contact details of all your mentee/tutees and create a group chat where possible. This can be through WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.
5. Claim processing: Note that should there be convincing evidence that you were supporting fellow students during this face to face break, you will safely claim for MenTut payment.
6. A MenTut should avoid face to face contact with mentees and tutees to minimise the spread of corona virus. Please honour this request until such time the ban is lifted by the national health officials.
7. Language Assistants are available to assist with assignments. Through email or any other form of social media.

STAFF SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

While face to face classes are on suspension, teaching and learning can be kept as active as ever. It is the module lecturer's responsibility to ensure that students are kept busy in the process while we await the global, national and institutional situation to normalise.

Student evaluation of lecturers

Students are encouraged to evaluate the teaching practices that happen in their respective modules using technology. This can be the use of Blackboard, WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom, Teams, etc. Lecturers should then encourage their students to evaluate them by log in on the Blackboard and complete the online evaluation form.

Below are steps to follow on conducting an online evaluation on Blackboard:

- Login to your course on Blackboard
- On the menu bar, click on "take survey"
- complete survey
- submit

NB: please note that this is for students who will be completing the online survey

Academic staff workshops

It is evident that planned workshops for this semester will no longer take place as scheduled. So, should you need some staff development workshop such as portfolio development workshop, curriculum development workshop, assessment etc. at departmental or school level, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Portfolio development material are uploaded on the ADU Blackboard site. In case you need that, please contact Mr Willie Xazela to link you to the site for ease of access.

We are available to provide online workshops through Zoom or Skype to promote social distancing amongst colleagues.

New academic staff members

It is a pleasure that a training workshop for new staff was conducted at the end of February 2020. However, we understand that these colleagues might continue to find it not easy to navigate the teaching and learning space at the teaching and learning space at the University of Venda. Please note that ADU is there for you and we shall try to assist you with your teaching and learning related challenges.

Contact details of ADU colleagues:

- Contact anyone of the ADU team: Dr Mary Masehela (HoD) on mary.masehela@univen.ac.za, Dr Fhatuwani Ravhuhali email Fhatuwani.ravhuhali@univen.ac.za, Ms Hlayi Mboweni hlayisani.mboweni@univen.ac.za and Mr Nndweleni Mathase on, email Nndweleni.mathase@univen.ac.za.
- Let's practice social distancing by avoiding frequent face to face contact with colleagues

The E-Learning practitioners are available to assist on any e-learning related issue. The following are their E-Mail addresses and cell numbers:

1. Willie.xazela@univen.ac.za +27 (83) 399-2504 (HoD)
2. Tshimangadzo.monyai@univen.ac.za 079 149 8862
3. Donald.mothisi@univen.ac.za (079) 764-7686
4. Thuso.matumba@univen.ac.za (079) 360-8210

Support emails

1. Elearningsupport@univen.ac.za (for staff)
2. Myuniven@univen.ac.za (for students)

Conclusion COVID-19

- # We-can-do-this-together
- # Use-lockdown-to-unlock-teaching-learning-social-responsiveness
- # Short-and-Sharp-Socially-Aware
- # Leave no-one behind!

STAY AT HOME

Artificial Intelligence coming to the University of Venda

#YourFacelsTheKey

The University of Venda is embarking on an Artificial Intelligence journey to provide a safe environment for all students and staff. We are implementing a leading, cutting-edge Facial Recognition system for access control at the campus and student residences.

The safety of students and staff is one of our top priorities and we would like to ensure that there are stricter controls at the entrances of the campus to ensure that only authorised members gain access. Over the years, we have had criminal incidences and we aim to reduce these incidences to zero by implementing the facial recognition system.

This exciting project was named #YourFacelsTheKey upon kick-off in 2019. Only each individual's face will gain them access to the campus and residences. We are not removing the current card reader functionality, but as an additional security measure, individual's faces will be scanned and validated. If individuals are swiping a card, but the scanned profile does not match the profile of the scanned student or staff card, access will be denied. We will share more information and a demonstration on how the system will work in the coming weeks.



The system will apply to all students, service workers, administrative staff and management. We will also accommodate other stakeholders like school learners, some members of the community as well as contractors who enter the campus for once-off or regular project work.

We started with student registration earlier this year, along with the issuing of student cards. To date, we have registered just over 12 000 students in preparation for the new

system. If you have not registered yet, please visit the registration desk upon your next visit to the campus later in April. All student registrations will be shut down during the COVID-19 21-day lockdown period (26 March – 16 April).

We will continue to share updates via email, on our Facebook page and on the website. We also have a radio advert playing on a regular basis, so please tell your fellow staff, students and friends to listen closely for news

about the project. We plan to have exciting awareness days where more information about the project, will be shared. Availability of more information on the awareness days will be determined by the progress of the current COVID-19 status.

We are very proud of this achievement. The implementation of this project will not only enable us to provide our staff and students at UNIVEN with a safer work and learning environment, but we will also be the first university in Africa to implement Facial Recognition for Access Control. We have the opportunity to be the leaders in technology and to lead fellow universities and institutions by example, and we are extremely proud of this.

The success of this project not only depends on the IT, Campus Security and Installation teams, but it also depends on the staff members and students of UNIVEN. We need you to support us in our efforts to create a safe working and learning environment. Safety starts with YOU. Safety starts with ME.

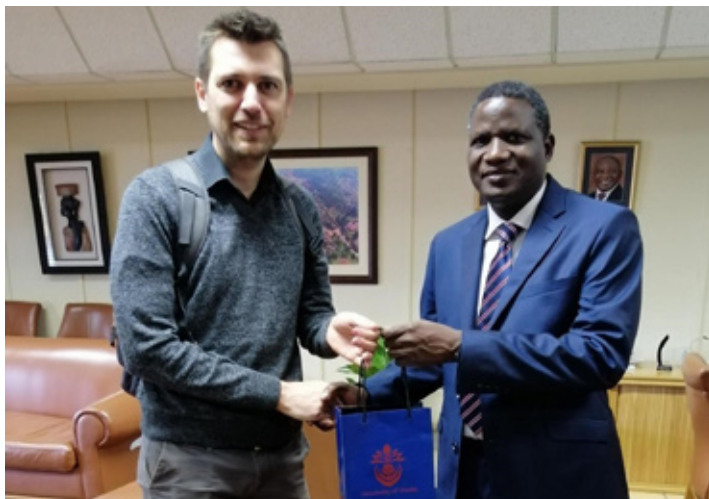
For more information, please contact Mr Sam Khoza, Director of the Department of Information and Communication Technology at 015 962 8102 / 072 249 1288 or email to sam.khoza@univen.ac.za

UNIVEN hosts Stijn Callewaert from UCLL, Belgium

University of Venda (UNIVEN) hosted Mr Stijn Callewaert, Coordinator, International Relations Office at the Department of Social Work, University College of Leuven and Limburg (UCLL), Belgium from 1-4 March 2020. He is on campus to continue discussion on possible expansion of the existing collaboration between our two universities. He paid a courtesy visit to the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal expressed his heartfelt appreciation to Mr Callewaert for visiting the University at this time. He said, the much-anticipated academic growth and development could only be achieved through strategic partnership initiatives such as the one with UCLL, Belgium. He applauded Stijn and other colleagues from UCLL and UNIVEN for sustaining the partnership. He recalled that six staff members including two Deans visited

UCLL, Belgium in November and December 2019 for more opportunities for both staff and students in the two universities in order to expand the partnerships.

Mr Callewaert had meetings with the Dean School of Human and Social Science, Prof Mokgale Makgopa and colleagues from the School who discussed specifically about the possible collaboration in the Department of Social Work. The School of Human and Social Sciences recently participated in an Erasmus+ proposal with the UCLL, Belgium which was granted to the tune of about €1million for 2020-2023. One of the participants in the proposal submission, Ms M Mamaleka will be visiting Belgium soon for a kick-off meeting. The Dean, Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi and colleagues from the School of Health Sciences met with Stijn and agreed on possible collaboration at the Departments of Advanced Nursing and Nutrition.



Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal (Right) and Mr Stijn Callewaert, UCLL, Belgium. (Left)



Mr Stijn Callewaert, UCLL, Belgium (fourth from left) pose for a photo with UNIVEN staff.



Prof Afam Jideani, Food Science & Technology with the visitor

The University is currently hosting three students from UCLL at the School of Education, Department of Early Childhood Education. The students arrived in February and will be departing in May 2020. Stijn visited the placement School at Maungani Primary where the three exchange students are carrying out their teaching practice. The School of Agriculture hosted one student under the supervision of Prof Afam Jideani, Food Science and Technology Department for a semester exchange programme from UCLL Belgium last year while UNIVEN also sent a final year student on a semester exchange programme to Belgium through the Vliroos government funding. Similar opportunity may be available for some students soon.

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communication channel.

Nendila editorial committee:

Dr Takalani Dzaga – Chief editor
Ms Welheminah Mabogo – Coordinator
Mr Peter Mashishi – Contributor
Ntsieni Sirwali – 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