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Creating future leaders



Your achievements represent hope – Motlanthe

means to make our world better. We look to education for the betterment of humans.

"There is a notable increase in the number of doctoral graduates. This is impressive - let us prove that nothing can stop us from being the best. Your achievements will make a difference in South Africa against poverty, inequality and unemployment. Contributing to the success of our nation, and helping others in your families and communities, is the most fitting way to thank your parents, families, and sponsors for having sacrificed so much to get you here," he said.

"In the past ten years Univen has made huge efforts to create a dignified learning environment for its staff and students," said Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlana.

"Huge efforts have been made by our professors and teaching and research staff to ensure that Univen produces quality graduates who are ready to work. As part of the university's curriculum transformation, we have introduced new degree programmes, including the introduction of new engineering and allied health sciences degree programmes in the near future.

"This university has a new institutional culture embraced by its staff and students who focus on the institution's core business. In ten years I have witnessed substantial growth in many important indicators for a vibrant and healthy university. This growth did not happen randomly, but through careful planning with a clear vision. We celebrate these achievements and realise the need to constantly keep our eyes on the ball to ensure even greater success in the future," said Mbatlana.

Among the 29 doctoral graduates was Dr Muendi

Tshililelwa Sigidi, with a degree in Microbiology. The title of her study - 'Selection and evaluation of ten medicinal plants used in the Vhembe district for life-threatening infections' - which constitutes Indigenous Knowledge Systems, coincided with heritage month.

The findings of her study indicated that the majority of traditional medicine is indigenous knowledge-based and the pharmacological activities of plants are solely understood by traditional healers. The aim of her study was to investigate the anecdotal claims by traditional healers to treat HIV/AIDS.

Caiphus Mukwevho, former SRC Secretary General, graduated with an honours degree in Environmental Sciences. Shonisani Masutha, former SRC Deputy President, graduated with a master's degree in Public Health. Thifhelimbilu Dongola, a Univen Campus Clinic staff member, graduated with a master's degree in Nursing.

Dr Sminny Nozimangaliso Minah Jonas posthumously graduated with a doctoral degree under the theme 'A model for the development of women in construction in the Limpopo Province of South Africa'. Jonas was a senior manager at the Department of Public Works. She was responsible for women empowerment and wellness. She was passionate and concerned about a serious lack of growth and development of women in the construction industry. In 2013, she published a peer-reviewed research article 'Sustainability of women-owned construction enterprises in South Africa: a burning issue in the path to career and success for women in science'. She has presented her work at four international conferences.



Thifhelimbilu Dongola, Shonisani Masutha and Caiphus Mukwevho.



Dr Muendi Tshililelwa Sigidi.



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Wrap the wide arms of the law around those who need it – Law conference

“One would like to see the arms of the law bringing relief to those who grieve and those who are vulnerable,” says South Africa’s Deputy Chief Justice, Raymond Zondo.

Officially opening the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges’ 13th conference in Polokwane recently, Zondo said: “How do we make justice to be accessible to women, poor people and senior citizens who are getting grants?”

“How do we make sure that access to justice does not depend on those who are rich and educated? The Constitutional Court seeks to protect those who are vulnerable. Today we have a judiciary which is inclusive of all blacks, whites and women. However, we still need to increase the representation of women in our various courts,” he said.

“Women judges have contributed to progressive jurisprudence in South Africa,” says President of the association, Judge Shane Kgoe.

“Therefore, we have many policies and the right laws, but how do we use these laws and policies to benefit our society? The chapter has helped to

strengthen the qualitative participation of women in the judiciary. Whilst transformation has occurred in the judiciary, it is not enough. The biggest challenge is whether ordinary people would feel the transformation that has happened so far in the judiciary.

“There is still violence against women and children and they are still abused and raped. Do women judges give back to society and contribute to the conditions of change towards them? With our partnering universities we must make women feel that there is hope and we must take away their resentment.

“We cannot achieve this alone, we need men to help us. Not only do we need men that help us to deal with gender based violence, but we also need men who empower women.”

“One should not hide behind culture and religion to express beliefs that are discriminatory,” said Justice Tshiqi of the Supreme Court of Appeal.

She highlighted the rights of vulnerable groups such as those affected by HIV and tuberculosis, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

“Women, gays, lesbians and disabled people continue to be victimised in this country. It is going to take the whole society to overcome these challenges.”

“We have many challenges in our society - but we have to acknowledge and pay tribute to many women who fought for their rights and our democracy,” says the Minister of Justice, Michael Masutha.

“Women in the judiciary and legal practice should work hard to bring transformation in the legal field. Despite 23 years of our constitution, we still have people who are excluded, including women in the judiciary. Overcoming this challenge is going to take the whole of society. We cannot leave the struggle for women alone - it should be a collective effort. Women should invite men as it would not help to talk about finding solutions without men and boys being present to hear the grievances of women.”

“Women who are already practicing and attached to the Department of Justice should make sure that women and children are free from victimisation,” said the Minister in the Presidency responsible for Women, Suzan Shabangu.

“Decision makers in the justice system must make sure that the vulnerable are protected. Failure to protect them will result in us being harshly judged by future generations. Black women judges’ most important role is to work for civil societies to protect women’s rights, especially in rural communities. Women in rural areas need to be informed about their rights and young girls should be taken to school until tertiary level. We can never achieve this alone, we need to collaborate and form chapters or organisations like this to achieve this transformation,” said the minister.

“The number of women has increased in the judiciary,” said Justice Sujata Manohar, a retired Judge of the Supreme Court of India and a retired member of the National Human Rights Commission of India.

“In most countries women were not allowed to practice in the legal field. It took a long time for women to be allowed into this field. Women were not included in the term ‘person for admission to practice law in many countries, including India, South Africa and the United States. Women who are already in power should help other women to gain power.”

“We will indeed balance gender scales in the judiciary during our lifetime, but a lot still needs to be done,” said the President of the Supreme Court of Appeal, Justice Mandisa Maya.

“It is through the support of fellow women and my hard work that I was appointed in this position. Women should never sabotage one another but

they should support each other if they want to achieve.

“Other than the financial benefits and the status that comes with the profession, I wanted a career that would allow me to defy the negative connotations that are associated with growing up in the township,” said Pheladi Rakhudu, a 26-year old graduate from Mafikeng in North West. She recently obtained an LLM from the University of the Free State. She is currently completing her practical legal training at the Potchefstroom Law School.

“Even as a young girl who had been presented with the opportunity to attend a private school, I took the liberty to break away from the stereotypical expectations and the limited career options of either becoming a teacher, nurse, or social worker. Instead I saw a career in law as a stepping stone that would allow me to be an advocate of change in my community and a career that creates a platform to constantly learn and grow.”

Delegates heard papers being presented on topics that affect society on a daily basis. These included legal analysis of the concept of child pornography and exposure of children to harmful content. It also included a national action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the mentoring of young women by the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges. Other topics were economic transformation for women, mobilising positive masculinity to wrap the arms of the law around those who need it, transformation of the judiciary and challenges in the implementation of Customary Law and customary marriages.

Under Customary Law presenters delivered papers on the true colours of polygamy in South Africa. Other papers included the challenges faced by women who are married under ‘Gonyalelwa lapa’ – customary marriages and the legal conundrum brought by the recognition of the Customary Marriages Act, 120 of 1998 and its impact on women. Another theme was transformative constitutionalism.

Among the speakers were academics from the Universities of Limpopo and Venda, including Dean Annette Lansink, Zama Mopai and Dr Lucille Maqebela. Other speakers included Adv Teresa Mugaza who is currently employed by the IDLO in Liberia, Angela Kamau who is a recent graduate of the Strathmore University of Law School in Kenya and Justice Jody Kollapen and Justice Theron of the Constitutional Court.

Other delegates included judges of the Supreme Court of Appeal and the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Faith Muthambi.



“How do we make sure that access to justice does not depend on those who are rich and educated?” - Zondo.



A meeting of minds - attendees of the 13th Annual Conference of the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges.

Univen hosts Ubuntu seminar

“Dare we hope that our universities can be the incubators of the new thoughts and ways of thinking. This will usher in the birth of a reframed, transformed, decolonised and just South Africa - a South Africa that does not pay lip service to Ubuntu.”

So said Univen’s Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic; Prof Jan Crafford, when officially opening the recent Ubuntu seminar on campus.

“For the past two decades, something has been struggling to be born in South Africa – it was always going to be something far more difficult and complicated, demanding and beautiful.”

“We thought it was going to be the rainbow child but we were naïve. Our politicians have proved themselves to be eminently unqualified to be the midwives to its birth.

“The list of the speakers at Ubuntu seminars over the past three years represents the who’s who of current African scholarship, thinking of black consciousness, liberation and decolonisation,” he said.

“I share with you interrelated ideas concerning the foundations and the possibilities of African knowledge systems,” says a former Univen Vice Chancellor, Prof Muxe Nkondo.

“Furthermore, this paper is about the assessment of advancing a person’s capability to function in the contemporary world. The current discourse on African knowledge systems is concerned with culture, identity, and authenticity. It investigates how people, through African knowledge systems, are able to make commodities, to command commodities and what they get out of commodities. There are different approaches to assess the possibilities of a particular knowledge system in a specific context. The assessment is always based on identity or authenticity or a combination of both.

“Struggles for liberation are fought against injustice,” says Prof Lewis Gordon, Professor of Philosophy and Jewish Studies at the University of Connecticut and Honorary Professor at Rhodes University.

“The society is unjust. Fixing the society requires eliminating injustice. This injustice is often about those who have versus those who lack. Those who have are often the few, though in some cases, they are also a fairly large majority, as is the case of the designated white populations of Europe.

“Sometimes those who don’t have are minorities, as is the case of immigrants, mostly of colour, in much of the so-called developed world. And in the so-called underdeveloped countries, those who lack are the overwhelming majority. And in the first quarter of the 21st century, those who have less are the planet’s majority.

“Justice is not, then, exclusively about numbers. The effort is to make things just. Colonised and racially subordinated people commit violence simply by appearing. If to appear is to be a participant in the moral space, a space whose legitimacy is built on such people’s exclusion, then the problem becomes a violation of what was presumed just.”

Prof Drucilla Cornell’s of the Rutgers University’s presentation was titled Frantz Fanon, Decolonisation, and Erotic Transformation.

“Frantz Fanon’s writings on erotic transformation and its significance to revolution have often been downplayed. This is because of what are seen as controversial statements about interracial relations, homosexuality and his purportedly infamous comment that he knows nothing about a black woman.

“I challenge some of his serious misreadings which have failed to see that a certain decolonising of feminism is crucial to his own challenge to Oedipal heteronormativity. This narrative was developed in the work of Sigmund Freud and then given a specific interpretation in the works of Jacques Lacan.

“Erotic transformation can and should be connected to Ubuntu. Under Ubuntu, all persons are immersed in a trans-individual affective force field of relations so that what one person does necessarily affects the entire field.

“As we know, violence against women is a serious problem in South Africa. Under Ubuntu this cannot help but affect the entire network of forces in which

we are immersed and part of shaping. Therefore, Fanon’s own writing on decolonisation and erotic transformation can certainly be understood in relation to Ubuntu.”

“The state constitutes itself as a nation but this does not reflect a true picture of the nation,” says the Director of Humanities at Rhodes University, Prof Michael Neocosmos.

“In 1990, South Africa was involved in a trauma whereby South African leaders didn’t know whether Basotho was part of South Africa or not. This led the people to initiate the issue of xenophobia attacks because the nation was confused. Because we were divided, we lacked wisdom that we are of the same nation.

“Another problem faced by South Africans was that the nation was promised service delivery by the government. Now people are folding hands, waiting for the government to deliver. On the other hand, the government is postponing from one term to another because it seems impossible to deliver to all at the same time.

“Today the government is enforcing decisions on its people because it cannot deliver everything that was promised. The saying that a chief is a chief by its people is not true. Decisions are nowadays taken without even involving the nation. Leaders do not represent but suppress the people they lead,” he said.

“Do you think Univen will ever be able to teach modules such as Mathematics and Sciences and Engineering in Tshivenda?” asked Lincoln



“Will Univen ever be able to teach Mathematics and Sciences and Engineering in Tshivenda?” – Mavhunga.

Mavhunga, LLB third year student. “Until such time when we translate all these terms into our own African languages, we will never achieve that goal,” said Nkondo.

“Teaching African children in foreign languages will never take us anywhere but to continue with the struggle.”

“It seems impossible until you give it a try,” said Prof Lewis Gordon of Rhodes University.

“It is possible that everything can be taught in any language. The reason why English is the medium of instruction is because English is straight forward and it has dominated the world for a short time. It is the most used language in the world but this does not mean that it will remain so - there will be other languages that will erupt to dominate the world.”



Speakers at the Ubuntu seminar - from left, Advocate Thibedi Majake of Univen, Prof Lewis Gordon of Rhodes University, Prof Drucilla Cornell of Rutgers University, Prof Michael Neocosmos of Rhodes University, Prof Muxe Nkondo, former Univen Vice Chancellor and Annette Lansink of Univen.

Women should have decision-making power in families - Munzhelele

To celebrate women’s month, the Black Management Forum Student Chapter in Limpopo, in collaboration with Univen’s School of Law, recently hosted a seminar on gender based discrimination and women empowerment on campus.

“Women should ensure that they fight all sorts of discrimination based on gender and physical challenges,” says Univen’s Director of Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama.

“Let us promote gender equality and women empowerment - we will not rest until it is done, because it is doable. We still see gender and disability discrimination faced by woman when advancing to managerial leadership positions - this has to stop. Now is the right time to change the domination of males in all chairs, but you can only do that if you start implementing your strength in good course. Female students of Univen, stop wasting time on non-issues and join hands in fighting discrimination,” said Netshandama.

“Never give up, even when days are dark and gloomy,” says the Executive Mayor of the Vhembe District Municipality, Florence Radzilani.

“Take charge and do wonders in what you know and believe in. Intervention and implementation is the key to success, but remember, everything comes with challenges. Gain self-confidence and believe

in yourself. Do not sit down and wait for others to uplift you, do it yourself. Fight for your space, It’s time to chair and it is doable,” she said.

“The opportunity is there as entrepreneurs, make use of it to reduce the unemployment we are facing today,” said the Provincial Secretary of the Black Management Forum’s Student Chapter in Limpopo, Mpho Motsei.

“Multitask as part of your ability towards success. Do not start a business only after obtaining your degree, fail then learn from it, later you will succeed. The Black Management Forum will help you – to develop and train students, facilitate and give them mentorship on entrepreneurship and multitasking.”

“Gender discrimination seems to be still present in the organisational hierarchy,” says, a magistrate at the Sibasa Regional Court, Mashudu Munzhelele.

“People should not look at who we are as women, but what we are capable of. We always overcome challenges and we are multitaskers. Should you witness and become victims of discrimination based on gender and disability, stand your ground and challenge those who put you down. Discourage discrimination in all manners, mostly focusing on disabled people and those discriminated on based on gender. Gender and woman equality are in line with rights,” said Munzhelele.



“You cannot do bad and expect to feel good” - Netshandama.



“Do not wait for others to uplift you, do it yourself” - Radzilani.



“Multitask as part of your ability towards success” - Motsei.



“Gender and woman equality are in line with rights” - Munzhelele.



NRF equips postgraduate students with science writing skills

“There is a specific academic jargon that master’s students have to use when they write their dissertations.”

This is according to PhD researcher and lecturer at the University of Limpopo, Mmaphuthi Andries Nkoana. Facilitating the annual National Research Foundation scientific writing skills workshop at Univen, Nkoana said the workshop equipped different types of students from different departments and faculties with presentation and scientific writing skills.

“Research students need to use a certain language so that those they present to understand them. Students have different kinds of dissertations and they are from different universities which are not the same in terms of disciplines and programmes. Students sometimes get lost in the mist of simple English writing when they do their research. Workshops like this one help them in terms of guidance for research writings.

“The workshop helps to differentiate between scientific and social research. It also identifies

problems that students come across while doing their research. Choosing a title rationally, not emotionally, will greatly increase your chances to complete your studies in time. Select a topic that will enable you to identify a problem from which you can write a good dissertation,” he said.

“Before choosing a topic, I have to identify my strength and resources so that I can have a good journal that will be accepted during presentations,” said Lutendo Mudzielwana, a Biological Sciences master’s student of the University of Limpopo.

“I did not only gain presentation and writing skills, but I also learnt that I cannot conduct research on my own. I should collaborate with other people and ask for help where it is needed,” he said.

The workshop was attended by postgraduate students from the Universities of Venda and Limpopo.

Learning the tricks of the trade - students at the annual scientific writing skills workshop.



“I have learnt how to conduct a good research report” - Mudzielwana.



Choosing friends can be as instrumental as choosing a career

“Not all friends have our destiny at heart,” says Prof Mokgale Makgopa, Univen’s Dean of the School of Human and Social Sciences.

Speaking at the recent Careers Day, Makgopa said learners should choose friends carefully as they could support or destroy one’s career dreams.

“Scrutinise those you consider to be your friends - assess them, evaluate what values do they bring in your life, what do they do when you are together and how much do they encourage you to prioritise your studies.

“Whilst parents can play an important role in supporting their children, I am a product of parents that choose careers for their children. Sometimes

this runs in families and develops into a family profession.

“Parents should not choose careers for their children. This could discourage children to even apply or focus during studies. Parents should support their children’s career dreams.”

He said children should identify their own role model and mentor from whom they can learn the trade of the career they aspire to.

“Have realistic goals to align your dreams with your own capabilities. This will help you to choose a career in which you can fit. Stay focused on your dreams at all times and build solid confidence by arranging your own job shadowing. Surround

yourself with people who will motivate and inspire you. It is critical in your career choice that you identify the role that you want to play in developing your own community,” said Makgopa.

“Stop undermining local institutions in favour of institutions away from your homes,” says Univen Schools Liaison Officer, Takalani Nyelisani.

“In seeking an institution of higher learning to further your studies, consider your family background. Do not pressurise your parents with unnecessary financial costs for qualifications that you can find at local institutions. Univen has produced many of our current leaders in the country. It provides a curriculum relevant to the needs of the South African region. It simply does not make sense for a learner to travel to the Cape to study programmes that Univen is offering at your doorstep.”

“Nurture your entrepreneurial dreams through secondary school and college or university studies,” says KJ Maphoto of the Greater Tzaneen Economic Development Agency.

“This will help improve your future aspirations. Do not be frustrated by the unemployment rate in South Africa - instead, consider self-employment.”



“Choose your friends wisely” - Makgopa.

Delegates from Masvingo University visit Univen

Delegates from Masvingo University in Zimbabwe paid a visit to Univen recently to benchmark the processes of examination and other ways of how to manage a University.

“We are willing to help you as far as we can to make yourselves at home,” said Univen’s Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali.



“Make yourself at home” - delegates from Masvingo University with Univen’s Prof Edward Nesamvuni (centre, front row) and Prof Peter Mbatlali (centre, back row).



“Look at local options when choosing an institution of higher learning” - Nyelisani.



“Nurture entrepreneurial dreams through study” - Maphoto.

ETDP-SETA Internship programme ends well

With youth unemployment being a sensitive issue in South Africa, getting an internship is a huge milestone as it gives the youth the capacity to learn and gain work experience.

The Education, Training and Development Practices Sector-Education and Training Authority (ETDP-SETA) is one of the sponsors that joined hands with Univen to eradicate unemployment and empower the youth.

At the farewell function interns were reminded how to apply for jobs, how to conduct themselves at a job interview and how to be good and reputable employees.

Univen's Training Development Practitioner, Louisa Mariba, told interns to apply for as many jobs as possible to increase their chances of being employed.

"However, never apply for a job that you do not qualify for," she said.

"This is a bitter sweet farewell - I will miss the work environment," said Wanga Ndou, Urban and Regional Planning intern.

"My highlight was forming part of the task team that is developing the Univen Engineering faculty. Whilst I am saddened by the fact that my internship has come to an end, I am hopeful for a brighter future."

Information Technology Intern, Patala Naliyabanu, expressed her gratitude towards the internship

opportunity.

"I had an amazing experience and I learnt a lot of things like problem solving and dealing with clients," she said.



"Never apply for a job that you do not qualify for" – Mariba.



"I will miss the time that I spent in this work environment" – Ndou.



"I had an amazing experience" - Naliyabanu.

Fundi donates R50 000 to deserving Univen students

"We want to make life simple for students who are finding it difficult during their studies, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds," says Fundi Chief Executive Officer, Amasi Mwela.

Announcing that Fundi will donate R50 000 to Univen towards financial needy students, he said, "We believe that this money will make a huge difference to some of your students."

Univen will identify 100 students who will receive R1 000 per month in voucher form to buy groceries from Shoprite.

"It takes the whole community to raise a child and everyone can perform well if they do not worry about what they are going to eat after class," said Mwela.

"Your funding is spot on," says Univen Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlana.

"We still have students who are in need of this kind of contributions, and thank you for thinking about us. The money will be used in a proper way and deserving students will be identified by our Finance Department,"



"We want to make life simple for students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds" – Amasi Mwela, Prof Peter Mbatlana and Dr Robert Martin.

Recognition of prior learning open day

Institutions of higher learning recently exhibited their offerings on the recognition of prior learning at the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs open day.

Recognition of prior learning recognises prior learning obtained via informal means such as work experience. This recognition should assist candidates in identifying the type of evidence, how much evidence, and the quality of evidence. Candidates' special needs are catered for as long as the principles of assessment and assessment criteria standards are upheld.

"Institutions should offer formal training and complement work experience to employees who wish to improve their education," says the Deputy Director General of the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, MG Makoko.

"Government departments and municipalities need to anchor employees to compete for available vacancies. It is worrying to see some of them feeling discriminated, not even making it to the shortlist simply because they do not possess the minimum required qualifications. Some of these employees have served in these positions for more than ten years.

"Many government departments and institutions and certainly many corporates are led by people who have important skills, acquired during their employ but not backed up by any formal qualifications. Some of these people have been with these companies for longer than ten years and perform very important and strategic roles in their organisations."

"Univen has a policy for recognition of prior learning through which candidates may also be admitted as students," says Univen Schools Liaison Officer, Takalani Nyelisani.

"Such candidates will be subjected to an evaluation programme by the School's Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning committee. Final admission will be granted by Senate," he said.

"We will soon put this invitation by the department as part of our priority agenda to explore feasible partnerships," says Univen Registrar, Prof Nesamvuni.

"This will fulfil two of our main responsibilities - teaching and community engagement. Univen is well positioned to fulfil a greater part of our National Development Plan by engaging with local and provincial government on matters that will elevate our role in the country and the Southern African Development Community region."



"Anchor employees to compete for available vacancies" - Makoko.



"Univen has a policy for recognition of prior learning" - Nyelisani.



A day of interaction - Univen Registrar, Prof Nesamvuni sharing how Univen can help staff members improve their educational qualifications.

First national status report on biological invasions in South Africa

“Invasion of ecosystems is a major threat to biodiversity and economic livelihoods in South Africa,” says the Director of Invasives Monitoring and Reporting at the South African National Biodiversity Institute, Dr Sebataolo Rahlao.

Speaking at the Univen public lecture recently, Rahlao said that species have been moved from one place to another due to the advancement of the transportation system.

“Many of them are alien species. Invasive plants have devastating impacts on water supply. However, many alien species are beneficial. Almost all agriculture and forestry in South Africa are dependent on organisms deliberately introduced by human beings. These include wheat, maize, sheep and eucalypts which are considered alien



“Preserve the benefits from introduced species, while limiting potential negative impacts” - Rahlao.

species. Many species are also introduced for horticulture, aquaculture and mari-culture, or kept as pets.

“The challenge is to preserve the benefits from these introduced species, while limiting potential negative impacts from invasions that might result as a consequence,” he said.

“Negative impacts of invasive alien species include the reduction of water runoff and groundwater recharge. Ultimately, reducing the water supplies of already water-stressed farms, towns and cities, species that invade rangelands reduce their capacity to support livestock. It, therefore, has an effect on the people that depend on the livestock production. Many other invasive alien plants and animals impact negatively on biodiversity. These include services that diverse natural ecosystems provide, ranging from ecotourism to harvesting food, firewood, cut flowers and medicinal products. The cost of controlling these species is substantial, and can be ill-afforded given the demand for other services.”

Rahlao said that some animals die because of eating invasive species.

“There are more than 200 species in the country which include pine and wattle trees. Community members must be educated about alien species. SANBI and Univen are planning to host a biological invasion symposium next year.”

He encouraged students to apply for bursaries that are available at SANBI.

“Priority is on the historically disadvantaged universities,” he said.

The public lecture, titled ‘The first national status report on biological invasions in South Africa’, was organised by the School of Environmental Sciences.



Learning about biological invasions.

Univen hosts SAICA-Thuthuka Maths development camp

Univen recently hosted the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) Thuthuka Maths development camp for 150 matric learners selected from the Vhembe and Mopani Districts.

Over the years SAICA camps were held at the University of Limpopo, but was extended to Univen to market particularly scarce skills in areas such as Chartered Accountancy, Actuarial Science and Engineering.

Now SAICA, with universities, run maths development camps country-wide. The camps are facilitated by SAICA and appointed service providers. The service providers include inspirational speakers, educators, students’ mentors and presentations by educational institutions and professional organisations. Presenting professional bodies include audit firms PWC, KPMG, actuarial firms and the Auditor General.

Mpho Makhari, a grade 12 learner at Thohoyandou Secondary School says the camp is good and important to her.

“I have learnt a lot from the mentors and the information they presented to us. It is a good experience and meeting new people was fun.”

“There is a critical shortage of skills in South Africa, especially those that require good pass rates, for example, mathematics, science and accounting,”

says SAICA National Building School Project Manager, Umlaw Thandanani.

“So SAICA and the Universities of Limpopo and Venda found it fit to support learners in need,” says Gudani Nemaboboni, a learner at Thohoyandou Secondary School.

Nemaboboni said he learnt that a group is better than an individual.

“I have also learnt how to maintain the standard in the career path of a chartered accountant.”



“There is a critical shortage of skills in South Africa” – Thandanani.



“I have learnt from my mentors” – Makhari.



Learners from various schools in the Mopani and Vhembe district.

National Science Week empowers surrounding communities

“The future of South Africa and the African continent is dependent on the next generation,” says Univen’s Dean of the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Prof Natasha Potgieter.

Addressing the audience at the National Science Week at the Vuwani Science Resource Centre, Potgieter said it is our duty to develop the next generation of talented scientists and entrepreneurs.

“They need to take up the opportunity to create new technologies and innovative solutions for the pressing problems facing our communities today. The Vuwani Science Resource Centre is making a huge contribution to this in the country. The centre is involved in projects that create awareness of the value of science and technology and the role it plays in ensuring sustainable community development engagements.”

National Science Week is an initiative of the Department of Science and Technology. It celebrates various role players conducting science-based activities during the week. National Science Week is run in all nine provinces simultaneously at multiple sites per province.

“One of the biggest challenges in our country is to increase the number of female scientists,” said Univen’s Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic, Prof Jan Crafford.

“Female learners should study science and mathematics to make this innovation possible. National Science Week has in the past years been

presented during Woman’s month. It might be a sign that we need to link it with women of this country.

“Thank you to the students of the University of Warwick for their assistance, especially those who help secondary school teachers with science and mathematics.”

Jason Chang, representing students of Warwick University, said he is not a scientist but he is very privileged to help learners to realise their dreams.

“When you travel around, identify science because almost everything is science,” says the Head of the Department of Physics in the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, Dr Eric Maluta.

“Even our forefathers were scientists because of the way they used to start a fire before inventions of match sticks. Never undermine traditional leaders and healers because they know more than we do and they might help us in future.”

Robert Tshikwama of Indigenous Knowledge Systems Documentations said science is not only about machinery, even the indigenous way of doing things can be regarded as science.

“Apply for 2018 enrolment at Univen and become one of the best products that Univen has produced so far,” said Univen’s Director of Communications and Marketing, Takalani Dzaga.

“Applying at Univen has been made even simpler as you can now use your cell phones to submit applications.



National Science Week 2017 is open! - Prof Natasha Potgieter (left) and Prof Jan Crafford.



Univen officials with learners representing their schools from communities around Thohoyandou and Vuwani.



Taking in information about science.

New Earth Sciences degree on the cards

"We intend to introduce a new Bachelor of Earth Sciences degree programme in Hydrometeorology," says Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbat. Officially opening the South African Society for Atmospheric Sciences (SASAS) conference recently, Mbat said this would integrate meteorology and hydrology modules with applications to water management.

"The Disaster Risk Science degree should be of interest, considering that more than 90 percent of natural disasters in South Africa are related to extremes of weather, climate and water.

"Univen also plans to establish a research group on meteorology, climate science and air quality, following the successful model of the Climate Systems Analysis Group at the University of Cape Town.

"The Limpopo region is of special interest to atmospheric scientists because it is a drought prone region where El Nino impacts are most significant. Some of the wettest stations in the country are found in the Soutpansberg mountain range in the north-eastern escarpment, where seasonal rainfall often exceeds 2 000 mm.

"We have 15 graduate students participating in this conference who will present their research and also learn from more experienced experts," said Mbat.

The conference theme, 'Challenges of a warming planet', was specially chosen following the recent record warming as 2016, 2015 and 2014 became the hottest years globally since instrumental records began more than 150 years ago.

SASAS stimulates interest and support for all branches of the atmospheric sciences in Africa. This is achieved by encouraging research and education between organisations and institutions interested in the science of the atmosphere.

"Peer reviewed conference proceedings over the past seven years has improved the quality of South African atmospheric science research," said the President of SASAS, Prof Sivakumar Venkataraman.

"Air pollution is a major problem of the new millennium and human activities are playing an important role in the cycling of trace gases in the atmosphere."

"African temperatures are projected to rise rapidly under low mitigation climate change futures, at 1,5 to two times the global rate of temperature increase," said Prof Engelbrecht, a Chief Researcher in the Natural Resources and the Environment Unit of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

"This high regional climate sensitivity in combination with the relatively low adaptive capacity implies that the global climate change mitigation effort is of crucial importance to Africa. In particular, the Paris Agreement aims to keep the

global temperature increase during the 21st century below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels.

"Global temperatures have risen by about 1°C since the industrial revolution and this change may be attributed to the anthropogenically enhanced greenhouse effect. The collapse of Larsen C ice shelf has occurred in a part of Antarctica that has warmed significantly in recent decades.

"Drastic increases in the number of high fire-danger days, very hot days and heat-wave days are projected across the African continent under 3 °C of global warming. Risks for drastic rainfall reductions and drought in Southern Africa are higher under 3 °C than under 2 °C of global warming," he said.

"During the warm Miocene and Pliocene epochs, vast subtropical regions had enough precipitation to support rich vegetation and fauna," said Prof Natalie Burls of the Centre for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Studies at George Mason University in the USA.

"Only with global cooling and the onset of glacial cycles some three million years ago, towards the end of the Pliocene, did the broad patterns of arid and semi-arid subtropical regions become fully established."

Burls' research focused on improving the understanding of the key processes determining the earth's climate and climate variability on a variety of timescales ranging from seasonal to decadal to much longer geological scales.

"Southern Africa is essentially a narrow peninsula-like landmass bordered to its south, west and east by oceans," said Prof Chris Reason of the Department of Oceanography at the University of Cape Town.

"Its termination in the mid-ocean subtropics has important consequences for regional climate since it allows the strongest western boundary current in the world ocean to be in close proximity to an intense eastern boundary upwelling current. Unlike other western boundary currents, the Agulhas retro-flects south of the landmass and flows back into the South Indian Ocean. This leads to a large area of anomalously warm water south of South Africa that may influence storm development over the southern part of the landmass as well as seasonal rainfall.

Reason's research interests include Southern Hemisphere climate variability and change, ocean and atmosphere modelling, mesoscale meteorology and severe weather and the physical oceanography of the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

"Near-term climate prediction is progressively becoming a more prominent component of climate projection," said Stefaan Conradie, a PhD student at the University of Cape Town.

"Concurrently, multi-year drought and extreme

heat occurring across multiple climate zones of Southern Africa emphasises the potential impact over this region of seasonal to decadal-scale variability."

Univen PhD candidate Nkosinathi Xulu's presentation focused on present and future variability in the Indian Ocean Mascarene High.

"The study investigates the spatio-temporal variability of the Mascarene High over the South Indian Ocean on weather and climate over Southern Africa at intra-seasonal, seasonal, inter-annual, multi-decadal and event time-scales.

"The anomalous 2016/17 rainfall season was influenced by development of the tropical cyclones and La Nina conditions in the Pacific," said Univen Honours student, Zwidofhelangani Tshiwandalani.

"Tropical cyclone Dineo was dominant over Southern Africa during the late summer season, resulting in devastating impacts in the Limpopo valley. The 2016/17 rainfall season was however, not the wettest season on record. The El Nino Southern Oscillation affects rainfall distribution through the seasonal, sub-seasonal, and inter-annual timescales over Southern Africa."

A PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Willard Zvarevashe, presented on time series analysis of rainfall data at Cape Point using the empirical mode decomposition.

"The global temperature is increasing at an average of 0.13 degree Celsius per decade since 1990. South African rainfall and temperature is influenced by several climatic variables. Many methods have been used to identify the impact of the climatic variables but have underlying assumptions such as linearity and stationarity of the data."

The conference also coincided with a day of meteorological significance as 22 September 2017 was the spring equinox in the Southern Hemisphere. On this day the sun's disk is directly overhead the equator heralding the approach of the early summer to Southern Africa.

Weatherman Mr Joel Guy Chabata of eNCA and eTV presented on the challenges in communicating climate change and global warming.

"Broadcast meteorology has held an important position in many societies around the world since the arrival of radio and television. Many radio listeners and television viewers have always accepted broadcast meteorologists as authorities in their field, thereby helping them to easily and effectively communicate weather projections to their audiences.

"With climate change and global warming having become a global reality and topical issue, broadcast meteorologists have found themselves having to disseminate information on these topics to their audiences in one form or the other. Climate scientists often communicate their findings in journals and conferences which the general public has limited access to."

Awards for best poster and oral presentations went to honours students Kgabo Lamola of Univen and Matshidiso Mogale of the University of Pretoria and PhD students Mtheto Sovara of the University of Cape Town and Thabo Makgoale, masters student at the University of North West.

The conference was attended by about 100 delegates from 16 institutions, including international delegates from Australia and the USA. It was co-sponsored by the Alliance for Collaboration on Climate and Earth Systems Science, the South African Weather Service and SAP.

The 2018 SASAS annual conference will be held in KwaZulu-Natal.

Univen students and supervisors.



"A new Bachelor of Earth Sciences degree in Hydrometeorology is on the cards for Univen" – Mbat.



"Air pollution is a major problem of the new millennium" - Venkataraman.



"The Paris Agreement aims to keep the global temperature increase below 2 °C" - Engelbrecht.



"Near-term climate prediction is becoming a more prominent component of climate projection" - Conradie.



"The warm Miocene and Pliocene epochs vast subtropical regions had enough precipitation to support rich vegetation and fauna" – Burls.



"Climate scientists often communicate their findings in journals and conferences which the general public has limited access to" - Chabata.



"Southern Africa is a narrow peninsula-like landmass bordered to its south, west and east by oceans" - Reason.



"Subtropical anticyclones locate and modulate weather and climate over subtropical belts" – Xulu.



"Tropical cyclones are very dominant over Southern Africa during the summer season" - Tshiwandalani.



"South African rainfall and temperature are influenced by several climatic variables" – Zvarevashe.



Seen at SASAS - delegates and students.



Poster and oral presentation winners - from left, Mtheto Sovara, Matshidiso Mogale, Kgabo Lamola and Thabo Makgoale.

Love, don't kill women - Legal Dialogue

As part of celebrating women's month, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, in partnership with Univen's School of Law hosted the Legal dialogue on sexual harassment on campus recently.

The dialogue was part of the department's annual Access to Justice Week which provides access to justice for women throughout the country.

"Women and children are being killed and raped by the people whom they love," says guest speaker Director-General, Advocate Vusi Madonsela.

"Sexual violence is a phenomenon that affects all of us. Our streets are becoming unsafe for women and children during the night. Work together to combat sexual violence in the communities. Univen has a big role to play in the communities to educate people about sexual violence," said Madonsela.

"Univen is a no tolerance environment for sexual harassment," says the former Director of Univen's International Relations, Cornelius Hagenmeier.

"We promote gender equality and empower the female members of our university. We will not rest until sexual harassment ends. We have to work together to educate our students, schools and stakeholders that sexual harassment has no place in our society. We need to sharpen the consciousness whereby every member of the university community and the communities in which the university is embedded, knows and understand that this is

A unified community against sexual harassment.

off limits. We have to work together to take a stand wherever we see any manifestation of sexual harassment," he said.

The South African Police Service advised people to avoid being alone at night and to have voluntary groups to educate each other about rape.

"This dialogue will help to devise strategies to eradicate sexual violence that is happening in almost every community," said the Director of the Gender Directorate at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Ntibidi Rampete.

"Boys and girls should be taught not to violate other people's rights. We must stop blaming the victims and making jokes about rape. People should host anti-rape protests and men should advocate against women violence. Put programmes in place that fight against gender violence as it has negative results in the community and the country as a whole."

"Many women are being raped and killed - relationships are becoming so violent," says the department's Adv Praise Kambula.

Femicide is taking away the lives of many women. We have devised with an anti-femicide movement to stop femicide. We are not born to be killed, but to be loved," she said.

Representatives of Legal Aid South Africa, the National Prosecuting Authority and the Limpopo Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex movement were among the people who attended the dialogue.



"Combat sexual violence in our communities" - Madonsela.



"We promote gender equality" - Hagenmeier.



"Let's fight against gender violence" - Rampete.



"Femicide is taking away the lives of many women" - Kambula.



School of Human and Social Sciences adds books of indigenous knowledge

"Two books were published in 2017, Creating knowledge in Africa by Kwesi Kwaa Prah and Batubatse - their history and traditions by Advocate Seshai Shai," says Univen's Dean of the School of Human and Social Sciences, Prof Mokgale Makgopa.

Speaking at the recent Univen Batubatse book launch, Makgopa said through these publications the authors wanted to make a contribution to African scholarly research which is scarce globally.

"We would like to make a laudable contribution to the pillars of excellence in teaching, learning, research and community engagement. We would like to see ourselves developing a legacy and footprint of promoting scholarly communication, as well as exhibiting and articulating our contribution to global knowledge."

"The author Ponele Seshai has given us a splendid insight into the history, culture and identity of the Batubatse people," says David Hilton Barber.

"This resonates with the Eskia Mphahlele Centre for African Studies which hosts a qualification in indigenous knowledge systems."

Academics, students and story tellers celebrating African books.



Limpopo hosts research seminar

Research is an integral tool in the transformation of society. It should benefit and change peoples' lives. The Limpopo Provincial Government, in collaboration with the University of Venda and the University of Limpopo, hosted the second Limpopo Provincial Research Seminar recently.

Themed 'Catalysing Socio-Economic Transformation through Research, Development and Innovation', the seminar highlighted that South Africa has since democracy made remarkable strides in terms of political transformation.

It is, however, apparent that the pace of socio-economic development is not impressive. It is for this reason that this year's seminar brought together practitioners and scholars to reflect on the past and present fundamental issues that have derailed the socio-economic transformation agenda. This move is geared to tap from research, development and innovation to fast-track socio-economic transformation in Limpopo and South Africa as a whole.

"There is a need to bridge the gap between the work done by academic institutions and the work done by government," said Limpopo's MEC for Treasury, Rob Tooley.

"The products of our research work should impact directly on the lives of our people. The battle to rid our country of the inherited challenges of poverty, unemployment and disease cannot be won without the active role of the academic community through research and innovation."

"We focus on multi-disciplinary research, research uptake, partnering and sustainability - it is where we conduct research, not just for ourselves or the shelves but for the communities that we serve," said the University of Limpopo's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Partnership, Prof Jesika Singh.

"Energy storage plays an increasingly important role for electric vehicle renewables like solar and wind and backups for energy utilities like Eskom.

"Our research activities focus on areas such as water and sanitation. Let us invest in the future of the people. We need to focus on basic education. We can transform people through research," said Univen's Director of Research and Innovation, Senior Professor Georges-Ivo Ekosse.

"The contract of research should stay within the universities in Limpopo. We have the capacity, skills, scholars and researchers who can manage research. Univen produced 29 PhD graduates for the 2017 September graduation. Currently we have 27 National Research Foundation-rated researchers and we are rising," he said.

"We should synergise the relationship between the public and institutions of higher learning as they produce knowledge based on research," said the Senior Manager of the Limpopo Tourism Agency, Dr Mavhungu Musitha.

"We want to ensure that our province is well-

marketed as a tourist destination. We want to ensure that many tourists enjoy the offering. Many tourists will create jobs."

"We need to establish a solid partnership with research and academic institutions, particularly those in Limpopo," said the Director-General of Limpopo Provincial Government and Administration, Nape Nchabeleng.

"We need more research on industrialisation," he said.

"There is an urgent need for all public sector institutions to make adequate budgets available for research," said the Acting Head of Limpopo University's Department of Cultural and Political Studies, Dr Kgothatso Shai.

"This is crucial for the sustainability of research collaboration between universities and the clients that we wish to service in rendering research and advisory support. There is a serious need for related quarterly activities like colloquiums, working groups and study groups to achieve goals and objectives".



"The products of our research should impact on the lives of our people" – Tooley.



"Let's invest in the future of people" – Singh.



"Research contracts should stay within the universities in Limpopo" – Ekosse.



"Market Limpopo as a tourist destination" - Musitha.



"Establish a solid partnership with research and academic institutions" - Nchabeleng.



"Make research budgets available at all public sector institutions" – Shai.



Celebrating heritage month at Bakoni Malapa Museum.



Live on Capricorn FM – facilitator Thabiso Kotane (second from right). Panellists Dr Mavhungu Musitha (far left), Senior Prof Ekosse (far right), Nape Nchabeleng (second from left) and Dr Maria Kanjere (middle).



A learning curve - presenters and delegates at the Limpopo Provincial Government Research Seminar.

School violence under the spotlight

For many children, the biggest threat to their right to education is not discrimination or lack of access to schools, but violence within or near their schools. This undermines their ability to learn, puts their physical and psychological well-being at risk and often causes them to drop out of school entirely.

These abuses include ongoing use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure, violence and harassment against sexual and other minorities and widespread sexual violence against girls by their fellow learners and teachers. Furthermore, it includes bullying among learners and the risk of sexual violence against girls travelling to and from schools. Fulfilling children's right to education entails not only the presence of schools and teachers, but also ensuring an environment that allows them to learn under safe conditions.

Univen in partnership with Evangelische Hochschule Nurnberg and local schools' representatives recently held a school leadership workshop.

Officially, opening the workshop, Univen's Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic: Prof Jan Crafford said that violence has become too characterised in communities.

"This is a serious psycho-social problem. We must come up with ideas to solve the problem."

"We want to eliminate violence in our schools," says the Chief Education Specialist for Institutional Development and Quality Assurance in the Vhembe District, Rendani Munzhelele.

"Violence can play a debilitating role in schools. We are aiming to have a 90 percent matric pass rate this year and this can prevent us from achieving this. We do not have psycho social support in our department, therefore, it is difficult to deal with the issue of violence."

He said that some teachers are still using corporal punishment and raping learners.

"We should refrain from corporal punishment. The effects of violence include truancy and dropouts. We are working with the Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme which provides support to vulnerable and abused learners."

"Teachers should implement play and learn programmes which aims at primary violence prevention," says Prof Andrea Zeus of the Evangelische Hochschule Nurnberg.

"Methodological approach encourages learners to develop skills to reflect their behaviour and values and those of others. It also addresses their everyday experiences.

"It strengthens resilience, develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Teachers should identify structures favouring violence hotspots on school premises. Win-win exercises such as arm-wrestling encourage learners to develop alternative conflict solving strategies," said Zeus.

"This workshop is very important as we want to

eliminate violence in schools," says Azwinndini Magoro, School Governing Body member of Dimani Agricultural School. We are going to implement these strategies at schools."

"Assist us to minimise violence," says the Circuit Manager of the Nzhelele West Circuit of Education, Ndifelani Nduvheni.

School representatives said that life orientation teachers must be empowered. There should be more resources and enough sports facilities to curb violence in schools.



"We must eliminate violence in schools" - Crafford.



"We want to eliminate violence in our schools" – Munzhelele.



"Identify violence hotspots" - Zeus.



"We want to eliminate violence in schools" - Magoro.



"Assist us to eliminate violence in schools" - Nduvheni.



No to violence at schools - participants at the school leadership workshop.



"The Services SETA facilitates skills development" - Sithole.



"The Services SETA offers bursaries, not loans" – Pandelani.

Services SETA introduces bursary at Univen

"The Services SETA is a public entity that funds students and facilitate skills development in the country," says Basani Sithole, Bursary Manager at the SETA's bursary services.

Speaking at the introduction of the SETA's bursary scheme on the Univen campus, Sithole said they have a mandate to ensure that the economy has the right skills for youth to be employed after obtaining their qualifications.

The programme is offered in collaboration with Univen's Department of Human Resources and the

Financial Aid Office.

"Be serious about your studies and make sure that you pass all your modules. We will help as long as you maintain a 100 percent pass rate."

The bursary pays for students at all study levels - from undergraduate to a doctorate. It also covers tuitions fee, books, accommodation and food.

"We are not the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, but sisters to it as we all get money from the Department of Higher Education and Training," she said.

"The difference is that it is not a loan but a bursary. You don't have to pay back the money and you are not obliged to go and work for a certain company after obtaining your qualification.

"We will award the best students and try to find a job for these students".

"Now I know that if one has failed a module before being funded by the Services SETA, it will not affect their funding strategies – they offer a bursary not a loan," says Munzhelele Pandelani, a funded Univen student.



"Getting all the facts" - students who are funded by the Services SETA.

Social Work students take the oath

Second year students of Univen's Department of Social Work recently took the oath before starting with their work integrated learning schedule.

The 86 students are placed in social work service rendering agencies for experiential learning. Taking the oath is part of the requirement of the programme endorsed by the professional body, the South African Council of Social Service Professions. The oath is based on the Social Work Code of Ethics.

"The society we live in, is full of cracks and needs someone to fill these," says Univen's, Dean of Human and Social Sciences, Prof Mokgale Makgopa.

"The oath binds students to adhere to the code of conduct and professionalism."

"Through your conduct and hard work, the social work profession can be on the map," says a social worker of the Department of Social Development, Thomane Gomba.

"People's adversities can be challenged through the quality of services they render - they leave a foot print for those who follow."

"The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being," says the Head of Univen's Department of Social Work, Dr David Mogorosi.

"The principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. Be careful about the use of technology and social media to share or gossip about private matters or divulge information about clients. Be careful about other people's privacy," he said.



"The society's cracks needs to be filled" - Makgopa.



Tshilidzi Mbadi signs the oath.



"Your conduct and hard work can put the social work profession on the map" - Gomba.



"This profession promotes social change, problem solving and peoples' empowerment" - Mogorosi.



Taking the oath - Mmaphuti Mamaleka reads the social work pledge for students to sign.



A committed social work core.

The constitution guides citizens – Manohar

“It is no longer the responsibility of the state alone, but also of corporations, non-governmental organisations and communities to respect the rights of others,” says Justice Sujata Manohar.

Delivering the Univen public lecture titled ‘Human rights - Entitlement of a civilized world’ recently, Manohar said the right to freedom of speech is contrasted against patriotism and slogan shouting.

“It has become more important to ensure that the law enforcement machinery of the state is respected and enforces the bill of rights found in the constitution. The right to education requires an adequate number of accessible schools, trained teachers and books and other equipment. Every budget of the government must have a human rights perspective. The legislature also needs human rights inputs. Family laws need to be re-examined and laws need to have in-built mechanisms for their implementation.”

She said the right to development is aimed at creating a society where everybody has a right to lead a life with dignity, a right to shelter, food and clothing.

“Each individual has the right opportunity to use his talent and intelligence for the betterment of mankind. If corporate social responsibility is made effective for promotion and protection of human rights, the country will get much needed financial



School of Law lecturers with Justice Sujata Manohar (middle) From left - Norman Raphulu, Gideon Joubert, Dr Ademola Jegede, Annette Lansink, Puleng Letuka, Simangele Mavundla, Dr Emma Lubaale, Cynthia Mkhabele and Jana Milne.

support for its work in the area of human rights. Let’s balance national security with human rights,” she said.

The public lecture was the culmination of a series of events undertaken by the School of Law over the past few weeks. These included the co-hosting of the Conference of the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges with the University of Limpopo and the 2017 Ubuntu seminar.

“Univen has received conditional re-accreditation of its LLB programme – it has been a good year for the School of Law,” said Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof Jan Crafford.

“Human rights is equate to mothers’ love – it is unconditional and human rights should be unconditional too.”

“We cannot have a civilised world without human rights,” says the Vice Dean of the School of Law, Puleng Letuka.

“Judges must interpret law in a way that will make human rights a reality. Our country needs judicial activism.”



“Individuals should respect the human rights of others” – Manohar.



“Univen has received conditional re-accreditation of its LLB programme” – Crafford.



“Our country needs judicial activism” – Letuka.

Univen project connects students with the global world

A community-based rural and regional development network which connects grassroots communities, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and universities in Southern Africa, was formed at Univen recently.

The network is also designed to develop a model for internationalising research-based masters and PhD studies in rural development. This National Research Foundation-funded project is implemented in collaboration with the University of Fort Hare’s Alice campus and the North West University’s Mafikeng campus. Two universities in Zimbabwe are also expected to come on board soon.

The project leader is Univen’s Director of the Institute for Rural Development, Prof Joseph Francis. He was assisted by Univen’s former Director International Relations, Cornelius Hagenmeier, in designing the project.

“Univen understands internationalisation as a core driver of institutional transformation,” says Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali.

“We place considerable value in innovation to achieve internationalisation and rural development. The participation of beneficiaries like community members and postgraduate students, in shaping the direction of the project is essential. This initiative would enhance the image of Univen and strengthen its rightful position as a catalyst for connecting rural communities in the Southern African Development Community to the global world of knowledge.”

“Internationalisation can make a significant contribution to the transformation of higher education and rural development,” says Francis.

“We will expose students and the grassroots community members so that they strengthen their intercultural competencies, thereby empowering them for success in this age of globalisation. Interventions included traveling seminars and homestays. Travelling seminars will discuss students’ academic work and will be organised in collaboration with partner universities, rural communities, government and non-governmental organisations. On the other hand, homestays will involve placing students and grassroots community members even beyond regional borders.”

Francis said another element of the project is human capital development.

“Through funding by the National Research Foundation, four honours students per year, five research masters and four PhD candidates will receive bursaries. An international conference will be organised during which the work done will be shared. There are also plans to expand the project to include more universities and sustaining its implementation beyond the three-year funding

period,” said Francis.

Messages of support from the two collaborating universities were read during the launch.

“The rapidly evolving challenges that our communities face mean that educators need to continuously think outside the box when designing training programmes for future agents of change, our graduates,” said the North West University’s Director of the School of Agricultural Sciences, Prof Victor Mlambo.

“I can’t think of any better approach than being part of this Africanised, contextualised, localised and internationalised postgraduate training programme.”

Prof Voster Muchenje of the University of Fort Hare said the uniqueness of this collaboration is that it will involve students from the three universities working together.

“I am quite certain that we will reach great heights.”

In response to the project, Wiseman Ndlovu, PhD in Rural Development candidate, said students would do all in their power to make it a success.

“This was a unique initiative – like a furnace used in the production of high quality steel.”

Headman Donald Mlati of the Njhakanjhaka Traditional Council said that communities could share indigenous knowledge with the world.

“Regional integration of communities was relevant in Southern Africa where artificial boundaries divide member countries. This is the first time I find myself sharing a platform with honours, masters and PhD students. Something needs to be done to make our communities understand that university studies do not merely end with a first degree. Most parents and guardians are ignorant of this and often do not push our sons and daughters to pursue further studies after graduating with a first degree.”

“The project will benefit both students and the communities in which they will be placed in,” says the Dean of the School of Agriculture, Prof Godwin Mchau.

“The success of the project should be measured by its impact on local, regional and international communities.”

“The project would help to operationalise some key elements of the university’s integrated community engagement initiatives,” says the Director of Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama.

The project is called ‘Internationalising postgraduate training and grassroots social change’ and is funded by the National Research Foundation. Traditional leaders, grassroots community representatives of the Vhembe Adopt a River Forum and Univen staff and postgraduate students attended.

Univen secures novel patent on bioremediation of acidic mine tailings

Prof Jabulani Gumbo and colleagues, Dr Francis Amponsah-Dacosta and Prudence Mulaisi of the Environmental Remediation and the Water Pollution Research Centre at the School of Environmental Sciences, have registered yet another provisional patent - ‘Method of bioremediation of acidic mine tailings with the use of banana fruit waste.’

This invention focuses on the in-situ bioremediation of acid mine drainage, using banana fruit waste.

“Gold and coal mine tailings are highly acidic,” says Prof Gumbo, Associate Professor at Univen’s Department of Hydrology and Water Resources.

“They have high electrical conductivity and are rich in heavy metals and these pose a hazard to the environment. Banana fruit wastes are rich in organic carbon and are needed by beneficial organisms. The novel material bio-removes the sulphate ion which is the main driver of acid mine drainage. It converts it to biogenic hydrogen sulphide and hydrogen carbonate and later combine in-situ with heavy metals to form metal sulphide precipitates and neutralisation of the hydrogen ions.”

Gumbo says the process increases the pH from acidic levels to alkaline levels.

“The study is on-going in its attempts to identify the beneficial organisms responsible for the bioremediation process and to optimise the operating conditions of the bioreactor and hydraulics. It is partly funded by the Technology Innovation Agency of South Africa.

“There are over 6 000 active and abandoned mine tailings in South Africa and millions of Rands are required to mitigate the acid mine drainage problem in the Gauteng region. Moreover, because there are numerous historic mine sites in other provinces of the country. This invention is exciting as it promises to contribute to alleviation of acid mine drainage which is a serious problem in South Africa,” he said.

The researchers acknowledge the Dean of the School of Environmental Sciences, Prof John Odiyo, for his leadership and encouragement for innovative, collaborative, and multi-disciplinary research.



Prof Jabulani Gumbo.



Smart workers - Dr Francis Dacosta and Prudence Mulaisi who worked with Prof Gumbo on the project.

Univen launches first-ever educational entrepreneurship week

Enactus Univen in collaboration with Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education and Univen's Department of Business Management recently launched the first-ever entrepreneurship week.

"Do not wait for someone to give you opportunities - create opportunities for yourself," says the Head of the Department of Business Management and Enactus Co-Faculty advisor, Dr Richard Shambare.

"We must educate students about entrepreneurship paths and alert them about advantages and opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is a career that grants you a brighter future than just being an employee - it has many benefits."

"Start your own businesses and experience entrepreneurial life while you still have time and support from the university," says Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic, Prof Jan Crafford.

"Enactus has already paved the way for you, instead of being stressed by writing your CV, you should be drafting your business plans and start thinking about putting it into effect."

"Stop the habit of waiting for a job - start your own business" - says the Project Manager of Entrepreneurship Development at the Department of Higher Education and Training and a founder of AfraLead, Dr Norah Clarke.

"Help each other and share ideas about how to become great entrepreneurs and how to exchange services among each other. Let us not waste time, help each other to grow in this industry. It is all in our hands and we can do it."

"Let us be positive in life and study to gain self-confidence and become disciplined, not to wait for other people to employ us," says SRC President, Mandla Shikwambana.

"It is not guaranteed that if you start a business then automatically the business will succeed. You have to work hard and sacrifice a lot before the business is where you want it to be. Empower yourself and your community by making entrepreneurship a career."

"The entrepreneurial word has been preached, now it's time for implementation and community

development," says the Univen Enactus team Deputy President, Nomagamaaphelile Bam.

Enactus is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to inspiring students to improve the world through entrepreneurial action. It provides a platform for teams of outstanding university students to create community development projects that enhances people's

own ingenuity and talents to improve their livelihoods.

Enactus transforms both the lives of the people they serve, and in turn, the lives of students as they develop into more effective, value-driven leaders. At Univen, Enactus is ranked second out of 27 participating universities countrywide.



"We can do it" - Shambare.



"Turn your degree into an entrepreneurial career" - Crafford.



"We live in a world of opportunities-students should utilise them" - Clark.



"Empower yourselves by taking valuable risks" - Shikwambana.



"Dominate the world of entrepreneurs" - Bam.



A spirit of entrepreneurship - Enactus Univen faculty advisors, executive and presenters.

Univen male employees get life hints at Men's Health Day

"If you think you have a good wife, consider yourself as being blessed," says Adv Vhutshilo Nange.

Speaking at Univen's Men's Health Day workshop, Nange said "Give your woman the assurance of love that she has never received from any man. Nowadays it is difficult to find a good caring wife."

At the workshop Univen men were educated about the risks that they take for granted and that could

be avoided.

"A good wife also deserves to be protected with a will because things might go wrong if you die without it. A will fulfils your wishes because the way things are in your household will change dramatically when you die. Let us all do the right thing while we are still alive."

"Avoid keeping secrets from your spouses when drafting a will. Cohabiting for a long time can

result in long-life partners having shares in assets when they pass on, regardless of whether they are married or not."

"Some diets can be harmful for men," says Dr Khathutshelo Hadzhi of the Campus Health Clinic.

"The rate of obesity is increasing rapidly in South Africa. It is not a sign of wealth but it could be as a result of illness that you might not be aware of. Eat proper and healthy food. Eat only when you

are hungry and drink more water than other drinks.

"Substance abuse leads to student drop out and to engagement in violence. If we are not responsible, we will experience challenges."

"Let's improve productivity from today," says Takalani Thabo of the Department of Communications and Marketing.

Learning all about men's things.



"A good wife deserves to be protected" - Nange.



"Let's improve our productivity now" - Thabo.

Warwick University students made impact on local schools

Univen recently welcomed the Vhembe District Department of Education, the Warwick University team and students of the University of Botswana to the Team Teachers Programme.

"The Warwick University students have already made an impact in the local schools," says The Head of Professional Studies in the School of Education, Dr Mamotena Mpeti.

"They have acclimatised very well - they are really helping learners."

"The Vhembe district is one of the best performing districts in the country," says Vhembe curriculum Co-ordinator, Tshiphiri Luvhimbi.

"We have students who do not have English, Maths

and Science teachers. This programme will ease our challenges because of the lack of teachers. Universities are not producing enough teachers for maths and science. Although we are the best in those subjects, we need more teachers. We have a vision of a 90 percent pass rate across all the grades. The programme should enhance and maintain the student pass rate."

Dr Elelwani Ramaite advised the teachers that they will be expected to have a code of respect to the elders.

"You also have to respect the royalty people. You should know how to communicate when you go to these villages."

"Consult with us if you experience difficulties," says the Chief Administrative Officer in the Directorate of International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire.

"We increase international research collaboration and we expose students and staff to global development trends. Take advantage of international scholarships that are available."

A Sociology student from Warwick University, Carli Rowell, said that they have learnt so much, including the culture and structure of education in the country.

"We thank the university for a warm welcome. We are looking forward to make many friends and enjoy our teaching experience."



"We are delighted to have the Warwick students here" - Mpeti.



"The programme will ease the lack of teachers" - Luvhimbi.



"You should have respect for elders" - Ramaite.



"Consult with me if you encounter problems" - Obadire.



"We have grasped more information about the education structure in South Africa" - Rowell.

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communications channel. Nendila editorial committee -

Mr Takalani Dzaga - Chief editor

Ms Welheminah Mabogo - Coordinator

Mr Peter Mashishi - Contributor

Ridovhona Mbulaheni (Intern)

Mphinyana Nemasitoni (Intern)

Ms Mushoni Mulaudzi - Preservation (Library)

Send your contributions to:

Welheminah Mabogo, Nendila Coordinator University of Venda, Private Bag X5050, Thohoyandou, 0950

Tel 015 962 8525, Fax 015 962 8494

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

Office number 24, first floor Main administration building

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