



UNIVEN launched the Institutional Advancement Unit to develop and grow third-stream income for the University



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As universities around the globe struggle with the challenge of funding and raising additional income, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) on Thursday, 31 March 2022, launched the Institutional Advancement Unit to develop and grow a third-stream income for the University. For institutions of higher learning to continue to operate and be competitive at global level, raising additional income is not a choice but a necessity. The UNIVEN Advancement Unit will have three primary functions: to generate third stream income for the University by actively driving fund-raising campaigns; establish and build the University's relationship with key stakeholders, including alumni, the private sector and investors; and give meaning to the University's strategic intent, particularly around impact and relevance.

The Institutional Advancement Unit was officially launched by the University of Venda Chancellor, Adv. Mojanku Gumbi at Emperors Palace, Johannesburg. Adv. Mojanku Gumbi called for a new model of development. The current model of capitalism, co-existing as it does with abject poverty is not sustainable. Adv. Gumbi expressed her sincere appreciation to all sponsors for their generous support that has made this occasion a great success.



In his keynote address, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said the launch of the Advancement Unit is a great moment for the University of Venda as we mark 40 years of our existence. He described an Advancement Unit as an important organ in the life of a university.

Dr Nthambeleni shared with the audience that the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) recently announced a significant grant to UNIVEN for the establishment of an SAMRC extramural unit focused on antimicrobial resistance. The Antimicrobial Resistance and Global Health Research unit at UNIVEN will be looking for solutions to the challenges of antimicrobial resistance from a microbial, human, and environmental perspective.

The University was established 40 years ago to accommodate 5 000 students, this year UNIVEN's total headcount for both undergraduate and postgraduate students is more than 17 500 students. Not surprisingly, this has put the institution's infrastructure and teaching facilities under immense pressure.

Given that a university's good reputation underpins its very existence, Dr Nthambeleni is very cognisant that UNIVEN's stature and credibility need to be maintained. As a result, good governance and transparency are a hallmark of the institution. "A negative reputation is like leprosy for a university – nobody wants to be associated with a tainted university which is why we protect and guard our reputation, follow prudent financial management policies and work to ensure we receive unqualified audit reports," he said.

Situated in Limpopo, more than 70% of UNIVEN's students come from lower income socio-economic backgrounds. As a result, ballooning student debt is a growing challenge. At the end of 2021, the University's outstanding debt was a massive R462 million.

Part of the reason for this are students who do not qualify for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) because their parents' combined income is above R350 000 – but who still can't afford the tuition fees.

A critical shortage of on-campus accommodation means that 75% live off campus which poses a huge reputational risk for the university, revealed Dr Nthambeleni.

"Universities can no longer rely solely on government subsidies if they hope to be sustainable which is why the launch of the Advancement Unit is critically important," said the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Nthambeleni.

"A negative reputation is like leprosy for a university – nobody wants to be associated with a tainted university which is why we protect and guard our reputation, follow prudent financial management policies and work to ensure we receive unqualified audit reports"

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Calling on businesses, alumni, and other stakeholders to support the university in its drive to become self-sustaining, UNIVEN Council chairperson, Julius Lekgetha, applauded the university for its ability to create future leaders. Mr Lekgetha further said through this Unit, we believe that the university will be better positioned to work together with external stakeholders to raise resources for its financial sustainability.

The Unit will bring together several functions and better position the University for investment and revenue generation, explained Dr Robert Martin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services at UNIVEN. "A pre-requisite to the University's long-term sustainability is enhancing and building relationships as well as engaging with potential sponsors and donors on a regular basis."

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Dr Martin indicated that the Advancement Unit is intended to support the effective implementation of the University's strategic objectives contained in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, especially with regards to branding and positioning as well as generation of third-stream income.



Messages of support hailed from the Chairperson of Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Innovation - Ms Nompindulo Thobile Mkhathswa, University of Johannesburg (UJ) Chairperson of Council, Mr Mike Teke and Standard Bank represented by Craig Polkinghorne, Head Commercial Banking South Africa.

The launch was organised in a fundraising format and corporate sponsorship was received from Value Capital Partners (VCP) and Standard Bank. Sponsorship was also received from companies and individuals. The event was attended by University Council members, Senior managers, Convocation members and alumni, UIGC Board members and CEOs of Corporate companies

Entertainers of the night were Dr Colbert Mukwevho and UNIVEN Choir led by Dr Aubrey Khoza who left the audience with their melodious tone.



Dr Colbert Mukwevho



UNIVEN Choir led by Dr Aubrey Khoza



Mike Teke



Craig Polkinghorne

Univen Student Representative Council Remembers South Africans who Fought for Human Rights



Human Rights Day in South Africa is historically linked with 21 March 1960, and the events of Sharpeville. On that day 69 people died and 180 were wounded when police fired on a peaceful crowd that had gathered in protest against the Pass laws. This day marked an affirmation by ordinary people, rising in unison to proclaim their rights. It became an iconic date in our country's history that on this day South Africa commemorates as Human Rights Day as a reminder of our rights and the cost paid for our treasured human rights.

Human rights are rights that everyone should have simply because they are human. In 1948, the United Nations defined 30 articles of human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It established universal human rights based on humanity, freedom, justice, and peace.

South Africa has included indivisible human rights in our own Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The articles of our Constitution can only be changed by a two-thirds majority in Parliament, which means it is difficult for anyone, including the government, to take away the basic rights of a citizen.

In 1948 the Nationalist Party came to power in South Africa and formalised segregation in a succession of laws that gave the government control over the movement of Black people in urban areas. The Native Laws Amendment Act of 1952 narrowed the definition of Blacks with permanent residence in towns and cities. Legally, no Black person could leave a rural area for an urban one without a permit from the local authorities, and on arrival in an urban area, the person had to obtain a permit within 72 hours to seek work. The Reference Book, or Pass, included a photograph, details of place of origin, employment record, tax payments, and encounters with the police.

In 1956 women from all walks of life, protested against the racist Pass laws, when 20,000 women marched to the Union Building in Pretoria, singing "wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo – you strike a woman, you strike a rock".

The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) proposed an anti-Pass campaign to begin on 21 March 1960. Black men gathered at Sharpeville without passes and presented themselves for arrest. The order was given to disperse, after which the police opened fire on the crowd of men, women, and children. Following the Sharpeville massacre, several black political movements were banned by the Nationalist government, but the resistance movement continued to operate underground.

When South Africa held its first democratic election, with Nelson Mandela elected as its first democratic President, 21 March, Human Rights Day was officially proclaimed a public holiday.

On Human Rights Day, South Africans are asked to reflect on their rights, to protect their rights and the rights of all people from violation, irrespective of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, whether they are foreign national or not – human rights apply to everyone, equally. Everyone must remain vigilant and report abuse and cruelty.

It is for these reasons that, on Thursday, 17 March 2022, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) Student Representative Council (SRC) held an event to commemorate the lives of the fighters who fought for Human Rights that are enjoyed by South Africans today. This commemoration event took place at the University Sports Hall.



SRC Secretary General, Mr Junior Magagula told attendees that every citizen of this country is tasked to protect Chapter 2 of the Constitution. Chapter 2 sets out the Bill of Rights, arguably the part of the Constitution that has had the greatest impact on peoples' daily lives. The first words of the chapter say: "This Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa." Magagula said in order to do that, we all need to know and understand Chapter 2 of the Constitution.

He encouraged students to participate in the law making of students' policies because they are set to be governing them. "Make sure that those policies are what students want."



Students were also addressed by the Solicitor-General, Mr Fhedzisani Pandelani from the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

In his Keynote address, Mr Pandelani indicated that although since 1994 South Africa has made progress in addressing certain iniquities relating to education, students should be conscientised that the fight for justice, freedom, truth and dignity is inalienable. He said though severely criticised, South African Constitution is viewed as pro-Human Rights.



Mr Andisani Mathelemusa who is the Administrative Officer in the Student Affairs Department highlighted that the University saw it fit to remember these human rights fighters on this day because on Monday, 21 March most students and staff members won't be around to attend this event. Organising this event earlier was to accommodate those who were held up on the Human Rights Day.



Attendees were welcomed by the Director Legal Services, Adv Eric Nemukula who indicated that they were meeting earlier than the actual date to commemorate the 21st of March dating back to 1960. He also gave a historical background of this day where he told attendees to always strive to protect their rights and to enjoy their rights responsibly.



A group photo of SRC Cabinet members, some of UNIVEN staff members, event organisers and speakers.



When introducing Mr Victor Simango from Simango and Simango Attorneys, the Minister of Legal Policies and Constitutional Affairs, Mr Ndivhuwo Siremba (Left Photo) spoke about the role of students in protecting their rights and other people's rights. Mr Charles Simango (Right) spoke about approaches to advance the protection of these human rights. Mr Simango mentioned that students have the role to protect, guarantee and spread or educate people about these human rights. He concluded his talk by advising students to make sure that they know how to achieve this task and it must be achieved in a responsible manner in such a way that it does not negatively affect their future," said Mr Siremba.



Programme directors - Mr Andisani Mathelemusa and Azwihangwisi Lukhwareni (SRC Minister of Information, External and International Relations).



When representing the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Prof Ademola Oluborode Jegede told attendees to remain vigilant and report abuse and cruelty.

South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) funds 'Antimicrobial Resistance and Global Health Research' at UNIVEN



Professor Pascal Bessong

Medicines that prevent the multiplication of germs are called antimicrobials. Antimicrobials have played and continue to play a substantial role in the promotion of global health, socioeconomic development, and advancement of nations and civilization. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is when a germ thrives in the presence of a medicine

that previously inactivates or kills it. However, antimicrobials are losing their utility, resulting in increased disease burden and death due to infections by germs. The priority to manage AMR was affirmed by Heads of States and Governments, in the United Nations General Assembly in 2016, with a pledge for a coordinated approach to curb the spread of resistance to antimicrobials.

It is against this background that the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) has made a significant grant award for the establishment of an SAMRC extramural unit – Antimicrobial Resistance and Global Health Research – at the University of Venda (UNIVEN). This followed a successful evaluation outcome of a proposal led by Professor Pascal Bessong, Head of the HIV/AIDS & Global Health Research Programme

at UNIVEN. The mandate of SAMRC is to 'improve the health of the country's population, through research, development and technology transfer, so that people can enjoy a better quality of life.' Through this award, UNIVEN will support the strategic objectives of SAMRC in the domain of antimicrobial resistance.

Prof Bessong said "the team at UNIVEN, comprising virologists, bacteriologists, biomathematicians, infectious disease epidemiologists, clinical psychologists, global health experts, working with national and international partners and collaborators, will seek solutions to the challenges of AMR from the microbial, human, and environmental perspectives, with the vision to become a reference programme for AMR epidemiology, global health research, and

human capital development". He further said, "A key component of the Unit's vision is to harness the potential in communities as a driver for improved AMR stewardship". To this end, the investigators aim to conduct high quality community and laboratory-based research relevant for community participation, education, policy development, practice, and to train the next generation of leadership on AMR – says Professor Bessong, the Unit Director. Professor Bessong is a C1 NRF rated scientist; an elected member of the Academy of Science of South Africa; and a Visiting Scholar at the School of Medicine, University of Virginia, USA.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza when congratulating Prof Bessong in his prestigious achievement said, "this is a great stride and need to be celebrated because together we have been sharing one purpose and that is excellence". On behalf of the University community Prof Feza stated that we congratulate Prof Bessong on this amazing news! "This is an incredible milestone and you deserve the spotlight to celebrate the moment", she added.

The mandate of SAMRC is to 'improve the health of the country's population, through research, development and technology transfer, so that people can enjoy a better quality of life.'

An internationally Acclaimed UNIVEN Scientist



The Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture of the University of Venda is proud to announce that its own Professor Yoshan Moodley has been awarded a B rating by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of the Republic of South Africa. He is the only B rated academic at the University of Venda. The NRF ranks South Africa's scientists by a stringent peer review system every five years in their careers. During the rating process, leading experts both locally and abroad are asked to comment on a scientist's standing in their field of research, based on the quality and impact of their research outputs. The rating a scientist receives is a summary of opinions of at least six peers. Among senior academics the three rating categories are C (established researcher), B (internationally acclaimed researcher) and A (leading international researcher).

Professor Moodley's achievement adds considerably to the credibility of the university as a research institution at home and abroad. Since Prof Moodley was employed at the university in 2015, UNIVEN's name made its first ever appearances on the pages of the world's most prestigious academic journals like Nature, Science and Proceedings of the National Academic of Sciences of the USA (PNAS). Moodley's research has also been reported extensively in the international media, giving the University of Venda its first exposure in renowned newspapers like the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Guardian. It is in recognition of these and other outstanding achievements that the NRF has awarded Professor Moodley with a B2 rating.

Prof Moodley's B rating provides hope and encouragement to all our UNIVEN academics, especially those who are yet to become NRF rated. In the time he has been with us, Prof Moodley also developed and established a series of undergraduate and honours teaching modules in evolutionary biology, designed especially for UNIVEN students, to allow our Biological Sciences graduates a deeper and more holistic appreciation of science, life and nature.

UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni says "It makes us proud and adds invaluable to our research psyche, to have a B rated scientist within our ranks.

I congratulate Prof Moodley on this great achievement", he concluded.



* Photos supplied

The Outcome of the Successful NRF Evaluation and Rating Applications Submitted by UNIVEN in 2021

The outcome of the successful National Research Foundation (NRF) evaluation and rating applications submitted by the University of Venda in March 2021 is valid and effective from the 1st of January 2022, as follows:



Prof Yoshan Moodley, B2-Rated is a South African evolutionary biologist. He joined the University of Venda as a full professor in 2015 after working for twelve years as a scientist at several prestigious European institutions. In 2016 he was awarded his first NRF rating of C1, denoting his standing as an established researcher with international standing. Over the past five years, Moodley has consolidated his achievements in Europe, producing an outstanding series of highly impactful research in his field of evolutionary genetics. Prof Moodley recently came up for scientific re-evaluation, and it is the pleasure of the University of Venda to announce that the NRF now considers him as a scientist with considerable international standing and have awarded him a B2 rating. Among his recent research papers, for which he had a leading or significant role, feature world-renowned scientific journals like *Nature*, *Science*, *Proceedings of the National Academic of Sciences of the USA* and *Molecular Biology and Evolution*. At the same time, Prof Moodley also developed a series of excellent undergraduate and honours teaching modules in evolutionary biology, which were designed to give UNIVEN Biological Sciences graduates a deeper, more holistic appreciation of science, life, and nature. His achievements since he has been with UNIVEN have helped place the University of Venda as a leading institution for evolutionary research in the republic. We wish Professor Moodley continued success in his research.

Comment: Prof Jaco Greef from University of Pretoria congratulated Prof Moodley on his excellent achievement. He is looking forward to seeing how much Prof Moodley's rating will climb in the next cycle.

Prof Mike Bruford from Cardiff University in UK was absolutely delighted that Prof Moodley has been awarded NRF B2 rating. He says that Prof Moodley fully deserves the rating and he has known Yoshan since he was an early career PhD student. He spent two years in his lab as a highly productive NRF postdoc, and in following his career subsequently, it has been a pleasure to see him mature into a Professor in his home country, and a scientist of high international standing, and he hopes that this suffices."



Professor Amidou Samie, C1-Rated holds a BSc and an MSc degree in Biochemistry and a PhD degree in Microbiology and a Master of Public Health (MPH) from the University of Pretoria. Following his PhD qualification in 2008 he was appointed as Lecturer in the Department of Microbiology at the University of Venda where he subsequently served as Senior Lecturer and currently as Associate Professor. He was the first Y rated researcher at the University of Venda in 2009 immediately after his PhD graduation and his rating has recently been re-evaluated and updated to the C1 category effective from the 1st of January 2022.

He has authored or co-authored more than 130 publications in peer reviewed International Journals on topics covering Genetics, Clinical Microbiology, Parasitology, Biotechnology, Water quality and Tropical Medicine. He has also published 5 book chapters and has served as Editor for 2 Books on Tropical diseases and *E. coli*. He has given more than 150 Lectures at both national and international conferences and has received the Vice-Chancellor's award for the best overall researcher at the University of Venda for 4 consecutive years. He has graduated over 20 MSc and PhD students. He has established collaborative projects with researchers from South Africa, USA, Japan, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Zambia and received research grants from several organisations including the WRC, NIH, NRF, ISID, Gates Foundation and UNESCO. He has served as an executive board member of the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes, the Limpopo Health research committee, the Research Advisory forum of the University of Venda. He also serves as external examiner for PhD, MSc, and BSc honours projects from different institutions in South Africa and abroad. Professor Samie's research has for the first time provided information on the molecular epidemiology and pathogenicity of emerging intestinal pathogens such as *Cryptosporidium*, *microsporidia*, *E. histolytica*, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Arcobacter butzlerii*, *Enteraggregative E. coli* and *Clostridium difficile*. Of particular interest to him is the study of *E. histolytica* which is a common cause of diarrhea among hospital attendees and HIV positive individuals. Professor Samie's most recent research interest covers issues of pharmacogenomics and genetic susceptibility and is actively involved in the role of the Immune system's genes on the occurrence of STIs and opportunistic infections among HIV patients. He is also interested in understanding the occurrence of steroid hormones in the environment and their potential impact on microbial diversity and Human health.



Prof. Jude J.O. Odhiambo, C2-Rated is a Professor of Soil Science in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. He has been awarded a rating of C2 by the NRF. Prof Odhiambo holds a BSc (Hons) Agriculture and MSc Agriculture (Soil Science) degrees from the University of Nairobi, Kenya and a PhD degree in Soil Science from The University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada and has over thirty (33) years of university teaching (at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels) as well as research experience at various institutions of higher learning in Africa and abroad. His main area of research is in soil fertility and plant nutrition and he has published extensively in peer reviewed and accredited journals. He has also presented his research work at several national and international conferences and supervised several Honours, Masters and PhD students. Prof Odhiambo is the former Dean of the former School of Agriculture, having also served as a Vice-Dean of the former School for a period of 8 years and former Head of the Department of Soil Science. He is currently the Interim Chair for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture at the University of Venda. Prof Odhiambo is an active researcher and a reviewer for several journals, and an external examiner and assessor for several universities and organisations, both nationally and internationally. He is the current president of the Soil Science Society of South Africa (SSSSA), a member of the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), International Union of Soil Science (IUSS), and a registered natural science practitioner (Soil Science) by the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNASP).

Comment: Dear Prof Odhiambo, congratulations on the successful outcome of your NRF rating application. It speaks volumes on the quality of your works and contributions to the soil science discipline and the professional bodies that we both belong and serve locally and internationally. I am particularly glad to be associated with this great achievement of yours. Please keep flying the flag high – Prof FR Kutu (University of Mpumalanga).

South Africa's National Research Foundation is the intermediary agency between the policies and strategies of the Government of South Africa and South Africa's research institutions. It was established on 1 April 1999 as an autonomous statutory body in accordance with the National Research Foundation Act.



Prof Irene Barnhoorn, C2-Rated recently received her C2 NRF rating. She is interested in research studies on exposure to environmental endocrine disruptors (EDCs) and health effects on wildlife and eventually humans. Her focus is mainly on freshwater aquatic sciences with the emphasis on aquatic endocrine disruption (ecotoxicology) and the safe consumption of wild fish. Prof Barnhoorn has published numerous papers in high impact factor nationally and international scientific journals. She has trained several honours, masters and doctoral students in aquatic toxicology both in the laboratory and field.

Comment: A Colleague, Prof Wilmiem Luus-Powell (UL) and C2 rated NRF scientist has known Prof Barnhoorn for more than 30 years and have been collaborating with her for the past six years. She is one of the most outstanding researchers I have worked with and her research on aquatic toxicology, environmental endocrine disruption and eco-physiology have had an impact on society and academia. This is evident in more than 1000 citations her research received worldwide in the past 10 years. Her rating shows that she is recognised as one of the leaders in her field of study. Prof Riana Borman, another colleague and B2 NRF rated scientist says: I have watched Prof Barnhoorn's career taking off from postdoctoral student to NRF-rated scientist. She has always had a keen eye for the abnormal or unusual and has distinguished herself as researcher that produces research results that matters.

The Outcome of the Successful NRF Evaluation and Rating Applications Submitted by UNIVEN in 2021 continued...



Prof Norman Chiliya, C3-Rated is an Associate Professor of Business Management. His research interests are in areas such as destination marketing, adoption of new technologies, small business management and sustainable development. Prof Chiliya received his C3 NRF rating, effective from the 1st of January 2022. Professor Norman Chiliya attended Chinhoyi High School in Zimbabwe. He obtained Bachelor of Commerce in Business Management and Industrial Psychology, Honours in Business Management and Master of Commerce in Business Management degrees from University of Fort Hare. Norman completed his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Business Management at University of Johannesburg. Norman has worked for University of Fort Hare, Monash South Africa, and Witwatersrand University. He joined University of Venda in April 2020. His research work focuses on entrepreneurship, innovation management, adoption of new technologies and marketing.

To date, Norman has supervised over 65 Honours, 20 Masters and 6 PhD projects. He has also externally examined a number of research projects for other universities. Norman has published over 39 Journal articles. He has also presented papers at local regional and international conferences. In addition to that Norman is a reviewer for several journals and conferences.



Dr. Marizvikuru Mwale-Manjoro, C3-Rated is a Senior Lecturer in the Institute for Rural Development, at the University of Venda (UNIVEN). She has more than 11 years of teaching and training experience at institutions of Higher Education in and outside South Africa.

Upon completing her doctoral studies with the University of Fort Hare, South Africa, in May 2010, Dr Mwale-Manjoro joined the then Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation at UNIVEN in October 2010 on a two years postdoctoral fellowship. During the period at UNIVEN she actively participated in community engagement activities, postgraduate supervision, research and publication, and she received Excellence in Research award for 2012 and 2013.

It is worth noting that apart from being an author/co-author of at least 45 peer-reviewed papers in various journals, two (2) conference proceedings and two (2) book Chapters, Dr. Mwale-Manjoro has a remarkable record of successful supervision/co-supervision of postgraduate research. To date she has graduated 11 Honours students, 6 Masters and 8 PhD candidates.

Dr Mwale-Manjoro's research work is mainly on animal production, animal nutrition, water and food nutrition security and ethnoveterinary medicine for improved food and nutrition security in rural communities.

Dr Mwale-Manjoro is also a principal investigator of a 3-year project on Water Security and Socio-Hydrological resilience of Rural Small-scale Crop Value Chains. The work is funded by the USAID (United States Agency for International development) under the PEER (Partnerships for Enhanced Engaged Research) cycle 6 programme. Collaborators are researchers and academics at IIE MSA, University of South Africa (UNISA) and Montana University in USA. Four (4) Masters students at IIE MSA, 3 Honours, 2 Masters and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow are benefiting from the project.

Dr Mwale-Manjoro's advancement in research coupled with her good interpersonal skills and diligence has seen her being invited by other researchers to participate in their projects. Currently she is a co-investigator of a project on Utilisation of indigenous knowledge in sustaining water security for humans and livestock in resource-limited communities in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces. The two-year project is funded by the Water Research Commission.

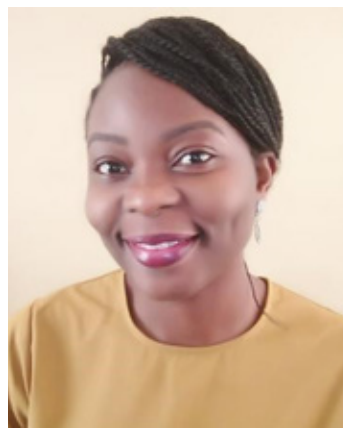
Invitation has also been extended to Dr Mwale-Manjoro and accepted for a five-year project on the National Collaborative for Research on Food, Energy, and Water Education (NC-FEW), an NSF-funded Research Coordination Network (RCN). This is an emergent, transdisciplinary community of educators and education researchers engaged in FEWNexus-focused educational programming and research/evaluation. The project is led by Prof Cory Forbes of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in USA. Dr Mwale-Manjoro is instrumental in the project as an International collaborator and expert in postgraduate training as well as informal and non-formal training.

Dr Mwale-Manjoro's advancement in research coupled with her good interpersonal skills and diligence has seen her being invited by other researchers to participate in their projects.



Dr Sphiwe Emmanuel Mhlongo, Y2-Rated is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Earth Sciences in the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture. He holds a PhD in Environmental Sciences (Geology), a Master of Earth Sciences in Mining and Environmental Geology, and a Bachelor of Earth Sciences in Mining and Environmental Geology (Hons) from the University of Venda. He joined academia in 2009 through the lecturer support programme of the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA). In his 13 years of experience in teaching and researching in Higher Education, he contributed to the supervision of 42 honours and 10 MSc students in the areas of mining and environmental geology. He is currently cosupervising 3 PhD candidates. His research interest is on sustainable mining, mine closure and rehabilitation (with a special focus on the issues of abandoned mines), and environmental geology. He has co-authored numerous papers published in scholarly journals and peer-reviewed conference proceedings. Dr Mhlongo is a member of professional societies such as the Geological Society of South Africa (GSSA) and the Land Rehabilitation Society of South Africa (LaRSSA). He is also the fellow of the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS).

Comment: Dr Mhlongo is grateful to Dr Francis Amponsah-Dacosta for being a wonderful mentor and supervisor since the beginning of his academic career. Prof. Wilson Gitari describes Dr Mhlongo as a promising academic and a researcher with great potential in driving this niche research area to higher levels. He is technically thorough in what he does and innovative. He is focused and showed great academic leadership within the collaborative projects we have executed together.



Dr Oluwatoyin Onipe, Y2-Rated has been recognised by the NRF as an emerging rated researcher in the field of Food Science and Technology (FST). Based on her recent research output's impact and quality, she received an NRF Y2 rating, valid from 1st January 2022.

Dr Onipe is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Food Science and Technology under Dr S.E. Ramashia and former mentorship of Professor A.I.O. Jideani. She holds a PhD in Agriculture (Food Science & Technology) and an MSc in FST from the University of Venda under Professor Jideani and Dr D. Beswa. During her doctorate programme, Dr Onipe proved herself an asset to the Department of Food Science and Technology, UNIVEN, through the quality of research.

The doctoral research of Dr Onipe on "Oil distribution, microstructure, and in vitro starch digestibility of magwinya enriched with cereal bran" was partly funded by external grants received from the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) in 2016 and the Centre of Excellence Smart Food project received in 2018. As the first researcher to carry out comprehensive scientific research on magwinya, Dr Onipe has carved for herself a research niche which makes her an authority in this research area. During this time, she pioneered the research on developing and optimising the formulation and processing of nutrient-dense, low-fat magwinya, for which one patent was registered in the South African Patent directory. In addition, she has authored/co-authored twelve (12) peer-reviewed publications, two (2) book chapters, two (2) industry magazine articles, seventeen (17) presentations at international conferences, one of which she co-chaired an academic session in 2018 at the Institute of Food Technologists annual conference in Chicago, USA. As the leading student researcher on the TIA and Smart Food projects, Dr Onipe has mentored a total of twenty (20) honours research students and is currently co-supervising two (2) master students. Apart from students, she has assisted staff members in the Department of Food Science & Technology with experimental design and research data analysis.

In the Famelab scientific communication 2021 competition, Dr Onipe participated and emerged as one of the top 10 out of about 300 contestants in South Africa and went on to have two media interviews at Makhado FM and radio 702. Her Famelab talks addressed the issue of food waste and malnutrition – two issues that currently plague both the developed and developing nations of the World. She spoke passionately about her research on magwinya – a product consumed by many communities in South Africa, and how she enriched and improved its nutrient profile while reducing its fat content using wheat bran – a cheap and available fibre source.

Comment: Her postdoctoral research at UNIVEN focuses on applying mechanical and bioprocessing methods for the modification of dietary fibres from wheat bran to improve its nutritional profile for use as functional food ingredients. This will be followed by their subsequent use for the development of foods. This research aligns with Food Security, a part of the sustainable development goals.

Speaking about her, Professor Jideani congratulates Dr Onipe for the achievement and wishes her the best in this national recognition. Dr Onipe is hardworking, humble, and the NRF rating endorses her as an emerging researcher. If given the opportunity, she has the potential to establish herself as a seasoned researcher. Her NRF rating has increased the value of the Department, Faculty, UNIVEN and South Africa.

Msc Student Joins a Polar Research Expedition to Marion Island, Sub-Antarctic



Tanganedzani Tshitavhe is a Master of Environmental Sciences student under the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture. Her dissertation focused on the "Effects of climate variability on citrus production and rural livelihoods in Mopani District Municipality, South Africa", supervised by Mr Edmore Kori (UNIVEN) and Prof Hector Chikooro of the University of North-west. Her research interests include climatology, atmospheric science, agricultural production, and rural development. Tanganedzani is part of the 2022/2023 polar expedition overwintering team to the Sub-Antarctic Marion Island as a Meteorological Technician onboard the SA Agulhas II polar research vessel.

Tanganedzani will be one of the 20 residents from 12 April 2022 to June 2023. She will be actively participating in the running of surface meteorological and atmospheric research projects assigned by the Marine Section of the South African Weather Service and Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment. Moreover, she will be performing surface meteorological

observations, conducting upper-air weather balloon releases, maintaining, and verifying equipment at the remote station of Marion Island.

Meteorological observations in a remote area are essential for predicting severe weather events and issuing of warnings. Warnings are especially important in cases of approaching severe storms, with potential to harm lives and property, that could make landfall. In addition, the meteorological data collected is accurate for use by forecasters, climate scientists or researchers in South Africa and anywhere worldwide. Aviation as well as sea and ocean navigation also use the data intensively and extensively.

This opportunity is a "once-in-a-lifetime experience", and Tanganedzani is thrilled to be part of the overwintering team. She is looking forward to exploring the island during her 15-month stay in utter isolation until the next relief team arrives. Ms Tshitavhe is dedicated to advancing women's representation in science by learning and sharing her expertise. She is committed to working for the environment and for the betterment of communities.

Marion Island is one of the two Prince Edward Islands remotely located in the SubAntarctic Southern Indian Ocean (3476 kilometres from the South Pole). The islands are of volcanic origin and are a Marine Protected Area and a Special Nature Reserve under the South African Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, No. 57 of 2003. As a result, research and conservation management are the only activities permitted on the island. The only human inhabitants (about 20 individuals) in Marion Island are the staff of a meteorological and biological research station managed by the South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP).



Mr. Edmore Kori, Tanganedzani's research project supervisor and mentor

Tanganedzani attributes this success to passion, dedication, discipline, and sheer hard work. She expressed her heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Edmore Kori, her research project supervisor and mentor, for igniting her passion in science and research. She went on to say that she cherishes the years she had the privilege of working under his guidance and will proudly carry the everlasting influence of his academic expertise and human virtue.

She has worked as an academic writing consultant and a tutor at the University of Venda, responsible for Geography tutorials, monitoring and improving students' academic performance, assisting postgraduates and undergraduates with academic writing skills. She also worked as a project assistant for the Global Environmental Facility Small Grants Programme Initiative (GEF SGP) in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve,

under the Institute for Rural Development, University of Venda, where she was providing mentorship, capacity development and support to teams implementing the funded projects, assisting with documentation of project activities, processes, and outputs. She was also the coordinator of the 2021 Mini-Habitable Planet Workshop School Programme under the Applied Centre for Climate Change and Earth Systems Science (ACCESS).

She is currently the deputy secretary of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve (VBR Board), a member of the South African Youth Biodiversity Network (SAYBN), Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), a Black Women in Science (BWiS) fellow, co-founder and director of Venus Environmental Services and operations manager of Waste Away Foundation (NPO). She volunteers and participates in community development programmes in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve. Additionally, she is a firm believer of dedication, discipline, and consistency.

She said she believes that there is nothing a person cannot accomplish if they apply their mind and time to it. "We often set our own limits based on general beliefs that society or others impose on us. It is crucial that we break past these (fictitious) barriers," said Tanganedzani Tshitavhe.

We often set our own limits based on general beliefs that society or others impose on us. It is crucial that we break past these (fictitious) barriers."

Deputy Minister in the Presidency Visits UNIVEN FM

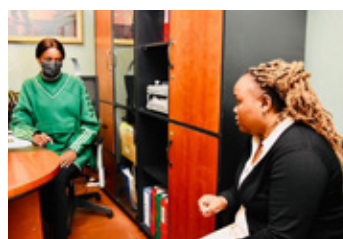
The Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ms Thembi Siweya (MP) together with the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) visited UNIVEN FM on Thursday, 17 March 2022. The purpose of the visit was to conduct the monitoring and evaluation to determine the extent in which MDDA funding is utilised as per funding policy, and to determine the challenges faced by the broadcast media on daily basis. MDDA was represented by the Senior Manager Communications and Strategy, Mr Rudzani Tshigemane.

Later on, the same day, the Deputy Minister and MDDA representative Mr Rudzani Tshigemane met with the University management represented by the University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani and Dr Takalani Dzaga who facilitated the meeting. The Deputy Minister briefly shared the good deeds that she has noticed and the gaps she has identified at the station. She said these gaps need immediate attention. The Deputy Minister was pleased with the work that UNIVEN FM is doing. She even bragged that UNIVEN might be a community radio station, but it is at the level of other national radio stations. She advised the University to utilise UNIVEN FM to its maximum operations. She also spoke about the issue of Gender Based

Violence (GBV) that should be addressed through UNIVEN FM as a vehicle with the capacity to reach communities in their own languages. Ms Thembi Siweya promised to come back for further monitoring and evaluation and to check the progress in addressing the identified gaps.

Speaking on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Adv Lambani appreciated the Deputy Minister's visit to the University and the station. He informed the Deputy Minister that the University is playing its part to make sure that the station runs well and fulfil its mandate. Adv Lambani indicated to the Deputy Minister that UNIVEN FM serves as a hub that supplies the country's radio and television stations with experienced presenters.

The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) is a statutory development agency for promoting and ensuring media development and diversity, set up as a partnership between the South African Government and major print and broadcasting companies to (amongst others) assist in developing community and small commercial media in South Africa, in terms of the MDDA Act No 14 of 2002."



UNIVEN FM Station Manager, Ms Tshildzi Shirinda and Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Ms Thembi Siweya



Ms Thembi Siweya (MP) and Mulshidzi Rambau during the visit to the studio



Mr Rudzani Tshigemane, Tshildzi Shirinda, Dr Thizwilondl Mudau, Adv Edward Lambani, Ms Thembi Siweya (MP), Dr Takalani Dzaga and Mr Heavy Mbedzi

7th Research Open Day Celebrated Under the Theme University of Venda Research and Innovation at 40



The Directorate of Research and Innovation (DRI) of the University of Venda (UNIVEN), celebrated excellence in research during the Research Open Day that took place at the UNIVEN Research Conference Centre on Tuesday, 01 March 2022. This was Seventh annual Research Open Day which was celebrated under the theme 'UNIVEN Research and Innovation at 40'. For the past two consecutive years, UNIVEN couldn't hold Research Open Day due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

The event was attended by the following distinguished guests: Emeritus Prof. Naftali Mollel, the Former Executive Dean: Faculty of Science, Health and Agriculture and Former Director Rural Development and Innovation Hub, University of Limpopo; UNIVEN Adjunct Prof Stanley Liphadzi from Water Research Commission; representatives from Vhembe District Municipality, the Member of the Mayoral Committee for Finance, MMC Anderson Mudunungu on behalf of the Vhembe District Executive Mayor, Councilor D Nenguda; Dr. ND Malindi, the Deputy Director Research and Development from the Limpopo Provincial Office of the Premier.

The event provided a platform for academics and students to showcase their outstanding research conducted within the various faculties of the institution through experimental exhibitions/display and posters.

Senior Prof Georges Ekosse said they chose the theme 'UNIVEN Research and Innovation at 40' because UNIVEN is celebrating 40 years of existence this year (2022)".

"Since UNIVEN is celebrating 40 years this year, it is a great honour to host this event as University of Venda is in its maturity age", added Senior Prof Ekosse as he welcomed the guests.

Prof. Nosisi Feza, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, and Postgraduate Studies

explained Research Open Day as one of the greatest days for the University of Venda because they were celebrating our research excellence. In her official opening message, Prof Feza appreciated Prof Stefan Foord, Chair of UNIVEN SARCHI on Biodiversity Value and Change in the Vhembe Biosphere for gracing the event. She pointed that this shows that our research is for our region, with our people and with our society.

Prof Feza also took the opportunity to announce that Prof Pascal Bessong's application to host the SAMRC Extramural Unit - Antimicrobial Resistance and Global Health at UNIVEN was successful.

She asserted that there are 35 NRF rated researchers in total and out of the 35, seven are women. "The good thing about it as we get 40 years in existence, we have a lot to show you that we as UNIVEN are matured". She highlighted that 48% of UNIVEN staff have doctoral degrees. Prof Feza specified that UNIVEN is an entrepreneurial University and there are five innovative champions working with traditional leaders. She further indicated that UNIVEN want to make sure that the richness reaches the masses. "The University of Venda is a University leading in engaged scholarship, therefore, we are not just adding the knowledge but we impact communities", she added.

"The knowledge UNIVEN has belongs to the society. As UNIVEN we have committed ourselves as engaged University. We have the knowledge and skills and that we should add value to this region. Our graduates need to have businesses while still learning. They should not cry after graduation due to unemployment".

The official opening of the event was followed by viewing of posters and experimental displays/exhibits by the Research Open Day Poster and Exhibits Awards adjudication

panel who were Emeritus Prof. Mollel: Former Executive Dean: Faculty of Science, Health and Agriculture and Former Director Rural Development and Innovation Hub, University of Limpopo (Chairperson); Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture represented by Prof. PO Bessong and Prof. M Chimonyo; Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education represented by Prof M Mashige; Faculty of Health Sciences represented by Prof L Makhado; Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law represented by Prof. M Ochara; the Director of Research and Innovation, Senior Prof. GE Ekosse; the Director of Library Services, Mrs. M Mulaudzi and Dr KS Sekhula who was the Coordinator.

Through support from the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP), the following winners of the different awards were offered honoraria and certificates:

The first best poster in the Faculty of Health Sciences went to Ms. M. Munyadziwa who won an amount of R2,500.00. While in the Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education, Dr. M. Mabika was the winner of the first best poster and she walked away with an amount of R2,500.00. Still in this category, Ms. M. Maligudu from the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law won R2,500.00. In the faculty Science, Engineering and Agriculture, the price went to Mr. O Chabalala.

This was followed by the Experimental setup/display category. In this category, Dr Angelina Maphula, a Clinical Psychologist and Lecturer in the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Health Sciences was the winner of First best experimental setup/display in her faculty and received R3,000.00. In the Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education, the winner of First best experimental setup/display is Dr. M. Mabika who also walked away with R3,000.00.

The First best experimental setup/display in the faculty of Management, Commerce and Law won by Mr. V Macheque with an amount of R3,000.00, hence Enviren Research Group in the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture won themselves an amount R3,000 in this category and the amount will be shared among the members in the group and they are Mr TL Budeli, Mr GK Pindiham, Miss Munzhelele EP, Mr A Shumba, Dr OU Izevbekhai and Dr R Mudzielwana.

In the Poster award category, the winner of second and third best walked away with R1,500.00 and R1000.00 respectively while in the category of Experimental setup/display, the second best won R2000.00.

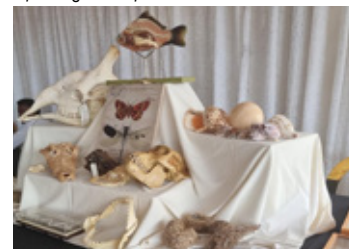
The purpose of these awards is to acknowledge the contribution to science in the four Faculties as well as the ability to portray institutional image through science communication.



Posters Viewing



Explaining their experiment



Some of the displays during the Research Open Day



All the winners posing for a photo with some of the staff members for DRI

2022 First Year Experience Roadshow Programme is Part of Student Support Programme



2022 FYE Roadshow with staff members from DU, SCCDU and E-Learning Units from Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL)

The student support sub-unit of Academic Development Unit (ADU) held a successful First year experience (FYE) programme roadshow from 21-25 February 2022. The University's Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning (CHETL) staff members engaged with a total of just over 1000 first entering students in two days wherein they were told about various activities and the importance of attending sessions such as test taking skills sessions, examinations preparations skills, time management sessions and many more during academic year 2022. The main objective was to enlighten, strengthen FYE visibility and promote FYE programmes to all UNIVEN's First Entering Students.

For the first time, the University of Venda on its webpage, has First Year Experience (FYE) videos clips from four Units under CHETL (Academic Development Unit, Student Counselling and Career Development Unit,

Disability Unit and E-Learning Unit) and some few directorates'. First year students can access all information needed from subunits under CHETL. The Unit's first ever FYE guide which is a working document and work in progress is completed and approved. It is on a verge of being published on a UNIVEN page for easy access by all first-year students. It includes sections such as Protection Services, Campus clinic, Library, CHETL amongst others.



Below are few of photos taken during the 2022 FYE roadshow:

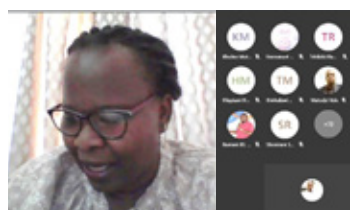


Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (Chetl) Held UNIVEN Wide Portfolio Development Workshop

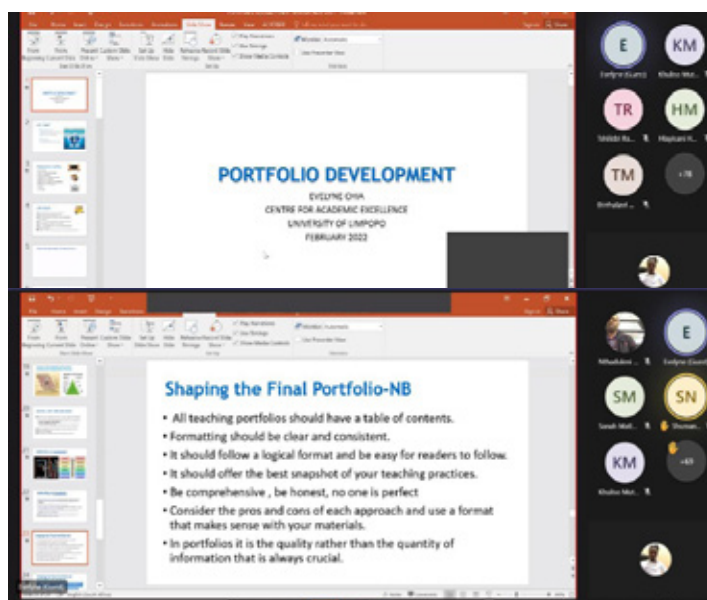
On 25 February 2022, the Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL), through its Academic Development Unit (ADU) held University wide Portfolio Development Workshop which took place on Microsoft Teams.

In welcoming and outlining the purpose of the Portfolio Development Workshop, Acting ADU HOD, Dr Fhatuwani Ravuhali noted that staff members should use the platform to engage collectively, constructively with a view to generate knowledge on how they can build their own Portfolios. Dr Ravuhali noted that anyone is set to benefit from the workshop as though it is skewed towards teaching portfolio. The idea is to provide ideas on how one can build a portfolio whether they are secretaries, Human Resource Practitioners, housing wardens or security officers.

A total of 80 participants attended this workshop. The guest speaker and presenter Ms Evelyn Chia from the University of Limpopo, Centre for Academic Excellence tailored the whole presentation around what a teaching portfolio is all about, the



types of portfolios, reflections on teaching, materials and methods as well as reflections on evaluations. Ms Chia highlighted that a teaching portfolio is a coherent, evidence based reflective narrative which is composed of set of materials, work samples and reflective commentary compiled to represent teaching practices as related to student learning and development. Participants were also given an opportunity to think about why they teach the way they do, any changes they have made in their teaching practices due to the Covid-19 pandemic, what they should keep or have a portfolio as a university teacher and what should be contained in such portfolio as well as the impact of critical reflection on their teaching and learning.



Gender Based Violence Amongst Women and Children is an Universal Phenomenon



UNIVEN's Dr Thizwilondi Josephine Mudau, HOD Youth in Development in the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education addressed a topic "Gender based violence amongst women and children" during the International Women's day celebration outreach hosted by Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Ms Thembi Siweya (MP). Dr Mudau spoke to women around Vhembe District Municipality in an event which took place at Thulamela Sports Hall on Thursday, 17 March 2022.

Her presentation was focused on gender-based violence which is a violation of human rights throughout the world including our country, South Africa. Dr Mudau indicated that GBV affects not only physical health but also mental health. This is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality and continues to be one of the most notable human right violations within all society. She stated that gender-based violence towards young women or females is a universal

phenomenon that persists in all countries of the world, and the perpetrators are well known to the victims. Mudau said there are some questions that one can ask herself, why is gender-based violence so widespread in South Africa despite the international intervention and local legislation enacted to prevent it? Why is it high in some communities and certain groups than others? There is no easy answer to these questions as the cause of gender-based violence cannot be attributed to a single factor. She pointed that curbing gender-based violence against women in family relationships requires change of attitudes about use of violence in settling disputes. "By working together, by confronting difficult issues, and mobilising everyone in and around our societies, we shall create a society where everyone, especially women, feel safe at all the times and in all spheres", she emphasised. "Where are we going as a nation when we still practice Gender-based Violence in our communities".

"By working together, by confronting difficult issues, and mobilising everyone in and around our societies, we shall create a society where everyone, especially women, feel safe at all the times and in all spheres"

Mrs Ruth Phaswana gives the University of Venda 30 years of service

Mrs Ruth Phaswana started working for the University of Venda (UNIVEN) on 01 June 1992 as the secretary to the Financial Aid Officer, the late Mr Johannes Khumela. Her position was funded by funds from Kagiso Trust. On 01 June 1993, the University appointed her as a permanent staff member. Her secretarial role also included allocation of funds to student accounts. By then it was Kagiso Trust and Race Relation as bursaries and TEFSA as a Loan.

She has served the University of Venda for the period of 30 years, 1 year as a contract

worker and 29 years as permanent employee, although she will be completing her 30th year on the 01 June 2022.

As indicated, Mrs Phaswana started her duties on 01 June 1992, working as the Secretary on a contract basis. Between 01 June 1993 and 31 May 1995, she was appointed as the Secretary Financial Aid under the leadership of Mr John Madzhie who was the then Director Financial Aid. Between 01 June 1995 and August 1999, she was serving as the Executive Secretary of the Finance department under Mr. John

Madzhie who was the then Director Finance. From 01 September 2002 to July 2007, Mrs Phaswana was serving as the Executive Secretary to Mr. John Madzhie who was at that time the Executive Director Finance. From 31 August 2007 to 31 August 2020, she was the Executive Secretary. Mrs Phaswana said on 01 September 2020, when the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) was appointed, she acted as his Personal Assistant (PA) until she was appointed on 01 October 2021 to date.

In her career journey, Mrs Phaswana has worked with eight (08) Finance Directors and one (01) Chief Financial Officer.

"I had a very good working relationship with all my managers. However, from all the managers that I have worked with, I appreciate, the Chief Financial Officer, Mr Botwe Kraziya for transferring so much knowledge to me with the little time we worked together. He is a manager who has the heart to follow-up on the well-being of all his staff members, motivates and encourage his staff to develop themselves academically.

Mrs Phaswana said some of her challenges since she started working for the university include late payments of NSFAS allowances to students and off campus accommodation. She said from her experiences, any delay in payments from the Financial Aid has an impact on Finance Department and the first place for students to go lodge a complaint is the CFO's office. "I have always listened to the concerns with calmness and assisted where possible or referred them to the relevant persons to assist but it was not an easy task."

When asked about what kept her working for the same organisation for such a long time, Mrs Phaswana said even though the job that she is doing is challenging but at the same time, it is very interesting as it exposes her to meet different types of people, different management style and personalities which assisted her to improve her emotional intelligence. "It also afforded me the opportunity to grow academically," she said.

She said when she joined the University of Venda, she had a Matric Certificate and Secretarial Diploma. Though studying was not easy due to work pressure, being a mother and being a wife, her colleagues, Ms Maria Dau and Mrs. Tshililo Muthadzwi motivated and encouraged her to further her studies. Mrs Phaswana is now holding a National Diploma Certificate, junior degree, and honours, and she is proud to say that she is working towards completing her master's degree in Business Administration at Southern Business School.

Her advice to others who are still new in the work environment is that knowledge is power, when you have knowledge, you have the power to achieve many goals. "Learning does not end with student life, or with one exiting the labour market, it is a lifelong process. Hence this is not the end of my journey but the beginning of a new chapter," she said.

She concluded with the words that the University of Venda is a good employer, staff members should always strive to achieve the best results by working hard, staying focused and by always preparing to learn new things.



High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Visits the University of Venda

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) through the Provincial Government of Limpopo hosted the High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to South Africa, Dr Mazhar Javed. The meeting took place at the University Council Chambers on Thursday, 17 March 2022. The High Commissioner was accompanied by a delegation from Limpopo Provincial Government, led by Ms Dorah Maraba, Chief Director International Relations in the Office of the Premier.



Ms Dorah Maraba, when outlining the purpose of the visit, said the High Commissioner's visit in the Province is aimed at strengthening and promoting trade and economic opportunities with Limpopo within the context of South Africa and Pakistan Relations. The Office of the Premier chose UNIVEN to host the High Commissioner with the view of promoting agricultural research and to create future relations with universities in Pakistan.



High commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Dr Mazhar Javed (left)

The High commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Dr Mazhar Javed thanked the University for a warm welcome and allowing him to address them directly. He displayed excitement to work together with the University of Venda looking at its richness in terms of Agriculture. Dr Mazhar Javed detailed the way Pakistan is doing in terms of agriculture. The High Commissioner also explained that the two countries have more things in common such as their landscape.

Dr Mazhar said Limpopo is a province that is rich in agriculture, and they need more partnerships in agriculture. He committed to facilitate any kind of collaboration and interaction between Pakistan and UNIVEN. He said, "Once that interaction starts the sky is the limit". He congratulated and wished UNIVEN the best for its 40 years celebration.



Mr Thabo Dikgale, UNIVEN's Partnership Officer said, "We will start the conversation through the Office of the Premier and create linkages with the other universities".



When opening and welcoming the guests, Dr Takalani Dzaga, Director Marketing, Branding and Communication said "It is a great day for UNIVEN to host His Excellency, High Commissioner of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He said that the High Commissioner's presence is important as this year UNIVEN is celebrating 40 years of existence and the University is looking forward to showcasing its achievements over the past four decades. He extended a word of warm welcome to the High Commissioner and delegates from the Office of the Premier who accompanied the High Commissioner.



In his response to the High Commissioner's proposal, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford said the proposal from Pakistan comes at the right time when UNIVEN has recently adopted its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and this is the 2nd year of the implementation of this new strategic plan. He indicated that UNIVEN is the only University in the country situated in a Biosphere Reserve designated by UNESCO. He also mentioned that UNIVEN has a SARChI Chair on Biodiversity Value and Change in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve. The University is excited about this potential collaboration and is looking forward to partner with Pakistan universities.



In his closing remarks the University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani supported that UNIVEN should grab this proposal with both hands. He further commended the Office of the Premier for choosing UNIVEN as the right University. He indicated that the University would work with the Office of the Premier and UNIVEN's International Relations and Partnerships Office in the process of facilitating the signing of the MoU with Pakistan universities. In his conclusion Adv Lambani said UNIVEN is looking forward to having a wonderful relationship with Pakistan universities.



Oversight visit by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) on Sibusiso Bengu Development Programme (SB-DP)



On Monday, 07 March 2022, a delegation from the Department of Higher Education and Training met with the University of Venda (UNIVEN) Executive management and some Senior managers to provide oversight on Sibusiso Bengu Development programme projects at UNIVEN.

The purpose of the visit by DHET was to oversee the progress regarding implementation of the projects funded by Sibusiso Bengu Development Programme (SB-DP).



The Acting Deputy Director General, Mr Fazel Toffee from DHET-Sibusiso Bengu Development Programme said, "the purpose of their visit is to ensure that the system works better and identify areas that need improvement". Mr Toffee indicated that they value UNIVEN as an important institution. "As Sibusiso Bengu Development Programme, we want to engage on how to best maximize the funds allocated. We are going to work together to see how we best make an impact" said Mr Fazel Toffee.



The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UNIVEN, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni extended a special word of warm welcome to delegates from DHET and internal members for honouring the invitation. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal briefed the delegates about the new executive and director positions that were approved by Council and recently filled. Dr Nthambeleni said "We created and employed capable personnel in these positions who will position UNIVEN for impact and relevance. He said UNIVEN made sure to put a robust team to make sure the business is running well.



Dr Robert Martin, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, presented an overview of the infrastructure and existing projects at UNIVEN funded by DHET-Sibusiso Bengu Development Programme. "Our goal is to make sure that we give employees and students the best experience through infrastructure", said Dr Martin.



Mrs Mushoni Mulaudzi, the Director Library Services and Mr Aluwani Magadani, Director Facilities Management gave an overview presentation about infrastructure development. It was reported that most of the projects were almost complete. In terms of the challenges, Mrs Mulaudzi indicated that COVID-19 contributed to the delay in the commencement of the infrastructure development.



Mr Magadani



Mr Alfred Makgatho from DHET when leading the discussion, said the proposal by UNIVEN was compact and well presented. It was aligned with the strategic objectives 2021-2025. DHET delegates were happy and impressed by the progress made by UNIVEN. Mr Makgatho said, "there is nothing that is stopping UNIVEN from being a university of choice globally". Mr Makgatho mentioned that UNIVEN has strategically positioned itself as a leader and not follower".

The purpose of the Sibusiso Bengu Development Programme (SBDP) is to decisively redress the inequalities that have impacted the development and sustainability of the HDIs and to contribute to their further development as strong universities, in a diversified system. The programme is further intended to develop HDI's to be highly regarded and valued, including by the communities from which their students are drawn. As a result, the HDI's will produce both graduates and new knowledge that can contribute to socio-economic development in local, national, regional and international contexts.



DHET team together with some of UNIVEN staff members also visited the on-campus residences that are still under construction, those that have been renovated and those already occupied.

"Our goal is to make sure that we give employees and students the best experience through infrastructure"

Vuwani Science Resource Centre Encourages Young Women to Pursue Careers in Science

On Friday, 04 March 2022, Vuwani Science Resource Centre held the women in science programme to encourage grade 12 female learners to pursue careers in science. The programme took place at Vuwani Science Resource Centre and was attended by learners from Tshinavhe, Vhafamadi, Ramauba, Ongedacht, Mudinane, Nwaridi, Maligana Wilson, and Khwara secondary schools.



Dr. Sophie Mulaudzi advised learners to be content about what they want to be in life. She further told them not to doubt themselves. "When choosing a career, see a need to choose whatever career that you choose. Do not choose a career because your friends also chose that career." She said parents, mentors, and teachers should also guide learners on the type of careers available, especially in science where there are a lot of opportunities. "Identify the gap in the field that you are interested in making your decisions based on career guidance, your interest in that field, and your bit of research in that field". She concluded her talk by telling them to make the province proud this year by passing with good grades.

"When choosing a career, see a need to choose whatever career that you choose. Do not choose a career because your friends also chose that career."



In her opening and welcome address, Dr. Mpelegeng Bvumbi, senior lecturer in the Department of Chemistry (UNIVEN) told the learners that she was there to guide them and encourage them to choose careers in science. She furthermore told the young female science learners that the world we live in today needs more female scientists. She also advised them to use opportunities like career guidance because opportunities like that are rare to find. Dr. Bvumbi also chaired a discussion on challenges faced by women in science careers.



Female learners listening to the motivational talk and career guidance from Dr. Sophie Mulaudzi during the Women in Science Programme



In her motivational talk, Mrs. Azwinndini Maphiri who is a Lecturer at UNIVEN's Department of Mathematical, and Computational Science in the Faculty of Science Engineering and Agriculture told learners that, as women, they face so many challenges. She said there are only 28% of women in science in Africa, this means 72% of scientists are men hence the world needs more women in science.

Mrs. Maphiri mentioned three challenges that women face, and these challenges hinder them from doing well in science and in some other careers where women are few. She said those challenges are but not limited to women having family responsibilities, societal patriarchy attitude, and working environments that are undermining women. "But above all, women should not allow these challenges to hinder them, women need to soldier on if they want to make it in life. Nothing should stop you from achieving anything that you want to achieve. Let the science in you shine. Focus on what you want to be in the future." She concluded her talk by telling them that they can choose any career they want to pursue as long as they are doing subjects that will allow them to register for those tertiary-level courses. "Stay motivated and always be hungry for education," she concluded.



Ms. Maduvhahafani Thanyani from UNIVEN's Department of Mathematical and Computational Sciences spoke about Careers in Science. She said science is very broad. "Science education is important because almost everything we do is science." She told the learners about various careers that some might not be aware of. Ms. Thanyani further encouraged them to do exceptionally well in maths and science in their matric results if they want to go far in science. "Think about what kind of scientist you want to be and work on your dreams. Think beyond getting a degree. Do not limit yourself," she said.



Dr. Shonisani Tshidino from the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology spoke about the importance of Women in Science. She said gender equality at STEM workplaces has miles to go. "In recent years STEM women have slowly paved a way through leadership positions. There is money in a STEM field, careers are there for you to make a living also." She advised them not to forget where they come from and to take care of their siblings and parents when they start working. She said women are now given equal opportunities to participate and engage in activities and take decisions that will shape their future. "Participation of women in STEM promotes the improvement and drives equality. Never look down on yourself, you are future leaders," she concluded.



Three panellists were also given time to talk to the learners. They spoke about their life experiences and how they ended up being in the science field. Miss Ronell Ronella Randela (Middle – an MSc student in Physics); Miss Mutshinyani Ligavha-Mbelengwa (Right) and Miss Mokgadi Rapeta are interns at the Vuwani Science Resource Centre. They all advised learners to get personal mentors who will assist them and guide them where necessary on their career choices.



Miss Mahandana (One of the educators) gave a vote of thanks and told learners not to allow their background to determine their future. She thanked the University of Venda, Department of Physics for organising this type of motivational talk.

Learners were accompanied by their educators: Mrs. Ravele from Ramauba Secondary School, Mrs. Makahane from Tshinavhe Secondary School, Ms Mahandana from Mudinane Secondary School, and Mr Nthabalala from Vhafamadi Secondary School.



A group photo of learners and organisers of the programme



A group photo of UNIVEN staff members who encouraged young girls to pursue careers in science

UNIVEN conducts another successful emergency mock drill

On Thursday, 31 March 2022 the Human Resources Department of the University of Venda (UNIVEN) conducted a successful emergency mock drill in collaboration with Muledane Fire Station and TEMS Ambulance Services. The evacuation drill was executed at the Facilities Management building.

The purpose of the mock drill was to test the University's emergency preparedness and to build capacity among employees in terms of dealing with disasters.



Adv Rudzani Makhema said "we had an opportunity to observe the way employees and students would respond and evacuate in the event of fire, bomb scare or any other emergency". UNIVEN tested and measured the state of readiness and response times of the University emergency response partners in accordance with the disaster preparedness plan.



The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni extended his sincere gratitude to the



University Community for their cooperation during the drill and thanked the Evacuation team for organising a remarkable mock drill.

He further emphasised the importance of conducting mock drill. He said, "it helps to prepare employees for an emergency and pin-point challenges they may have to face during evacuation and warn them on inappropriate actions to be avoided, like taking time to collect personal items and using the lift to evacuate the building".

Thabelo Makananise, UNIVEN OHS Officer applauded everyone for working together with them and said if staff members and students need training, they should come to the office and make suggestions on how to be safer on campus.

He said, "The mock drill ticked all the boxes in terms of identifying loopholes".

He thanked the fire brigade and campus health for their active participation in the mock drill.

Mr. Hendrick Sibara from the Vhembe District Municipality Disaster Management and Fire Services said people need to be aware that any danger can happen at any time in the University premises. He said, " people die because of lack of knowledge, that is the reason why we are doing this exercise."



The mock drill



Campus Health Clinic held a successful First Thing First awareness campaign

From 14 to 28 March 2022, Campus Health Clinic held the First Things First awareness and Vaccination drive campaign to make awareness to students and staff members of the University about the importance of living healthy lifestyles. This campaign took place on-campus and off-campus residences. During the day, the services were rendered at the University's Cafeteria Lapa.

During the campaign, various services were rendered including HIV testing services conducted by Campus Health and Officials from Higher Health, Wellness services by Bio kinetics department, Dental services by Dentists from Tshilidzini Hospital and Pap Smear by Department of Health. A total of 773 students and staff benefited from these services. A total of 10822 Information Educational Communication (IEC) material was distributed to staff and students while male and female condoms were distributed during the campaign.

During the evenings of the week of the campaign, health officials held dialogue sessions at five different residences. Door-to-door campaigns were done daily in all residences to mobilise students for health services. The dialogue sessions were done in the following residences: On the first day of the campaign, students from M Shelly 1&2 and Samvuni; Second day Degann-Inn and students from Nchembeko; third and fourth day Simeka students; fifth day F5 residence covering all first entering students on campus. A total of 980 students was reached during these dialogue sessions.

During these sessions, different topics were covered including Impact of Gender Base Violence by Dr Thizwilondi Josephine Mudau, a Lecturer and a Specialist in Gender Based Violence from Gender and Youth Studies. During her presentation she highlighted what Gender Based Violence is and how it can affects them as students during their studies.



Dr Mudau addressing students at M Shelly Residence

Dr Morongwa Takalani a Clinical Psychologist from CHETL, presented on how Mental Health, Stress, Depression and Anxiety can affect their studies. She highlighted the value of visiting the CHETL and consulting online when there is a need for counselling and support services.

Ms Maggie Hlungwani, the HIV Coordinator presented about issues on HIV, TB, STI's and Sexual Reproductive Health. During her presentation she indicated to students the way the clinic operate and different services that are rendered on daily basis. She encouraged students who are having medical conditions to bring their referral letters so that they can be assisted with their follow up medication since the Doctor is available to review them as expected. She concluded her presentation by encouraging students to vaccinate for Covid-19.



Tents that were used for HIV counselling and Testing and vaccinations



Students queueing for COVID-19 vaccination



Students engaging with University officials on the first evening of the dialogue at M Shelly Residence



The Second evening of the dialogue at Degann-Inn Residence, students engaging with officials from UNIVEN, Dr T Morongwa (Clinical Psychologist) was presenting during this session



Campus Health Staff (Navy Blue T-Shirts) together with Dr MC Takalani & Dr TJ Mudau on the last evening of Dialogue Session



Ms Maggie Hlungwani (HIV Coordinator), Centre Mr Smile Manganyi (SRC President) and Peer Educators in Red T-shirts on the last day of the Campaign



The Third & Fourth evening of the dialogue at Simeka Residence, students engaging with officials from UNIVEN



The Fifth (last) evening of the dialogue at F5 Residence, students engaging with officials from UNIVEN

Vuwani Science Resource Centre hosted Early Childhood Development (ECD) Workshop in Collaboration with Play Africa



Group photo of the ECD educators and Vuwani Science Resource Centre team (photo supplied)

Vuwani Science Resource Centre in collaboration with Play Africa held the first Early Childhood Development (ECD) hybrid workshop with educators around Vuwani. Play Africa focuses on creative, holistic, and playful learning in early childhood development (ECD) and primary education and empowers children with skills for a changing world. Creches from Vyeboom, Vuwani, Tshivhulana, and Tshitungulwane (Tshimbupfe) areas were invited to participate. Faranani Early Learning Centre, U a Londa Day care Center, Aluwani, Mutshidzi Day Care Center, Vuwani Day Care Center, Tshikurukuru, Lotsha and Ziggy Children Center were represented. Team members from the University of Venda were amongst the attendees as the organisers.

The main purpose of the workshop was to introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education to children between 3 – 6 years. A new early childhood curriculum to build STEM skills and climate change awareness through recycled material was the main objectives of the workshop. Due to Covid-19 rules and regulations, a hybrid session was facilitated with creche educators. Rachel Fowkes from Play Africa conducted the workshop virtually.

Pre- and post-surveys were performed to obtain the level of understanding of science and climate change from the early child development educators before and after attending the workshop. The pre-surveys were for the educators to give information whether they are familiar with STEM education and if they can implement it to children at lower age.

The presentation was interactive because the educators were expected to reflect on questions such as 'what is your experience about STEM?'.
The main purpose of the workshop was to introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education to children between 3 – 6 years.



Teachers were encouraged to redefine STEM through play. That was done through the grouped activities that they performed, showing that the STEM curriculum can be introduced through play learning. Different materials such as stones, bottles, leaves, papers, glue, scissors, etc., were used to implement the key skills in Science, Technology/ Engineering and Maths processes and knowledge. Teachers were also taught how to set up a STEM classroom. In their post-survey, teachers appreciated the recognition and presentation that was so informative. They promised to implement what they have learned about the STEM curriculum in their classes and pleaded with the organisers to continue to empower them.



Photos above and right: Educators during the Science, Mathematics and Climate change activities.

If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the University Hotline by calling toll free number 0800 212 755 or email: univenhotline@tip-offs.com

Improper conduct includes the following...

1. Financial misconduct,
2. Misuse or misappropriation of University assets,
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4. Plagiarism,
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