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Creating future leaders

Women lead the UNIVEN 2023 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies



The University of Venda Chancellor, Adv Mojanku Gumbi conferred degrees and awarded diplomas and certificates to 2 899 graduates during the University of Venda's 2023 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies. Of particular significance during the 2023 UNIVEN Autumn graduation is the higher percentage of female graduates which is 63% compared to their male counterparts at 37%. These graduates crossed the stage of the University's Auditorium to collect their merited qualifications during the graduation comprising of Seven (07) sessions that were held from 16-19 May 2023.



UNIVEN Chancellor, Adv Mojanku Gumbi has on the first day of the graduation ceremonies told graduates not to find themselves trapped by material things. She continued to tell them that these qualifications should benefit the communities where they come from, quoting from the book of Mark 8 verse 36 – "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "Whatever you do, never sell your soul. Never do things that will bring shame to your family. Instead, always thrive to make your people proud."

Adv Gumbi quoted Albert Einstein when he said, "Don't conform to the status quo, be curious and seek the answers to our questions." She told graduates to use their

knowledge to solve the challenges of the world and one of the most challenges we need to deal with is hunger and lack of job opportunities. She further quoted John Lennon's song 'War is over,' for you it is just the beginning of the war. She told them not to take shortcuts in life because the decision to take shot cuts will haunt them for the rest of their life. "Define your general mission as a group to find solutions for this country."

She spoke about Harry Belafonte's song 'You cage the singer, not the song' - referring to the voice and advised graduates not to let anybody cage their voice.

Adv Gumbi further quoted Frantz Fanon's words, - 'Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.' She continued to advise graduates to find their mission and fulfill it. Adv Gumbi told graduates that, as they walk out of the graduation venue- (the University Auditorium), they should remember who gave birth to them. Not their biological parents but people who contributed to their life and prosperity. People who made them to be who they are. "You are born of great people. Whenever you feel it is tough out there. Remember 'Nizalwa Ngobani,' a song by Thandiswa Mazwai as quoted by Adv Gumbi.



"Never go out there and bring shame to your people because when you do that, everyone will be asking the same question- 'Nizalwa Ngobani.' We do not want to be associated with people who intentionally conduct themselves or involve themselves in wrongdoing."

Chancellor Adv Gumbi also gave an illustration of the difference between education and wisdom, which is an African proverb. She spoke of a wise old man who was tested by a young man who asked him to tell whether the bird hidden in his hands is dead or alive. The wise old man simply said the life of the bird is in your hands and this was a message she was referring to the graduates that as they go out, the life is in their hands. As she concluded she referred to DJ Khaled's song 'Another One' which she advised the graduates to listen to it for motivation. It is a song of hope and breaking barriers.



It was in the 7th session of the graduation week when the audience witnessed a University of Venda Security Guard, Ms Lydia Ramatsea graduating with a BA degree. The University prides itself on seeing its staff members graduating in numbers from undergraduate degrees to PhDs.

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Women lead the UNIVEN 2023 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies cont...



President of SRC, Gudani Tshamano

The President of the University of Venda Student Representative Council (SRC), Mr Gudani Tshamano led by example as he graduated Bachelor of Social Work.



The University of Venda's Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni mentioned that this trend in the graph depicting higher proportion and performance by female students is not only observed here at the University of Venda but also a phenomenon at other universities in the country.

During the Autumn Graduation Ceremonies, 61 graduates received their master's degrees while 19 received their doctoral degrees.

Dr Nthambeleni mentioned that the University of Venda's graduate success rate is not just the quantity, but the quality as well. A sizable number of the University of Venda alumni occupy strategic leadership positions in both private and public sectors in the country and abroad.

In line with the University of Venda's strategic thrust of becoming an Entrepreneurial University and to give students a competitive advantage, the University management took a decision to offer all first-year students who registered in 2023 to take on a compulsory online Entrepreneurship course in partnership with Technological Higher Education Network South Africa and all final year and Honours students will be required to take on a compulsory Artificial Intelligence course partnering with the University of Johannesburg. Students will receive certificates upon completion and at no cost to them.

Dr Nthambeleni shared with the audience some of the highlights and milestones that have punctuated the growth trajectory of the University to date. Amongst other achievements, he highlighted that the University of Venda has seen a substantial increase in research outputs. He mentioned that the pass rate, graduation rate and throughput rate are well within the national average norms.

"It is precisely because of this quality of researchers that our University is gaining recognition nationally and internationally for its rigor and scholarly outputs."



In addition, he said "The University of Venda prides itself as an engaged scholarly university that promotes globally competitive research and innovation outputs. Our researchers are making waves in different fields and hoisting the UNIVEN flag high. Several of our researchers have recently received awards in recognition of their excellent work."

He stated that the University has invested a lot in promoting and encouraging its staff to further their studies and acquire higher degrees. This investment is paying off as the University is now witnessing an increase in the number of permanent teaching staff with PhDs.

Currently, 44% of the University's academic staff have PhD's, and the University participates in several staff doctoral programmes funded jointly by the Department of Higher Education and Training and international partners, through the University Staff Development Programme.

"The quality of this University's academic and research staff is also evident in the increase in the number of NRF- Rated researchers, which has grown exponentially from only 12 in 2012 to 43 in 2023."

The Vice Chancellor and Principal announced that through the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, the University has signed a Service Level Agreement with Limpopo Department of Education to offer

the Bachelor of Education Degree in the Foundation Phase programme. This 4-year degree programme is fully funded by the Limpopo Department of Education and is scheduled to run from 2023 to 2026.

Regarding infrastructure, he mentioned that the University of Venda is witnessing a massive infrastructural development on campus. Dr Nthambeleni further thanked the support from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

In his concluding remarks, Dr Nthambeleni conveyed gratitude to parents, guardians, lecturers, University support staff as well as sponsors and the government through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme for their support.

"We are confident that as you embark on your life's journey you are academically equipped to cope with the demands of the modern sophisticated challenging world you are about to enter. The knowledge you have acquired in your chosen fields and disciplines is key to providing pathways for your future," he told graduates.

He concluded his remarks by quoting from the work of Minor Myers Jr who said "go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and do good."

During Session Five of the Graduation Ceremonies, Mohale Majoro Jacob, a graduate of the Faculty of Humanities,

Social Sciences and Education was awarded the Senate Medallion. Mohale scooped the following awards – The late Chief Makwarela Ratshitanga Award, he is the best student in Bachelor of Education, Further Education and Training; Ishe Patrick Madavhu Award, he is the best student in Bachelor of Education: Further Education and Training; Ishe Patrick Madavhu and NTT Toyota Louis Trichardt Awards, he is the Overall Best Student in the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education; Convocation Exco Award; Muofhe Graceland Award and Fundi Award.

Adv Gumbi said Mohale Makoro Jacob did not do this alone. She said, without other graduates, he could not have done it. She congratulated Mohale Makoro Jacob and thanked graduates for helping Makoro to be a leader. The University expresses gratitude to all sponsors of the best performing students awards.

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Women lead the UNIVEN 2023 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies cont...



History in the making: The graduates became overjoyed when they ascend the stage and wanted to dance to the song 'Seanamarena , Kobo ya thuto' with the Chancellor

Universities of Venda and Limpopo collaborate with Limpopo Provincial Government to celebrate Africa Day



The Universities of Venda and Limpopo, in collaboration with the Department of Sport Arts and Culture in the Limpopo Province, celebrated Africa Day exactly 60 years since the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU) was formed in 1963. In 2002 African Leaders gathered in Durban to rename AOU to African Union (AU). 2023 Africa Day is celebrated under the theme which says: Building a Better Africa and a Better World. This theme is drawn from the National Theme: "Deepening the AU Vision for Unity for Africa through Prosperity, Peace, and Modernity for a Better Africa and Better World: Accelerate the Human Capital, Social and Economic Development."

The day was celebrated through various activities, including cultural displays, exhibitions, cultural dance groups and displays of indigenous food and African country's flags. This celebration was held at the UNIVEN Auditorium on 25 May 2023.



Acting Premier of Limpopo Province, Mr Seaparo Sekoati, displayed his appreciation to the University Management for allowing the Limpopo Province to commemorate and celebrate this historic day at UNIVEN.

He thanked the University of Limpopo for being a reliable ally as this historic occasion is celebrated. The Acting Premier further appreciated the Provincial Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, for ensuring that the celebrations of this day are held with the necessary African character and flair.

In the same spirit, he also thanked the audience for attending Africa Day in numbers to reaffirm the message that Africa's time is now. "Your presence here today is a clear indication that the project of Africa's renewal is alive. In one voice we are saying that Africa is us and as Africans we are one nation."

Honourable Sekoati pointed out that through our beautiful blend of colour, dance, music, diverse cultural heritage and collaborations, we are here to say Africa our motherland shall rise. We will leverage all the opportunities presented to us by Limpopo's cultural and artistic riches to achieve our goal of a united Africa, from Cape to Cairo, from Madagascar to Morocco Africa is one.

We are gathered here to mark the African continent's resilience, triumph, grace, beauty, and greatness. The OAU's principles presently upheld and cherished by the African Union (AU) are contributing positively towards the lives of people in Africa.

These principles include freedom, quality, justice, and dignity, which are essential objectives for the achievement of legitimate democracy desired by all African people.

Honourable Seaparo Sekoati strongly expressed demand to the people to join the masses of Africans in celebration of Africa Day, review progress in terms of service delivery imperatives and development, build a better and more united province and also assess the challenges in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), National Development Plan, and the Limpopo Development Plan for a better province.



Universities of Venda and Limpopo collaborate with Limpopo Provincial Government to celebrate Africa Day cont...

He paid a special tribute to former African leaders who spearheaded the struggle for Africa's self-determination.

He said the journey is not smooth but marked with challenges, therefore, we must acknowledge that the continuation of civil wars in this continent still exists. "The correction of this fault must be at the centre of African renewal. Honourable Sekoati said the economy of this country should be one that fights unemployment in this country.

The message of silencing guns in Africa was the talk of the day during the Africa Day commemoration.

In addition, he spoke about the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) where he mentioned that the 4IR should be used to assist the government to fight other challenges. "The 4IR gives us an advantage to improve the quality of life and education". Therefore, he urged universities to take a lead in 4IR and must assist the government to resolve the challenges that it is faced with. We all need a united Africa. We declare here as the people of Limpopo that no African should ever again walk in fear of guns, tyrants and abuse; experience hunger, avoidable disease and ignorance and feel ashamed to be an African in Africa," he said.



In his opening remarks, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said Africa Day is also a reminder of our rich cultural heritage, diversity, and resilience of the people of Africa, and most importantly, Africa Day is an opportunity for Africans to reflect on their history, achievements, challenges, and to renew their commitment to building a better future continent. Dr Nthambeleni continued to say that despite challenges of unprocessed minerals being transported from Africa to other countries outside Africa for processing and later being sold to Africans at very high prices, over the years, some African countries have made significant progress in various areas, including economic growth, social development, and political stability. He said the African Union has played a crucial role in promoting peace, security, and development in Africa, through initiatives such as the agenda 2063, which seeks to transform the continent into a prosperous, integrated, and peaceful region.

"However, the African continent still faces many challenges, including poverty, inequality, disease, and conflict."

Dr Nthambeleni informed the audience that UNIVEN was recently awarded a grant by the Medical Research Council to establish the extramural unit for Antimicrobial Resistance and Global Health Research at the University of Venda. "We need more such support to improve the well-being of the people of Africa.

To overcome these challenges, Africa needs to harness its vast human and natural resources, promote regional integration and cooperation, and invest in education, innovation, and technology. The continent also needs to address the root causes of conflict and instability, promote inclusive growth and development, and protect the rights and dignity of all its people.

Africa needs to invest in education and training essential to building a strong and productive workforce. We need to build strong and resilient economies by diversifying our economies, increasing productivity, and improving access to finance."

He said this can be achieved through investment in infrastructure, education, and technology. Africa needs to address environmental challenges including climate change, desertification, and deforestation.



In his remarks, Prof Somadoda Fikeni from Public Service Commission shared some thoughts on the Africa Day celebration and the history of how it was formed by a group of African leaders who met in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia and felt that Africa should unite. Prof Fikeni said when he looks at the African map, he sees a shape like a question mark. Where the dot of the question mark is supposed to be, there is South Africa. To him, this means South Africa should bring hope to all Africans. The main focus of the OAU was to support the efforts of those who were still struggling to gain independence from colonialism. The AU's main focus has mainly been socio-economic advancement. Hence Africa is still experiencing a lot of socio-economic challenges. The guns have not been silenced in Sudan wherein Africans are killed every day. Africa has still suffered racial prejudice across the world. When Africa's once-slavery plan was developed, Africa was not on the table but on the menu. If Africa is not organized, it is likely to always be on the menu and not on the table.

Prof Fikeni said it is about time for Africa to wake up and start organising itself if it is serious about progress.

"Africa is a resource-rich continent, and all mineral resources are found here in Africa. Africa has the most useful population and the fastest growing middle class, but Africa remains the poorest continent in the world.

He also mentioned that Africans need to look after each other because prejudice in Africa is still a huge burden which means as Africans, we are on our own.

Africa must be culturally grounded, and the idea of Africanism must start with us. PanAfricanism must be undergirded by cultural diplomacy.

The idea of Pan-Africanism does not start with opening borders perse, it starts with us appreciating and understanding the ties that are bind us as Africans. He said if there is one thing we should be selling to the world, that is humanity, 'Ubuntu,' 'Botho'. "We need to invoke the notion of what brings us together."



In his vote of thanks message, the Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr Dowelani Nenguda mentioned that indeed we are one nation but divided by mere rivers. Let us keep our African drum roaring. He said When we celebrate Africa Day, we should not forget the greatest African leaders who have assisted Africa to be where it is today. "These leaders have made sure that Africa remained united. We are afro-centric because of these leaders and those who are leading today. We have a responsibility to build the Africa we want," he said.



The Mayor of Thulamela Local Municipality, Cllr Sarah Rammuda acknowledged guests.



The Acting MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya

To follow are the highlights of Africa Day in pictures...



Dr Bernard Nthambeleni and Mr Seaparo Sekoati exchanging flags



Universities of Venda and Limpopo collaborate with Limpopo Provincial Government to celebrate Africa Day cont...

The Programme was cofacilitated by the Acting MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Hon. Mavhungu Lerule Ramakhanya and UNIVEN Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga



From a Security Guard to a BA graduate

A 43-year-old Azwinnidini Lydia Ramatsea from Makonde village outside Thohoyandou changed the status quo against all odds. Ms Ramatsea is working as a Security Guard at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) and graduated with her Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) during the 2023 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies. In pursuit of her dream, she furthered her studies by registering for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education at the same institution.



Ms Ramatsea, a mother of three (two boys and a girl) was raised by a single mother and her grandmother. She is the second born in the family.

She grew up in an overwhelming background wherein the situation was not easy to be maintained by her mother since she was unemployed. However, she had never given up on her children until her last breath whilst Lydia was at the age of 20.

Ms Ramatsea started her primary education at Ravhura primary school, proceeded to Luvhimba secondary school, and later went to Silemale Secondary School, where she obtained her matric in 2001. When it comes to tertiary education, Lydia first enrolled for a Bachelor of Environmental Sciences at the University of Venda in 2002. It was unfortunate that she eventually dropped out due to financial difficulties as the whole family was not financially viable. From 2002 to 2013, she was trying with no luck, "I saw it fit to start looking for a job. God finally answered my prayers when I was hired by UNIVEN Innovative Growth Company (UIGC) as a Security Officer in 2014. After seeing how the situation was bad, I also felt that working at UNIVEN was a game changer because it made things easier for me to enroll. After all, I was motivated by seeing people going to classes every day. Deep down I felt that this opportunity could make a difference and improve my life and my family," said Ramatsea.

When asked how she managed to balance being a mother, employee and student, she said it was not easy to put everything on the right lane since she had three difficult tasks

Ramatsea expressed that she became frazzled by guarding other young men and women most of her son's age seeing them attending classes every day while she is working as a security officer at the University of Venda. She further expressed that, being around students who are half her age was challenging for her because she could see that she is way older than them.

This is what inspired and motivated Ms Ramatsea to register for a BA degree. "I then realised that everything is possible, only if you have hope and believe in yourself. I completed my BA degree last year in 2022 and I graduated in record time". Her degree was conferred on Friday, 19 May 2023 during the 2023 University of Venda's 7th graduation session. She graduated the same week with her firstborn son Mishumo Kevin Gwambe who graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting degree during the 2nd session of UNIVEN graduation week. Mishumo who has since graduated with a BCom in Accounting degree, followed in the footsteps of her mother by enrolling for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education at UNIVEN. An apple does not fall far from the tree.



to fulfill every day. However, she trusted that God would make things possible for her. He indeed gave me the strength to Conquer. I am happy because I finished my degree in record time under those difficult circumstances."

Ramatsea encourages others who look down on themselves not to give up. "You might be a security officer or something else, but that does not mean that your future is doomed. Try by all means to achieve your goal in life."



The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni congratulates Ms Lydia Ramatsea

"You might be a security officer or something else, but that does not mean that your future is doomed. Try by all means to achieve your goal in life."



Ramatsea said that she was very happy to see the support from her colleagues on the day of her graduation when they paraded and accompanied her to the Auditorium.



L-R: Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Ms Lydia Ramatsea and Mr Issac Nemukovhani

We need to be bringing back the dignity of Africa, says MEC Mavhungu Lerule Ramakhanya

On the eve of Africa Day, the University of Venda and the University of Limpopo and the Limpopo Provincial Government held a joint gala dinner which focused on celebrating our African Heritage. The event took place at 2Ten Hotel, Sibasa, outside of Thohoyandou.



In her remarks, MEC for Education who was the Acting MEC for Sport Arts and Culture, MEC Mavhungu Lerule - Ramakhanya said that the Provincial Government had decided to honour some of our exceptional individuals in the arts industry, as they are our living treasures. She said they are honouring those artists on the eve of Africa Day because we celebrate our own being, and we remain proud of our roots. "As a province, we are honouring these excellent artists, we applaud them, because they have made us proud. She indicated that Limpopo has always been known to have the best gems as far as music is concerned. Limpopo stars such as Makhadzi wa who rine; Pastor Lungi Ndhalala and Musa Keys deserved the recognition as they come at the top and they have gone against the best among them in their respective genres. MEC Lerule -Ramakhanya mentioned that these artists should understand that the need for music development in and around their home townships and villages is dire and necessary for young ones to learn from them. Music has been seen as the biggest sector within the broader creative industries and it is also an important contributor to nation-building and social cohesion." The MEC also indicated that the aforementioned artists may not have found it to be possible to ply their trade if it were not for legends such as veteran

musician Dr Irene Mawela who was awarded a National Order by President Ramaphosa in respect of the musical journey she embarked on 66 years ago. Amongst the veterans, she also mentioned Dr Noria Mabasa who recently received an honorary Doctorate from the University of Johannesburg. She said when they keep on emphasising social cohesion in every programme that they do, they need to be bringing back the dignity of Africa. She called on Universities that they should come together in realising this social cohesion.



Prof Geoff Mapaya from UNIVEN delivered a Public Lecture titled "Seeing, Hearing, and Remembering Our African Selves." He shared his experience of feeling unseen and unheard during his music studies at various universities until he joined the University of Venda, which acknowledged him. He stressed that this concept can be applied in all institutions where Africans seek to redefine themselves. Prof Mapaya criticized the schooling system for failing to see its students, advocating for universities like UNIVEN to provide an authentic reflection of African identity. He challenged universities and academics to transform the mindset and values of Africans, urging individuals to see themselves in all aspects of their lives. Prof Mapaya questioned why the legacy of overlooking and silencing the African region persists and emphasised the importance of building an intellectual legacy while acknowledging the challenge of national unity.

Public lectures were highlighted as valuable platforms for discussing ideas and nurturing African imagination. Prof Mapaya proposed the establishment of a university press,

inspired by the University of Limpopo, to share and spread African ideas. Also, he called for the abandonment of the graduation song "Gaudeamus Igitur," considering its unAfrican origin and its rejection even in Europe. Prof Mapaya viewed it as an abomination to the African agenda of overcoming colonial and apartheid remnants. Prof Mapaya's lecture underscored the need for universities and institutions to recognize, amplify, and shape African voices, challenge existing mindsets, and foster African narratives and traditions.



During this gala dinner, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said as we mark this day, we must ask ourselves how, as this beautiful Province, Universities, Business organisations, civil society are contributing to better the lives of our citizens.

He said from the University of Venda's point of view, we understand that universities play a critical role in producing knowledge and driving innovation to solve local challenges and build local knowledge to create new possibilities for sustainable development.

"We also understand that without a critical mass of trained scientists, Africa's effective participation in research and development will remain a pipe dream."

Dr Nthambeleni called upon universities, businesses, and governments to collaborate and scale up innovation and find ways to foster inter-institutional collaborations to address major public issues and integrate fragmented scientific knowledge.



Manager in the Office of the Executive Director of Marketing and Communication of the University of Limpopo, Mr Moses Moreroa said when you see two universities partnering with the government, know that we are in the process of providing African solutions. Mr Moreroa said as a University of Limpopo, this truly resonates with what we stand for because we have a vision of finding solutions for Africa. He further said, as an academic institution, we are in the business of producing solutions, oriented people, who are going to serve in government and help bring the solution that we are looking for. "If we were to say, we are thinking for

ourselves as Africans, it means we will begin where we have core business as community engagement at the university, where our research is very engaged and goes into the communities that we serve which is where the government operates in building better communities", he added. Moreroa mentioned that they are excited about the prospects of coming together with these three institutions and hope that this is the beginning of a great partnership where we can pull the resources to serve our people. Mr Moses Moreroa finally indicated that this partnership will bring better results that we all want to see. This day helps us to find solutions that we all want to see."



The Acting Director of International Relations and Partnerships, Dr Segun Obadire said this is an opportunity for all Africans to come together to celebrate and showcase our cultural diversity, heritage and successes of Africa. He said Africa Day is a platform for addressing challenges faced by Africans. "It also provides the opportunities to engage leaders with the aims of coming up with solutions to the challenges faced by African people."



The Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr Dowelani Nenguda informed the audience that Vhembe District Municipality signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Zimbabwe Rural District Council with the purpose of collaborating on various projects. He said that soon people will see them with Zimbabwe building the economy that is needed by both countries. He said they saw a need to sign this MoU and they have a responsibility to protect one another and to protect the infrastructure they have. "We are one nation, just divided by a river, unlike other countries that are divided by oceans. Cllr Nenguda reminded the people that when we celebrate, we should not forget the great leaders of this continent who have contributed so much in bringing Africans where they are today. "As we celebrate Africa Day, we should pray for peace, order and tranquility in order to silence the guns that are always roaring in most of the African states that are devastated by persistent wars.



Three UNIVEN Staff members are nominated for the NSTF-South 32 Awards 2022/2023



L-R: Dr. Khavhatondwi Netshiheni, Mr. Mpho Mashau and Mr. Ephraim Kgatla

Three UNIVEN Staff members are nominated for the NSTF-South 32 Awards 2022/2023

Three University of Venda (UNIVEN) staff members in the Faculties of Science, Engineering and Agriculture and Health Sciences are nominated for the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) awards. Dr. Khavhatondwi Netshiheni and Mr. Mpho Edward Mashau have been nominated in the category of TW Kambule-NSTF award: Emerging Researcher while Mr. Tsietsie Ephraim Kgatla has been nominated in the category of Management Award.

Dr. Netshiheni mentioned that her nomination shows that young female researchers can compete in terms of research in the field of science, engineering and technology. Dr. Netshiheni is a Lecturer in the Department of Nutrition, Faculty of Health Sciences. She has three publications, three book chapters and one patent. Her research area includes food fortification and child nutrition. Her nomination is based on Masters and PhD project where she developed an instant maize porridge fortified with termite and Moringa oleifera leaf powders for the improvement of the nutritional status of children aged 3 to 5 years old. Throughout the development of fortified maize porridge (MSc Food Science and Technology), Dr. Netshiheni worked with Professor AIO Jideani, Mr. ME Mashau, UNIVEN and Dr. D. Beswa from the University of Johannesburg. She has completed a PhD in the Department of Nutrition at UNIVEN and she graduated in May 2023 and her promoters are Dr. Cebisa Nesamvuni and Dr. Lindelani Mushaphi.

Dr. Netshiheni's research work and its potential in alleviating child malnutrition using locally available foods was acknowledged by a national newspaper, Sunday World (August 2022). In July 2022, she attended the CSIR 7th Emerging Researchers Symposium (ERS) which was a prize-giving ceremony and her work was highly applauded. She received a prize for being one of the young researchers for innovative research solutions. In 2019, Dr. Netshiheni was awarded a scholarship by the University of Venda in collaboration with the University of Virginia in the United States of America for Young Staff Capacity Development, and she also became the top winner for the best young scientist and innovator. She thanked the Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof. TM Mulaudzi and colleagues in the department for always giving her full support in her research journey.

Mr. Mashau mentioned that his nomination is a true reflection of the quality of the work he is doing with his collaborators in research (Dr. SE Ramashia, Dr. Nethathe, Mr. Kgatla, students and other colleagues). Mr. Mashau is a Lecturer in the Department of Food Science and Technology. He has several publications (27 in DHET accredited journals), three book chapters, one technical report and one patent. He has over 400 citations and H-index of 11 in Google Scholar. Moreover, he has co-supervised four MSc students (including Ms. Netshiheni) to completion.

He is currently serving as a reviewer for top Food Science/Technology and related journals such as Journal of Food Science, Food and Bioprocess Technology, CyTA-Journal of Food, Foods, Scientific Reports, etc. The nomination is based on his contribution to Food Science and Technology in the field of food fortification/enrichment, under-utilized indigenous crops and medicinal plants in food products. Mashau is amongst the top 500 authors in the field of Agricultural and Biological Sciences, by scholarly output in South Africa over the period 2019 to 2022. This is according to SciVal report of Elsevier. He is ranking No. 393 and other UNIVEN academic staff on the list include Prof. M. Chimonyo (72), Prof. SH Foord (148), Adjunct Prof. AIO Jideani (249), Prof. NE Madala (378) and Prof. JBO Ogola (495). Lastly, Mr. Mashau mentioned that the contribution of the Adjunct Professor (Jideani) cannot go unnoticed because he introduced culture of research in the department. The nomination and ranking of academic staff show that we mean it here at UNIVEN when we say we create future leaders.

Mr. Kgatla mentioned that his nomination shows that UNIVEN is capable of producing researchers who can compete with other researchers from well-known institutions. Mr. Kgatla is a Lecturer in the Department of Food Science and Technology. He has 11 publications, with 6 H-index and over 200 citations in Google Scholar. He has supervised/co-supervised two MSc students to completion as well as several honours students. His research interest includes science, technology and applications of indigenous fruits and their waste into food, functional ingredients, non-alcohol fermented products and alcoholic beverages and non-food products.

His nomination is based on the development of various food products such as prickly pear wine, Moringa energy drink, marula

beverages and marula peels powder active ingredients for baking.

Mr. Kgatla was a winner of the French-South African Agricultural Institute (FSAGRI), food challenge in 2019 and a winner of 2021 International Agtech Innovation: Applied Research, sponsored by the Department of Science and Innovation, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform & Rural Development, French Embassy, French Ministry for Agriculture & Food & World Bank Group.

He collaborated with Choulet Alain at Centre d'Expérimentation et de Transformation, Agro-Food Engineer (French) for prickly pear and marula product innovation transformation. Both Mr. Mashau and Mr. Kgatla thanked the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, Prof. Natasha Potgieter for always supporting researchers in the faculty.

The University of Venda Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr. Bernard Nthambeleni congratulated the trio and wish them all the best and hope that they will bring back the trophies to the University. UNIVEN aims to raise the bar in various aspects with the determination to make UNIVEN one of the top universities by 2030.

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UNIVEN academic publishes groundbreaking book



The University of Venda academic, Dr. Tendai Chari who is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English Media Studies and Linguistics has co-edited a groundbreaking book in the field of media studies. Titled "Global Pandemics and Media Ethics: Issues and Perspectives". The 11-chapter volume highlights ethical issues in the media brought to the fore by the COVID-19 pandemic in different regions and cultures of the world. The book was co-edited with renowned media scholar, Professor Martin Ndlela, a full professor at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Norway. It was published by Routledge, an imprint of Taylor and Francis under the publisher's Routledge Research in Journalism. A global anthology, contributors hail from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. Countries represented are Lithuania,

Romania, Hungary, Italy, India, Japan, Brazil, Spain, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Two of the chapters were authored by UNIVEN academics (Dr. Tendai Chari and Dr. Khutso Mabokela). Dr. Chari, who is a C3 National Research Foundation (NRF) Rated Researcher said "I am very excited that the book, which we started working on during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic is finally seen the light of day. We started working on the book during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and coordinating it was a nightmare because there was so much uncertainty at the time due to COVID-19 pandemic related disruptions in the publishing industry. Chapter reviewers took forever to respond to our requests while the work routines of contributors were turned upside down.

UNIVEN is proud to host the 2023 international Forest21 Climate-Smart Forestry Entrepreneurs Workshop



Attendees at Research Conference Centre

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) recently hosted a three-day Forest21 workshop under the theme '21st Century Climate-Smart Forestry Education for Livelihood and Sustainability in South Africa'. This hybrid workshop which was held at Research Conference Centre was followed by an 11-day student challenge at Ratombo Farm. This workshop was attended by delegates from the University of Venda (UNIVEN), Nelson Mandela University (NMU), Fort Cox, HAMK Finland, Forestry South Africa, and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).

Eighteen students from UNIVEN, Fort Cox, and HAMK, Finland were part of the

workshop and continued with a student challenge at Ratombo Farm located between Makhado and Thohoyandou.

The objectives of this workshop were to conduct needs assessment towards the sustainable implementation of climate smart forestry education and forestry enterprises in South Africa; to identify and document the prospects and protocols of sustainable incorporation of student challenges approach into forestry curricula in South Africa; to explore the prospects of incorporating entrepreneurship concepts into forestry curriculum, by engaging students and academics and to investigate

the concept of multiple land use in forestry sector as a means of combating the challenges of climate change.

The workshop focussed on deliberations of climate smart forestry education and forestry enterprises; prospects and protocols for the sustainable incorporation of student challenge and approach into forestry curriculum in HEI's in South Africa. It further dealt with matters of incorporation of entrepreneurship concepts into forestry curriculum: strategies and success stories; prospects and roadmap to the sustainable implementation of small-scale businesses in Forestry: Opportunities for emerging

Foresters and Concept of multiple land use for combating climate change challenges in forestry sector.

Attendees received presentations from various international speakers on various Climate Smart Forestry and Entrepreneurship Approaches including approaches on the sustainable Small-Scale Business Opportunities for Emerging Foresters.

During student challenge, delegates from HAMK, Fort Cox, and UNIVEN visited Entabeni Plantation and Ratombo Farming Enterprises.



Attendees of the workshop posing for a photo outside Research Conference Centre

Department of Human Resource Management and Labour Relations in collaboration with the Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning empower Grade 12 learners



Some of Grade 12 learners during the outreach programme

As part of community outreach programme, the Department of Human Resource Management and Labour Relations, in collaboration with the Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL) undertook schools outreach programme. This community outreach programme recently took place at Relela Village under Greater Tzaneen Municipality, Bolobedu South.

Twelve (12) schools representing Tzaneen and Motupa circuit gathered under one roof

to receive information through presentations and distribution of information booklets. 739 learners attended this outreach programme. The Department of Human Resource Management and Labour Relations spearheaded this programme and sought to empower prospective students with the academic programmes offered by the University. They were further informed about admission requirements, financial assistance, housing, and university life experience. This programme was held in collaboration with CHETL, which sought to empower

prospective students about study skills and time management as well as eLearning.

This was done in line with the University Strategic Objective 3 which is to strengthen the engagement of students, staff, and community stakeholders and Strategic Objective 15 to strengthen the University's local, regional, and international profile and visibility.

Representatives from Motupa Circuit and Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality honoured the invitation with attendance.

Each school was represented by a principal and life orientation teacher.

Academic programmes offered at the University of Venda were successfully marketed to prospective students for consideration through presentations. This marketing strategy was amplified by distribution and display of UNIVEN promotional materials by CHETL.

Both the learners and teachers were thrilled by the opportunity to access University information at their doorstep.



UNIVEN delegates, Greater Tzaneen Municipality delegates and teachers who honoured the invitation

Faculty of Health Sciences Celebrates International Nurses Day



International Nurses Day (IND) is celebrated around the world every 12 May to acclaim the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth, who gained the nickname 'Lady with the Lamp'. The University of Venda, Faculty of Health Sciences under the banner of the Department of Advanced Nursing Science joined the masses to commemorate this day. The 2023 IND was celebrated under the theme "Our Nurses. Our Future." According to the International Council of Nurses (ICN), Our Nurses, Our Future is a global campaign that aims to address global health challenges and achieve better global health.



As she welcomes the Health Professional Workers, academics and students in the profession, Prof Ntsieni Mashau mentioned that Florence Nightingale was considered the founder of modern nursing. Even today she stands as an example of the importance of the profession. She indicated that Florence Nightingale volunteered to monitor and look after the British soldiers who were suffering from injuries and dying from bacteria. She also improved the environmental conditions of the Barracks. Prof Mashau mentioned that at night Florence Nightingale would walk among the beds, checking the wounded soldiers holding a light in her hand. Cleanliness was seen as essential for the health profession even today because as it is in hospitals, the patients become better. She further indicated that as nurses, they are following in the footsteps of this health giant.



The HOD of Advance Nursing Science, Prof Dorah Ramathuba spoke in length about the meaning of the word nurse as follows:

N- Nearer the patient, always being at the bedside of the patient, a patient advocate.

U- Understanding = means standing under the opinion of one another for teamwork and listening to the plight of patients. Listening is a skill.

R- Respect = means respect for human dignity, everyone is made in God's image and should be respected young and old. Respect is earned and a two-way process. We should also respect ourselves and the profession.

S- Support = means support for patients and clients, providing comfort and hope.

E- Empathy = means placing yourself in the shoes of your clients, walking a mile with them to understand their emotions and provide care.

She said nursing has always been regarded as a noble and caring profession, hence nurses are guided by the morals, values, and norms of the profession. "As we wear our uniform, we are proudly and publicly pronouncing that we promise publicly to serve humanity. Furthermore, Prof Ramathuba said they dedicated the day to all nurses around the globe who paid the ultimate price of caring for people during the COVID19 crisis, some lost their lives along the way and are continuing to care amidst the challenges. She highlighted that the focus is on reflecting on the lessons of the coronavirus pandemic"

and translating those into actions for the future "that ensure nurses are protected, respected, valued and have a voice to be heard and to lead." Prof Ramathuba alluded that the nursing profession must be engaged and, in the process, there is a need to strengthen community action by engaging with the community to increase individuals' and communities' involvement in the decision making process about issues that impact their health and wellbeing. She encouraged nurses to assume responsibility and take a leadership role so that they can work autonomously and as part of a team within the community and influence healthy lifestyles. In terms of re-orientating health services, she said it is crucial to utilise nurses effectively so that they can foster intersectoral collaboration between the health sector, police, and education (across all disciplines). In conclusion, she spoke about the issue of mentorship in order to lead with a health equity lens.



Rev/Dr Zwodangani David Mudau gave word of inspiration during the commemoration. He read the scripture from the book of Luke 10:30-37 that in summary it says "If we love our neighbour as ourselves, we will act kindly towards anyone, even our enemies.

God wants us to love Him with everything we have: in other words, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength. This is His greatest commandment." Dr Mudau started his words of encouragement by saying that Nursing is a calling. He discouraged the people who joined the nursing profession who are not called. He mentioned that nurses are called to care for one another. . " You are called to care and love those who criticise you even in public which is not easy for a human being," highlighted Dr Mudau. He pointed out that Jesus told a story that we should love the people without segregation. He advised the nurses present to listen to their voices and the voice of the one who called them to serve who is God. Dr Mudau indicated that nurses and health care workers must be filled with unconditional love and compassion without checking the background of a patient. He indicated that during COVID-19 some nurses died trying to serve other people. He said "One should know that you are not alone in this journey, but with God the Creator – the one who called you. You, therefore, need to be a person of integrity," added Dr Mudau. He advised that nurses should always be clean and take themselves seriously. He also spoke about confidentiality and professionalism which is crucial in the nursing and health care profession. He further encouraged nurses to empower themselves academically to become experts in various areas of the healthcare profession. He finally reminded the nurses about the significance of their calling and working as a team.

"One should know that you are not alone in this journey, but with God the Creator – the one who called you. You, therefore, need to be a person of integrity,"

Faculty of Health Sciences Celebrates International Nurses Day continued...



In proposing a vote of thanks, Mr Steven Rammala appreciated the very great moment to commemorate the great health giant whose life will be celebrated forever. Mr Rammala commended the University Management and the Faculty Board for allowing International Nurses Day celebration to be possible. He thanked all healthcare professionals and students for attending the event and said that their attendance was not taken lightly. He further thanked Rev/Dr Mudau for the word of inspiration and that he put a seed in prepared soil. He saw the day as a revival for the nurses. He concluded by encouraging nurses to continue to have prayers at hospitals and clinics before they start with their work because through prayers, some patients recover and gain hope.



There was a candle lighting session as a symbol of hope.



The programme Director: Dr TC Mahopo

Our Nurses, Our Future is a global campaign that aims to address global health challenges and achieve better global health.



Students led by Rolivhuwa Sigida, rendering a poem titled 'Being a Nurse'

Faculty of Health Sciences train 200 post-matric unemployed youth and non-funded Community Health Workers

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) Department of Public Health under the Faculty of Health Sciences recently conducted a training workshop on UBUNTU HIV/AIDS and TB at the Living World Mission Church, Maluwe for the Post Matric youth and Community Health Workers (CHWs). Similar workshops were also conducted in Siambe, Tshififi, Mbahe and Nweli.

The purpose of the workshop was to train 200 post-matric unemployed youth and non-funded CHWs on issues of HIV, AIDS, and TB, which infused Ubuntu values and principles that are required every day. The workshop aimed to empower and give the unemployed youth and CHWs skills and knowledge to incorporate Ubuntu philosophy in Counselling and Testing for HIV/AIDS and TB as well as prevention and management so that they can care for the people living with TB, HIV, and AIDS.

The South African National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB, and STIs 2017-2022 promotes the awareness and prevention strategies of testing and the Anti-retroviral treatment (ARV) programme scale up to reach the UNAIDS goals of 95 by 95 by 95 by 2030. Community Health Workers are crucial in providing HIV services such as prevention and awareness of HIV and AIDS, counselling, support in ARV treatment and Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) for treating tuberculosis. It is therefore, important that the HIV and AIDS programmes have well-informed human capital. The team identified the need to empower and source more manpower to help the country to reach the 95-95-95 UNAIDS goals.

These established a need to design a training course and manual to equip post-matric candidates, community health workers, and traditional health practitioners, with knowledge and skills on Ubuntu-informed management of HIV/AIDS and TB. This training course focused on the knowledge and skills of preventative measures against HIV/AIDS and TB, testing, counselling, treatment, and care. Participants were given Ubuntu HIV/AIDS and TB manual at the end of training which will serve as a guide and reference to use in the future.

Ubuntu is a Nguni term meaning "humanness" and equivalent to the Venda and Tsonga "Vhuthu" and "Vumunhu" respectively. The values of Ubuntu include respect, trust, compassion, humility, solidarity, equity, mutual responsibility, social justice, communalism, and interdependence. Ubuntu promotes a spirit of community over individualism.

Different facilitators such as Prof Lebeso R T, Prof Mashau NS, Prof Makhado L, Dr. Tshivhase SE, Dr. Mudau A G, and Dr Tshitimbi TO facilitated the activities that CHWs and unemployed youth were expected to do and they also analysed different scenarios, titled "Applying UBUNTU principles when caring for an HIV/AIDS and TB person at home, Stigma, discrimination, Screening Testing and Treatment- Interactive session." The last interactive activity was "Role of Community Health Care Providers." The facilitators further mentioned that the Ubuntu principles are part of their everyday lives. It was concluded that all the participants will receive a certificate of attendance after completion of the training.



Maluwe, Nweli and Mbahe Group for HIV, AIDS & TB Training (Post Matric Group)



A group of Post Matric learners and CHWs pose for a photo during HIV, AIDS and TB training



The University of Venda Convocation held a fruitful Induction Workshop for Alumni Chapters



The University of Venda Convocation held a successful Induction Workshop for Alumni Chapters from 05-06 May 2023 at the Emperors Palace in Johannesburg. The workshop was organised under the theme "Deepening Engaged Scholarship through Strengthening the Functionality of Alumni Chapters." Under the facilitation of Prof. Joseph Francis, Director of the Institute for Rural Development, the workshop was attended by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin, the President of Convocation, Mr Sylvester Motadi, members of UNIVEN Senior Management, North West University Head of Alumni Relations, Ms Nicolize Van Der Walt, members of the Executive Committee of Convocation and members of Alumni Chapters. The Alumni Chapters that were represented at the Induction Workshop are Vhembe, Capricorn-Waterberg, Mpumalanga Lowveld, Mpumalanga Highveld, Gauteng and UNIVEN Agricultural Alumni Association.

The workshop aimed at improving the functionality of Alumni Chapters and create a more engaged and active alumni community. The workshop was crucial as its main objectives were to strengthen the functionality of Alumni Chapters by providing a platform for alumni to come together, network, and share knowledge and best practices; to provide an opportunity for alumni to understand their roles and responsibilities; to unpack the causes of the dysfunctionality of some of the chapters and learn and develop strategies for renewing and strengthening the chapters; and to orientate participants on the constitution of Convocation and provide an avenue for them to develop a community of practice.



When giving the overview and purpose of the workshop, the Director of Legal Services Adv. Eric Nemukula stated that it is important for the University Convocation to launch chapters in all areas where UNIVEN alumni stay or work. He advised Convocation to explore the programmes of the University and find areas where they can fit in. "The Alumni chapters need to mobilise resources

that will assist academically deserving and financially needy students," said Nemukula. Highlighting the University Statute and the Constitution of Convocation, Adv. Nemukula reminded delegates that the purpose of the workshop was to orientate chapters on how to operate and collaborate in realising the vision and mission of the institution. "Alumni are ambassadors of the University and are expected to conduct themselves ethically to protect the University brand," said Adv. Nemukula.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin spoke about the importance of strong Alumni Chapters and the role of the University Management in nurturing and strengthening the operations of Alumni Chapters. In prefacing his speech, Dr Martin called upon alumni to make an impact on the world around them and be proud as products of a University based in a rural setting.

"We don't want graduates who only focus on themselves but those who focus on social entrepreneurship and solving issues around us." He pointed out that strong Alumni Chapters are there to enable the University to do things differently. He encouraged alumni to assist the University to look for WorkIntegrated Learning (WIL) opportunities and open doors to companies and funders. The role of the University management is to provide guidance, support and tools that will assist Alumni Chapters to achieve their goals," said Dr Martin in his conclusion.



UNIVEN's Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni as he welcome

members of Alumni chapters, commended the role and leadership of the Executive Committee of Convocation led by the President, Sylvester Motadi. He further applauded all the delegates for the unquantifiable level of sacrifice that they continue to demonstrate by attending alumni events like the induction workshop. Dr Nthambeleni said it takes hard work, perseverance, commitment and sacrifices as well as teamwork to come this far.

Dr Nthambeleni highlighted the University's massive infrastructure development, academic, research and community engagement successes to thunderous applause from the delegates. "We want alumni and all stakeholders to feel the need to be associated with this University," said the Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

During questions and comments after the Vice-Chancellor's remarks, the delegates noted Prof. Sylvester Mpande's commitment to donate R150 000.00 from his research funds towards the best performing students. Prof Mpande informed the delegates that he will also donate a certain percentage towards crowdfunding for indebted students from the sales of his books. As if this was not enough, the coordinator of Mpumalanga Highveld Chapter, Mr Itani Nematandani pledged to donate R5 000 towards indebted students project and encouraged fellow alumni to follow suit. "The University management is taking the matter of student indebtedness seriously hence debt settlement and discount offers of 15%," said Dr Nthambeleni in responding to one of the questions posed.



Ms Salome Makgoka introduced the speaker, Ms Nicolize van der Walt, from North-West University who is the Section Head: Alumni Relations.



In his remarks, the President of Convocation, Mr Sylvester Motadi appreciated the cast of goodwill by Prof. Mpande and Mr Nematandani and implored others to do the same. "When we were elected to lead, we promised to deliver and now it is the time to deliver what we have promised," said the President of Convocation. Mr Motadi urged every member to take their responsibilities very seriously. He further said that chapters are expected to submit reports that are fruitful, meaningful and impactful.

"Let us put our boots on and deliver what we have promised. Let us work hard to give back and be thankful for the support we are getting from the University. We should not be ignorant and take the support we are getting from the University for granted," said Mr Motadi.



Ms Nicolize van der Walt gave a comprehensive presentation about experiences and lessons from the Alumni Associations of North-West University.

She indicated that the role of the alumni chapter is to empower the university. She told the delegates to ask themselves what is it that they can contribute back to the university and not what the university can do for them. On the second day of the programme, Ms van der Walt shared the characteristics of successful Alumni Chapters. Amongst others, she shared ten tips and how to run a successful alumni chapter.

The University of Venda Convocation held a fruitful Induction Workshop for Alumni Chapters continued...



Director Institute for Rural Development, Prof Joseph Francis facilitated the programme on days one and two. Prof Francis's dynamics made alumni chapter members learn to work together. He advised them to be accountable for their own actions. He further talked about elements of integrity. Prof Francis guided alumni that they should communicate with each other and give feedback, and not only when they need something. It has come clear that there should be uniformity of the programmes across the chapters.



Deputy President of Convocation, Mr Rudzani Mushweu spoke about the journey travelled for the launch of alumni chapters. He thanked Prof. Francis for the teachings on how to work as a team in order to achieve intended goals. He said this will assist them to produce a quality report at the end of the term. He further encouraged alumni to contribute R40 every month towards helping students to fund their studies. "Having laid this foundation we need to put efforts to ensure that we build a good image of the University and give back to our alma mater," said Mushweu.



On the way forward, Ms Shonisani Masutha, who is a member of the Executive Committee of Convocation, presented the functionality of alumni chapters; programme of action or action plans; reports and reporting by chapters to EXCO of Convocation through the Alumni Relations Officer and Exco member representation. She highlighted the importance of relationship building with alumni; financial pledges and fundraising; alumni profiling; capacity building; collaborative programme implementation; Circulation and Archiving by Alumni Office; Chapters 'operational parameters; contracting and initiating official communications. She further encouraged members of Alumni Chapters to play their respective roles to strengthen the operation of the chapters.



In her vote of thanks, Prof. Vhonani Netshandama said to allow leaders to emerge, it is critical to developing mentorship programmes. We need leaders who will multiply to produce more leaders who find solutions for the challenges communities are confronted with. Find space and contribute to taking the University to greater heights. Prof Netshandama appreciated the commitment demonstrated by members of the Convocation and Alumni Chapters. She further urged the Executive Committee of Convocation and Alumni Chapters to develop programmes aimed at supporting the University's strategic direction.



This was followed by group presentations where groups presented their plans on how to achieve their goals.



Delegates paying attention to the speakers



Some of the speakers and invited guests.



Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga handled the item on introductions and housekeeping.



Univen Hosts a Successful Careers Exhibition



Considering the Strategic Objective number 3 and 15 (SO 3 and SO 15) of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, the UNIVEN Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication strengthened local, regional, and international profile and visibility by collaborating with local community structures, NGOs and industry through a Careers Exhibition held from 02-05 May 2023, at the University Auditorium. The purpose was to disseminate information on programmes and services offered to prospective learners. Careers Exhibitions are one of the platforms through which this objective can be achieved.

The Career Exhibition was attended by 12 485 learners from 150 Secondary Schools in the Vhembe East Education District. The UNIVEN Career Exhibition was hosted in partnership with the Department of Education, Vhembe District under the banner of the Careers Exhibition and Information Association (CEIA). CEIA is the umbrella body for the coordination of all career exhibitions of institutions of higher learning in the SADC of which UNIVEN is a member.



UNIVEN Assistant Schools Liaison Officer, Mr Justice Lebopa said Careers exhibitions are very much relevant in terms of helping learners in choosing their professional paths.



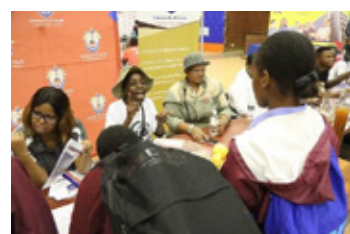
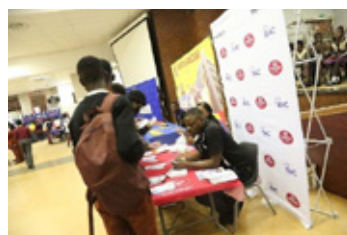
Amongst the UNIVEN exhibitors was the Internal Audit and Risk Management Directorate team led by Ms Diana Makwarela. In commemorating May as Internal Audit Awareness Month, she mentioned that the intended purpose of the Directorate in attending the career exhibition was to raise awareness of Internal Audit and Risk Management as a profession and showcase career opportunities for grade 12 learners to pursue studies aligned to the qualifications that are being offered by UNIVEN through the Faculty of Management, Commerce, and Law.



Pontsho Semata, a grade 12 learner attended the UNIVEN Careers Exhibition in order to gain information about application requirements for various programmes from different institutions.



UNIVEN CFO Mr Botwe Kraziya was impressed when visiting the Careers Exhibition venue.



UNIVEN hosts an international Proteomics Workshop sponsored by the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) academic staff members recently held a successful international workshop that attracted scientists from various countries, including Nigeria, Mexico, Italy, Tanzania, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. This international workshop was held under the theme 'Proteomics: From theory to practice', sponsored by the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB). This workshop was organised by Professors Addmore Shonhai, Ntakadzeni Madala (from Biochemistry and Microbiology Department) and Pascal Bessong (Research Professor, in the Faculty of Sciences, Engineering and Agriculture).

The workshop focussed on training scientists from the life sciences and chemistry fields on the principles of proteomics as a research tool. Proteomics essentially involves the study of proteins in a biological system on a large scale or collective basis. Proteins are the workhorses of biological systems. As such, their functional deficiencies typically indicate cellular disorder and onset of disease. Proteomics techniques quantify and evaluate the scope of proteins in a system under normal conditions relative to diseased state. Similarly, proteomics may be applied in agriculture to identify proteins that play an important role, for example, in imparting plants resistance to diseases and heat stress.



The workshop was chaired by Prof Addmore Shonhai, from the University's Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology.

He said UNIVEN team seeks to set up a proteomics hub at the institution hence the ICGEB sponsored workshop served as a primer plan to set up this hub. The workshop was coordinated by leading proteomics experts such as Dr Michael Myers (from ICGEB, Trieste, Italy), Dr Stefano Cacciatore (from ICGEB, Cape Town), Dr Previn Naicker (from Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, South Africa), and Prof. Takafira Mduluzi (from the University of Zimbabwe). Prof Pascal Bessong, a leading expert on medical virology and Research Professor (from UNIVEN) presented on the role of proteomics in medical research, and in particular HIV/AIDS. The workshop came as a follow up to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNIVEN and the ICGEB in 2021 coming on the backdrop of a visit by the ICGEB Director, Dr Lawrence Banks in the same year. This workshop was a huge success based on the feedback presented by the workshop participants. The organisers solicited the support of Anatech, a private company which supplies LC-MS equipment which is widely used in proteomics studies. The company brought their LC-MS which facilitated demo runs to the participants.



(DVC, Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza

When welcoming attendees, Prof Nosisi Feza, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies challenged participants to apply proteomics to address various biotechnological challenges and to consider harnessing protein waste to come up with innovative products that address global challenges.



Prof Lutendo Murulana welcomed the participants on the behalf of the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science Engineering and Agriculture, Prof Natasha Potgieter. Prof Murulana highlighted the relevance of the workshop to the University of Venda's strategic objectives.

Highlights of the workshop in pictures:



Prof Takafira Mduluzi from the University of Zimbabwe and Prof Ntakadzeni Edwin Madala posing for photo outside the workshop venue



Front (left), Dr Previn Naicker, one of the invited presenters from the CSIR and front right is Dr Bridget Calder and Mr Charl Yeates from Anatech (Pty)Ltd South Africa that supplied a demo LC-MS and facilitated the practical demonstrations, back, right side is Prof Pascal Bessong of UNIVEN and some of the participants closely following the workshop



UNIVEN Partnership Officer, Mr Thabo Dikgale handing over a token of appreciation to Dr Stefano Cacciatore

UNIVEN hosts an international Proteomics Workshop sponsored by the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology continued...



Dr Myers told participants that the best way to learn and teach is to have fun.



Dr Michael Myers from the ICGEB, Trieste, Italy, a leading proteomics expert gave insightful presentations that kept the audience engaged throughout several slots he coordinated.



Postgraduate students from universities of Limpopo and Venda pausing for pictures outside workshop venue



Practical demonstration kit for protein enrichment and participants attending lab session (top 3 panels)



Some of the participants who have attended the workshop listening to presentations

Univen Participates During the 63rd Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF)

The University of Venda team led by the Acting Director of International Relations and Partnerships, Dr Segun Obadire comprising of Mr Justice Lebopa, Assistant Schools Liaison Officer in the Department of Marketing Branding and Communication as well as Mr Thabo Dikgale, Partnerships Officer in the Department of International Relations and Partnerships, participated in the 63rd Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF). The International Trade Fair was organised by the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair Company with the aim of bringing together a diverse audience to promote trade and investment in the country.

The event was honoured by the presence of the President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa and King Mswati III, Head of the Swazi royal family who officially opened the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair.

The Zimbabwe International Trade Fair Company (ZITF Company) is in the Exhibitions and Events Industry and its vision is to contribute significantly to the transformation of Zimbabwe into an economically thriving nation that is respected throughout the world and seen as a preferred place for trade and investment in Africa.

The University of Venda Acting Director for International Relations and Partnerships, Dr Segun Obadire facilitated meetings with some of the stakeholders with the purpose of building partnerships that will strengthen the University's local and international profile as well as contribute to the University's core business. Some of the areas of collaboration that were considered include skills exchange programmes, collaborative workshops, conferences, research and entrepreneurial programmes. Dr Obadire led discussions with three universities in Zimbabwe, these included the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Bulawayo Polytechnic College and Lupane State University (LSU). These discussions were immensely successful, promising to yield results for both staff and students.



As seen in the photos below, delegates from the University of Venda Mr Justice Lebopa, Assistant Schools Liaison Officer in the Department of Marketing Branding and Communication, Mr Thabo Dikgale the Partnerships Officer in the Department of International Relations and Partnerships and the Acting Director, Dr Segun Obadire had time to share information with prospective students who visited the stall to learn more about programmes and services available at the University of Venda.



Director of the Department of Communication and Marketing at the National University of Science and Technology in Zimbabwe, Bulawayo, Mr Thabani Mpofu also presented the programmes and services available at his University (NUST). "I am excited to announce that after listening to the University of Venda presentation on its services, there is a similarity with what NUST is offering so in this case it will be easier for these two institutions to form a partnership," said Mr Mpofu.



Above photo: A group photo was taken after a meeting between UNIVEN and Bulawayo Polytechnical College



Above photo: Discussion about partnership between UNIVEN, Office of the Premier Limpopo Province and the National University of Science and Technology

The event was honoured by the presence of the President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa and King Mswati III, Head of the Swazi royal family who officially opened the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair.



Above photo: Mr Dikgale and Dr Obadire were interviewed on NUST FM which is a campus radio station at the National University of Science and Technology in Bulawayo

University Management declares 2h45 minutes of Physical Wellness Activities for Employees



The University of Venda Human Resources Department under the banner of the Employee Health and Wellness Unit in collaboration with the University's Department of Student Affairs (Sports and Recreation Unit) recently organised the launch of Physical Wellness Activities that will take place every Wednesday of the week from 14:00 to 16:45. This was an initiative by the University of Venda Management that employees should participate in physical wellness activities.

The purpose of this initiative is to promote a healthy lifestyle through physical wellness activities including but not limited to fun walks, aerobics, and traditional games. The duration of the sporting activities shall be 2h45 minutes from 14:00 to 16:45 every Wednesday of the week. However, employees who are not participating shall remain in their offices until the normal University knock-off time. All participating employees will be expected to complete an attendance register for control purposes. The launch took place at UNIVEN Sports Hall on Wednesday, 31 May 2023.

and institutional operational efficiency. The University management understands that employee wellness is important and that it is considered a means to promote employees' physical and mental fitness and health.

Dr Ratombo pointed out that employee wellness activities are a strong tool for promoting employees' health and helping them to influence their quality of life, mental well-being, and performance at work. He maintains that employee wellness is not only about reducing absenteeism and being absent due to illness but also about proactively encouraging and promoting healthier lifestyles and attitudes among the employees.

The UNIVEN management views employee wellness as an investment for the University because employees are the biggest asset of the institution to deliver on their mandate.

He further said studies have indicated that employees are more likely to be productive when they are in good health.



Dr Mutshinyalo Ratombo, representing the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni made a commitment that indeed the decision to launch these physical wellness activities was not a mistake. Dr Ratombo briefly spoke under the topic, 'What is Employee Wellness for the University of Venda Strategic Plan Implementation?' He said there is a direct relationship between employee wellness



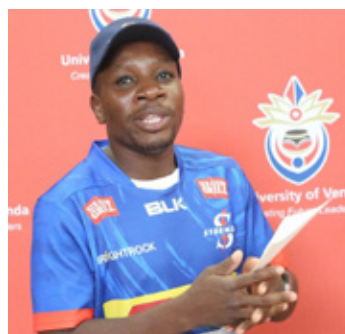
The Director of Human Resources, Mrs Uanda Ndou encouraged employees who attended the first physical wellness activities to love and take care of their bodies by not only putting on beautiful clothes, make-up and eating junk foods, hence exercising was found as part of a healthy lifestyle. She further encouraged them to respect the time given by the University and use it for the benefit of their health. Mrs Ndou said all these when welcoming employees to this launch.



Partners in physical wellness activities, Sports and Recreation Unit was represented by Patrick Thaba. Mr Thaba said that they are excited to be part of this initiative that aims to improve the health and well-being of employees at the University of Venda. He indicated that their Unit is not only responsible for students' sports activities but also for employees hence they have to come up with programmes that are relevant to employees as well. He reaffirmed their commitment to the success of this initiative. He called upon all the wellness champions to also commit themselves to this initiative.



The Head of Employee Relations, Adv Rudzani Makhema facilitated the programme. The programme started with the fun walk which was followed by different activities. He finally made a call that other employees who were not present should follow suit.



Dr Percy Mugwedi from Sports and Recreation Unit thanked all the employees in attendance and speakers for honouring this very important programme.



There is a need for a link between farmers and research organisations, says Prof Victor Mmbengwa

On Wednesday 31 May 2023, the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture (FSEA) held its 2nd Annual Farmers Day event to establish partnership between farmers, high school learners, local organisations, industries, and the University of Venda (UNIVEN). The event was organised by Ms Thifheli Kutama who is the Farm Manager of the experimental farm and is part of the FSEA's operational plan. This event took place outside the University's Research Conference Centre (Parking lot) and was attended by local farmers, representatives from the Department of Agriculture, secondary school learners, University staff, and students.



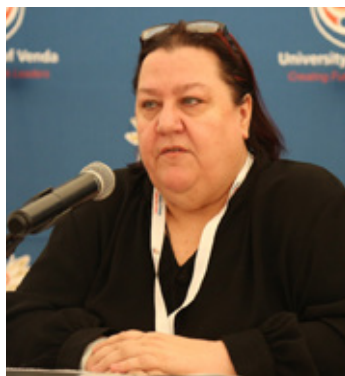
The keynote speaker, Prof Victor Mmbengwa, a Research Fellow on Smallholder Market Access from the University of Limpopo, who is also a UNIVEN Alumnus, presented on the topic 'farmers are the future.' He mentioned that there is a need for a link or a relationship between farmers and research organisations because we are now in the technology driven era. Prof Mmbengwa told farmers that they are the providers of this world because no one can survive without eating the food that are produced by farmers. He further told high school learners that UNIVEN is their priority, and they should apply for enrolment at UNIVEN because this is where the foundation of being farmers will be laid. "There is no need to go far in order to enrol for something that is here at home."

Prof Mmbengwa also stressed the importance of linkages in every industry. "We learn and gain a lot from linkages. As we speak here today, there are some farmers who do not know about government farming grants and through linkages, they would have known even how to apply for these grants." He advised them to make as many linkages as possible.

He concluded his talk by telling agriculture students and learners to never be discouraged by anyone because agriculture is the future of this world.



Goats that were on display for exhibition during the 2023 Faculty Farmers Day



In her opening and welcome address, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, Prof Natasha Potgieter said we are here to learn from each other and as a University we are involved in community projects and engage with local communities and farmers. "Secondly, we have invited local high school learners to interact with farmers themselves and gain knowledge of what is happening in the farming industry. We need to make our learners and students to be interested in agriculture because they are our future." Prof Potgieter further mentioned that three high schools were invited to attend this farmers day. "We want farmers to prosper and assist the world to secure food for all. With our research, we want to contribute and be relevant in our communities."



Dr Shonisani Ramashia mentioned that farmers need to be involved in the process of curriculum development because they know what is needed in the workplace. "If we are serious about producing graduates that are relevant to the market, we need to start involving these farmers even in research." She also mentioned that UNIVEN trains its students on entrepreneurship because the University has realised that our graduates need to know that after producing agricultural products, they need to know how to market them and sell them to the consumers. "If we sit together and talk about how to solve these challenges, we will achieve a lot."



Mr Emmanuel Mudau spoke on behalf of all farmers. He said he did not have an opportunity to attend tertiary school, he has worked for a furniture shop. He said he quit and went into farming because he had passion for farming. "Farming is a calling and is not for everyone. People should start respecting farmers because they are the backbone of the economy. Without farmers there will not be food." Mr Mudau told small scale farmers to never give up and to aim to grow their businesses. "Do not depend on government grants, come up with creative ways of sustaining your farms because most farmers don't survive when the government stops funding them."

He concluded his talk by advising farmers to start imparting more knowledge into the upcoming farmers because this will enable them to grow. He said these upcoming farmers are the future of this country's economy.



Dr Emaculate Ingwani introduced the keynote speaker.



Dr Lutendo Mathomu introduced exhibitors/farmers who are also service providers.



Prof Joseph Baloyi gave the vote of thanks.



Tractors on display during Farmers Day

The Department of Agriculture representative, Mr Rudzani Manyatshe highlighted some of the technical challenges that emanated from the 2022 Farmers Day. Mr Manyatshe said the University should preserve and sell the grass in winter because during rainy seasons, the feed is there and needs to be cut and stored for use during dry seasons like in winter. "The University could even sell these feeds to farmers." He said the Department of Agriculture is passionate about assisting local farmers.

There is a need for a link between farmers and research organisations, says Prof Victor Mmbengwa continued...



L-R: Dr Takalani Dzaga, Prof Victor Mmbengwa, Ms Thifheli Kutama, and Dr Bernard Nthambeleni posing for a photo before Farmers Day 2023 event



Exhibitors:



Student Housing Unit organises a fruitful 2023 HRC Leadership Workshop

The Student Housing Unit under the Department of Student Affairs recently hosted the Housing Representative Committee (HRC) Leadership Training. This training took place at the University's E-Block Lecture Hall. The training was held in collaboration with the Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL), Old Mutual, Protection Services, Maintenance, Student Governance, Legal Services department, Occupational Health and Safety officer from Human Resources, Sports and Recreation Unit and Campus Health. The content was strategically developed to assist the House Representative Committee Members (HRCs) in their duties as Residence Leaders.

The objectives of the training were to promote teamwork, effective communication skills, roles, and responsibilities, encourage ethical leadership, community mobilization, and financial literacy. University student leaders serving in the HRCs are expected to be active members of the community and they should contribute positively to society. These leaders are encouraged not only to be the voice of the students but also problem solvers and innovators.

The first two days of the training focused on Life Skills which were presented by Dr. Morongwa, Dr Gloria Dama, and Dr Tshifiwa

Matodzi from the Student Counselling and Development Unit. On the third day, it was followed by financial literacy presented by Mrs Nokuzola Ntiwane from Old Mutual. Mrs Ntiwane gave insight on personal finance and planning for the future. Dr Tshidaho Manyage from the Academic Development Unit presented the importance of academic competence, particularly because they are supposed to set an example to the rest of the student community in residences. Advocate Mphephu from Legal Services advised them on the legal aspects. He encouraged student leaders to use their positions wisely to benefit students instead of misusing their power. Mr Kenneth Dama from the University's Maintenance unit also gave a presentation, followed by Dr ME Makhwanya from Campus Health who focused on sexual health education. Occupational Health and Safety Officer from the Human Resources Department, Mr Thabelo Makananise gave a brief introduction on the fire safety and other health hazards to look out for in the residences. This session was closed by the Student Housing Unit when they presented the roles and responsibilities of HRC members which were presented by Mr Thomas Mukwevho and Ms Lethogonolo Shibambo.



On the last day of the workshop, the focus was on team building which took place at Havana Resort. Members actively participated in this activity that was led by Mr Ambrose Mogashoa from the Sports and Recreation Unit. The workshop was facilitated by Mr Dakalo Ndanduleni and Ms Zanele Ngomane.



Some members of the Housing Representative Committee posing for a photo at the workshop

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Improper conduct includes the following...

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- 2. Misuse or misappropriation of University assets,**
- 3. Health and safety risks,**
- 4. Plagiarism,**
- 5. Fraud and corruption.**

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