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University of Venda
Creating future leaders

Univen staff celebrates Prof Mbatl as a man of honour

Univen staff gave outgoing Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatl, a heartfelt send-off recently.

"On 1 February 2008 the University of Venda community entrusted me with the responsibility of serving this great institution as its Vice Chancellor and Principal. I was not sure what awaited me. I can now tell you that it was lot of hard work that needed well thought out strategies, collective wisdom, the buy-in of Council and staff at all levels, the unions, the SRC and the general student populace," said Mbatl.

The highlights of Mbatl's ten-year tenure include academic re-engineering, increased programme relevance, a viability exercise and clean programme quality management results, as well as exponential growth in research outputs – from 0.12 per capita units to 0.94.

The university's new flagship programme, the Bachelor of Accounting Sciences degree, currently offered through the Univen/Thuthuka project to train chartered accountants, was also established. The Agricultural Engineering programme is accredited and is now offered in the School of Agriculture. In addition, increased leverage on internationalisation, linkages and partnerships in implementing the strategic vision proved to be successful and approximately R2,3 billion

investment in infrastructure from the Department of Higher Education and Training was received.

Other achievements include approximately R84 million from Council-controlled funds towards infrastructure projects, a R300 million DBSA loan for student residences and growth of bandwidth from 08mg/sec to 10gigs/sec. The rollout of staff laptops, student tablets and Black board was also achieved. The student leadership model was implemented and various unqualified audits followed.

Mbatl said the future, though fraught with uncertainties, especially funding and sustainability of universities due to factors such as inflation, global performance of the Rand and the #FeesMustFall campaign, presents exciting possibilities.

"Univen will need to reimagine its governance and leadership to align itself to the new realities that demand increased third stream income funding. This relates to new and relevant curricula that repositions us into the new status of a top ten South African university. Most importantly, it strengthens cohesion and unity of purpose between all the stakeholders to ensure a prosperous and successful Univen.

"You translated the vision and dreams that I had as Vice Chancellor into the successes that we see all around us," he said.

"You lifted Univen to its greatest heights - you

made us proud as a nation," said Univen's NEHAWU Chairperson, Alfred Mutoti. "Your mark will remain forever in the history of Univen. We wish you the best wherever you wish to go."

"You dramatically improved Univen's graduation output and today we produce more than 2 000 graduates in every graduation ceremony," said Mr Dongola on behalf of admin staff members.

"Long service awards and online registration and applications are but a few of the advantages he introduced. Today Univen plays a big role in the development of Thohoyandou."

"He is a man of integrity, goal-orientated and made Univen a university of choice," said Mrs Malehu Maluleke on behalf of academic staff.

"Through his leadership, we witnessed calmness and leadership at the university. We will miss your emotional intelligence."

Dr Thizwilondi Mudau described Prof Mbatl as an authentic leader and approachable.

"Univen is now a force to be reckoned with," said the Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic, Prof Jan Crafford.

"You have made us believe that a small university could transcend its history and disadvantage to the extent that it is competing with universities that are more than 100 years old."



"You translated my vision and dreams into the successes that we see all around us" - Mbatl.



"You made us proud as a nation" - Mutoti.



"We will miss your emotional intelligence" - Maluleke.



"Univen is now a force to be reckoned with" - Crafford.

Univen acknowledge retirees

Univen recently acknowledged the university's retirees.

"Through your contribution, you've made the university what it is today," said the Director of Human Resources, Justice Manenzhe. "We wish you a good retirement life."

On behalf of the service staff, Shumani Nthambeleni, thanked Univen for the opportunity

to work at the institution.

"We thank Univen for the opportunity to serve at this special institution," said Prof Agnes Musyoki on behalf of the retiring academic staff members.

"It has been a time of great transformation and reflection, not only at the university, but in the country as a whole. We are pleased to have been part of these changes. We have played our part and



"You made the university what it is today" - Manenzhe.



"We are pleased to have been part of the changes" - Musyoki.

contributed to teaching, research and community work.

"We have developed our intellectual capacity and contributed to changing the future of many students and colleagues. Students in turn contributed to our growth by sharing ideas and knowledge - at times challenging our views but leading us to share a better understanding of our fields of study. We are happy that as we retire, Univen is on the right trajectory for success as a university of choice, both nationally and internationally."

• See the January 2018 edition of Nendila for information on long service awards.

A line up of retirees.



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Education first, the rest will follow - Ndifhedzo Munyai

Girls between 14 and 18 from schools in Ha-Makuya, Tshikondeni and surrounding villages recently attended the 6th Annual International day of Girl Child on the Univen campus.

The summit, hosted by Univen's Community Engagement Directorate and the SheReigns and Naledi Foundation, encouraged girls to be independent thinkers and self-learners. It introduced them to the importance of technology and to increased support of tribal authorities in the development of a girl child.

"Focus on education, because sexual activities will delay your dreams," said third year nursing student, Mukonazwothe Netshifhefhe.

"It will minimise the chances of having cervical cancer, HIV and AIDS infections, pregnancy and sexual transmitted infections.

"Be able to control your feelings. I won't encourage you to use condoms because girls at your age are not expected to be engaging in such activities. Family planning is not for girls of your age, but for those who are about to start families.



Games as part of education.

"You should never allow your friends and boyfriends to force or rob you to engage into sex. Be careful of older men who do not want relationships but who wish to use you for sexual pleasure."

Lalumbe Makuya, Project Director of the Naledi Foundation, encouraged girls to always carry handbags with the necessary accessories needed during an emergency. She advised them to delay entering sexual relationships.

"Focus on education first and the rest will follow," said a grade eight learner of the Fhetani Secondary School, Ndifhedzo Munyai.

Speaking during the summary session, Munyai said she will now help educate other girls in her village.

"I am amazed at the level of understanding of young girls," said third year BCoM Accounting student and SheReigns President, Mercy Sasunhwa.

"They seem to have a great understanding of how women should conduct themselves."

"Learners see possibilities, they are able to visualise the future they imagine," said Univen's Director of Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama.

"If 13 Univen students each inspire 100 girls, 1 300 girls will be inspired and the future of the supposedly marginalised girls will be brighter. Univen then becomes more accessible and contributes towards learning outside of the classroom. She said that an engaged university is largely a responsive university.

"Most learners had never been to any university, let alone interacted with university students. This will make an impact in their lives."



100 girls from different schools and villages learnt how to take care of themselves.



"Never allow anyone to rob you to engage into sexual activities" - Netshifhefhe.



"Always have your cell phone with you" - Makuya.



"Education first and the rest shall follow" - Munyai.



"Visualise the future you imagine" - Netshandama.

Thanking the mentors - Prof Netshandama, the girls and mentors.



Africa the richest, yet its people are the poorest

"Africa is the richest continent in the world, but the poorest people reside in it," says the Deputy Director General of the Department of Science and Technology, Mmboneni Muofhe.

Speaking at Univen's first Technology Transfer Forum, Muofhe said: "We need to reclaim what belongs to us.

"Food like rooibos tea does not grow anywhere else but in Africa, but the people who have the rights to this food are not citizens of this continent. African people are jobless, yet people from abroad continue to patent properties and ideas of Africans.

"South Africans complain about load shedding but there are areas which are extremely hot throughout the year. People should start thinking how to generate electricity, using solar power to supply villages. This could create employment and boost the economy of this country."

The forum strategised possibilities to assist South African researchers to start businesses which will create jobs and boost the country's economy.

"As required by the Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development

Act, Univen has established an Office of Technology Transfer in the Directorate of Research and Innovation," said the Director of Research and Innovation, Senior Prof Georges Ekosse.

Naomi Ngoasheng of the National Intellectual Property Management Office said this office identified, protected and commercialised intellectual property for the benefit of South Africa.



"South African researchers should use solar power" - Muofhe.



"The importance of a Technology Transfer Office" - Ekosse.



"Understanding the role of the National Intellectual Property Management Office" - Ngoasheng.



Getting together - Univen staff members and stakeholders from partnering organisations.

How to assure the authenticity and integrity of data

“Data should be stored in a manner that ensures its authenticity and integrity and meets all legal and confidentiality requirements,” says a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Built Environment at the Central University of Technology, Dr Bankole.

Speaking at the recent Univen Research Data Management workshop, Bankole said the effective management of research data increases research impact by maximising the visibility of data and promoting transparency in research. It also prevents the unauthorised use by addressing privacy and confidentiality issues throughout the research project.”

“Data is the lowest level of abstraction from which information and knowledge are derived,” said Univen’s Research Professor in the School of Management Sciences, Prof Nixon Muganda Ochara.

“Research data is recorded and factual material commonly retained by and accepted in the community as necessary to validate research findings, although the majority of such data is created in digital format. All research data is included, irrespective of the format in which it is created.

“The levels of managing data include documenting the research, structure file and use of metadata tools. The research data cycle involves creating data, processing data, analysing data, preserving data, giving access to data and re-using data.

“Data is meant to be shared. Research data should be freely accessible so that the same data can be re-used. You have to protect your data before making it available to the public.”

“A lot of research needs to be conducted to improve the economy of the province,” said Priscilla Nemaangani, Univen’s Research Administration Officer.

“We have to alleviate poverty through research - your research should benefit communities.”



“The researcher must make efforts to ensure the validity of data” - Bankole.



“Research data should be freely accessible” - Ochara.



“We have to reduce poverty through research” - Nemaangani.



Researchers came in numbers to grasp information about research data management.

Green economy is the future economy

The Universal Greening Organisation, in partnership Univen and the Tshikovha graduates, hosted the 3rd Annual Green Economy conference recently.

The conference was held under the theme ‘Business opportunities in the bioprospecting and wildlife economy’. The conference is also a tool to facilitate an enabling environment for students and community members to access the job market and entrepreneurial opportunities.

In the formal sector of bioprospecting, black participation is very low, while in the informal sector the traditional medicine market is mostly blacks. In wildlife economy, only 2,5 percent are black. There is thus great opportunity for emerging young black entrepreneurs in the field of environment to participate in this sector.

“The focus must be to empower and encourage more women and young entrepreneurs to recognise existing potential,” said the Executive Mayor of the Vhembe District Municipality, Florence Radzilani.

Officially opening the conference, Radzilani said the conference should boost entrepreneurial potential among the youth.

“We need home-grown, alternative solutions to the current challenges of healthcare, energy, food security, agriculture, water shortages and sanitation. The green economy is the future economy. It must assist in achieving sustainable development as envisaged in the national development plan. It must help reduce poverty, skill young people to create their own jobs and generate much needed employment. It must protect our natural ecosystems against degradation, whilst maximising tourism benefits. It must mitigate the negative effects of climate change by reducing the carbon footprint through cleaner and greener energy and technology.”

“It is exciting to see young people taking initiatives that contribute to the improvement of people’s livelihoods, particularly at a local level,” said the

Deputy Director General of the Department of Environmental Affairs, Shonisani Munzhedzi.

“The Universal Greening Organisation is doing a sterling job which serves as an inspiration to others. South Africa’s rich biodiversity can unlock the economic potential of the bioprospecting of wildlife economies. Academic institutions like Univen should take part in research that advances entrepreneurship in business development at local level.”

“Our programme educates citizens about the environmental challenges and we create an environment for students and graduates to participate in the economy,” said the Executive Chairperson of the Universal Greening Organisation, Talifhani Tshitwamulomoni.

“We also engage in cleaning campaigns, environmental education and careers exhibitions. Everyone must play a role in protecting the environment.”

“The biodiversity economy of South Africa encompasses the business and economic activities,” said the Chief Director at the Department of Environmental Affairs, Khorommbi Matibe.

“These either directly depend on biodiversity for their core business or contribute to conservation of biodiversity through their activities. Limpopo is set to benefit immensely since it is home to a number of species, including but not limited to Ximenia Caffra (sour plum or Mutanzwa), Trichilia emetic (Mutshikili) and Adansonia digitate (baobab-Muvhuyu).

“There is a need to unlock the potential of small, medium and micro enterprises, cooperatives and township enterprises. There are products in the local and international market such as rooibos and aloe ferox with similar properties to indigenous plants that could substitute to grow the market. Take care of the environment for future generations.”

“The biggest obstacle for a local entrepreneur or businessperson is a lack of business skills,” said the Director of Tshikovha Graduates Academy, Moudy Mudzielwana.

“These skills enable people to nurture ideas from concept to sustain their businesses. Most emerging businesspeople lack business skills and focus on pitching skills instead of actual business ideas. Business is a platform to make profit where you have identified a gap. It can either be providing services or selling products. Be a specialist in what you do and make customers always want to come back to your company.”

“Black rural women are the face of poverty in South Africa and youth unemployment is at crisis proportions,” said the Director of Youth Mobilisation and Development Support in the

Department of Social Development, Noncedo Zonke.

“There is an increase in school and university drop-out rates, a growing labour force and a shrinking economy – all causing unemployment. We need more conferences such as this with leaders who inspire the South African youth. We need targets for youth and women participation in enviropreneurship and the green economy.”

“People should analyse their current business models,” said Ellis Lember of the South African Essential Oil Business Incubator.

“We test the oils for cosmetics so that they can be commercialised. We also test oils for the CSIR, the Tshwane University of Technology and the University of the Free State and for commercial farmers.”



Invitation to the conference.



“Green economy must help us reduce poverty”- Radzilani.



“A sterling job and an inspiration” - Munzhedzi.



“Acquire information from experts” - Maraganedzha.



“Let’s plant indigenous trees across South Africa” - Tshitwamulomoni.



“Let’s take care of the environment for future generations” - Matibe.



“Be a specialist in what you do” - Mudzielwana.



“National exposure inspires the youth” - Zonke.



“Testing oils for commercialisation” - Lember.



Health and safety essential in the workplace

To make employers and employees aware of their health and safety in the workplace, Univen's Human Resources Department coordinated the recent health and safety workshop in Thohoyandou.

"Everyone in the workplace is responsible for ensuring safety," says Occupational Health and Safety Specialist at the Department of Labour, Carol Mthethwa.

"The duties of an employer are to provide a healthy and safe work environment, identify all hazards, assess and minimize employee exposure to risks and to inform, instruct, supervise and train employees

on the hazards they are exposed to.

"Employers should not allow anybody to work in unsafe or unhealthy conditions. Give workers precautionary measures to follow. It is the duty of employees to report unsafe and unhealthy conditions. Take care of everyone's safety. Carry out lawful orders and obey health and safety rules and instructions. Always report incidents to the employer as soon as possible.

"In most cases the causes of incidents in the workplace result from failure to maintain machines and equipment, working alone in a field or in a



"Employers should provide a healthy and safe work environment" - Mthethwa.



"Report incidents as soon as possible" - Nemasetoni.

dilapidated building, lack of water in the building and working long hours without taking breaks."

"The Compensation Fund, a public entity that reports to the Department of Labour, compensates employees who are injured or contract diseases through the course of their employment," said the Assistant Director of the Department, Vincent Nemasetoni.

"This also includes death cases resulting from such injuries or diseases and paying reasonable medical expenses incurred."

The fund is administered by the Compensation for Occupational Injuries Diseases Act of 130/1993.

"Employers must register with the compensation fund. Employers must report an accident within seven days and an occupational disease within 14 days. They must also provide free transport for the employee to see the doctor and grant special sick leave with full pay on an accepted claim.

"The employee must report an accident to the supervisor immediately, either verbally or in writing. Furthermore, the employee must consult specialists for examination and treatment by the doctor of his or her choice. The doctor must also assist the employer in obtaining medical reports.



Univen employees and delegates get together.



Delegates participating in group activities.

Israel continues to impose apartheid on Palestinian people - Dajani

"The situation of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation remains dire due to repressive, destructive and colonial policies and practices."

So said the Ambassador of the State of Palestine to South Africa, Hashem Dajani, at a recent public lecture at Univen.

"Israeli continues to perpetrate Palestinians with its colonial policies in deliberate systematic and grave violation of international laws. The international community continues to fail to hold Israel accountable in accordance with the law.

"The situation has deepened the sense of insecurity among the Palestinian people. Furthermore, Israel continues to destroy Palestinian cities and villages and it holds thousands of Palestinians in its prisons.

"Israel persists with its illegal and immoral blockage on Gaza, which continues to gravely impact about two million Palestinian civilians. They are suffering a dire socio-economic and humanitarian crisis, despite the repeated calls to end the blockage

which constitutes punishment prohibited under international law."

Dajani said approximately 7 000 Palestinians are in the prisons of Israel and many Palestinians are being killed.

"Palestinian people seek to obtain their freedom and independence in their homeland. The United Nations Security Council is required to establish a special regime of international protection for Palestinian people.

"On behalf of Palestinians I thank South Africa for the role that it plays in leading the international solidarity with the Palestinian people."

"Many people have compared the ongoing impasse between Palestine and Israel and others have taken sides based on sentiments, while others are indifferent even though lives are being lost," said Univen's Chief Administrative Officer in the Directorate of International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire.

"When some of the steps were taken towards peaceful resolutions, people from all over the world were already easing a sigh of relief as Israel agreed to compensate the Turkish citizens killed by Israeli forces.

"There should be a way through peaceful negotiations - and not war or violence - that can bring about the much-coveted solutions to this crisis. It is my wish and candid opinion to see this war coming to an end. I wish Palestine and Israel fruitful deliberations and a positive outcome for a solution to the problem."

"The Israeli invasion of Palestine and apartheid settler colonialism raise important questions about the sovereignty of states," said the Former Vice Chancellor of Univen, Prof Muxe Nkondo.

"The fear of Western domination is the main concern, particularly after the disintegration of the Eastern bloc, which has created a monopoly capitalist global system controlled by the United States. These concerns about the threats posed

by Western domination have become discursively linked to appeals for solidarity between South Africa and Palestine.

"Solidarity politics in Palestine and South Africa are ultimately an effect of global power relations and struggles in both countries, located within the broader discursive economy through which global power and authority are exercised.

"Anticolonial social movements in Palestine and South Africa are a product of the widespread regional belief that sovereignty and self-government cannot be achieved within the Western-dominated regional order," said Nkondo.

The National Coordinator of the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Movement, Muhammed Desai, said that Palestinian people assisted South Africans during South African apartheid era.

"Therefore, South Africans should return the favour and support Palestinians to solve their issues with Israel."

CETA already invested more than R36m in Univen

To ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the Construction Education and Training Authority's (CETA) funded projects of more than R36 million at Univen, a planning session was held recently.

The Univen delegation was led by Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat, while CETA participants were led by the Chairperson of the Board, Raymond Cele and CETA Chief Executive Officer, Sonja Pilusa.

"We do not regret being associated with Univen and the presence of Prof Mbat demonstrates the university's commitment to the CETA-funded projects," said Cele.

"Univen could become CETA's implementing arm and help us to achieve our objectives. Through this partnership we have consistently been receiving clean audits."

"CETA's continuous support plays a pivotal role in transforming our university into the best that it can be," said Mbat.

The planning session was concluded by signing a three-year implementation plan. The plan comprises programmes which include Infrastructure Development, Research and Development, Lecturer Development, Qualification Development, Programme Development, Learning Pathways and accreditation of the Univen Innovative Growth Company to offer CETA programmes.

To ensure effective implementation of all the programmes and to achieve better results, a joint project management team comprising of CETA and Univen representatives has been elevated to the CETA head office. Both parties expressed their satisfaction with a very fruitful engagement.



CETA and Univen delegates.

LGBTI+Q people should be loved, not discriminated

“Being human starts by showing humanity to others - you do not choose who to love if you really know what love is,” says Univen’s Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic Prof Jan Crafford.

Crafford officially opened the 2nd annual Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning or Queer (LGBTIQ) symposium recently.

“It is not acceptable if students who identify themselves as LGBTIQ find it difficult to learn and sometimes drop out or fail to pursue their studies because of being ridiculed or discriminated against.”

The symposium focussed on a conversation with community leaders about providing a benevolent leadership amidst communities struggling with

stereotype and prejudice.

Univen’s Director of Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama, raised participants’ eyebrows when she said that there are transgender people who spend a lot of time and energy saving money so that their organs can be operated and be aligned to what they feel inside of themselves.

“Therefore, as human beings, instead of judging, rather let us seek to understand. The methodology that they chose to employ is one that compels them to shift power, question themselves on a whole array of subjects, stereotype, prejudices and sometimes senseless, hurtful behaviour towards other human beings. People, young and old, should be reflective, search themselves and introspect because freeing oneself from prejudice takes time.”

“As a coordinator of the HIV and AIDS programme on campus I interacted with many students who subjected themselves to risky sexual behaviour because



“We should have the sense of Ubuntu” - Crafford.



“As time changes, people’s perspectives change” - Netshandama.



“The LGBTI+Q community is discriminated against in many spheres” - Mavhandu-Mudzusi.



Lekgowe ‘Nono’ Thipe is attracted to females.



“Being gay is not a choice” - Raedani.



“I don’t care what other people say about me” - Sedibe.



“Create a safe space for everyone” - Thovhogi.



Traditional healers, pastors and community members at the LGBTI+Q symposium.

of fear of discrimination and stigmatisation,” said Prof Azwihangwisi Mavhandu-Mudzusi of Health Sciences at Unisa.

“During pre-test counselling I would often ask about the sexual partner of a student or anyone who sought testing. That’s when I realised that there is a need to engage further on the issues and to educate people about the dangers of suppressing others.”

Lekgowe Thipe, student counsellor at Unisa, said that she has lived half her life the way she did not like, due to society’s expectations.

“If I had to choose between being a male and female, I would have chosen to be male. I am that kind of a female who likes driving big trucks and playing soccer, which the society suggests to be for males. I love kids. My partner and I are planning to have kids soon. Sometimes I struggle with people’s obsession with labels and categorisation.”

“Being gay is inevitable to those that are gay - I did not choose to be one,” said Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme activist, Victor Raedani.

“I was once assaulted as a result of being gay and nearly lost my life. There is no-one who chooses to put their Christian family into disrepute. There is no-

one who chooses to put their life at stake if being gay was a choice,” he said.

Maleditho Sedibe, a Univen student, said there is a marked improvement in terms of being ridiculed and obvious discrimination since she started her degree four years ago.

“When I was referred to as lesbian in the beginning, I did not even understand what that meant. I only understood at a later stage.”

A renowned gospel singer and councillor, Mbilu Rambuwani, said that everyone is created in the image of God.

“Churches are places where people should run to and not be discriminated against, irrespective of their sexual orientation. It is a blessing that the pastors and traditional leaders have come together to fight for rights of the LGBTI+Q community.”

The symposium was attended by Univen staff members, students, local community leaders, traditional leaders, traditional healers, religious leaders, pastors and the LGBTIQ community. Also attending were delegates of the University of the Witwatersrand, Unisa, the Nelson Mandela University and the Universities of Namibia and Malawi.

Sharon Mashau leaves Univen

Staff from the Department of Communications and Marketing, friends, colleagues and family members recently gathered to bid farewell to the Head of Communications and Marketing, Sharon Mashau.

“In life, one needs to grow. I think I have learned as much as I needed,” said Mashau.

“Like a bird, it is time for me to spread my wings. I am not leaving Univen for good, I just need to learn other things, to explore a bit and to learn how other organisations’ corporate cultures are conducted. I believe this will add value to Univen when I come back.”

Mashau told the interns in the Department of Communications and Marketing to use the skills that they are taught at Univen, as they are very valuable and will take them far.

“A team that is committed and dedicated makes the line manager to be competent. Working with a team which is committed at all times made my job easier. Continue travelling on the same footprint because this will take the department very far.”



“In life, one needs to grow” - Mashau.

“When you joined Univen I thought you were coming to work for Univen until your retirement,” said the Director of Communications and Marketing, Takalani Dzaga.

“Little did I know that you would leave very soon. The loyalty and attitude that you have displayed during your stay was splendid and we are happy to have worked with you.

“Thank you for assuming leadership and congratulations on your new job – you were a valued team member.”



“You were a valued team member” - Dzaga.



Mashau bids farewell to interns.

Media Studies students learn to face the corporate world

The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA), in collaboration with Univen’s Communications and Marketing Department, recently hosted the 2017 Limpopo Student Conference to equip Media Studies students.

The conference familiarised students with the corporate world, educated them about crafting a winning curriculum vitae and taught them how to survive in the corporate world.

“You should be unique from others,” said PRISA Chairperson, Phuti Mothapo.

“Communication is not only about becoming a journalist or being a television or radio presenter, there are more opportunities in this field. Claim the opportunities that are available.”

“Writing remains important, especially in the digital age,” said the spokesperson for the Limpopo Premier’s Office, Kenny Mathivha.

“If there is a communicator who does not have a twitter account, that person is in the wrong field. Nowadays elections are won on social media as politicians and celebrities gain popularity on social media platforms. Social media has influenced and is still influencing our routine lifestyles. Both digital and print media are relevant in this digital age but most people prefer to read the news through digital media because the information will still be fresh. The news on digital media is in most cases instant and timeless.

“Good communicators are those who communicate visually and reduce too much text, those who communicate in a linear way. Communicators should be interactive and dynamic, able to engage their audience and must always be transparent. Information seekers of today believe in transparency. Never lie or twist



Students came in large numbers and filled the venue.

information.”

“Do not craft long CVs because recruiters do not have time to read them,” said the Human Resources Manager of the SABC’s Limpopo Region, Ronny Mphephu.

“Show confidence when you walk into the interview. Familiarize yourself with companies or potential employers when you are shortlisted.

“Have thorough knowledge about that company to show them that you are interested in working for them. Do not be late for an interview. Avoid wearing revealing clothes and bright colours when going for an interview as this could make panellists judge you before they start allocating scores.”

Established in 1957, the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa represents professionals in public relations and communication management throughout the southern African region. It has

registered practitioners in Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa.

PRISA is a founding member of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management and initiated the formation of the Council for Communication Management in South Africa. The council is the coordinating body representing various groupings of professionals in South Africa.

PRISA plays a leading role in uniting professionals and driving transformation. As the recognised leader of the public relations and communication management profession in southern Africa and beyond, it provides the southern African industry with the local professional advantage.



Thank you to Univen for hosting us - Sadiki.



Lindokuhle Zwane rendering her poem related to the topics of the conference.

Indigenous languages are African heritage

“Collaboration works much better than working individually,” says the Head of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in Limpopo, Mortimer Manny.

Speaking at Univen’s recent language seminar, Manny said his department is responsible for promoting all the official languages in Limpopo.

“However, we realise that alone we will not achieve the desired results.

“Limpopo is rich in heritage, talent and resources. People of this province are the most culturally diverse. Our languages are our heritage and we need to make sure that our languages are growing. Languages are becoming more of an economic commodity than just a means of communication.”

The seminar was part of Heritage Month celebrations and was presented in partnership with the Limpopo Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and the Pan South African Language Board.

“The seminar needs to gather information about indigenous languages,” said PanSALB Senior Provincial Manager, Mapula Madiba.

“This will assist in developing and promoting the indigenous languages to reach the standard of English and Afrikaans.”

A lecturer at the MER Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Arts and Culture, Dr Tshinetsi Raphalalani’s presentation focused on ‘The significance and appropriateness of Tshivenda proverbs in the new South Africa’.

“Cultural norms and values among the Vhavenda community used to be transmitted from one generation to another through verbal means. Communication was implemented through oral tradition or folklore. Folklore is an expressive genre which consists of legends, music, oral history, proverbs, jokes, popular beliefs, fairy tales, stories, riddles, ceremonies and rituals.

“The post-apartheid era in South Africa is characterised by a new legal order where the constitution is the supreme law of the country. Forms of oral tradition or folklore, particularly proverbs, seem to be vanishing among the Vhavenda community. The vanishing of this important genre seems to be negatively impacting the moral fibre of the entire South African society and the Vhavenda community in particular.”

“Most complex linguistic phenomena emanate from the belief that some languages, together with their lexicon and grammars, are primitive,” said a lecturer at Univen’s Department of Communication and Applied Language Studies, Dr Masindi Sadiki.

“Therefore, they are considered as not appropriate for use within specific communities.”

Sadiki presented on ‘Deafness and identity: Some linguistic varieties in South African sign language.’

“Among deaf communities, a clash in language use exists where some members are considered to be using the signs that are either old or compose non-standard varieties even though they do serve meaningful communicative functions among the speakers of South African sign language.”

The Limpopo Department of Education’s spokesperson, Dr Naledzani Rasila, presented on ‘Government’s lack of effective planning to promote own languages: Indigenous languages are heritage in danger in South Africa’.

“Writing and publishing in indigenous languages is facing many challenges in South Africa. Some parents prefer their learners in urban schools not to learn home languages as their own and first languages, but second or additional languages. They use English as the first and home languages as additional.

“Government lacks a deliberate approach to promote indigenous languages. This also results in the continuous domination of the English and Afrikaans languages over African indigenous languages,” said Rasila.

University of Limpopo student, Dimakatso Kgwadi, who presented on ‘Translation of subtitles in selected SABC soaps: The case of Northern Sotho’ said the translation of subtitles plays an important role in multilingual countries such as South Africa.

“It is important for translators to translate relevant information to their viewers as the wrong translation will mislead the viewers.”

The seminar was also attended by the Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Kgoshi Malesela Dikgale.



“We are grateful to be part of the seminar” - Manny.



“We want more research about indigenous languages” - Madiba.



“Proverbs seem to be vanishing from the Vhavenda community” - Raphalalani.



“There is language clash among deaf communities” – Sadiki.



“Some parents prefer urban school learners not to learn home languages as first languages” - Rasila.



“Translators should translate relevant information to their audience” - Kgwadi.



Participants in the language seminar.

Prof Makatu elected as co-chair of SA Young Academy of Science

Following a two-year stint as an executive committee member of the South African Young Academy of Science, Prof Makondelele Makatu, Associate Professor in Univen’s Department of Psychology, was re-elected as a co-chair until 2018.

The academy is the voice of young scientists in South Africa. It contributes towards solutions to national and global challenges facing society and provides a platform for young scientists to influence policy decisions. It also contributes towards the development of scientific capacity in South Africa through mentoring and role-modelling of future scientists and fosters opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations among young scientists.

The organisation has a very close relationship with the Academy of Science of South Africa and the Department of Science and Technology. Every year it calls for nomination of young scientists. To qualify for nomination, a candidate should meet criteria like a doctoral degree in any field of scientific enquiry where science is defined broadly as encompassing natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, medical sciences and engineering. Other criteria are evidence of scientific excellence through an established publications record, receipt of honours and awards, a National Research Foundation rating, evidence of activities demonstrating service to society, willingness to volunteer time and effort to organisation activities, be under the age of 40 years and within seven years from receipt of a doctoral degree at the time of nomination.

Prof Makatu is now a co-chair of the South African Young Academy of Science.

Nomination of candidates who deviate from this expected profile requires additional motivation. Anyone can nominate an emerging young scientist for membership.

Makatu achieved her doctoral degree in psychology at the University of Pretoria. She is also a member of the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World. Her research interest is in youth and women psychology.

She trains students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She has published a considerable number of articles in both national and international peer reviewed and accredited journals.



Univen alumnus receives Mexican citation plaque

Univen alumnus, Prof Sylvester Mpandeli, made the University of Venda proud when he received a citation plaque during the 23rd International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage and the 68th International Executive Council meeting in Mexico City recently.

He became the first black South African to be awarded with a citation plaque since South Africa joined the organisation in 1993.

Mpandeli obtained his first degree, a Bachelor of Agriculture, from the University of Venda in 1997.

He received the citation for his sterling work and achievements made during his tenure as the chairperson of the organisation’s African Regional Working Group from 2013 to 2016.

Some of the achievements include developing a capacity building strategy for Africa on agricultural water management and securing funding for a short training course from the Chinese National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage. The course was presented in Cairo, Egypt in 2016. He was also part of the team that developed a road map to ICID Vision 2030 which is going to be implemented by more than 100 countries across the globe.

Mpandeli is part of the agriculture expert team that is providing capacity building and technology transfer to global young professionals on water issues across the globe.



Making Univen proud - Prof Mpandeli with the citation from the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage.

“I am coordinating and facilitating the establishment of the young professionals on the African continent. Moreover, I am tasked by the African countries to finalise a strategy on the Green Revolution in Africa by 2018. With other former Univen students, we are making positive contributions across the globe on sustainable millennium development goals such as zero hunger, clean water and sanitation and affordable and clean energy. I became one of the representatives and negotiators of the South African government on climate change adaptation negotiations at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change from 2006 to 2013.”

He has been requested by the African member countries and the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage to co-chair the African Regional Working Group until 2020, with Dr Wabha from Egypt.

After completing a Bachelor of Agriculture degree at Univen, he went to the University of Pretoria where he obtained two honours degrees, one in 1998 specialising in floriculture and the other in 2002 specialising in land use planning.

Again, at the University of Pretoria, he completed a master’s degree, specialising in irrigation and agronomy. In 2006, Mpandeli completed a PhD degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, specialising in climate change adaptation issues.

He is a renowned scholar who published more than 26 scientific papers, 75 peer reviewed conference proceedings, published five book chapters and is an external examiner of postgraduate students at different universities in South Africa.

Agriculture students get entrepreneurship advice

To link students with businesspeople to discuss entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector, Univen's School of Agriculture held its first ever networking dinner recently.

"South African agricultural graduates should be ready to use the land to produce products that can also be exported," said the chairperson of the school, Munyaradzi Makoto.

Officially opening the networking event, Makoto said students should not only study to pass, but learn how to practice their skills.

"Be ready to overcome the challenges. This will not only eradicate the scarcity of employment, but will boost the country's economy. People are fighting to reclaim their land, but is the country ready to utilise the land after winning the battle of land reform?"

"South Africa should not be in a situation where we have land that is not used. The agricultural sector is the number one employer in South Africa - without its presence people will starve."

"Agriculture controls the global economy but it is not everyone who wants to be an entrepreneur," said the President of the Limpopo Farmers Association, Tshiane Mathidi.

"Some people want to be employed by government or the private sector, while others want to be academics. In farming, without the land, you will not survive. If you want to be an entrepreneur, you need to erase the lazy mentality and start to think about what you can do to earn a living."

Phumudzo Maphila, a 4th year BSc Plant Production student, said statistics show an incline in the unemployment rate.

"New graduates should start to think about how to create jobs rather than to look for jobs. Do not be selfish - work together by starting agriculture-related businesses. There is a gap in this sector which needs to be filled and that is where we should come in. Government alone cannot create jobs for all, it needs our intervention."

Rene Munya of Afrinest presented on the use of

muringa plants.

"We are planting muringa and exporting the products to Europe. Start businesses and plant muringa trees, as there is a worldwide demand. We are working with more than 40 farmers, including Univen, and wish to increase the number of farmers."

"We produce healthcare products, pills and skincare products. We also help farmers to distribute their products, as long as they are producing healthy products that are cultivated on healthy land."

"Our company creates networks among communities, entrepreneurs and farmers," said the Managing Director of Vhembe Agriculture Hub and Chemistry Supply, Luvhengo Nyelisani.

"We train emerging farmers to survive in this field. We also buy and sell agricultural products".

Alwin Makhale, a mechanical engineering graduate and an entrepreneur in the field of agriculture, advised students to start thinking about opening

their own businesses before completing their studies.

"The little knowledge you have from class will help you to start smaller gardens which do not need a lot of money. It is a matter of starting with a garden in the backyard at home, then you will grow from there."

Tshildzi Mathidi, one of the youngest South African farm owners who studied marketing, encouraged students who want to be in business to tackle the field where they see a gap.

"Everything is possible as long as you are dedicated to what you want to achieve. Put your money where you want your future. In life, if you want to make it, work hard. Let your dream be driven and accompanied by hard work."

In his moral support message, Talifhani Tshitwamulomoni, Executive Chairperson of the Universal Greening Organisation, advised businesspeople who graduated from Univen to employ graduates of the university.



"South African graduates must be skilled on how to use land" - Makoto.



"Not all graduates want to be entrepreneurs" - Mathidi.



"New graduates should start their own businesses" - Maphila.



"Students should get into the muringa business" - Munya.



"Train students on how to start businesses" - Nyelisani.



"Start businesses before you complete your studies" - Tshitwamulomoni.



"Businesspeople who graduated from Univen should train students" - Makhale.



Networking at the dinner.

Government never gave customary law full recognition

The South African government never gave customary law full and proper recognition - recognition is driven by the state's need to be secured when dealing with indigenous people and their systems.

Recently Univen, in partnership with the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, hosted a Customary Law seminar focusing on customary marriages, tribal authority and African jurisprudence.

Prof Thandabantu Nhlapo said sections 39 (2) and (3) of the constitution provide for judicial developments of customary law and recognise the rights or freedom conferred by customary law.

"The issue of marriage is fascinating because it leads to family and family is the building block of society. Family is important in every culture. African culture is very pro-marriage and pro-children. Customary marriages must be recognised and celebrated. The requirement for customary marriage is that the prospective spouses must be above the age of 18."

Nhlapo is a renowned customary law expert with an academic

career spanning over three decades of research, writing, teaching, public service and social activism. He is a former senior Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town.

Customary law expert and lecturer at Univen, Zama Mopai, said customary law is about the customs and usages of tradition observed by the indigenous people of South Africa.

"Customary law is part of people's daily lives. Sometimes we are forced to look customary law as inferior because of colonialism. Every African should understand customary law. It is difficult to separate customs from belief."

"There are two types of customary law - living and official customary law. Living customary law evolves as communities change their values, whereas official customary law easily changes and it is written and captured in statutes, judicial precedents and books."

"At the National Association of Democratic Lawyers we want to make sure that everyone has access to justice," said the association's Memory Sosibo.

"Attorneys should be equipped so that they can give proper justice. Customary law governs many people in our lives."

"Customary law is a very important aspect of the law," said the Deputy Dean in Univen's School of Law, Puleng Letuka.

"The African way of doing things is very important. We should have an important discourse on it."

"Matters that involve customary law are difficult to deal with because they are not written," said Justice Ramafalo of Legal Aid South Africa.

"There is a lack of proper documents that support customary law. We face this challenge every day in our practice."

A lecturer in the English Department, Dr Godani Mashau, said that cases of witchcraft are difficult to deal with because it is also not written anywhere.

"Until the government defines the role of traditional leaders, there will always be a conflict between traditional leaders and elected government leaders."



"Family is important in every culture" - Nhlapo.



"Because of colonialism, customary law sometimes seems inferior" - Mopai.



"Attorneys should be equipped with customary law" - Sosibo.



"Customary law is important" - Letuka.



"We encounter challenges when dealing with customary law" - Ramafalo.



"Government should define the role of traditional leaders" - Mashau.



Partnership with HAWK University continues to flourish

Univen's Department of Social Work recently hosted the welcoming function of a HAWK University delegation of three staff members and 12 students. Art Gallery Co-ordinator, Dr Elelwani Ramaite-Mafadza, advised the delegation that they will be expected to have a code of respect for the elders.

"You have to add the prefix Vho- to the name of an adult person to show respect. You also have to respect royalty. You should know how to communicate when you go to these villages," she said.

Caroline Elisabeth Maas of HAWK University said this year they decided to focus on clients with disabilities.

"We are here for the fourth time and we feel welcomed. We want to keep this collaboration alive because it is important to both partnering universities."

The Chairperson of the Social Work Student Association, Wisani Baloyi, encouraged students to use the opportunity as a way of knowledge exchange.

"Living with a disability is not a sin or a punishment," said Dr Glory Lekganyane, a Lecturer at Univen's Department of Social Work.

"Let us not deny those living with disabilities the latitude to live a normal and protected life, just like everyone else. It is in your hands to change the bad ideology of the community towards disabled people. Exchange ideas to accommodate disabled people."

Neo Ramabula, a second year student of Bachelor of Arts Social Work at Univen, requested students to assist those who need to learn about the rights of and legislation related to people living with disabilities. In the past there were no policies protecting the rights of people with disabilities. However, now we have policies and legislation - let us guide them towards the practice of their rights."

Derrick Khosa, a Univen social work student, encouraged participants to develop their communities through sensitisation and awareness campaigns.

"Let us empower disabled people with leadership skills. This is the time to help those who are discouraged by stigma to discover their creativity and skills. Social workers, let us play our role effectively and help those in need."

Prof Maike Schmieta, a lecturer and researcher from HAWK University's Social Work Department, expressed her great gratitude to Univen and Hawk University students, social work lecturers and everyone who contributed to the success of the programme.

A good team - lecturers, social work students and HAWK University delegates.



"You should have respect for elders" - Ramaite.



Expressing the importance of Univen and HAWK collaboration - Maas.



"No one can take the knowledge that you have" - Baloyi.



"Disabled or not, together we are a family" - Lekganyane.



Neo Ramabula guiding students on policies and legislation concerning people with disabilities.



"Let's empower disabled people with leadership skills" - Khosa.



HAWK students during the presentation about disability and implementation of policies.



"Never give up helping those who need help" - Schmieta.



Takalani Nyelisani new president of CEIA

The Careers Exhibition and Information Association's members expressed their vote of confidence in the Univen Schools Liaison Officer, Takalani Nyelisani, by electing him the new president of the association at the recent Annual General Meeting and congress.

This year's event, hosted in Durban, was themed 'Education tariff intolerance: how it affects basic and higher education'.

"Let us work together in the interest of higher education and the association," Nyelisani said in his acceptance speech.

"Let us start with those little things that do not mean much, because that is where solid relations in an organisation start. They build strong foundations for collaborations and referrals. Whilst one would understand that we work for different institutions and have different targets, let us remember that our sole purpose is to serve the learner - an African child.

"Our organisation will soon embody institutions that are beyond the Southern African Development Community - I envisage that our membership will grow and our service will spread throughout Africa soon. Most of us have national and international strategies to position our institutions. We need to start building effective relations among ourselves so that we can go out and be heard," he said.

"The Southern African Development Community Protocol on Higher Education has appealed to universities to accommodate five percent international students. We have also seen a host of foreign institutions already setting themselves up to operate on our turf. We will need to brighten our presence to ensure sustainability. This will require our vigilance to ensure sustainability of our institutions."

The association currently has membership from South African universities, technical vocational education and training colleges, private colleges and departments of education nationally as well as in Southern African Development Community countries such as Swaziland and Lesotho.

"In the wake of globalisation universities have a pivotal role to play," said Dr Ngogi Mahaye, Regional Director for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Provincial Interventions.

"Our institutions of Higher Learning should assist to produce learners who are able to interact

comfortably in a globalised and international setting. They would then be able to work in foreign places and do business with people from diverse cultures. We should shape our children into globalised citizens with a broad range of skills and knowledge to apply anywhere in the world."

"Student performance is critical in the funding of higher education institutions," said the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Mangosuthu University of Technology, Prof Msomi.

"Universities need to find students who can excel in the programmes and environment they offer. We need to develop sound relationships with faculty members in the development of recruitment strategies."

"South Africa has experienced a dramatic increase in the amount of protest actions in the last few years," said the Director for Communications and Marketing of the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, Dr Pule.

"Our country is still struggling to win the battle against academic and financial exclusions of students. Students who fall victim are those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to Universities South Africa, student enrolment has almost tripled since 1994 and the student body is more demographically representative.

"National Student Financial Aid Scheme allocations, despite increases, are not adequate to meet the needs of eligible students. This raises the question of how increased enrolments were to be funded. Clear partnerships between university management, students, private entities, the government and the community in general can come up with various fundraising strategies to accommodate more students at various institutions," said Pule.

Representing the Department of Education, Umlazi District, Bheki Ntuli was impressed by the work done by schools liaison officers and recruitment officers.

"We are aware of the bad conditions under which you work sometimes to access learners, especially in the rural areas. Even in some urban areas, you encounter school principals who do not give you easy access to learners, but you persist. We will continue to support the work done by your association because we believe that you are adding value to the future of our learners by giving them hope and exposure."



A new president - Takalani Nyelisani receives the certificate of appreciation for hosting the 2017 careers exhibition.



A new exco - The new executive committee and the newly-elected President, Takalani Nyelisani (front row, second from right).



"In the wake of globalisation universities have a pivotal role to play" - Mahaye.



How student recruitment remains relevant in the midst of higher education fees intolerance - Msomi.



Academic and financial exclusion and how it affects the education landscape - Pule.



Newly-elected President Takalani Nyelisani and outgoing President Bonginkosi Dladlama.



"You are adding value to the future of our learners" - Ntuli.



Consulting and lobbying - delegates at the conference.

Univen embraces cultural diversity

Univen recently hosted a student cultural event in a unique and exciting way.

Comprised of students and staff members from various countries in Africa, the university accommodates students with diverse cultural backgrounds.

“We are practising what we do in the lecture halls,” said a lecturer in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Fhatuwani Sumbana.

“As part of the curriculum, we celebrate cultural diversity in the school. Culture can be an attraction - somebody can develop a business by attracting tourists through culture.”

“We have inherited a noble culture which we need to preserve for generations to come,” said Rev Dean Dr Alunamutwe Rannitsheni.

“Whatever we inherited from our fore-parents should not end with this generation. We need to pass this to the next generation - but in a good and better shape than the form in which we have received it. A nation without its past is a nation treading to the drain and it will be difficult to restore.

“Univen is obliged and required to live according to the theory of Ubuntu which advocates togetherness and working as one, although we differ in one way or another. Without Ubuntu, this university will not be able to produce people who are solution-orientated but people who will cause harm, disorder and wipe out everything our fore-parents have achieved during their time.

“A university community that does not hold to the principle of Ubuntu finds itself in a situation where people are fighting with each other. Cultural

diversity should not be a key for people to hate one another, but a glue to stick us together.”

“The heritage that we preserve in our country is also about wildlife,” said Jeremiah Machavi of South African National Parks.

“We offer different careers which include park manager, nature conservator, conservation planner, field ranger, law enforcement officer, wildlife veterinarian and social ecologist.

“You must know what you want. When you choose careers, know your interest, personality and values,” said Machavi

Tshimangadzo Maphaha of Ivory Route Tours said careers in tourism are all about information.

“Research tourism for your own benefit as this will help you shape your future.”

There were cultural presentations, food testing, and cultural performances from Indian, Muslim, Maasai and Nigerian cultures.



Showcasing the Maasai culture.



Tasting food - judges and participants in line to taste.



“Events like these are part of the curriculum” - Sumbana.



“We are required to live according to the theory of Ubuntu” - Rannitsheni.



“South African National Parks offers many career opportunities” - Machavi.



“Always strive to know more about tourism” - Maphaha.

Ethics committee commits to principles of excellence

Univen’s Research Ethics Committee is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in a research community. It is committed to quality and excellence, accountability, transparency, integrity, respect, diversity and social responsibility, community engagement and Ubuntu.

The Directorate of Research and Innovation recently hosted a delegation from the National Health Research Ethics Council of the Department of Health for the annual Research Ethics Committees compliance audit.

The council’s Dr Sikweyiya said the audit reviewed the planned and systematic actions and processes that are established and carried out by Univen’s

Research Ethics Committee. These actions determine its business, standards, policies and procedures.

“The audit provides research ethics committees with recommendations that assist to improve operations in the committee. The audit team included the council’s Prof Brink, Dr Sikweyiya and Mr Maluleke of the council’s secretariat.

The meeting was attended by Univen’s Senior Prof Georges Ekosse, Research Ethics Committee members Prof Nwafor, Dr Ndlovu, Prof Maputle, Prof Barnhoorn, Mrs Obida, Research Administration Coordinator, Mrs Sigama and Univen Research Ethics Committee Secretariat, Ms Khoza.

Senior Prof Ekosse appointed to property rights office

The Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, has appointed Senior Prof Ekosse as a member of the panel for the Review of the Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act and the National Intellectual Property Management Office.

Ekosse is Senior Professor of Applied Clay Mineralogy and Environmental Geology. He is a Fellow and the immediate past secretary general of the African Academy of Sciences and member of its Advisory Committee on Space, Earth and Environmental Sciences.

He is a Life Member of the Geological Society of Africa and the Association of Geoscientists for International Development, a member of the

Soil Science Society of Southern Africa and the International Association for the Study of Clays.

Ekosse is Deputy Chairperson of the Limpopo Research Forum and a National Research Foundation C2 rated researcher 2007-2012, 2013-2018 with expert knowledge in the chemistry of clay minerals, applied clay mineralogy, environmental geology, environmental health, extraction metallurgy, soil mineralogy and environmental geochemistry.

He has authored/co-authored over 300 publications.

Ekosse is a leader with excellent skills and insight in exponential growth and transformation of university research, innovation and postgraduate studies.

Univen staff makes headlines

Prof Pascal Bessong inducted into the Academy of Science of South Africa: A first for Univen

Prof Pascal Bessong was recently inducted into the Academy of Science of South Africa.

The academy honours the country’s most outstanding scholars by electing them as members in recognition of scholarly achievement. Members are the core asset of the academy and give their time and expertise voluntarily in the service of society.

Bessong did his doctoral training in South Africa and France, and postdoctoral training in the United States. He is a Research Professor of Microbiology and Global Health and Head of the HIV/AIDS and Global Health Research Programme in Univen’s School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences.

His research interests include antimicrobial resistance, specifically on the burden of drug resistant HIV, markers of antibiotic resistance at the population level and the interactions of gut microbiota, gut function, vaccine response, growth and development.

Bessong has trained about 40 masters and doctoral students and published more than 120 peer reviewed scientific articles. He is a collaborator on the Global Burden of Disease project and the South Africa lead investigator for the MAL-ED Network.

On an ad hoc basis he reviews research grant proposals for the government of Hong Kong Health and Medical Research Fund, the Canadian Institute for Health Research, the Medical Research Council and the National Research Foundation of South Africa.



Psychological Society of SA elects Prof Mashamba

Prof Mashamba was elected as an executive member of the Psychological Society of South Africa during the recent Pan African Psychology Union meeting in Durban.

She was also elected as a member of the South African National Committee for the International Union of Psychological Sciences in Cape Town.

Mashamba did her doctoral degree in Psychology at the University of Venda and her postdoctoral Master of Science in Epidemiology at the Columbia

University in the United States of America. She is currently heading the Department of Psychology and is also Vice Dean of the School of Health Sciences.

Her research interests include Indigenous Knowledge and Health Systems, Mental Health, HIV and AIDs, and Health Psychology.

Mashamba has trained students at both masters and doctoral levels and has published articles in both national and international peer reviewed journals.

BRICS appointment for Senior Prof Ekosse

The Department of Higher Education and Training has appointed Senior Prof Ekosse as National Convener of the Ecology and Climate Change Thematic Group of the BRICS Network University.

The BRICS Network University facilitates cooperation and collaboration among BRICS universities. These universities provide high quality life-long learning through education such as traditional academic programmes, short-term programmes and modular courses.

They also facilitate sustainable development of the BRICS countries through joint research and educational activities in among others, natural and social sciences, humanities and engineering. Furthermore, these universities provide training for professionals of BRICS countries by expanding students’ access to methods, forms and education technologies of the BRICS Network University educational programmes.

There are six priority areas – energy, computer science and information security, ecology and climate change, water resources and pollution treatment, economics and BRICS studies.

Each BRICS country has its National Coordinating Committee which oversees and coordinates the work of the thematic groups. The BRICS Network University International Governing Board directs the work of the BRICS Network University. It comprises three representatives of each BRICS country as well as a representative from the Ministry of Education.

Each BRICS country has up to 12 universities that are formal members of the BRICS Network University. The South African members are the University of the Witwatersrand, the Tshwane University of Technology, the University of Johannesburg, the University of Cape Town, the Central University of Technology, Rhodes University, the University of Pretoria, North West University, Stellenbosch University, the Durban University of Technology

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communications channel. Nendila editorial committee –

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Univen supports people living with disabilities

Univen staff members recently supported disabled students during the 2017 Disability Indaba that was organised by the Univen Disabled Student Unit.

The indaba started with a fun walk from the university's main administration building to the sports hall.

"The university community should be aware that there are disabled people on this campus," says Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali.

"Despite the fact that a lot has been achieved, access for the disabled into university buildings is not enough. Holding a cane with my eyes blindfolded has made me realise how blind people need assistive devices at all times. It is not easy to walk without seeing where you are going. Let us help these people to access all these buildings which will also assist them to live the life that all students live. The university will increase the number of disabled employees," he said.

Travel With Flair donated a brand new technologically advanced wheelchair to Mpho Sekgweni, a Univen student who is physically challenged. The company's Cathy Koele said she was deeply touched when she heard that there is a student who sometimes fails to do things just because his wheelchair no longer functions properly.

"I know the difficulties faced by disabled people and most of them do not want to be other people's burdens, yet they need help. It is not nice to ask people to push you to get to places where you want to go."

"I am very happy because the university and the donor heard my plea - hence my prayers were answered today. I wish the same could be done for all students living with disabilities."



Prof Peter Mbatlali holding a mobility cane, participating in blind activities.

Sekgweni is doing his internship at Univen's Department of Information Technology Services.

"The government has been and is still developing programmes for young and disabled people of this country," said the Acting Chief Operating Officer of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, Victor Rambau.

"Disabled people who have applied for NSFAS do not have to apply again the following year. Funding for them will automatically be taken as a bursary instead of a loan. They do not have to repay it when they complete their studies.

"NSFAS is trying to fund all disabled people. Universities should provide the names of the students living with disabilities before the closing date for the 2018 academic year."

Members of the University community filled the university streets to participate in the disability awareness fun walk.



"It is not nice to ask people to push you to get to places" - Koele.



"Tuition fees for disabled people will automatically be taken as a bursary not a loan" - Rambau.



Testing the new wheelchair - from left, Prof Peter Mbatlali seated on Mpho's new wheelchair (vrrr-pha) and Cathy Koele from Travel With Flair.

Univen and Wageningen host supervision training

Univen and Wageningen University jointly hosted a postgraduate supervision workshop, focusing on effective academic development, competence and skills for PhD supervisors and academic staff.

The workshop was attended by 30 staff members and postdoctoral students from different schools and departments. Highlights of the training included the seven habits of highly effective academics, the heart of communication, scientific writing and publishing.

The workshop was facilitated by experts from the Wageningen University in the Netherlands, comprising of Dr Claudius van de Vijver, the PhD Programme Coordinator at the CT de WIT Graduate School for Production Ecology and Research Conservation, Barend van de Broek and Dr Lennart Suselbeek, PhD Programme Coordinator at the same graduate school.

The facilitators paid a courtesy call to Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali, who thanked the Wageningen University colleagues for their consistent support.

The workshop was coordinated by the Directorate of International Relations.



A good get-together - from left, Dr Lennart Suselbeek, Barend van de Broek, Dr Segun Obadire, Prof Jan Crafford and Dr Claudius van de Vijver.



Participants in one of the group activities.



Facilitators with Prof Peter Mbatlali.

Mbatlali receives RUFORUM IMPRESSA Award for 2017

Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali was awarded as the first runner-up of the RUFORUM IMPRESSA award recently in Lilongwe, Malawi.

He was recognised for excellence in research, institutional transformation and building Africa's human resource capacity. The award comprised of a trophy, a certificate and US\$15,000.00.

Present were Bright Msaka, Malawian Minister of Education, Science and Technology, George Kronnisanyon Werner, Liberian Minister of Education, Dr Muyingo John Chrysostom, Ugandan Minister of State for Higher Education and over 300 participants that included vice chancellors representing the 66 member universities, development partners and other dignitaries.

Vice chancellors, rectors, principals and deans from 35 African countries, with development partners from Africa and abroad and recipients of the various RUFORUM 2017 awards.



Bright Msaka hands the RUFORUM Imprensa award to Prof Mbatlali.

Workshop empowers emerging researchers

Research and knowledge creation are defining characteristics of a university. The absence or severe decrease of this aspect in a higher learning institution spells an imminent loss for that institution.

Themed 'Carving the way forward in research and innovation at Univen', the Directorate of Research and Innovation recently hosted an 'article writing for publication' workshop.

The workshop taught researchers, including academics, postdoctoral research fellows and postgraduate students how to write manuscripts for publication. It was attended by 80 research participants to provide hands-on coaching and mentorship to emerging researchers.

Prof Antoine Mulaba-Bafubandi, Head of the Mineral Processing and Technology Research Centre at the University of Johannesburg, said scientific writing is a science and it follows some logical and rational rules.

"The elements of a scientific paper include introduction, methodology, presentation and discussion of the findings, integration of the literature in the discussion, conclusion and recommendations and references.

"Contextualise the content of the paper in the introduction. Give the motivation and the rationale of the work reported. At times, mention the gap in the body of knowledge literature."

On methodology, Mulaba-Bafubandi told participants to account for the type of research they are conducting. Also describe the research tools used for data collection, equipment, questionnaire, experimental, field and observation. Indicate the population and the sample or material.

"The abstract should summarise the discussion of main results and its comparison with the literature."

"A researcher should have a hunger for publishing," said Univen's Director of Research and Innovation, Senior Professor Georges Ekosse.

"Univen sees the need for research to be done and disseminated appropriately. We have to put Univen on the map of scholarship. You must combine wisdom with the knowledge that you have generated to benefit the society. Be a researcher with a difference and you must know how to publish. You should develop yourself to be a scholar of high integrity and an internationally acclaimed scholar."

"Univen has increased its research output," said Univen's Dr Sinah Sekhula.

"Therefore, masters and PhD students should not graduate without any publication. Emerging researchers' research findings should not sit in the library. It should benefit the society and researchers should find ways of disseminating these findings to the relevant people. You have to publish your work so that it can be used by the coming generation."

Univen's Research Coordinator, Dr Owen Nkosinathi Sotshangane, said that academics are employed to either publish or perish.

"This workshop will help you to overcome barriers to writing for publication. This will not only benefit you but will also contribute in improving research productivity for Univen and the country as a whole.

"Postgraduate students are often expected to write manuscripts worthy of publication without being taught how to achieve this goal. It is assumed that once someone has a PhD, that person can write publishable articles."

The workshop provided hands-on coaching and mentoring of emerging researchers. Based on calculations of publication units, universities are provided with research subsidies by the Department of Higher Education and Training. Univen was allocated 0.94 units for the 2016 publications and as a result, it is well placed to meet the target of 1.25 units that was set by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for 2019. The call for participation was meant for participants who had draft manuscripts which would then be worked on and submitted for publication.



Prof Mulaba-Bafubandi taught emerging researchers how to conduct research.



"Workshops like these help researchers to improve their writing skills" - Sotshangane.



"Have a hunger to publish" - Ekosse.



"Univen has increased research output" - Sekhula.

Participants at the workshop.



If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus – contact the tip-off hotline - 0800 212 755, e-mail univenhotline@tip-offs.com