

The University of Venda held a successful Council Induction Workshop



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) Council held its induction workshop from 31 January to 01 February 2022 at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria. The council exercises general oversight over the institution and its affairs.

The purpose of this Induction workshop was to share and educate Council members about the roles and responsibilities of council in the institutions of higher learning and what is expected from them as council members, most importantly as the University is in the process of implementing the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan.



The Chairperson of Council, Mr Juneas Lekgetha welcomed the Council members and a delegation from the Department of

Higher Education and Training (DHET) led by Mr Mahlubi Chief Mabizela who is the Chief Director: Higher Education Policy in the Department of Higher Education and Training. In his welcome message, Mr Lekgetha highlighted that the purpose

of this workshop was also to look at the governance of the council itself. He indicated that workshops like this are very resourceful and are organised to equip council members with skills for ensuring smooth running of the University.



Presenters from DHET posing for a group photo outside CSIR International Convention Centre

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The University of Venda held a successful Council Induction Workshop..continued

On day one, the Induction session received presentations from Mr Mahlubi Chief

Mabizela who is the Chief Director: Higher Education Policy. He presented on Higher Education Overview, Policy and Legislative Framework. This was followed by a presentation by Dr Phillia Vukela, Institutional Support and Sector Liaison from DHET who talked about the Roles and Responsibilities of Councils. Mr Alfred Makgato, Director for Institutional Funding at DHET's presentation was based on University Funding Formula. Ms Pearl Whittle, Director for Management Support DHET delivered a presentation about Reporting Regulations and the Financial Health Indicators.



UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni delivered his strategic overview of the University's 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan. In his presentation, he set the tone by highlighting the background and context of the strategic plan 2021-2025. He further touched on UNIVEN positioning statement which is 'Positioning the University of Venda for impact and relevance'. Dr Nthambeleni reflected on UNIVEN Strategic plan 2021-2025 at glance in which he explained the vision, mission, values and the four Strategic Thrusts. He concluded his presentation by highlighting the University's Operational Model that gives rise to the University's new academic structure.



The University Registrar, Adv. Edward Lambani delivered his presentation which covered important topics such as Council operations and its sub-committees; Evaluation of individual members of Council and its committees (including Chairpersons) and Evaluation of Council and committees of Council.



On the second day of the workshop, Adv. Eric Nemukula, Director Legal Services on behalf of the University Registrar presented about Council Code of Conduct and How to exercise oversight of Governance maturity of the institution.

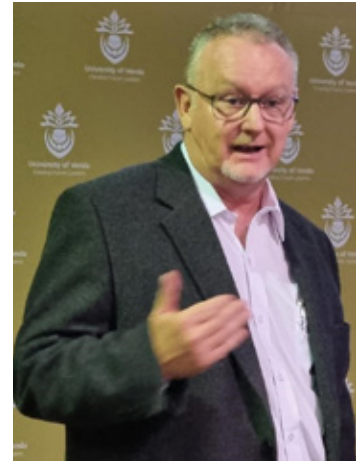
Throughout the workshop, the fundamental role of Council was made very clear. The Council, through its oversight and governance role is expected to be the pillar of strength in the University.

The importance of understanding the roles and responsibilities of other stakeholders in the management of the University was noted. Understanding of these roles will enable Council to operate smoothly with other internal stakeholders to ensure the growth, effective management, and development of the University.



The Council induction workshop was facilitated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin.

The Council, through its oversight and governance role is expected to be the pillar of strength in the University.



Members of Council also received a presentation from Mr Christopher Whittle, a Managing member of Universum Governance, Strategy and Risk Advisory. His presentation focused on Governance of Risk, Audit, and ICT. Mr Whittle defined Risk as an "Effect of uncertainty on objectives". In essence, risk management refers to the practice of identifying potential risks in advance, analysing them, and taking precautionary steps to reduce or curb the risk. He said it is vital for a university's governance structure which is Council to have capacity and an ideal framework to support the implementation of risk activities.

The Chairperson of Council, Mr Juneas Lekgetha gave the closing remarks. He made reflections on the Induction workshop and how the induction has served its purpose. He concluded by thanking all participants as well as the organisers of the workshop for their sterling job.

UNIVEN begins to engage grade 12 learners on various career choices

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) has already started to encourage learners to apply for 2023 academic year admission. The University Assistant Schools Liaison Officer, participated in the Vhembe West Education District Careers Exhibition which took place at Nzhelele, former Makhado College of Education campus on 31 January to 03 February 2022.

This Vhembe West Education District was attended by 10103 grade 12 learners from 108 schools and 20 exhibiting institutions. Through this exhibition, UNIVEN Assistant Schools Liaison Officer, Mr Justice Lebopa managed to share information about application processes, funding opportunities available and programmes on offer.

"We have already noted that whilst it is still the beginning of the year, there are matriculants with subjects not corresponding with their career plans and learners who

have not yet decided on their career choices. Therefore, we are using this time and these Career exhibitions as eye openers for most learners", says Mr Lebopa.

Schools that participated in the Vhembe West Exhibition were from the following circuits: Nzhelele East, Nzhelele Central, Nzhelele West, Soutpansberg East, Soutpansberg West, Soutpansberg North, Hlanganani North, Hlanganani Central and Hlanganani South, Dzondo, Lwamondo, Vhuronga 2, Sekgose North and Elim Circuit.

The second lap of the Vhembe East Education District will be hosted by the University of Venda from 3 to 6 May 2022.

Career exhibitions are critical parts of the University's recruitment strategy. They bring various Institutions of Higher Learning in one central place affording learners and teachers the opportunity to interact with representatives from various institutions.



Learners from Gwamasenga Secondary School with Mr Justice Lebopa (in Striped T-Shirt)

Attendance of exhibitions is also a means to control dissemination of authentic information to the public as all exhibiting institutions are continuously vetted on their accredited programmes by the Careers Exhibitions and Information Association (CEIA). This has alleviated challenges created by many institutions that promote programmes that are not accredited.

Exhibitions also assist learners who have no access to online facilities, especially in the rural areas, to interact with representatives of Institutions of Higher Learning.



Matriculants from Vhaphamadi Secondary School



Matriculants from Tshipetane School

Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL) Held a Successful New Staff Induction Programme

In Line with the University of Venda Policy on On-Boarding, Orientation and Induction Programmes (Draft Policy), the Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL), Academic Development Unit (ADU) facilitated a three-day new academic staff-induction programme called 'New Academic Preparation Programme' from 07-09 February 2022. Nine (9) new academics were inducted on a three (3) day programme which focused on teaching and learning, assessment, and curriculum related matters. The New Academic Preparation Programme adopted a Needs-Based Induction Model conceptualised by the Academic Development Unit (ADU) in accordance to the New Academics Transitioning in Higher Education Programme (NATHEP) since the University of Venda is one of the ten (10) universities that are part of the programme. The NATHEP programme is aligned with the UCEDP goal, 4.1. The UCEDP goal 4.1 aims to provide a development resource to address transformation imperatives in the university system through the provision of quality research development and teaching development opportunities for all academics from recruitment to retirement.



Other presentations' screenshots from the induction made by the Academic Development Unit (ADU) during some of the engagements with NAs.

A draft Policy regarding On-Boarding, Orientation and Induction Programmes stipulates that the New or returning employees, in this case, academics/lecturers/university teachers, must attend the academic induction sub-programme within the first three (3) months of joining the university (p.12). Drawing from the policy, the Academic Development Unit under CHETL conceptualise a NBI model in which induction and orientation of new academic staff members should be understood and undertaken as a 'process and not as an event'. Accordingly, the CHETL-ADU has undertaken to induct and engage New Academics (NAs) as soon as they are employed and have become part of the university teaching staff, irrespective of the number of such academic staff. This is in line with Fullan (2001) cited in Wong (2004) who argues that induction is not about having just one special event, meeting, or activity; rather, its success lies on understanding and sustaining that it is a process which entails a journey of recursive decisions and actions.



The DVC Teaching and Learning, Prof. Jan Crafford addressing New Academics during the induction programme

On the first day of the induction programme, Prof Jan Crafford in his capacity as the UNIVEN's DVC Teaching and Learning welcomed the new academics and everyone who was part of the induction. Prof. Crafford

assured all the new academic staff that they have not taken a wrong decision by joining the University of Venda. He also elaborated on CHETL and its mandate in driving and advancing quality teaching and learning in the University of Venda. Prof. Crafford encouraged the new academics and everyone to familiarise themselves with the University of Venda's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and to understand the overall role played by CHETL and its four (4) units, ADU, SCCDU, DU and E-Learning in driving such a strategic direction of the University. He further noted the significant role played by CHETL in driving the strategic thrust such as student centredness and engaged scholarship. He encouraged the new academics to work towards achieving student success to ensure graduate throughput and graduation rate at the University of Venda.

There were other presentations from the representatives of the four CHETL units. One presentation was on 'Understanding Academic Development Unit', its sub-units and services.

It was presented by Dr Ravhuhali. This was followed by a presentation on 'Understanding Student Counselling & Career Development Unit' and its services (SCCDU), presented by Dr R. Pila-Nemutandani. Dr T. R. Mbuva presented on 'Understanding Disability Unit' and its services. While Mr. W. Xazela presented on 'Understanding e- Learning' and its services.

Further, Mr. Phathutshedzo Rathogwa representing students' components, especially the DU students, highlighted his experiences of teaching and learning, assessment, and expectations from new academics. Furthermore, Mr. A. Gadisi presented on 'Teaching Students Living with Disabilities' and he highlighted challenges that students faced when they are taught by academics who are not aware of the variety of challenges that disabled students endure.



Presentations made by some of the CHETL units during the induction programme

Mr. A. Mulaudzi presented on 'Auxiliary Services and Examinations' processes at UNIVEN while Dr. M. Mabika presented on 'Working with MenTuts to Enhance Students Learning'. Other presentations that formed part of the three (3) Day induction for new academics included amongst others, Understanding university students in the late adolescence and imaging adult; Being and becoming an academic at UNIVEN (Reflections on the Self and practice); UNIVEN Context (histories, present and future; Promoting student centeredness through diverse teaching and Learning strategies; Large Class Pedagogy (managing large classes); Re-Thinking curriculum transformation; Diversity in (and) knowledge: Whose knowledge matters the most?; Assessing learning in Higher Education; Using students' evaluation of teaching as reflective tool. On behalf of the DVC Teaching and Learning, Prof. Crafford, Dr Ravhuhali thanked all the new academics for making time to participate and engage in their induction to learn ways of teaching and learning as well as organizational culture in relation to the University of Venda.

Executive and Senior Management participate in the Performance evaluation exercise for the 2021 Academic Year



Performance Evaluation Panel - Front row L-R: Adv Edward Lambani, Emeritus Professor Ramesh Bharuthram, Dr Bernard Nihambeleni, Prof Refilwe Mafuya-Phaswana and Prof Nosisi Feza.

Back row L-R: Prof Jan Crafford, Dr Robert Martin, Mrs Uanda Ndou, Mr Botwe Kraziya, Mr Kenny Maimela, Ms Relelike Morwasehla and Mr Esrom Phungo.

The University of Venda's Executive and Senior Management participated in the Performance Evaluation Exercise that took place from 07-11 February 2022 at the University Council Chambers. Over and above, all staff members were requested to complete their performance agreements in line with the University Performance Management Policy.

The University of Venda Executive Management led the process to develop 2021 Divisional/Operational Plans informed by the Strategic Plan 2021-2025; 2021 Annual Performance Plan; 2021 Internal Audit Plan; 2021; Risk Register; 2019 Audit Report and the UNIVEN Integrated Entrepreneurship Innovation and Bio-diversity Plan.

Internationalisation in Action: The Fulbright Fellowship sends Prof Joseph Baloyi to the University of Georgia

Prof Joseph Baloyi, HoD of Animal Science and former Vice Dean of the School of Agriculture, at UNIVEN was the recipient of Fulbright Fellowship and was hosted by the University of Georgia (UGA) in Athens, Georgia. Prof Baloyi's fellowship was from 1st June 2021 to 31st December 2021. The Fulbright Fellowship is meant to enable one to interact with fellow animal nutritionists in the developed world, particularly at University of Georgia (UGA) in Athens, Georgia and participate in their graduate research activities. The Fulbright Fellowship seeks to further improve the research skills and outputs of the sending institutions. The lessons learned from this experience will not only enhance the teaching and supervisory skills but will commensurately increase the research skills and outputs for University of Venda (UNIVEN) postgraduate students. The purpose of the Fulbright programme is to increase mutual understanding between people of the United States and other countries through the exchange of persons, knowledge, and skills. Approximately 1,900 grants are available to over 140 countries.



Prof Joseph Baloyi (centre), posed for a photo with Dr Todd Riley Callaway (2nd from left) and some staff members in the Department of Animal and Dairy Science



At UGA, Prof Baloyi was hosted by the Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences (ADS) under the stewardship of Dr Todd Riley Callaway, a Ruminant nutritionist. Since Fulbright does not fund research activities, Prof Baloyi stepped in to assist in some of Dr Callaway's ongoing research projects. Dr Callaway has a well-equipped laboratory, where he mostly works on microbiology in the animal gut as it is affected by feeds. Prof Baloyi's participation, included in-person laboratory experiences, visiting university farms, and working with graduate students. Prof Baloyi had full access to UGA's staff, students and its world class research equipment and laboratories.

During his stay at UGA, Prof Baloyi conducted the following activities:

Learnt some basic laboratory techniques and was involved in an online training on Laboratory basic safety and Animal Care in Research; Together with the Department of ADS staff, visited Rock House Dairy, a Division of Kelly Products Incorporation in Eatonton where they make cheese and ice creams. Prof Baloyi was involved in some ongoing graduate research projects:

The first project involved a PhD student who needed to take initial research data for her project. Prof Baloyi and the Department of ADS went to Northwest Georgia Research and Education Centre in Calhoun, the UGA Beef Farm that is about 300 km away near Rome. The whole Department of ADS went to the farm to assist the PhD student. Prof Baloyi was extremely impressed by the cooperation between the departmental staff and students.

- He also assisted an MSc student working on Mastitis to collect milk for somatic cells count (mastitis), rumen and faecal samples.
- Another MSc student is evaluating the effect of feeding Russell Bermuda grass cut at different stages of maturity on digestibility and volatile fatty acid production in horses.
- During his stay, Prof Baloyi also managed to further his own research interests and conducted a research project titled: In vitro Dry Matter and fibre digestibility of different varieties of peanut tops and Bermuda grass forage. The research was conducted in collaboration with Dr Todd R. Callaway and Jefferson Lourenco and sought to evaluate the in vitro dry matter and fibre digestibility, gas and volatile fatty acid production of peanut (*Arachis hypogaea*), tops from seven cultivars grown in Georgia and Bermuda (*Cynodon dactylon*) grass.

Prof Baloyi's stay at UGA and his participation in the Fulbright fellowship will yield significant results for

UNIVEN postgraduate students and will contribute to positioning the University

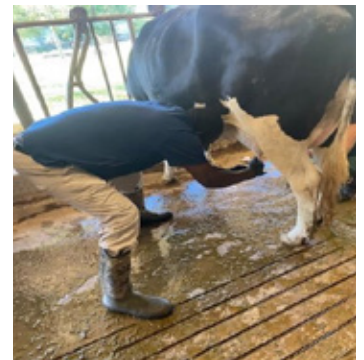
for global influence. Prof Baloyi's work at UGA and dedication will culminate in the production of some manuscripts for publication. On 14 September 2021, Prof Baloyi delivered a presentation titled "Livestock production, teaching and research in South Africa." His presentation was part of the Animal & Dairy Science and Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication weekly seminar series.



Prof Baloyi's excellent work and passion for UNIVEN, allowed him to concretise and strengthen ties between UGA and UNIVEN. His efforts culminated in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UGA and UNIVEN. Under the MoU, UGA and UNIVEN will collaboratively exchange both staff and students between the two universities. This goes to show the value of collaboration and partnerships, where one exchange could potentially create more opportunities for the university over an even longer period.

There are many takeaways and lessons that emanated from Prof Baloyi's visit to UGA, as well as some implications for UNIVEN. Despite the limited funding and being far away from friends and family, Prof Baloyi managed to fly the UNIVEN flag high. His visit will produce inter-alia;

- At least four papers still being considered for publication, these include two articles and two manuscripts.
- New research techniques and hands on experience in methane research work.
- The MoU between UGA and UNIVEN entered into force on 23 December 2021.



Professor Nosisi Feza Appointed to the Editorial Membership Board of the African Journal of Teacher Education and Development



Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Professor Nosisi Feza

UNIVEN's Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies (DVC RPS), Professor Nosisi Feza has been appointed as a Member of the Editorial Board of the African Journal of Teacher Education and Development. The Journal as per its advertised information, shall serve as a forum for scholars engaged in teachers' preparation and continuing professional development from primary to secondary education level. Its publications will address issues confronting teacher education and development in the different education systems in Africa or from other countries with relevance to Africa. Some of the topics will include marginalised youth, their families, and communities;

programme design and impact; selection, recruitment, and retention of teachers; local and national policy; accountability; routes to professional registration; and maintenance of competence. The scope of the Journal covers intellectual development; motivational development; procedural development; productivity improvement; role development; cultural development; management and leadership; professionalism; teacher morale; job satisfaction and motivation; communication; psychological/personal development; theoretical ideas and teaching suggestions; and professional development initiatives for teachers in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Dr Mutshinyalo Samson Ratombo joins the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal as the Director Strategy and Monitoring



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) has appointed Dr Mutshinyalo Samson Ratombo as the new Director Strategy and Monitoring with effect from 01 February 2022. Dr Ratombo is joining the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal with more than 17 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation. His monitoring and evaluation career started in 2005 when he joined the then Department of Land Affairs as Planner Monitoring and Evaluation.

In 2007, Dr Ratombo was appointed as the Provincial Manager Service Delivery Monitoring for South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). In 2009, he was appointed by the Department of Science and Technology as a Deputy Director Performance Monitoring and Evaluation. Moreover, in 2011, he was promoted to be the Director in the same portfolio. In 1991, Dr Ratombo completed his Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA) and furthered his qualifications by enrolling for the University Education Diploma (UED). He worked as a Teacher at Tshiemuemu Secondary School between 1992 and 2005, teaching Geography in Grade 12.

In 2000, he enrolled and completed his Honours degree in Environmental Sciences (Geography) at the University of Venda. It is at this University where he met his two mentors,

the retired Professor Agness Musyoki and Dr Nthaduleni Samuel Nethengwe. Under the two distinguished scholars, Dr Ratombo enrolled and completed his master's degree in Environmental Sciences in 2004 and his PhD in 2016.

Between 2006 and 2021, Dr Ratombo obtained the following certificates and diplomas: Emotional Intelligence and Personal Mastery, 30 September 2021, (IMSIMBI Training); National School of Government: Nykela Public Service SMS Pre-entry Programme, 25 March 2021, (School of Government); Advanced Project Management, 29 November 2019, (NWU Business School); Postgraduate Certificate in Executive Leadership, April 2013, (VUT and PALAMA); Monitoring Implementation, Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation Methods, 2010-2011, (University of Western Cape); Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation in the Public Sector, 12 June 2009, (Stellenbosch University); Monitoring and Evaluation -Utilisation of Evaluations, 2007, 2015 The South African and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) and Basic and Intermediate SPSS, 2 November 2006, (SPSS_SA).

Dr Ratombo is currently a member of SAMEA and African Evidence Network.

"With my in-depth knowledge in monitoring and evaluation, I believe I will immensely contribute to the successful implementation of the University of Venda Strategic Plan 2021-2025 aimed at positioning the University for impact and relevance".

UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni calls on all members of the University community to give Dr Ratombo the necessary support during his tenure.

Ms Azwianewi Mavis Madzhie joins UNIVEN as the Director Financial Management and Reporting



Ms Azwianewi Mavis Madzhie has been appointed as the University of Venda's Director Financial Management and Reporting effective from 04 January 2022. She graduated with a BCom Accounting degree from UNIVEN and went on to complete her CTA Level 2 (Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Accounting Science at UNISA (NQF level 8). Ms Madzhie further completed the SAICA ITC exam (Part 1 Board Exam) and is currently an APC candidate (SAICA final board exam). She is also a registered Professional Accountant (SA) with the South African Institute of Professional Accountants. Moreover, Ms Madzhie is studying towards a Master of Business Administration degree at Regent Business School. Her other qualifications include: CPMD (Municipal Finance) from WITS University; Advanced Taxation from North-West University and an Executive Leadership Municipal Development

Programme from the University of Pretoria.

Mavis Madzhie has over 20 years of working experience in the field of finance. Before joining UNIVEN, she was the Director Finance at Gauteng Provincial Legislature. She has also worked as the Chief Financial Officer at Thulamela Municipality.

Mr Botwe Kraziya, UNIVEN CFO, explained Ms Madzhie as someone who has the potential to position UNIVEN for impact and relevance and has wished her well in her new role as the Director Financial Management and Reporting.

UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni welcomes Ms Madzhie in her new role as the Director Financial Management and Reporting. He urged the University Community to give Ms Madzhie the necessary support in her new role.

International Relations and Partnerships Directorate hosts a fruitful workshop on Integrating Health Approaches and the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus and the Erasmus+ 2022 call for Proposals



Attendees and Presenters of the workshop posing for a group photo on day one outside the conference hall where the workshop was taking place

On Tuesday, 01 and Wednesday, 02 February 2022, the University of Venda's International Relations and Partnerships (IRP) Directorate hosted a workshop on Integrating Health Approaches and the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus and the

Erasmus+ 2022 call for Proposals. This workshop was held at Southern Sun Hotel in Pretoria. The objectives of this workshop were to assist in achieving strategic objectives 3, 5, 8, 11 and 15 of the University's Strategic Plan 2021-2025. In particular, this workshop served the following purposes: To promote the Integrating Health Approaches and the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus' in the NWO/NRF call; to share information about a virtual information and matchmaking event that took place on the 3rd of February 2022 for potential applicants and interested partners; promote the Erasmus+ 2022 call – which covers nine (9) areas of action open for international cooperation; to discuss possible partnerships and consortia for applying to the calls and to develop timelines for applications and submissions to the calls.



In his opening and welcome message, the Acting Director International Relations and Partnerships, Dr Segun Obadire indicated that there is a need to move ahead from

where we are. "It is now the time for us to make impact in our communities with these research projects." Dr Obadire told attendees that there is a need to come up with research proposals that will assist the students who will in turn also make positive impact in the communities where they come from. "Let us not do research for the sake of research and funding, research should be aimed at improving the lives of other people." He encouraged participants to continuously apply for grants and identify Memorandums of Understanding that are in line with their fields. He concluded by mentioning that the International Relations Directorate is available to assist those who need the support.



UNIVEN's Partnership Officer: International Relations and Partnership, Mr Thabo Dikgale highlighted that for a university to be globally competitive, that University should first position itself in good standing locally. He said a university should not operate in a vacuum, there should be mechanisms on how to make greater impact in its local communities. "We need to start drafting our own research agendas. When we engage in research projects, we need to ask ourselves about the benefits for our country, surrounding communities and the University itself."



Research Coordinator at the Directorate of Research and Innovation, Dr Nkosinathi Sotshangane presented about positioning UNIVEN for Impact. In his presentation and amongst other things, Dr Sotshangane reflected on matters relating to the UNIVEN Intellectual Property Policy and processes of getting research proposals funded. He said this year (academic year 2022) marks the second year of the implementation of the university's strategic plan 2021-2025 which largely seeks to rejuvenate and position the university for impact and relevance.



Dr Luxon Nhamo from Water Research Commission (WRC) presented on Achieving

environmental and human health needs and resource security and sustainability at the national level through nexus planning. He said last year alone he has produced 26 publications related to nexus planning. He further presented about options to achieve sustainability by 2030; post-covid-19: how people should prepare and get ready for the new normal.



Mr Teuns Phahlamohlaka who is the Professional Officer: KFD Knowledge Advancement and support at the National Research Foundation (NRF) presented about the call text and requirements where he highlighted that the applications should be aligned to national research agendas, as well as international initiatives. "This is to build and connect knowledge to increase the (socio-economic) impact of research. He said collaborations aim to further stimulate long term research collaboration between South Africa and the Nederland by funding interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research consortia semi-public and private organisations."

International Relations and Partnerships Directorate hosts a fruitful workshop continued...



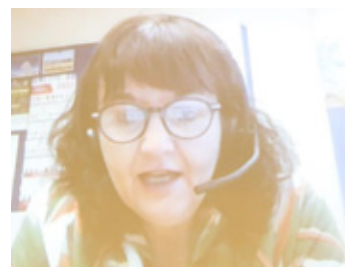
Mr Stephen Dlamini, Professional Officer: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) at NRF presented about grant application procedures. In his presentation, he explained the process of application until the application gets approved or rejected. Mr Dlamini indicated that universities need to have their own internal closing dates for review of the applications before they submit to NRF. He said this date should be before the actual NRF closing date to allow coordinators and administrators to administer and check if all documents are in place before submissions could be made to the NRF.



Professional Officer Reviews and Evaluations at NRF, Ms Leana Meiring presented on NRF Reviews and Evaluations. Amongst other things, Ms Meiring indicated the assessment procedure for the proposals. Ms Meiring encouraged applicants to adhere to the call guidelines.



The Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi encouraged staff members, particularly researchers to fully participate in this programme because there are lot of benefits in it. Prof Mulaudzi indicated that UNIVEN had the requisite human capabilities to successfully compete for these opportunities.



Jozet Muller who is the Programme Manager: Higher Education and Governance Delegation of European Union to South Africa presented about the Erasmus+ 2022 Call Actions. In her presentation, she highlighted areas of international cooperation in the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 call. She outlined opportunities in the following areas; international credit mobility; Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters (EMJM); Erasmus Mundus Design Measures (EMDM); Capacity building for higher education and Jean Monnet activities.

Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi encouraged staff members, particularly researchers to fully participate in this programme because there are lot of benefits in it.



Attendees and Presenters of the workshop posing for a group photo on day two outside the conference hall where the workshop was taking place



In her vote of thanks, Prof Ndileleni Mudzielwana from the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education indicated that she wishes that the University could organise these kinds of workshops more often because academic staff members, more especially researchers learn a lot from them in terms of community engagement, self-development, research proposal funding and writing winning research proposals. "We need to start publishing more often for us to place the university back to its original position in the research rankings." She said in order to win, staff members need to work as a team. "For us to see progress, all team members need to fully participate. It is your efforts which will lead us to success."

Mentors and tutors are advised to take their responsibilities of being MenTuts seriously

The Academic Development Unit, under Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL) held a successful training programme for the MenTuts (Mentors and Tutors) from 20 to 24 January 2022. The training workshop was virtually attended by 155 MenTuts from four faculties (Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Faculty of Health Sciences, and Faculty of Human Social Sciences and Education) across various departments. The programme covered various topics to equip MenTuts in carrying out their duties and contributing towards the student success within the University of Venda (UNIVEN). This is in line with the University 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

Prof Jan Crafford, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning welcomed MenTuts and indicated that he is pleased to see how the programme for MENTUTS is arranged and the contents therein. He acknowledged that the MenTuts are being trained under extreme pressure due to the waves of the Covid-19 that has been on our shores for the past two years. Furthermore, Prof Crafford stated that, MenTuts must take their jobs and responsibilities of being MenTuts serious.

"You are the peers of our students, and you have a lot to contribute to the development of your younger comrades (brothers and sisters) in their endeavour to graduate successfully from the University of Venda".

Dr Fhatuwani Ravhuhali, the Acting Head of Academic Development welcomed MenTuts and emphasised on the role that they play within students' success, especially for First entering students. Dr Ravhuhali further emphasised that MenTuts are one of those role key players in terms of ensuring that UNIVEN's first entering students are able to do well and succeed academically. He further indicated that the main purpose of the training is to engage, discuss, interact and to bring to light that MenTuts could play to advance and enhance academic success of first entering and undergraduate students in general. Dr Ravhuhali encouraged the MenTuts to make sure that they contribute towards the success of the University and even go an extra mile.

The training workshop covered different topics such as 'the roles and responsibilities of a MenTut'. In so doing, Mr Azwitatimi Gadisi from the Disability Unit provided his intense yet eye opening presentation on the

inclusion of students living with disabilities within the classroom space. He encouraged MenTuts to not discriminate against students living with disability. Mr Gadisi further indicated that disability is not contagious, "if you help someone with disability it doesn't mean you will also be disabled but one needs to be compassionate."

One of the students who has served as a tutor in 2021, shared with the new tutors and mentors about the challenges they were faced with when conducting online classes, he indicated that there is a huge lack of attendance from the students and use of technology in conducting their classes. These sentiments were shared by many mentors and tutors who had to devise strategies on encouraging students to attend classes. In helping MenTuts on how they can keep students engaged in lecture rooms, a presentation by Mrs Mboweni-Pataka on 'Teaching, tutoring and mentoring strategies' was helpful for many mentors and tutors. Dr Ravhuhali closed the session by thanking all MenTuts for sacrificing their time and showing commitment to the trainings and being actively engaged in the whole time (for three days) training.

DAY 1 (20 January 2022)			
08:00 - 08:30	Registration	08:30 - 09:00	Dr. Ndileleni Mudzielwana
09:00 - 09:30	Welcome	09:30 - 10:00	Prof. Jan Crafford
10:00 - 10:30	Agenda of the training	10:30 - 11:00	F. Mboweni-Pataka
11:00 - 11:30	Who are MenTuts? Roles of a Mentor and Tutor	11:30 - 12:00	J. Dlamini
12:00 - 12:30	Break	12:30 - 13:00	Dr. Ndileleni Mudzielwana
13:00 - 13:30	What is a MenTut?	13:30 - 14:00	Dr. Ndileleni Mudzielwana
14:00 - 14:30	What is a MenTut?	14:30 - 15:00	Dr. Ndileleni Mudzielwana
15:00 - 15:30	What is a MenTut?	15:30 - 16:00	Dr. Ndileleni Mudzielwana
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99:00 - 99:30	What is a MenTut?	99:30 - 100:00	Dr. Ndileleni Mudzielwana

Some of the topics covered during MenTuts' three-day training



Screenshots of some of the presentations shared at the training workshop

UNIVEN council members visit new infrastructure projects

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) council members recently visited University infrastructure projects. The visit was aimed at assessing the progress, risk implications and to get feedback from contractors as to when will the resources be ready for utilisation. UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni indicated that the University is always striving for a safer and friendly user infrastructure for its students to promote good learning environment. He said UNIVEN is aware of the energy challenges due to loadshedding which is affecting the whole country, but otherwise generators will be installed at the new building to solve this challenge. "We are also considering renovating old buildings aiming to save money but considering all risk factors through advice from experienced engineers. The Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication will coordinate the official opening and naming of the completed building projects.



Photo of the new male and female residence which are still under construction



Contractors updating council members about the progress of the infrastructure projects



The Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga during the briefing of council members about the itinerary to be followed when visiting infrastructure projects



UNIVEN Council Chairperson Juneas Lekgetha and the Vice-Chancellor Dr Bernard Nthambeleni



Some of Council members during the briefing meeting



Council members together with some of University staff members departing from the main admin building



UNIVEN Deputy Vice Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin; UNIVEN Council Chairperson, Mr Juneas Lekgetha; Civil Engineer, Ms Rotenda Ramufufhi and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni at the newly constructed Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education building



Faculty of Health Sciences building construction is underway and part of this building will be demolished due to some encountered faults as indicated by the contractor



UNIVEN Council members exiting the Mathematical and Natural Sciences building which has just been renovated. The building is ready for use as from the beginning of the 2022 academic year



One of the recently completed buildings for the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education



Group photo at the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education foyer

University of Venda Signs Memoranda of Understanding for Citizen-driven Rural Development with Six Traditional Councils in Vhembe District

Wednesday, 08 December 2021 will be remembered at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) and beyond for a very long time. It is a day when the UNIVEN Vice Chancellor and Principal signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the Madonsi, Manenzhe, Masia, Njhakanjhaka, Sinthumule and Tshivhase Traditional Councils in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. The history making signing ceremony took place in the University's Research Conference Centre. Gracing the ceremony were UNIVEN staff and students, and representatives of the six Traditional Councils. Strategic partners in attendance included MAVU, Scania Southern Africa and the Limpopo Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Others sent messages of support.

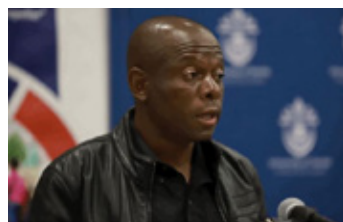
The MoU signing ceremony was a product of several deliberations that involved University staff and postgraduate students, strategic partners, and citizens in the six Traditional Authority areas, which the Institute for Rural Development (IRD) at UNIVEN facilitated from late September to November 2021. In the engagements, multiple stakeholders shared their perspectives on what constitutes a relevant university, community engagement and societal impact. Stakeholder-preferred focal areas of the formal partnerships between UNIVEN and Traditional Councils were determined and included in MoUs. This laid the foundation stone for the mooted citizen-driven rural community development practice.

Dr Takalani Dzaga, the UNIVEN Director of Marketing, Branding and Communication facilitated the programme for the MoU signing ceremony. He could not hide his excitement to be presiding over such a significant event. In his own words, he said "I am delighted because this is a historic day... it is the first time that UNIVEN is signing MoUs with 6 Traditional authorities in one ceremony.

Prof Vhonani Netshandama, the Director of Community Engagement at UNIVEN welcomed the participants and introduced guests. In her welcoming remarks, she revealed that, "The university applauds progressive leaders like you who lead in development and education. Today is a great day for us all because we are demonstrating unity of purpose, which is to develop our communities. We cannot reach our destination without the support of Traditional Leaders. We humble ourselves before you because you are in charge and will show us the way to lead responsibly. This is your University. We are your children who need your guidance when we become disoriented. Rest assured that we will listen to you."

Prof Joseph Francis, the Director Institute for Rural Development (IRD), gave an overview of the UNIVEN-Traditional Authority areas partnership for citizen-driven development. In his speech he reported that, "This event resonates with our IRD slogan, which is Taking the University back to its rightful owners. So, although we are hosting you here today, this event is entirely yours. Most of you here are aware that we have been working in some of your communities for nearly 20 years. Along the way, we realised that without formal agreements in place between us and the communities where we work, we are somewhat hamstrung with respect to what and how much we can accomplish. We decided that it was critical to formalise these relationships so that we would have the blessings of the entire University as we drive out of campus to communities". Prof Francis went on to summarise the series of events that unfolded leading to the signing ceremony. Soon after his presentation, strategic partners delivered messages of commitment to collaborate when operationalising the MoUs in the 6 Traditional authorities.

"We cannot reach our destination without the support of Traditional Leaders. We humble ourselves before you because you are in charge and will show us the way to lead responsibly. This is your University. We are your children who need your guidance when we become disoriented. Rest assured that we will listen to you."



Ms J.O. Matlala, Representing MAVU (top left); Mr A. Jeleni President of Vhembe Chamber of Commerce and Industry (top right); Mr D. Gofore representing Scania (bottom left) and Ms. B. Monyela (bottom right) representing Food Agriculture Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FARNPAN) and Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) in Vhembe District - reading messages of commitment to collaborate in implementing the MoUs.



Prof Joseph Francis giving the overview of the UNIVEN-Traditional Authority Area Partnership for Citizen-driven development



Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, then delivered his keynote address. He reiterated the earlier highlighted view that signing MoUs with the six Traditional Councils was a watershed moment in the history of UNIVEN. In this respect, he noted the sterling work that Prof Francis and his team had done, including "organising this significant event". In addition to the strategic importance of the event, Dr Nthambeleni said the University's view is that UNIVEN should not only lead in research but must provide relevant joint solutions that contribute to South Africa's development and identification of key priorities, among which are job creation, poverty reduction, food security, redress and development, nation building and promotion of human rights and culture, and gender-based violence. "The signing of these MoUs signifies the very important role from the University side as stated earlier by Prof Francis that we are willing to put our efforts in making sure that we implement what is contained in our MoUs. Since we believe in working with you, we believe we will be able to change the country and the region for the better", Dr Nthambeleni contended. He went on to reveal that the UNIVEN Executive Management intends to visit each Traditional Council to share what the University is doing and plans in place. In line with this, he contended that the University doors are wide open for Traditional Councils and society in general. Concluding his address, the Vice Chancellor and Principal said, "We believe this University belongs to you and we belong to you".



Dr Takalani Dzaga, Director of Marketing, Branding and Communication (Left) facilitating the programme and Prof Vhonani Netshandama, Director of Community Engagement (Right) delivering welcome remarks



"I am delighted because this is a historic day ... it is the first time that UNIVEN is signing MoUs with 6 Traditional authorities in one ceremony."

University of Venda Signs Memoranda of Understanding continued...



Director Legal Services, Adv. Eric Nemukula, clarifying how the MoU signing process would unfold

After the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's address, the MoUs were signed. Adv. Eric Nemukula (Director Legal Services at UNIVEN) presided over the signing. Upon completion of MoU signing, the Senior Royal Leaders addressed the audience, one after the other. Hosinkulu Madonsi delivered his remarks first with Thovhele Manenzhe, Thovhele Masia, Hosinkulu Njhakanjhaka III and Acting Chief Sinthumule following suit. They highlighted their thoughts and views on what the signing of the MoUs meant for them. Some snippets of what they said are shared below.



Adv. S. Lubisi co-facilitating signing of the MoUs



The Vice-Chancellor and Principal with each one of the six Senior Royal Leaders after signing the MoUs



Hosinkulu Madonsi (Mr. W.E. Madonsi)

and protection of our environment. As community leaders, we see a lot of things that are harmful to the environment. Rather than leaving the effort to address this to academics and environmental practitioners, it is our responsibility to come up with well-planned interventions through collaboration for the benefit of future generations. As the Manenzhe Traditional Council, we believe this journey will build an environment that we will be proud of and we are committed to it.



Thovhele T.E. Manenzhe

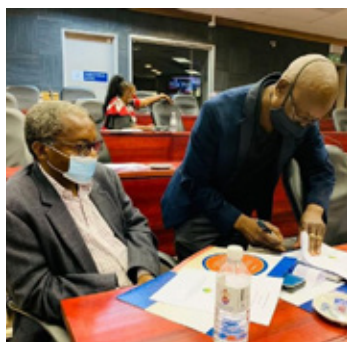


Thovhele M.J. Masia (via a recorded voice message and represented by the Secretary of the Traditional Council)

Thank you, Prof Francis and your team, and of course the University, for giving us an opportunity to work with you as the Madonsi community". We are happy because we believe you will help us deal with our mental poverty. The Madonsi community is always willing to collaborate with any institution that wants to improve the quality of life of our community. We will donate the best of our land and other resources that we can contribute to help the institution help us.

It is a privilege for us as the Manenzhe Traditional Council to be part of this journey. Sustainable community development cannot be realised without the involvement of community leaders and relevant stakeholders in tackling the challenge of climate change created by the same community. The community must play its part in preservation

On behalf of the Masia Traditional Council and myself, I would like to convey our words of appreciation for the progress we have made thus far, the progress that is defined by the current moment when we are signing the MoU with the University of Venda. We use the term, "progress", because we've been working with the University on community development issues for a very long time. The Masia community is currently doing better as a result of the University of Venda's involvement and commitment to ensure that it reaches out to our community to improve the lives of our people. This MoU is just another accomplishment that we should all be proud of.



Hosinkulu Madonsi, Thovhele Manenzhe, Musanda vho Masia, Hosinkulu Njhakanjhaka III, Acting Chief Sinthumule and Dr Bernard Nihambeleni signing the MoUs to cement the partnership for citizen-driven rural community development



The Madonsi community is always willing to collaborate with any institution that wants to improve the quality of life of our community. We will donate the best of our land and other resources that we can contribute to help the institution help us.

University of Venda Signs Memoranda of Understanding continued...



Hosinkulu Njhakanjhaka III (Adv H.S. Mukhari)

This is a long-awaited day for us and Prof Francis's team. His team has been working in our villages for years, encouraging communities, assisting them through identifying needs in the various locations and guiding how to take advantage of what they can do to cope with rural development concerns. We are thankful to the University of Venda –through Prof Francis and his team– for the patience and perseverance as it has not been easy. It has been a long journey where they were faced with some serious challenges. Nonetheless, they were persistent knowing that a day like this would come. Rest assured that we are committed. We commit to work with you to mobilise our communities so that they drive their own development and resources that we require.



Acting Khosi Sinthumule (Mr M. Sinthumule)

With Prof Francis and his team, we come from far. We had great collaborations and several achievements in the past. Signing this document means a lot to us. We are also signing for all our community members who have been left behind. By signing this MoU, we are pleased because the institution will contribute expertise in various fields that our communities want to be improved, including finance, agriculture, culture, and law, amongst others. We are ready to work with you.

The University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani gave the vote of thanks just before Mrs B. Koko, a Lecturer in the Department of Psychology, made announcements, clarifying the way forward. He noted Hosi Njhakanjhaka III's insightful remarks which revealed how progress with implementation could be achieved. For him, that was crucial because of its potential to develop a stable society. Evidently showing his excitement about the significance of the historic day, he remarked "Everything has been recorded, and one day history will replay itself. Thank you for your kind words, Mutavhatsindi Manenzhe. The university has widened its wings and reaches out to the whole community in which it is located. Dr Nthambeleni, our Vice-Chancellor, thank you for your leadership. This is an epoch-making moment. It has never happened before."

In the afternoon of the same day, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal signed a MoU with the Tshivhase Traditional Council. The Tshivhase delegates could not join others in the main signing ceremony because they were committed elsewhere. Soon after signing the MoU, Senior Royal Leader M.P.K. Tshivhase expressed his appreciation and elation as follows: "The MoU signing is a very welcome development for us. We waited for a long time. Why it took so long is difficult to understand. But we are happy that it has happened. On behalf of the entire Tshivhase community, I would like to assure you that we will make it possible for this partnership to achieve its objectives."



University Registrar, Adv. Edward Lambani



Mrs B. Koko a Lecturer in the Department of Psychology



Thovhele Prince Kennedy Tshivhase (far left), Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni (right) and Adv Irene Mukweho (standing) facilitating the signing of the MoU.



Prof Vhonani Nelshandama, Dr J.G. Tshifularo, Thovhele M.P.K. Tshivhase, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Mr D.D. Mabuda and Prof Joseph Francis



Participants during the signing of the MoU

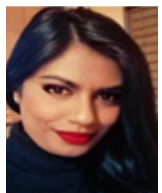
UNIVEN hosts webinar on the Making of Engaged University: Engaged Scholarship Impact and Ethics



UNIVEN Directorate Community Engagement recently hosted a guest lecture on 'The Making of Engaged University: Engaged Scholarship Impact and Ethics' which was facilitated by Dr Genevieve James, who is the Deputy Director of the Community Engagement and Outreach Division at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Dr Genevieve James is an esteemed colleague, who also co-created the sustained education for justice initiative, the Chance 2 Advance, which is a best practice in Knowledge Mobilization. Referencing Ernest Boyer (2009) she indicated that: "Engaged scholarship breaks new ground in the discipline and has direct application to the broader public issues. Answers significant questions in the discipline which has relevance to public and community issues. It is reviewed and validated by qualified peers in the discipline and by members of the community. It is also based on solid theoretical and practical bases.



The webinar was officiated by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Professor Nosisi Feza who outlined the significance of UNIVEN hosting the lecture. "We aspire to lead in engaged scholarship and impact through community engagement programmes and projects".



Dr James commended UNIVEN for making engaged scholarship its vision. She outlined some of the key documents necessary for any engaged scholar to familiarise self, including historical

documents from the rest of Africa as it relates to engagement in Higher education.

Furthermore, Dr James meticulously addressed key aspects particularly as it relates to the Characteristics of an Engaged Scholar which are as follows;

Has an acute understanding of global and local context; Is a creative and innovation thinker; Thinks about thinking and reason; Is able to describe, understand and reflect critically on societal problems in dialogue with communities;

Can effectively harness research to respond to the challenges of community needs; Is able to frame and create desired development outcomes in consultation with community; Is a good listener - listens authentically; Has ontological consciousness - is able to see how personal "being" or "reality" such as personal socio- economic context, language usage, and ideological inclination may influence reflection on society and impinge on scholarship; Resists engagement from a capitalist, consumerist or empire perspective; Engages ethically (right, moral and just); Understands power dynamics (overt, covert, and ideological). Aware of the asymmetries in partnership with community; Works to address hegemony in intellectual and development spaces; Understands and upholds principles of cognitive justice; Understands the role of spirituality and world view.

Dr Genevieve James further provided insights, methods and procedures, and tools commonly used to measure the engaged research. African-South African perspectives of engaged scholarship cannot be divorced from being deliberately decolonial. She gave an example of the need to critique the generally accepted research protocols of colonial approach. Dr James encouraged that Africans should come together and create new-contextual declarations.

Dr James emphasised that the engaged university actively develops strong relationships with the communities in all settlement types and brings recourses to bear on the improvement of the development outcomes while advancing and enhancing scholarship. She added that engaged university needs a strategy, mission and vision which is a high-level indication of the university understanding of its identity as an engaged University. In addition, she indicated that an engaged university should have an engaged scholarship office to drive and cohere the university's engaged scholarship strategy, niche areas and development efforts. There should be budget committed to support engaged scholarship and to deepen the impact, she said. She also advised that the project needs

to be registered and have spending rules and focus on good cost that will drive the project forward. "faculties should discuss their niche areas-i.e. areas that they wish to channel resources, support and impact. Dr James. Other strategic areas included:

- Consistent messaging across the university, including on strategic documents;
- Intentions to reflect against the university's contribution to Sustainable Development Goals, noting goal 17 on Partnership as a key vehicle of community engagement in universities.
- Creating open space that allows connecting internal and external ecosystems with the mind that one disciplinarily cannot solve all challenges of the world. Insisting on shared purpose and mutualism.
- Creating spaces for a 2-way knowledge mobilisation in which academic knowledge should move to community and vice versa through the reciprocal and mutual interaction.
- Supporting a cohort of engaged scholars who collaborate with communities outside the academy for mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge in a context of partnership and reciprocity.
- Insisting on ethical engagement and being true to the course.

"In engaged scholarship, our motive should be knowledge mobilisation, better informed decision making, community and nation building as well as improving service delivery. We need to be aware of permission dynamics. Be aware not to use or abuse community members." She concluded.

Interactive session

Questions:

how one can change scholars trained under the regime which is not about people but the career development to the regime that research is about the people?

Dr James:

"We need to move from inward to outward mind-set. Policies should be designed that can be able to trickle down to everyone to prioritise people."

Question:

Please share with us experiences and lessons learnt from the Chance 2 advance initiative at UNISA?

DR James:

- "Moving academics out of ivory towers." The initiative looked at community

learning inadequacy that leads to the widening of the knowledge gap;

- Chance 2 Advance managed to influence policies and procedure as well as implementation toolkits and guidelines;
- 700 trained academics are linked to the initiative;
- More than hundreds of thousands of students and community members have across Africa been in contact with the programme;
- it is 10th year running in 2021.

The Director Human Resources, Ms Uanda Ndou conveyed the closing remarks. She thanked Dr James and all who attended. "Early Christmas holiday gift of sorts to reflect, engage about what it means to be an engaged university in practice." She wished everyone to have ethical, respectful and impactful engagements during 2022.

We would like to hear from you!

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