

Nendila

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA



University of Venda
Creating future leaders

'Take charge and make a difference' – celebrating Human Rights Day

"When you talk about radical transformation, you should look into the type of leadership we have," says Lebogang Munyai, second year Univen law student and master of ceremonies at the recent Human Rights Day celebrations on campus.

"I take pleasure to be guided and shown the path by Univen leaders on embracing and celebrating Human Rights Day."

"The rights that we are celebrating are the rights that everyone has and should be respected," said the Acting Director of Student Affairs, Lutando Charlie.

"Leaders should leave a legacy, not a vacancy. Oliver Tambo did not leave a franchise behind, Solomon Mahlangu did not leave his supermarket behind. We celebrate them today because they left something for all, not for their family members only. Today we are all benefiting from the struggles that these icons left for South Africans."

"Until there is justice and equality in relation to land, until the dignity of black people is restored through access to land, any human rights attained are incomplete," said Student Representative Council President, Mandla Shikwambana.

"Education and its recognition in the constitution is an important tool to fight poverty and other social challenges such as access to land."

"Take charge of your lives and make a difference," said keynote speaker Humbelani Netshandama.

"Do not only focus on human rights but also the economy. Engage in business, as you have been given the power and opportunity to uplift the country, especially women."

"Women empowerment is the ability to influence the economy positively. A degree is not wisdom but enlightenment for a brighter future".

Condemning xenophobic activities, Netshandama said people from other countries are not enemies but fellow brothers and sisters.

"Let us all make better use of our rights, remembering those who fought and put us where we are today," said SRC Minister of Legal, Policies and Constitutional Affairs, Tshilidzi Mashau.

"Black nation, free yourself from that mentality of thinking that whites are better, embrace your skin, culture and your true being," said Lindokuhle Zwane, a third year student of International Relations.



"When we die leave a legacy, not a vacancy" – Charlie.



"Until the dignity of black people is restored through access to land, any human rights attained are incomplete" – Shikwambana.



"A degree is not wisdom but enlightenment for a brighter future" - Netshandama.

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"Let us all make better use of our rights" – Mashau.

Black Lawyers Association grooms future lawyers

“Your education should be on the same level as that of people studying at other institutions in the country,” says the Chairperson of the Limpopo Black Lawyers Association, Nkosana Mvundlela.

Speaking at the recent launch of the University of the Venda Black Lawyers Association, Mvundlela said to decolonise legal education means to remove everything that has been brought by the colonialists.

“We must free ourselves, to be decolonised. Decolonise your mind, then you can decolonise education and then you can achieve your goals. Know the Traditional Act and demand to be taught by proper, knowledgeable lecturers.”

This year’s congress theme was ‘Decolonisation and transformation of legal education’. The association stands for the profession’s economic justice and for the transformation of the judiciary. It focuses on the empowerment of black lawyers and is non-racial with membership open to all students.

The Black Lawyers Association Student Chapter President, Pearl Biyela, said it is important to groom young lawyers.

“We need to be decolonised to pave the way for transformation. Decolonisation and transformation is achievable,” said Biyela.

Motivational speaker, Humbelani Netshandama, said that it is their responsibility to educate future lawyers to transfer information to the next generation.

“If you want transformation in education, you must learn first, then

apply the practice at a later stage. Improve the standard of traditional courts as some people are disadvantaged to the extent that they cannot even defend themselves on simple matters, even when they are not guilty.

“Your degree should be important to your community. Go to your communities and inform the traditional leaders about the latest information concerning the law. Do not pollute your mind with the things that happened in the past if you are doing nothing to change that.

“We do not need other people to decolonise us, we should do it ourselves,” she said.

“Lawyers who do not keep time or their promises will never be successful,” said the Chairperson of the Thohoyandou Attorneys Association, Vhutshilo Nange.

“You must succeed in the law industry while you are at a tender age. Read law books if you want to be successful attorneys. Always bear in mind that the challenges will always be there, as in any other field. Know the field of your interest to become an expert in it.”

“Make use of the law firms in your vicinity,” said Thihangwi Nelufule of Nelufule Attorneys.

“Go to courts to observe how lawyers present their arguments. This profession requires hard work. Learn the practice while you are still students, to pave your way to the corporate world.”



“Decolonise your mind first, then you can decolonise education” – Mvundlela.



‘It is our responsibility to groom young lawyers’- Biyela,



“Improve the standard of traditional courts” – Netshandama.



“Keep time and your promises to be successful” – Nange.

Cycling Fridays launched

Univen’s Office of Sport and Recreation, in collaboration with the Centre for Biokinetics, Recreation and Sport Science and the Univen Student Representative Council, recently launched the Cycling Fridays project.

“The event will take place every Friday to promote an active healthy lifestyle for Univen’s community,” says Univen’s Sports Administrator, Ndiafhi Percy Mugwedi.

Malele Muthusi, a third year student of Bachelor of Sciences in Exercise and Sport Science, said this creates awareness about the need for sports and recreation.

“Students benefit by getting together and recreating during their leisure time.”

Ready to go - The first group of Cycling Fridays students take off on a road trip.

The Cycling Fridays organising committee.



Increased turnout at First Thing First campaign

“Prevention is better than cure,” said the HIV/AIDS First Thing First event co-ordinator, Maggie Hlungwani.

Speaking during the 2017 First Thing First campaign launch on campus recently, Hlungwani said the campaign helped students and staff to know their health status, live a healthy life and help those who are still in fear of getting tested.

HIV counselling and testing was done by the Centre for Positive Care, the Univen Campus Health Clinic and a non-government organisation from the Mopane District.

“After attending to students’ problems regarding HIV testing and their health, we help them through support groups. As students familiarise themselves with the campaign, we give them advice to live positively and maintain a healthy status.”

The campaign, initiated in 2012, is now active at all South African universities.

“We also encourage women to undergo a Pap smear, distribute information about health related issues to men and women and distribute condoms and demonstrate how to use them. Furthermore, we teach female students how to prevent unwanted pregnancies. There are many unplanned pregnancies, so it is up to us to provide the necessary information on how to prevent them. Other services include tests for breast cancer, diabetes, hypertension and tuberculosis.”

“It is sometimes difficult for students to accept test results,” said a counsellor of the Centre for Positive Care, Azwihangwisi Mulaudzi.

“If the results are positive, it’s difficult for people to accept. So it’s my duty to comfort them. We encourage students to come for testing with their partners. Partners should come for testing before they engage in sexual intercourse.”

“This event doesn’t focus on HIV and AIDS only, but on the overall health of a human being,” said the Head of Campus Health, Faith Mashau.

A second year student doing BCom in Tourism Management, Mapaseka Mokgaphane, also participated in the campaign.

“I want to keep other people and myself safe. It’s important for us to know our status,” she said.

A total of 887 students underwent counselling and testing. Information and educational material was distributed to 525 staff and students, while 8 400 male and 100 female condoms were distributed.

During the week, oncology nurses from the Vhembe District Department of Health did 162 Pap smears and breast examinations.

Other services included the communication of a wellness programme to 795 people, with assistance from the Biokinetics Department. The Dental Department of the Tshilidzini Hospital attended to 128 students and staff.



“We advise people to live positively and maintain a healthy status” - Hlungwani.



“It is sometimes difficult to accept test results” - Mulaudzi.



“We focus on the overall health of a human being” - Mashau.



“I want to keep other people and myself safe – we must know our status” – Mokgaphane.

Univen bids farewell to NRF interns

“Mentors are at a huge loss as interns leave when they are needed the most,” said Sampie Mathebe, a lab technician at the Vuwani Science Resource Centre.

Speaking at the recent farewell ceremony to honour National Research Foundation interns, Mathebe said interns’ commitment were laudable.

The event was hosted by the Organisational Development and Training section. The year-long intern programme started in February 2016.

“Univen contributed a great deal to the lives of the interns as they have spent the past months being mentored and acquiring skills that will help them climb the corporate ladder,” said the Acting Director of the Department of Information Technology Services, Nkhumbuleni Ratshitanga.

“Discipline, determination, commitment and confidence are good success recipes. Never be

satisfied, but strive for excellence instead,” said Ratshitanga.

The Head: Organisational Development and Training, Patrick Rachidi engaged in a discussion with the interns to get a feel of their experiences during their stay. The discussion proved fruitful as the interns expressed their concerns and suggested solutions thereof. Some of the intern’s concerns were the length of the application process and extension of the duration of the internship since one year is not enough because companies consider people with more than three years’ experience for a permanent job.

“Thrive, succeed and keep in touch,” said intern Tshiedzi Ndivhuwo.

“Don’t give up and continue looking for open posts.” Some of the interns received permanent placements at Univen.



“Mentors are at a huge loss as interns leave when they are needed the most” – Mathebe.



“The skills you have acquired will help you climb the corporate ladder” - Ratshitanga.



Question time - The Head of Organisational Development and Training, Patrick Rachidi, discussed interns’ experiences.



“Thrive, succeed and keep in touch” - Ndivhuwo.



It was great to be at Univen – interns say farewell.

My library, your library

Univen celebrates Library Week

Univen recently celebrated National Library Week.

An initiative created by the Library Association of South Africa in 2001, National Library Week helps create an understanding of the important role that libraries play in a democratic society. They advance literacy, make the basic right of freedom of access to information a reality and promote tolerance and respect among all South Africans.

Influenced by the burning of the Howard College Law Library at the University of KwaZulu-Natal last year, the 2017 theme was 'My Library, Your Library' with sub-themes 'My Library, My Home', 'Mind your Library' and 'Tell me about your Library'.

The theme takes libraries into the heart of the community and strives to awaken a sense of ownership in each community member. As libraries nourish and sustain their communities, the theme encourages and motivates members of society to reflect on the role and value of libraries in their lives. It is a reminder to all library users that the library is a communal space that caters for specific needs, be they educational, social, recreational or informative.

The President of the Student Representative Council, Mandla Shikwambana, encouraged students to make use of the library. "You are here to study. Use the library effectively, as it is your asset to a good future."

He also said the Univen library must improve the standard of books on offer. "We need decolonised books in our library."

The Head of Technical Services in the library, Matamela Mashamba, said the library would take students to new heights. "Let's preserve our books for future generations."

The Director of Univen Library Services, Mushoni Mulaudzi, said Library Week gives South Africans the opportunity to reflect on the role that libraries play in their lives. "The 2017 theme reminds us that the library is our property because it is funded largely from taxes."

She saluted Univen students who refrained from damaging the library and other university buildings or equipment when they needed to express their dissatisfaction to university management during the #FeesMustFall student protests.

"Univen values the library and invests no less than R20 million rand per year in information resources alone. The library team is committed to continuing building the collection of books and other information resources and making the library a comfortable study space for students."

"Let's use the library and its resources responsibly so that the next generation of students can benefit equally from this valuable resource."



"Use the library effectively" – Shikwambana.



"The library will take you to new heights" - Mashamba.

At your service – Univen library staff.



"Univen invests R20 million per year in information resources alone" - Mulaudzi.

New leadership at Universal Greening Organization

The Universal Greening Organization introduced its new leadership and presented its 2017 year plan to its constituency recently.

The organisation has been operating since March 2014, gaining recognition from private and public stakeholders such as the Tshikova Graduates Academy and Limpopo's Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism.

"I will work tirelessly for the benefit of the organisation and its stakeholders," said incoming chairperson, Maanda Mpfunzeni, a second year

student in the School of Environmental Sciences.

"We will focus on bringing more companies to students, offer more conferences and events in and outside the campus to inform people about environmental issues."

"We have been working with different departments like the School of Environmental Sciences, Community Engagement and Facilities Management to conduct environmental awareness in the Univen community," said Lindelani Maraganedzha, an honours student in the School of Environmental Sciences.

"We wish to build a healthy society living in a clean and safe environment, while providing quality leadership in environmental management through community engagement. In doing so we wish to develop fully capacitated environmentalists within South Africa for the current and future generations."

"The programme is our pride in the School of Environmental Sciences, since it is an agent to communicate what we teach in class to the public at large," said a lecturer in the school, Fhumulani Mathivha.

"The organisation takes students on field trips which help them to understand more about what we teach in class."

"We are passionately volunteering to protect our environment," said outgoing chairperson, Talifhani Tshitwamulomoni.

"I believe the new management will do even more for students and the communities," he said.

All the best for 2017 - incoming chairperson, Maanda Mpfunzeni (left) and outgoing chairperson, Talifhani Tshitwamulomoni.



Universal Greening Organisation leadership.



EU research now in the Univen domain

An information session about the European Union Horizon 2020 programme was recently conducted at Univen by the Department of Science and Technology.

Horizon 2020 is the union's programme for research and innovation and stems from the combination of Europe 2020 and the Innovation Union. It provides investment support for research and innovation and

is the biggest research programme ever with 80 billion Euros available from 2014 to 2020.

An assistant director at the department, Tiyani Chauke, presented an overview of Horizon 2020, LEAP Agri and ERA MIN2. Deputy Director Zamokwakhe Dlamini presented on information and communication technology open calls and Deputy Director Thabo Radebe presented on

science for society. Assistant Director Alpheos Masemene presented on ESASTAP 2020 and South African support instruments and Dr Siyavuya Bulani, Senior Liaison Officer, Academy of Science of South Africa, presented on South Africa's participation in the FP7 European Union programme.

They announced the LEAP Agri call for proposals that is open and encouraged participants to submit

applications. The project is worth 27 million Euros over three years.

Univen's Chief Administrative Officer at the Directorate of International Relations, Dr Segun Obadire, urged researchers at Univen to apply.

Sharing EU research on the Univen campus.



Symposium on global health research in Africa on campus

"It is a time to exchange ideas on what innovations are required to address global health issues, particularly in societies with low socio-economic status," said Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlali.

Officially opening the recent symposium on global health research in Africa, Mbatlali said there is also a need to celebrate the crop of human capital that has been developed.

"We should continue to develop careers in global health research and its applications. These programmes provide an enabling environment for the mentoring of pre-doctoral and post-doctoral students from Univen on global health research. Furthermore, through the interactions of our faculty and staff members and those of the University of Virginia, the research infrastructure and processes are strengthened for outputs of higher quality."

More than 90 delegates from countries like the USA, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and South Africa attended the symposium.

Themed inspiration, innovation and implementation, the symposium was co-hosted by Univen and the University of Virginia and chaired by Prof Pascal Bessong of the HIV/AIDS & Global Health Research Programme in the School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences and Prof Rebecca Dillingham, Director of the Center for Global Health at the University of Virginia.

Mbatlali said the collaboration on research, graduate student training and mentoring of junior lecturers between Univen and the University of Virginia goes back almost 15 years.

"During this time, investigators from both institutions have jointly carried out research projects that have produced results of global significance and application. This symposium relates to key aspects relevant to improving health and equity in health for populations.

"Coming together as biomedical and human sciences investigators, healthcare professionals and funding agencies, the symposium is an excellent opportunity to discuss the relevance and applicability of our global health research initiatives," said Mbatlali.

"The importance, fruitfulness and richness of collaboration in research and human capital development can never be overemphasised," said Prof Bessong.

"Commitment and mutual respect are key ingredients to successful collaborations. I believe this meeting has galvanised your pursuits in global health research in Africa and beyond."



Engaging the conference co-chairs - Prof Peter Mbatlali (centre) with Prof Rebecca Dillingham, Prof Pascal Bessong, Dr Flora Katz, Dr Richard Guerrant and Dr Josyf Mychaleckyi.

Dr Flora Katz, Director: Division of International Training and Research at the Fogarty International Center said that innovative research is not complete without implementation.

"The symposium links top scientists who share interests, tools and purpose to produce synergistic collaborations that grow far greater than the sum of the separate projects" said the University of Virginia's Founding Director of the Centre for Global Health, Dr Richard Guerrant.

"This is the first Pan-African symposium that engages five of the six NIH-Fogarty International Centre Africa training programmes, sharing their work and exploring 'win-win' collaborations.

"Due to the partnership between the universities, we are building outstanding trainees and collaborators across multiple disciplines. Tremendous advances in technology can now be applied to understand and fight major health threats among those in the greatest need."

"The benefits of participating are to find common ground for responding to call for proposals," said Michigan State University and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Research Fellow and Lecturer in Horticulture, Dr Wezi Mkwaila.

"It is a great opportunity to communicate my research findings and an opportunity for future collaboration."

"We have discussions that may lead to new ideas to address global health issues," said a Univen lecturer in Psychology, Dr Angelina Maphula. She is also a former recipient of the D43 fellowship award of the Fogarty International Center. "It could bring change through multidisciplinary research."

Major funding agencies such as the South African Medical Research Council, the National Research Foundation and the Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes of Health were represented.



"We should continue to develop careers in global health research" - Mbatlali.



"The importance of collaboration in research and human capital development can never be overemphasised" - Bessong.



"Tremendous advances can now be applied to fight major health threats among those in the greatest need" - Guerrant.



"The benefits are to find common ground" - Mkwaila.



"These discussions may lead to new ideas to address global health issues" - Maphula.

Sharing experiences during a break.



Univen hosts Teaching and Learning Day

Univen's Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning recently hosted the second Teaching and Learning Day.

Academics, students and support staff made valuable contributions on effective teaching and learning.

This came after the sector for higher education came under pressure to increase epistemological access to produce graduates who are intellectually well-trained with relevant skills to meet the social and economic needs of the country. They should also have visionary qualities to lead the country to greater horizons.

"The Minister of Higher Education and Training is to make education teachable and practical through strategic ways in which students can be employable after completing their study programmes," said Univen's Vice Chancellor and Principal, Prof Peter Mbatlana.

"Having a PhD doesn't mean that you know

everything, it simply means you have specialised in a particular field of study. Academics should continue with their studies even after obtaining their PhDs because education is dynamic, as it changes from time to time.

"Some of the education received 20 years ago might not be relevant to the world of today. I therefore encourage everyone to never cease to study."

"The open day provides the opportunity to meet academics and students to share our views and thoughts about what brought us here," said the Acting Director of the centre, Dr Nancy Mutshaeni.

"Quality education is what produces an individual who is holistically orientated and academically purified in a specific field of study to meet and outline challenges in the world of work. The centre has created a platform for academics and students to engage in dialogue," she said.

The Teaching and Learning Day has been welcomed

by the international community of academic developers and academics as a positive move towards addressing the challenges faced by the higher education sector.

"There are only a few universities across the world that have the opportunity to talk about matters like these, with the vice chancellor, at a personal level," said Vanessa Merckel of the University of Johannesburg.

"I am humbled by what Univen is doing, engaging with students who are the primary stakeholders of the institution. Most lecturers do not listen to students when they have something that they want to express. Respect, gentleness and participation should be the most used words to practice around each other. If you give people bad attitude, it's not going to be nice when the same is done in return."

Taking questions from students, Merckel said personal transformation is everyone's responsibility - take charge of your life.

"No-one will transform your life if you are not able to transform yourself. Other people will only come to support the change that you have already started and that should be taken as a motivation. Students should stop blaming others for their actions, they should act responsibly instead.

"I know students sometimes go through difficult situations and that can be stressful. It could lead to depression, to such an extent that someone can end up engaging in certain irrational actions. But I would advise everyone to talk to relevant people for assistance," she said.

Ngwedzeni Raphasha, who is doing his masters in Public Administration in the School of Management Sciences, asked whose responsibility is it to transform the way someone behaves, especially people with negative attitudes.

"It is every individual's responsibility to change themselves - people will just be there to support the change," said Merckel.

Iremangalunwe Radzhadzhi, a second year student of Education, Further Education and Training, said there is no proper communication among students and lecturers in most instances and this is what leads to a high dropout rate and misconducts. He asked how communication between students and university management can be improved.

Mbatlana said he will discuss with management to see how this matter can be simplified. "But e-mails can be used to get anyone's attention, it allows anonymity and it is also a private communication channel."



"Students should be employable after completing their studies" - Mbatlana



"Quality education produces an individual who is holistically orientated" - Mutshaeni.



"I am humbled by what Univen is doing, - engaging with students, the primary stakeholders of the institution" - Merckel.



"Whose responsibility is it to transform the way someone behaves?" - Raphasha,



"How can communication between students and university management be improved?" - Radzhadzhi

We would like to hear from you!

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