



## The Launch of National Science Week 2023 was a memorable turning point



The National Science Week 2023 was officially launched by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande under the theme "Building a Culture of Evidence-Based Practice." The theme seeks to entrench the concept of science as the solution to everyday problems and encourage young people to study and enter careers in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for the purpose of taking the country forward.

The launch that took place at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) on Saturday, 22 July 2023, was graced by the presence of diverse stakeholders, including but not limited to traditional and religious leaders, mayors, parents, learners, heads of departments, University Council members, UNIVEN members of the Senior Management, staff and students, representatives from NRF, SAASTA, CISR and other stakeholders from both private and public institutions. Despite the extremely chilly weather conditions, people came in numbers to witness the launch of National Science Week wherein close to 3000 people including the exhibitors, were in attendance. The National Science Week would run throughout the country from 31 July to 05 August 2023. The annual science engagement initiative is led by the Department of Science and Innovation and the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA).



The Minister prefaced his speech which was delivered virtually by informing the audience that "What makes this launch extra-ordinarily momentous is that it is taking place in the month that marks the 105th birthday of our former President Nelson Mandela".

The Minister said South Africa and the entire world have challenges that need us to expeditiously advance science, technology and innovation. He mentioned that environmental pollution, climate change, poverty, inequality and global public health crisis are posing severe challenges to humanity today. The Minister stated that South Africa is currently considered one of the most technologically advanced countries in Africa and was rated the most innovative region in sub-Saharan Africa in the 2022 Global Innovation Index, and in 2022 South Africa was ranked 69th in innovation inputs and 61st in innovation outputs.

Dr Nzimande cited that the Department of Science and Innovation is committed to using science, technology and innovation as catalysts for faster and inclusive economic growth, in the short and longer term, as per the National Development Plan. He further said that as a department they are also committed to building the science and technology pipeline, and to broadening representativeness in science and technology, making sure that young people, women and people with disabilities are mainstreamed in science-related careers and education at all levels.

**"This is one of the reasons we host the annual National Science Week, as part of our efforts to contribute to the development of a society that is knowledgeable about science and critically engages in science, technology and innovation."**

The Minister made a call to all learners that no one should be left out of the solution-driven national discourse that speaks to the value of science in our lives and for our future. He further encouraged learners to participate in the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) competitions in order for them to improve their science knowledge and understanding.

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He also spoke of the fully accredited Postgraduate Diploma in Science Communication which is funded by the Department of Science and Innovation and offers basic science communication skills to scientists and knowledge brokers in journalism, education, and traditional science awareness at places such as museums and science centres.

The Minister appreciated Prof Eric Maluta's commitment to public engagement with science which earned him the 2022 National Science and Technology Forum Communication Award. Prof Maluta is the Coordinator of UNIVEN's Vuwani Science Resource Centre.

Talking about the creation of new knowledge between researchers and the public, the Minister said "Our endeavors to foster public engagement with research to advance evidence-based decision-making and practice should go beyond traditional science communication approaches." He mentioned that the aim of the Department is to see researchers collaborate with citizens at distinct stages of a research project.

The Minister indicated that South Africa, through the Department of Science and Innovation, is the only African country among the seventeen (17) countries working together towards global policy guidelines to promote citizen engagement in the production of scientific knowledge.

Dr Nzimande applauded the learner from Thengwe Secondary School, Uatshila Munenyiwa, who is exemplary because she has what it takes to produce and supply these raw materials. Earlier this year she presented a project that won her the South African Youth Water Prize 2023 at a provincial level.

The Minister pleaded with all principals and teachers to improve efforts in making sure that more learners in their schools participate in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and innovation (STEM) Olympiads and exhibitions. He said "Let the National Science Week 2023 be a turning point. Make sure that on each day from 31 July to 05 August 2023, there is at least one fun science experiment that every classroom in your school engages in before learners disperse".

He said that he is encouraged by the NRF's endeavours to highlight the significance of research impact beyond the academia through the adopted Framework to Advance the Societal and Knowledge Impact of Research. Public access to research knowledge and citizens' participation in the cocreation of knowledge will undoubtedly lead us to a situation where science is embedded in daily life.

He urged universities to establish systems that will enable their researchers to exchange their research knowledge with the public because we do not see any other effective means to encourage the potential utilisation of their research.

Lastly, he thanked the University of Venda, under the leadership of Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, for not only agreeing to host this event but also for being part of the organising team and participating in the event.



To the Executive Mayor of the Vhembe District, Cllr Dowelani Nenguda who was

representing the Limpopo government, the Minister said "Your support is well aligned with the cooperative governance constitutional obligations, which he appreciated immensely.



The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni welcomed the audience to the University of Venda which is located in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve (VBR) with a unique biodiversity; a place of learning, a place where future leaders are molded, the University which is a beacon of hope since its inception. The University for greater impact and serves as the anchor institution within the VBR surrounding communities. The fact that UNIVEN is only one of two universities in the world located in a UNESCO-designated Biosphere reserve offers unique opportunities for the development of Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM) relevant to the community needs, geared towards entrepreneurial aspirations and contribution to diverse socio-economic development outcomes. Central to this is collaboration with grassroots communities, local leadership institutions, both private and public sector stakeholders, and international bodies to support national development and transformation objectives as outlined in the National Development Plan (Vision 2030 NDP).

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal indicated that the University understands that the primary goal of the National Science Week (NSW) campaign is to promote science and technology literacy, as well as awareness of the value of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and innovation in people's daily lives.

Dr Nthambeleni commended those who contributed to the establishment of Vuwani Science Resource Centre. He said the University through the Centre forms part of the NSW exhibitors throughout. The Centre has been a key flagship of the University during the celebrations of the NSW by highlighting the STEM students' potential and raw talent from the rural areas of the Vhembe District. Vuwani Science Resource Centre is in the middle of the communities which makes its science communication effective. Vuwani Science Resource Centre has been chosen by the DSI to host the Limpopo Indigenous Knowledge System Documentation Centre (IKSDC) because of its location coupled with the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve uniqueness. The Centre has been embarking on science outreach to the disadvantaged rural schools in the areas where learners have no science equipment and proper laboratories to conduct their experiments.

He indicated that University researchers are working on renewable energy research trying to find a solution to the current energy crisis and the effect of load shedding in our country. "We have researchers working on Solar Energy, Biogas, and other alternative energy supply. "We have biogas digesters built in different communities assisting rural households with cooking and solar water pumping system."

Dr Nthambeleni further indicated that the United Nations has declared 2023 the International Year of Millets (IYoM). Therefore, the University's contribution to the NSW will be to provide platforms for general awareness of the contribution of millet to food security, nutrition and production of millet and grain products.



Lutendo Bobodi from SABC, Dr Phil Mjwara from DSI and Vhuthu Tshilengo (far right)

He mentioned that UNIVEN is better positioned as an important player in the new knowledge-based economy and contributes evermore to the national skills development strategy and the continued production of high-level skills for the job market.

The Vice-Chancellor expressed gratitude for incessant support from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.



A 16-year-old grade 11 learner, Uatshila Munenyiwa from Thengwe High School in the Vhembe District and the winner of the Limpopo South African Youth Water Prize, received a standing ovation after making her presentation on her grassroots innovation solution to the sanitation challenges at her school.

This was followed by a presentation from Vhuthu Tshilengo, the first University of Venda student pursuing a master's degree in Astronomy. She presented her research on ThunderKAT, one of the MeerKAT's large survey projects.



Prof Edwin Madala from the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology at UNIVEN presented on the Identification of newly emerging plant compounds with nutraceutical relevance through a combination of mass spectrometry and computational metabolomics approaches. He said UNIVEN is doing extremely well in terms of science. He talked about the light that comes from the sun. Prof Madala indicated that plants are particularly important for maintaining the life of many animals. "Government needs to fund UNIVEN science projects that are without funding. Due to climate change, plants are also faced with challenges of survival as they are undergoing change." He said the food that we are eating today underwent some change because of the change in climate change. This means there is a change in chemical composition. Prof Madala mentioned that there is a possibility that in the future the food that we eat might not have nutrients because of climate change. He said climate change is caused by human beings through air pollution.



The other presentation came from Prof Pascal Bessong, Director: SAMRCUNIVEN Antimicrobial Resistance and Global Health Research Unit who made a presentation about Mitigating antimicrobial resistance: the Role of Communities. Prof Bessong articulated how to make an effort in eliminating microbes/germs Antimicrobial resistance (AMR). He said if we all move together in using science to improve our lives, challenges could be eradicated. Our science cannot remain in the academic journals, we also need to train other upcoming experts in this field. We need to have engagements on how to bring high schools into play. We need to collaborate with our communities if we want to go far. We need to tackle these problems in our communities together," said Prof Bessong.



The programme was facilitated by the Director General of the Department of Science and Innovation, Dr Phil Mjwara who consistently encouraged learners and the public to develop a love for science.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford proposed a vote of thanks and thanked the Minister for bringing the National Science Week Launch to UNIVEN. He further thanked DSI, DHET and UNIVEN for putting together a successful event. "This event has proven that the University of Venda is an anchor institution in the Vhembe district.

There were over 200 exhibitors and workshops that demonstrated how basic sciences have paved the way to the discoveries and technological revolutions that are continuously reshaping the world in which we live.

## The Launch of National Science Week 2023 was a memorable turning point continued..

Below is a photo gallery of the exhibition stalls and Exhibitors:



UNIVEN Choir entertaining the audience

## Prof Kanyane is a co-opted member of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and a member of the Research, Monitoring and Advice Committee (RMAC)



The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Prof Modimowabarwa Kanyane has been appointed as a co-opted member of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and a member of the Research, Monitoring and Advice Committee (RMAC).

His appointment is from 01 July 2023 to 30 June 2026. The CHE also considered his expertise and appointed him to serve on the Research, Monitoring and Advice Committee of the Council.

In congratulating Prof Kanyane, Rev. Vuyo Memani-Sedile, the CHE Chairperson said

"I take this opportunity on behalf of the CHE to congratulate you on this important call to national duty. I have no doubt that you will make valuable contributions to the governance of the CHE given your vast experience and knowledge. I look forward to working with you".

Prof Kanyane is a renowned scholar in South Africa who has an extensive range of experience in governance, public service ethics and intergovernmental relations within the broader field of Public Administration, Management and Development coupled with decadal social sciences research at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).

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Prof Jan Crafford, Deputy Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning, on hearing about the good news said "What an honour – another feather in your cap! You are establishing an impressive profile in SA higher education and at the same time doing UNIVEN proud. This is wonderful, congratulations!".

In his acceptance, Prof Kanyane said that he feels honoured by this appointment to have an opportunity to contribute especially in the areas of governance, monitoring and research.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is an independent statutory body established by the Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997, as amended. It is also governed by the NQF Act No. 67 of 2008 which declared it the Quality Council for Higher Education, and further operates as a Schedule 3A public entity in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA, Act 1 of 1999), as amended.

The Council has the overall responsibility for oversight of the CHE and is accountable for the performance of the organisation. In carrying out their functions, Members of the Council, the HEQC and all subcommittees are expected to possess a high level of expertise in their fields, are required to be knowledgeable about the higher education sector and are required to uphold the highest standards of ethics.

# The University of Venda Journal of Educational Studies held the first-ever Biennial Conference



The University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s Journal of Educational Studies held the first-ever Biennial Conference on selected and topical themes. The conference which was officially opened by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza took place from 28 – 29 July 2023 at Kruger National Park, Skukuza Camp in Mpumalanga.

The theme for the inaugural conference was Reinventing Education in the PostPandemic Era. This theme was conceptualised after the pandemic. The Covid19 pandemic exposed the deep inequalities existing in our education systems across all sectors. Such inequalities have been clearly demonstrated around issues of physical and epistemological access in schools and universities around opportunities to succeed across different socio-economic groups and across gender divides.



As she officially opens the conference, Prof Nosisi Feza said, "it is a humbling moment for me to open this significant event for our education researchers and the contribution made by the Journal of Educational Studies (JES)." Prof Feza expressed her appreciation to distinguished guests such as Prof Felix Maringe Editor in Chief of the JES and Prof Shireen Motala who was the conference's Keynote Speaker. She further appreciated the UNIVEN team led by the Interim Deputy Dean of Research and Postgraduate Studies, who is the Co-Editor of JES, Prof Takalani Mashau and Dr Leonard Tshikoto who is also the JES Co-Editor for their leadership and understanding that Education research is the mother of all careers and if not done, our challenges will continuously lead us to dysfunctional societies.

Prof Feza echoed the words of the late Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world!" Her take on Nelson Mandela's

words was that the key role of education is to "Liberate the minds." Prof Feza stated that it is not about putting bread on the table but liberating the minds so that they could create opportunities to invent and make the bread needed by our societies.

She further made reference to Piaget and Kamii who maintained that in their research on Autonomy, the two scholars discussed two kinds of autonomy: Moral and Intellectual autonomy. "Moral autonomy is doing right in the absence of anyone. Intellectual autonomy, being curious in figuring out the root causes of behaviour, incidents, problems, occurrences to make sure we live a quality life."

As she continued with her opening address, she highlighted Education and its importance within the seven (07) Aspirations of the Africa Agenda 2063. Prof Feza detailed Aspiration One (01) which speaks about a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. She showed that this aspiration goes back to the identity of UBUNTU as an African concept. This means ethical growth centred around respect for everyone and all entities. She further spoke of the 'Well Educated Citizens and Skills' revolution underpinned by Science, Technology, and Innovation that is more relevant to this conference and this Journal, and what makes it unique from others.



The official opening was followed by a conference workshop conducted by Prof Felix Maringe, Conference Chair and Editor in Chief of the JES. The workshop was about 'Exploring factors that contribute to a successful research grant.' Prof Maringe highlighted factors that could assist in authoring a winning research grant. He also spoke about a range of grants that are available.



The keynote speaker of the conference, Prof Shireen Motala was introduced as a visionary scholar, entrepreneur, manager, organiser, publisher and extraordinarily strong in transformation. Prof Motala is a SARChI Chair: Teaching and Learning at the University of Johannesburg (UJ).

She delivered an address on Epistemic disruption, inequality and new realities in South African Higher Education – A clinical perspective. In her presentation, Prof Motala talked about the social justice agenda that has been co-opted by performativity and complex accountability instruments that government wields without being finessed or nuanced for the social contexts and realities of the highly differentiated higher education system in South Africa.

Prof Motala said the techno-rational turn has brought celebration from university and government leadership with the promise of launching the South African higher education system into new worlds that are contemporaneous with technological developments and on par with the developed world. She implied that the question is whether the Global South and developing world contexts – are primed and ready to be agents for meaningful change. She stated that "our contention is that they cannot be viewed in isolation from societies." Prof Motala pointed out that the structural inequalities of society are mirrored in higher education. She alluded to the participation parity that has been difficult to achieve, and digital inequality has contributed further to mediated and unmediated forms of discrimination. Hence, there is a huge gap between the government and the teaching and learning environments of universities mirroring the vastly differing contexts of rurality, demography and economic and social development. However, these are by no means homogenous – different contexts – different capabilities and different challenges and strengths.

Prof Motala applied Trow's definition that says, 'higher education has massified and resource allocation has not kept pace,' which means that equity of access, attainment and outcomes has not been achieved.

As she concluded her presentation, Motala maintained that holistic development requires all the resources which must centre on teaching and learning and social justice discussions. As a result, these include academic development and support, well-qualified teachers, favourable staff-student ratios, a package for learners that accommodate social and academic needs, and a movement amongst universities and government, locating Teaching and Learning at the centre stage.

Over 60 participants from fifteen local and international universities attended this conference, with three plenary sessions and 60 parallel sessions organised during the conference.



Prof Takalani Mashau chaired the official opening and closing of the conference and workshop.

In wrapping up the conference, Prof Motala gave an overview of the conference. She said we can be impactful in terms of change. The responsibility for change in South Africa is upon all of us. We need to explore all methodologies in order to impact change. She thanked UNIVEN for organising an event which was scholarly and intellectual engagement and sharing. The quality of the presentations was exceptionally high. The biggest issue with this kind of event is that it is an opportunity for us to network, share, to hear from other colleagues because South Africa seems to be silent and we often do not hear what colleagues in other institutions are thinking about. She said colleagues should use this opportunity to establish some collaborations and cross-research themes that are critical in the areas of common interest.

## The University of Venda Journal of Educational Studies held the first-ever Biennial Conference continued..

Prof Motla mentioned that what was striking in this conference is that everybody embraced the theme of the conference in a profoundly serious way. The important thing that came up was whether there was a lot of description and detailed analysis of the problems we face. What are the interventions, innovations, range of methodologies that we can use, and what is our policy impact? She went on to state that we can do a lot of research, but who is listening to us and where do these go? She said this particular challenge is for all of us as education researchers and professionals. There is an issue of urgency and how we all individually can begin to understand that through our research, practices, teaching and learning can be impactful in terms of change.



Delegates sharing their grant proposal writing experiences



Conference organisers



Dr Nkhangweleni Mafenya, Ms Tshimangadzo Mudau, Prof Felix Maringe, Prof Takalani Mashau, Dr Leonard Tshikota, Dr Dzihonele Sinthumule

## University of Venda and the US based Guilford College discuss potential collaborative areas



UNIVEN and Guilford College staff members posing for a photo at Research Conference Centre



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) recently hosted a delegation from Guilford College at the University's Research Conference Centre. The reason for their visit was to discuss potential collaborative areas.

Guilford College is found on a scenic, 349-acre wooded campus in the lively college city of Greensboro, North Carolina, US.

In his welcome remarks, Prof Jan Crafford gave a brief sketch of UNIVEN. He mentioned that this University was founded to be the only University to cater for only Tshivenda

speaking people. But later after seven years from there when the apartheid government lost power, change happened. That is when UNIVEN started to cater for everyone. Since then, the enrolment increased, responding to the population of South Africa.

"Our new vision was developed with the vision to lead in engaged scholarship. We have the capacity in engaged scholarship and this is one of the areas that UNIVEN and Guilford should collaborate on. We have over the years been in the field of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). IKS is also one of

the areas where we excel, we are keen to explore and conduct research in traditional African medicines to test whether they could be commercialised." Prof Crafford further mentioned that the search for these two institutions should address challenges for our communities. "Biodiversity conservation is also important. Our Biosphere Reserve must be protected. There are many areas in which UNIVEN and Guilford College could collaborate on." Prof Crafford said he is impressed by the missions, vision, values of the Guilford College.

# University of Venda and the US based Guilford College discuss potential collaborative areas continued..

“Our new vision was developed with the vision to lead in engaged scholarship. We have the capacity in engaged scholarship and this is one of the areas that UNIVEN and Guilford should collaborate on.”



The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, Prof Bongani Bantwini gave the background of the faculty where he highlighted the profile enrolment in the faculty. He also highlighted the faculty staff profile. Prof Bantwini said this Faculty has 10 departments. He also presented the faculty-based projects and activities (indigenous knowledge systems and heritage studies), faculty projects and activities in the African languages, faculty-based projects, and activities professional and curriculum, English, media studies and linguistics, early childhood education, professional and curriculum studies, including the Takenote IT/UNIVEN cybersecurity MoU.



The Interim Deputy Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Prof Tharien van der Walt presented the overview of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law Flagship projects. She presented about a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes including research project. She said since last year the faculty has been hosting the school for legal practice on campus. Amongst others, she presented about Community Engagement activities, local, regional, and international research activities in which the faculty participates in; Faculty research niche areas / Thematic Thrusts and other points of interest in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law.



Prof Jethro Zuwarimwe presented the overview of the Institute of for Rural Development (IRD) Flagship Projects. He further presented IRD's areas of strength and existing expertise.



When talking about the purpose of the visit, the President of Guilford College, Prof Kyle Farmbry gave a brief historical background of Guilford College. He mentioned that Guilford College has several students who are working on entrepreneurship, others on Biodiversity. These are some of the areas that we should collaborate on. Prof Farmbry said he was excited to be at UNIVEN to discuss the way forward on the possible areas of collaborations.



On behalf of the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, Prof Nthaduleni Nethengwe presented the faculty structure, research areas of collaboration, roles of Vuwani Science Resource Centre, Grade 10 to Grade 12 Support Experiments Projects, Robotics and Coding Project, Social Learners Support and Motivational Talks. He further presented the University's involvement in the SARChi Chair office, relevant published papers, and journals in the faculty, IKS and Genomics project, biodigester project, geography, and geospatial technologies. Prof Nethengwe concluded by presenting the faculty's areas of collaboration and possible areas of partnerships.

When giving remarks, Director Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama spoke about Community Engagement and the Scholarship of Engagement as a function cutting across all areas. She said it is important for UNIVEN and Guilford College to collaborate and partner because both institutions have areas of interest in which they could collaborate. She further said that both UNIVEN and Guilford College need to take into consideration the extramural activities of their students. Prof Netshandama mentioned some of the flagship projects and possible collaborative areas in the Institute for Rural Development, Vuwani Science Resource Centre, CHETL, Student Affairs Directorate, Curriculum transformation and dual learning programmes.



Mr Thabo Dikgale gave a brief overview of UNIVEN and possible areas of collaboration. He said the UNIVEN 's geographical location makes UNIVEN the best University to collaborate with, for organisations that want to make impact in the SADC region. Mr Dikgale continued to mention that UNIVEN introspects and reevaluates how the University supports research, and partnerships.



The Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi gave the overview of the Faculty of Health Sciences. She gave a brief profile of the faculty where she presented about the departments in the faculty. She further presented about undergraduate programmes and staff profile. She mentioned that the faculty has four Flagship projects. She concluded by highlighting the published books in the faculty and the planned upcoming faculty conferences.



Delegates from Guilford College

# UNIVEN plays a leading role during the First International Conference on Community Engagement and Service



Some of conference participants posing for a photo with Prof Netshandama

As a University that is leading in engaged scholarship, the University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s Community Engagement Directorate has recently played a leadership role during the 1st International Conference on Community Engagement and Service held from 28-30 June 2023. This was a partnership in which the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), UNIVEN, Mangosuthu University of

Technology (MUT), Botho University (Botswana) and Nelson Mandela Children's Fund put together a conference to promote contextual, scholarly engagements for social impact to Communities in Southern Africa. The venue of this hybrid conference was Umfolozi Hotel Resort, Empangeni hosted by the University of Zululand (UNIZULU). The theme of the conference was 'We are because you are: community engagement and the scholarship of engaged interface.'

The conference offered participants an opportunity to connect, collaborate and communicate best practices for engaging with communities.



"This was our inaugural conference at UNIZULU, and we are proud to be the host. This conference was an academic activity that allowed the scholars to engage with each other, share ideas, showcase their work and network," explained Dr Mammusa Lekoa who is the Manager: Community Engagement at UNIZULU. The official opening remarks were delivered by Professor Nokuthula Kunene who is the DVC Research and Innovation at UNIZULU.

UNIVEN team, largely from Professor Joseph Franci's engaged scholarship Community of Practice (CoP) delivered 15 papers. Other participating universities included Catholic University of Zimbabwe, University of South Africa, Central University of Technology, North-West University, Rhodes University, University of Free State and they contributed up to 65 presented papers. The topics that were covered are an array of themes that were crafted to also relate to strategic responsibilities across the partnering universities amongst others:

- Understanding the praxis of the integrated community engagement.
- Africanisation of community engagement and service learning.
- Monitoring and evaluation of community engagement in higher education.
- Societal and social impact self-review, evidence collection and measurement.
- Critical post-humanist, adaptive systems, and change theories.
- Community engagement in the digital era.
- Application of the quintuple partnership helix in community engagement and social enterprise development.
- The role of community engagement in addressing the SDGs.
- Social innovation and social entrepreneurship development through community engagement.
- The ethics of engagement and community engagement in higher education.
- Development approaches and models to community engagement • Social partnerships in communities for change.
- Integrated community engagement ecosystems.
- Decolonising communities and methodologies for community-engaged research.
- The politics of community and engagement – ethics, economics, traditions, etc.

- Models of social innovation / social entrepreneurship as community engagement.
- Responsible citizenship development and community engagement.
- Citizenship education-student initiatives and CE projects- (student track).

Ubuntu, in her presentation she raised the following questions: how do we use ubuntu as community engagement philosophy? How to be an Ubuntu Responsive Educator (URE). She said teachers should be 'Ubuntu Responsive.' In her conclusion she borrowed from a book by Omiunota Nelly Ukpokodu who mentioned that "You Can't Teach Us if You Don't Know Us and Care About Us: Becoming an Ubuntu, Responsive and Responsible Urban Teacher" (Black Studies and Critical Thinking). The final keynote was delivered by Titus Pacho from Kisii University in Kenya.



Various keynote speakers from international organisations addressed attendees on various topics. Prof Azwihangwisi Helen Mavhandu-Mudzusi from the University of South Africa addressed attendees on the first day of the conference under the topic 'Higher Education and Engaged Scholarship'. She was followed by Prof Wilson Majee from the University of Masouri (Columbia). Ms Noni Mumba who is the Head of Engagement KEMRI (Kenya) spoke about Welcome Trust Research Programme. Prof Alecia Nichole Blackwood from Longwood University (USA) spoke largely about Ubuntu Pedagogy. She mentioned that academics should teach learners in the spirit of



As one of the keynote speakers during the gala dinner that was held on the evening of 29 June 2023, Chief Programmes Officer at Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, Dr Stanley Maphosa said we are living in a country where many people find themselves being struck by poverty and unemployment. "Struggling communities are only being visited by politicians during election times." Dr Maphosa said the late Nelson Mandela formed this organisation to bridge this gap. "Nelson Mandela formed this organisation with the realisation that the government alone couldn't bridge this gap. He was contributing third portion of his salary to this centre. Let us continue to assist these communities through organisations such as the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund," said Dr Maphosa.

The conference also had three workshop sessions. Two of the workshops were facilitated by Professor Netshandama (University of Venda) and colleagues

## UNIVEN plays a leading role during the First International Conference on Community Engagement and Service continued...

Professor Nkonki – Mandleni (MUT) and Dr Lekoa (UNIZULU). The first workshop was on the “nexus of work-based integrated learning, social entrepreneurship training and development, and the scholarship of community engagement in higher education: Peeling the back the layers, examining the intersection, and the second.”

The second workshop was about “How to monitor and evaluate performance towards social impact in higher education? A qualitative, transformation and indigenous paradigm.”

The third workshop was by Professor Zuwarinwe Jethro, Dr Agnes Mathaulula and Mr Rudzani Mamphweli (UNIVEN Scholarship of engagement CoP) was on “Strengthening the capacity for engaged scholarship and community engagement: Reflections from the University of Venda. The following was the leading question asked during the workshop: How do we strengthen the capacity of engaged scholarship within our institutions?”



Professor Vhonani Netshandama spoke about the impact of colleagues working within communities. She advised them to define for themselves what communities are and stop waiting for someone to define communities for them.

Undergraduate students from UNIVEN also presented a paper titled “Experience and lessons in facilitating the skills for future programme for Grade 12 learners in selected schools of Vhembe East”.

Their presentation emanated from their current project (Skills for the future programme (SFFP) for grade 12 learners) which aims to introduce learners from rural based schools careers of the future. The trio were sharing their experience and lessons in facilitating the programme. The key contribution of their paper was building confidence amongst grade 12 learners before their final examination, and the fact that learners obtained the marks that they were anticipating through the programme “Indeed we are the ATeam Girls” - exactly what their mentor will always say to them.



In her welcome address on day three of the conference, Director Community Engagement and Development at Mangosuthu University of Technology, Prof Busisiwe Nkoki-Mandleni indicated that this was a perfect opportunity to deliberate on issues of social justice and redress. Prof NkokiMandleni reminded attendees that without communities, we are nothing because we also come from the same communities where we collect our research data, and our aim is to solve challenges faced by these community members.



A group of students from UNIVEN who participated and presented their paper on the 1st International Conference on Community Engagement and Services. L-R: Pfunzo Netshivulana, middle is Lusani Netshilaphala and Tshinakaho Tshilamulela.

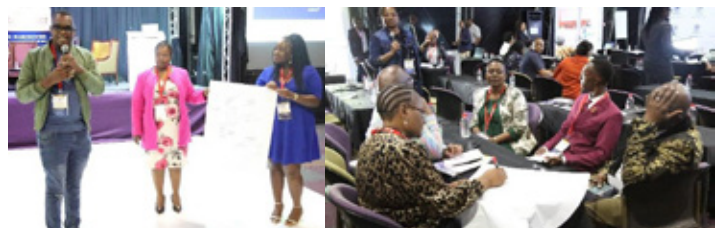


UNIZULU Choir entertaining participants



Some of the conference participants during the conference

### Some of the pictures taken during the conference.





# USAF Officials Conduct Exemption Regulations Capacity Building Workshop at UNIVEN



The Department of Academic Administration recently hosted officials from Universities South Africa (USAF). These officials were on a roadshow, conducting Exemption Regulations capacity-building across all institutions from June to September. Besides Academic Administration staff, an invitation was also extended to Faculty Managers and International Relations and Partnerships Directorate staff members.

The guests were welcomed by Mr Seth Ugoda who also introduced a guest from Matriculation Board: Ms Annie Viljoen (Manager, Matriculation Board), Mr Lesufi Clayton (Exemption Regulations Officer) and Ms Graham Louiee (Finance and Administration Officer). In his opening remarks, he explained the purpose of the workshop.

The first presentation was delivered by Mr Lesufi on Exemption Regulations. Mr Lesufi indicated that Matriculation Board determines minimum general admission requirements. He highlighted the diverse types of exemption that they issue to applicants who meet requirements, i.e. Complete Exemption; Foreign Conditional Exemption for international students; Mature Age Exemption; Senate Discretionary Exemption; A-Level Conditional Exemption;

AS-Level Conditional Exemption; Higher Level Conditional Exemption; IGCSE Level Conditional Exemption and Condonation Exemption Certificate.

Mr Lesufi further indicated that an exemption certificate is transferable from one institution to another. He indicated that he was also

concerned about the few applications for Mature Age Exemptions and Senate Discretionary Exemptions from University of Venda that they recently received. He indicated that other institutions have a policy on the number of students who should be admitted based on Mature Age Exemptions and Senate Discretionary Exemptions.

During discussions some of the colleagues indicated that it was for the first time they were hearing about the diverse types of exemptions that applicants can use to qualify to study at a university.

It was suggested that the roadshow should be extended to different career exhibitions across the country so that the information could be spread widely.

The second presentation was done by Ms Graham who indicated that USAF has introduced an MBIT- online. It is a new Matriculation Board System for Institutions, that has been developed to cater for institutions to submit and manage their application for exemption electronically. Some of the supporting documents that are required when an application is made include the following:

- M30E application form
- Copy of ID /passport/birth certificate
- Marriage certificate or divorce order
- School leaving certificate
- Academic record/transcripts of post-School qualification (if applicable)
- Proof of payment

The process of the application takes up to three weeks. The cost of applying for both complete and conditional exemption is R700-00, while the amended or duplicate certificate is R350-00. Application for Senate Discretionary Exemption is valid for three years because the student must complete all firstyear modules within a period of three years.

Ms. Julia Sigama, Faculty Manager in the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture thanked the organisers of the workshop that was well organised. She also thanked USAF officials for their insightful presentations. She concluded by thanking all the participants .



## Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication welcomes new interns from the Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus package



Mr Mafanedza Ramabulana, Mr Gudani Ralufuluvhi, Ms Mukovhe Ramukosi, Ms Tshilidzi Ratalulani, Mr Ntsieni Mutengwe and Mr Vhuhwaho Ramukumba .

The Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication (MBC) will host a cohort of six new interns from the Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus package in 2023 for six months, from July to December 2023. The interns and their details are in the picture.

The Director of Marketing Branding and Communication urged the mentors to enable the interns to learn valuable work skills and gain useful experience. "We are committed to treat our interns with the same respect as any other member of staff. Let us come together to welcome and support these young minds wanting to take the Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication in particular, and the entire University to new elevations", highlighted Dr Dzaga.

# A Memorandum of Understanding opens doors to partnerships in research, student exchange, and community engagement programmes



UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni (Left) and Guilford College President, Prof Kyle Farmbry (right) exchanging the signed copies of the MoU

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) and United States' Guilford College have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to forge new academic relationships and engage in several collaborative programmes. The signing ceremony of this Memorandum of Understanding took place on Monday, 17 July 2023 at Khoroni Hotel.

The agreement, which runs through July 2028, was signed by UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni and President of Guilford College, Prof Kyle Farmbry.

UNIVEN and Guilford College will collaborate in ways that leverage academic strengths, faculty expertise, resources, and technology to enhance student learning. The agreement encourages the exchange of faculty members

and students between schools, and joint organisation of conferences and another programmes.



A group photo of attendees of the MoU signing

## President of Convocation Sylvester Motadi joins other scholars at the BRICS Conference



On Monday, 17 July 2023, the President of Convocation, Mr Sylvester Motadi, presented a paper titled "Public Administration Reforms and Emerging Challenges" at the BRICS Conference that took place at the University of Pretoria Future Africa campus. The National School of Government has organised the conference for 17-19 July 2023 with a specific focus on Governance and Public Administration Reforms as part of a build-up towards the BRICS Summit to be hosted by the South African government next month. The conference was attended by over 50 scholars from BRICS member countries, senior government officials, and academics from schools of government in Asia, Europe and Africa.

UNIVEN Alumni News had a telephonic interview session with Mr Motadi. In his introduction, Mr Motadi described public administration reforms as critical in promoting growth and development in BRICS countries because these reforms influence the functionality of governments, delivery of services and the implementation of policies. He also identified challenges that BRICS nations face, such as technological revolution, climate change, equity and resource constraints. Mr Motadi further made an in-depth and comparative analysis of public administration reforms in the BRICS countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

"The technological revolution brings transformative changes and also multi-dimensional challenges. India and South Africa face access to and successful utilisation of digital technology, which highlights socioeconomic gaps. The public administration of all BRICS countries are exposed to cybersecurity challenges which pose serious national security and citizen privacy", said Mr Motadi about the technological challenges among BRICS nations.

He encouraged BRICS countries to work together in managing disasters and other challenges brought about by climate change. "Brazil and India face climate catastrophes due to extreme weather events while South Africa and China's economies are dependent on fossil fuels, which make it challenging to implement climate-friendly policies and practices", said Mr Motadi on climate change challenges.

Mr Motadi outlined the findings and analysis of the study, looking at the political will, stakeholder involvement and participation, technological adoption and digitisation of public services as essential drivers of public administration reforms. "A successful reform recipe requires a harmonious blend of political commitment, stakeholder engagement and the effective use of technology."

# Campus Health Services organises an educational Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Campaign



Staff and students participating in the fun walk from Sports Hall to the venue where the event took place before the event

'Education is contraception's best friend.' This was the theme of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Campaign that recently took place at the University's Lecture Hall 01 of the School of Education. During this health awareness campaign, Campus Health Services advised students about disadvantages of falling pregnant while they are still students. Students were educated about how to avoid unwanted pregnancies, how to avoid being infected by sexually transmitted diseases, and to give students the opportunity to be accountable for their health.



In his Address, the University Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni thanked students for attending this event in numbers. He told them that these events are organised to educate them, therefore, students should make use of these opportunities to gain experience about things that will help them to build their careers without distractions. Dr Nthambeleni discouraged students from engaging in illegal termination of pregnancies.

"We called you to this meeting as your parents because we care about your future. You are the hope for the future of this country. There is no future without young people. As young people, understand that there is a brighter future ahead of you. There is so much more to life after obtaining your degrees. Focus on what you are here for. We care about your health. Love and respect yourselves." Dr Nthambeleni told attendees that this message is not for young women only, it is also meant for male students, "let us all take responsibility of our lives."

Dr Nthambeleni further informed students that the decisions that they take today will determine their future. He told them to be careful of their actions. "Be the first one to break the cycle of poverty in our families." He mentioned that in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), South Africa has the highest HIV prevalence. "Refuse to be part of this statistics. There is hope ahead of you, there is a Campus Health Clinic where you can learn a lot about sexually transmitted diseases. Use health services that are available at the campus health clinic." Dr Nthambeleni told those who are already HIV positive to know that there are services to assist them at Campus Health and they still have brighter future ahead of them.

He concluded his talk by advising students to never become victims of friendships because some students make uninformed decisions because of an influence from their peers. "Always remember where you come from. Never forget about where you come from." He advised students to stop using NSFAS stipend to buy alcohol and drugs. Students should use the stipend to buy food and other things that will assist them during their studies. "The issue of raising children is not an easy one. So do not allow people to play with your future," Dr Nthambeleni concluded.



In his welcome address, Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga indicated that the University cares about the health of students. He indicated that this event is intended to make sure that the University produces graduates who are responsible in taking care of their lives even beyond their graduation.



Mr Edward Dongola told students about the services that are provided by the Campus Health Services. These services amongst others include primary healthcare, emergency services and HIV and AIDS services. The clinic has 24-hour emergency services, and it is free of charge for students. "We encourage students who are not in need of emergency services to make bookings, appointments will be scheduled, and the best service will be rendered." Mr Dongola further indicated that Campus Health Services also provides the service of minor surgical procedures. "We have a medical doctor who is available during the week from 10:00 to 12:00. Counseling Services are also available. We also do community outreach services both physically and through UNIVEN FM." Mr Dongola highlighted some of the challenges that the Campus Health Services comes across. He advised students to use the available contraceptives in a proper way to avoid unwanted diseases and pregnancies.

"Illegal pregnancy termination is dangerous, there is a way that you can protect yourselves to avoid illegal termination of pregnancies. This information that we give you will save you for the rest of your life." He thanked the Limpopo Provincial Department of Health for the support that they are giving to the University. Mr Dongola also thanked Higher Education Health for their contributions in making sure that students get the best health services on campus.



SRC Minister of Health, Safety and Security, Mamatho Fulufhelo told students that this health campaign was organised to empower

them. He said the Student Representative Council supports initiatives of this nature because they aim to make sure that students take informed decisions. He applauded student's participation and for attending this event in numbers.



Deputy Director: Maternal and Child at Vhembe Department of Health, Mr Milingoni Phanel Phamphe, spoke about Sexual Reproductive Health Rights. Mr Phamphe told students that good health with a better future is in their hands. "It starts with you. Everyone has the right to have access to health services including sexual health services. This is a fundamental component for everyone." Mr Phamphe further told students to make choices that are right for their future. "Make informed decisions in life. Take care of your own bodies then you will have a long healthy life. This health clinic is here to help you to make those informed decisions. Use free family planning services that we are offering because this will avoid unnecessary termination of pregnancies."

"Always be aware that HIV is still out there, therefore protect yourselves. Take care of your reproductive organs." He told attendees that he is happy to see the University taking charge of educating students about the importance of making informed health decisions. "The future is in your hands and take care of yourself."



Associate Professor who is a Clinical Psychologist, Prof Angelina Maphula spoke about psychological effects of unplanned pregnancy. She told students that falling pregnant while they are still studying is a challenge because they are not ready psychologically, emotionally, and financially. "Focus on your studies. Do not mix studying and starting a family. Do it step by step not at the same time because that will make your life difficult."

Prof Maphula advised students to delay starting families until they are financially stable. "Books and babies do not mix, it is like paraffin and water. Use the family planning services that are available at Campus Health. Use the contraceptives that are available and avoid falling pregnant. Protect yourselves because there are lot of sexually related diseases out there. Secure your future first and the rest will follow. Those who had illegal termination of pregnancy should go for counselling. Make success fashionable, prioritise your goals. Protect your vision, protect your dream," she told students.

## Campus Health Services organises an educational Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Campaign continued...



The Director Human Resources, Mrs Uanda Ndou told students to mark this day as a day of change. "Change must start here with you. She told those who have attended to share what they have learned with others." Mrs Ndou encouraged students to abstain and if that choice is difficult then they should use contraceptives that will protect them from unwanted pregnancy and diseases.



Attendees of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Campaign listening to the speakers



Dr Bernard Ntshabeleni posing with UNIVEN staff members and some of the University stakeholders from various organisations

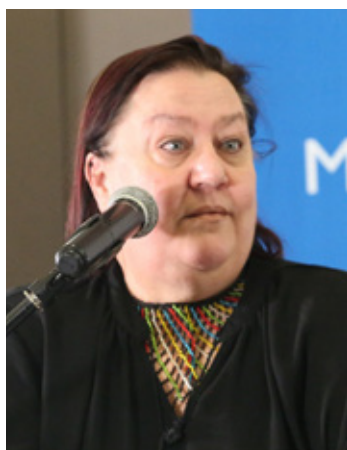


Campus Health Staff members and Peer Educators posing after the event

# The untold story of women scientists in Mzansi dialogue



When celebrating five remarkable women who have broken through traditional gender barrier and are using science to make South Africa a better place, on Friday, 21 July 2023, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) hosted a dialogue on the untold story of women scientists in Mzansi. This dialogue took place at the University's Research Conference Centre and was organised by the University of Venda, National Research Foundation (NRF)'s South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA), National Science Week (NSW), Department of Science and Innovation, and the National Development Plan 2030.



This dialogue was chaired by the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, Prof Natasha Potgieter. Prof Potgieter mentioned that these ordinary women have worked hard to improve their lives and to get to where they are. In her final remarks, Prof Potgieter said these women are where they are today because of their dedication. "Put yourself first in everything you do. Support each other, love one another," she told women who attended this event.

The panelists of the dialogue were Ms Mandisa Fanele (Facilitator at the Department of Science and Innovation); Dr Sophie Mulaudzi (Lecturer: Physics at UNIVEN); Ms Nosisa Dube (Director: Reviews and Evaluations at the National Research Foundation); Dr Mahlodi Makgoka (Medical Officer at the Cullinan Care and Rehabilitation Centre); Ms Rudzani Maboyi (MSc student in Earth Science(Hydrology and Water Resources) and an intern at the South African Environmental Observatory Network, University of Venda); and Ms Tshimangadzo Mudau, Senior Software Engineer at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).



When introducing herself, Dr Sophie Mulaudzi, who is the Senior Lecturer in the Department of Physics said at first, she wanted to be a Medical Doctor but due to financial challenges, she ended up being a teacher. She mentioned that being a teacher did not discourage her from furthering her studies, she said she furthered her studies till she completed her doctoral degree. "The journey has not been easy, but it was worth it." She continued to explain that she still encourages young girls to further their studies and become what they want to be. Dr Mulaudzi said some of the young women that she was studying with were not taking their studies serious and she had to motivate them to use their opportunity because there are a lot of people out there who could not get this opportunity.



Ms Nosisa Dube, who is the Director: Reviews and Evaluations at the National Research Foundation said she was raised by educators

(referring to her grand parents). "I knew that I should be grateful and use every opportunity that I get. I knew that an opportunity might be the first and the last opportunity. So, I used every opportunity that was given to me. When you are given an opportunity, make use of it." Ms Dube advised women not to relax in life and to always try to be financially independent. She told them that it is important to always build networks. "Do not wait for people to come to you, if you need help, go out to seek help from those that you think will assist you.

we need to look for them and not wait for someone to present them to us. Whenever there is an opportunity, tell someone that you know who might need that opportunity. Especially those who are sorted, when you see something that might benefit someone you know, assist those who need those opportunities."



Ms Tshimangadzo Mudau who is the Senior Software Engineer at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research said she studied Bachelor of Engineering at the University of Johannesburg. She spoke about the way she got her bursary for undergraduate degree and for her masters in engineering. Ms Mudau mentioned that it was not an easy journey, but it was worth it. "Within a year of getting employment, I worked hard, and I became a senior in the organisation that I am working for." She expressed that, this field is dominated by men and young girls need to form study groups and motivate each other. She encouraged women who have made it in their careers to mentor young girls. "Young people need to start going out there to seek opportunities. Opportunities are plenty and



Dr Mahlodi Makgoka who is the Medical Officer at the Cullinan Care and Rehabilitation Centre said sometimes it is good to dream of becoming something but when you get there, you realise that this is not what you have imagined it to be. She said she studied Bachelor of Medicine. "It was not an easy journey, but it was worth it." She continued to explain that she went into medicine because people were saying there is money in there, till today she has not seen the money that people were talking about. "As an individual, do research on career paths to avoid disappointments. "This will assist you not to waste your money and time." She said usually at young ages, most people lack mentors. "We do not know who to approach to mentor us. We do not know the right career paths are right for us but if young people could be mentored, a lot of young people will become what they want to be." She advised the youth to use their smart phones to look for information that will build assist them to improve in lives."

## The untold story of women scientists in Mzansi dialogue continued..



Ms Rudzani Maboyi, MSc Student in Earth Science (Hydrology and Water Resources) and an intern at the South African Environmental Observation Network University of Venda said she was the first woman with honors degree from her family. She had no one to look up to within her family. "Encouragement comes from within, if you tell yourself that you can make it, you will make it. Start believing in yourselves. Expose yourselves in many things that you believe will be of assistance in your life."



The dialogue was facilitated by Ms Mandisa Fanele from the Department of Science and Innovation. She told attendees that the country needs to look at how we build a community of our own as scientists. "We need to start talking about empowering and building both our boys and girls. As women, we need to raise our boys in ways in which they will be responsible and be supporting men in future. We should not only be talking to girls all the time, but we also need to balance and not neglect our boys."



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Prof Afsatu Traore who is the HoD: Microbiology and Biochemistry gave a vote of thanks.

**"Encouragement comes from within, if you tell yourself that you can make it, you will make it. Start believing in yourselves. Expose yourselves in many things that you believe will be of assistance in your life."**



## Thendo Gertie Makhado is A Finalist for the 2023 South African Women in Science Awards



As we are celebrating Women's month, the University of Venda celebrates and recognises women in science. Thendo Gertie Makhado has been nominated as one of the finalists for the esteemed 2023 South African Women in Science Awards (SAWISA) under the DSI Fellowships category. This recognition serves as a testament to her dedication to advancing knowledge in the field of nursing and her commitment to empowering women and girls in science.

The SAWISA is an annual event that celebrates and rewards the excellence of women scientists and researchers in South Africa. It aims to profile these exceptional women as role models for the next generation, inspiring them to pursue careers in science. The theme for the 2023 SAWISA, "Harnessing technological change and innovation to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls," aligns with Thendo's passion for utilizing research and education to promote inclusivity and reduce stigma.

Thendo Gertie Makhado is a junior lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Advanced Nursing Science at the University of Venda, who joined the University of Venda in August 2022 on a 2-year fixed-term contract. She is also an enthusiastic PhD candidate in Nursing at the University of Venda. Her research focus centers on epilepsy and its impact on education and social integration. She is dedicated to developing Epilepsy

Life Skills Education Guidelines for Primary Schools in Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces, South Africa, with the goal of fostering an inclusive learning environment for all children.

Throughout her academic journey, Thendo has consistently demonstrated her commitment to advancing nursing knowledge. She has published five peer-reviewed articles directly related to her PhD research, highlighting her dedication and rigorous approach to research. In total, she has contributed to 12 publications, addressing various healthcare challenges and emphasising her interdisciplinary approach to tackling critical issues.

Beyond her academic pursuits, Thendo actively engages in community empowerment initiatives. Notably, she has facilitated a partnership between the University and a local special school, working to empower and educate parents of children with special needs. Through this initiative, she aims to promote inclusivity and empower children with learning disabilities to become independent, reflecting her dedication to making a tangible impact beyond academia.

Thendo is grateful for the invaluable support and mentorship provided by her PhD supervisor, Prof Racheal Lebeso (University of Venda), and her Mentor, Dr Nombulelo Veronica Sepeng from the University of Pretoria. Their guidance has played a pivotal

role in shaping her research and career path, inspiring her to continue making a difference in the field of nursing.

The SAWISA Gala dinner, where the awards will be presented, is scheduled for Friday, 08 September 2023. The Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation will host this prestigious event at the Southern Sun Elangeni and Maharani in Durban.

Ms Makhado said that she is deeply honoured to be considered for this prestigious award,

When congratulating Thendo Gertie Makhado the Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi said "Thendo is committed to continuing her journey as a dedicated woman scientist, striving to make a positive impact on healthcare, education, and gender equality."

**"Harnessing technological change and innovation to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls," aligns with Thendo's passion for utilizing research and education to promote inclusivity and reduce stigma.**

# Student Affairs Department dedicates a week to honour the late President Nelson Mandela



Wamashudu Maphalu, Candice Chirwa, Hazel Nhuli, and Lesedi Kekana: Leadership of SOWOSA displaying the One Res One Garden vegetables that were harvested from residences. These vegetables were handed over to needy students.

One Res One Garden initiative is a collaborative programme of Student Housing and UNIVEN Experiential Farm. The programme aims to encourage student participation in farming, training students to produce and sustain small yard gardens, feeding the needy students with no financial support and those struggling to have a meal. Fresh organic spinach and cabbages produced from F4 Female and Mvelaphanda Male Residences were harvested and handed over to the Social Work Student Association (SOWASA). The Association helps students who need assistance in terms of food and other items.



Ms Lufuno Mugogovhali, Mvelaphanda Male Residence Warden

**“Student Housing at UNIVEN strives to create a living and learning environment as the foundation of its residence culture and best practices.”**



Mr Mfaniseni Mnguni Who is a Chief Clerk Hostel Warden said “Student Housing at UNIVEN strives to create a living and learning environment as the foundation of its residence culture and best practices. Whilst student development and support are dynamic in nature, the department foregrounds its array of services on epistemological concepts and theories, inclusive of the living and learning communities concepts. Every effort is made to ensure that student residence life experience will foster their holistic development as well as being fully supportive of their academic programme. The holistic student support initiative is embedded in the co-curricular activities.”



Ms Portia Mohlala, F4 Female Residence Warden

The vision of One Res One Garden initiative was to establish a sustainable garden that promotes holistic learning to the classroom. This garden was established with the intention of making it a school-community garden, allowing the University community to have garden plots. Students received training from the Faculty of Science, Engineering and

Agriculture. Together with Student Housing, these students were working in the garden once a week, weeding and learning how to take care of crops in the garden. Vegetables from the garden were donated to SOWOSA, a Social Work Organisation.



Mr Thomas Mukwevho, Mvelaphanda Male Residence Warden



Vegetables donated to SOWOSA

## Mr Tiyani Mboweni is the University of Venda’s new Social Media Officer



Lecturer in the Department of Media Studies. He also worked for a media monitoring company, Tangaza Africa Media where he mastered spotting misconceptions around the brand and taking control of the company’s brand reputation and customer sentiment.

Before joining the University of Venda in August 2023, he worked at the Department of Higher Education and Training - Mopani TVET College as a Public Relations Officer for seven years. In this role, he was responsible amongst other duties to develop and maintain good relations between the College and its internal and external stakeholders.

He also has incomparable skills in content development, customer service, and proficiency in all Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok.

Mr Mboweni graduated in 2015 from the University of Limpopo with a Master’s Degree in Media Studies.

The Director Marketing Branding and Communication, Dr Dzaga expressed that with the presence of a Social Media Officer, the University will maximise its online potential, expand its reach, enhance stakeholder engagement and ultimately increase UNIVEN brand awareness. Dr Dzaga called upon all members of the University community to give Mr Mboweni the necessary support during his tenure.

On behalf of the University of Venda, the Director Marketing, Branding and Communication is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Tiyani Mboweni as the new Social Media Officer in the Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication with effect from 01 August 2023.

Mr Tiyani Mboweni has over Thirteen (13) years of working experience in four different organisations undertaking a mixture of public relations, marketing and media monitoring amongst others.

He started his career as an Intern at the Limpopo Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing in 2009. In 2013, he joined the University of Limpopo where he worked for three years as an Assistant

# Quality Assurance and Self-Evaluation Review workshop in the higher education landscape, ‘Lessons from Stellenbosch University’



Attendees of the workshop

The Directorate of Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance (IPQA) held a Workshop on Quality Assurance and Self-Evaluation Review (SER) concept for the Higher Education landscape. The workshop took place at Porche Villa Hotel on Thursday, 13 July 2023. The IPQA Directorate invited the Stellenbosch University (SU) Director of the Centre for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (APQA), Mr André Müller who is a facilitator in the Training on Internal Quality Assurance (TrainIQ) project, offered to quality practitioners in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.



Dr Patience Mativandela, Director of Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance said the Directorate saw it fit for the University of Venda Community to have a workshop on quality assurance approaches, self-evaluation review (SER) guidelines, processes, and share best practices from another local institution. Dr Mativandela further indicated that “we believe all nonacademic and academic departments will better understand the Quality Management System concept and reflect on what makes UNIVEN better than other higher education institutions”.

Amongst the attendees were representatives from Executive and Senior Management as well as Heads of Departments from both academic and nonacademic.



Mr Lufuno Netshifhefe, IPQA Head of Quality Assurance gave a presentation on Quality Assurance scope, current systems and SER at UNIVEN. His presentation touched on departmental and programme quality reviews with the higher education context, the UNIVEN context, and the process-flowchart. Mr Netshifhefe explained the processes of Council on Higher Education (CHE) and how these operate to ensure institutions have their internal quality assurance systems in place to manage the quality of their activities and educational provision. When it comes to UNIVEN context, Netshifhefe highlighted that UNIVEN is in line with the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and UNIVEN approved Quality Assurance (QA) policy, guidelines to ensure that a well-established and fully functional Internal Quality Assurance (IQ) systems which include: Appropriate plans, policies, structures, processes and networks; and the flexibility to assure quality across their functions and operations, including the core academic activities, governance structures and management, administrative and support services. Mr Netshifhefe explained that the QA policy needs to ensure implementation of quality of the core business of teaching, learning, research, and community engagement, as well as that the supporting processes are maintained and improved through critical self-evaluation, followed by peer evaluation.

He indicated that the CHE expects public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to have strong Internal QA systems to ensure that all aspects of educational provision are functioning as planned, the CHE expects institutions to conduct their own self-reviews as part of regular institutional quality review cycles and to collect evidence that would inform continuous quality improvement and enhancement.



The Stellenbosch University Director of Centre for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (APQA), Mr André Müller, a facilitator in the TrainIQ presented quality reviews in the higher education landscape: Lessons from Stellenbosch University. He advised the workshop attendees to find ways that would assist them to be more relevant in this era. “Know how to plan, how to teach and how to tackle your research. Always aim to improve from your previous performance,” he said. He introduced the notion of “quality as sense making” as articulated by Marshall (2016). In his presentation amongst other things he spoke about self-evaluation, Quality Assurance Framework, tools for sense making, how to tackle challenges and student participation in quality assurance.

His guidance includes:

- Layers of quality reviews: self-evaluation, and peer evaluation and these are critical and need to be managed appropriately;
- Some institutions use quality reviews as a vehicle for transformation;

- Promote internal cross-disciplinary constitution of internal panels based on the quality of a person and not the portfolio or discipline;
- Introduce the scholarship of educational leadership, particularly for facilitative units/directorates because you are compelled to know a bit about everything colleagues are doing in their areas of expertise-departments, etc.
- Involve students, business partners and track your graduates.



The workshop was Chaired by Professor Vhonani Netshandama, Director Community Engagement, who in her concluding remarks, referenced Chris Brink’s book, The Soul of the university, why excellence is not enough, and other critiques which are unsettled when notions of quality are glossed through as quality benign. Standards are problematic if coming only from hegemonic paradigms and are decontextualised. UNIVEN has a task to ‘make sense’ for itself of what quality management systems and processes are transformative to assist UNIVEN’s identity and vision. Prof Netshandama encouraged colleagues to report back to their respective workstations the lessons from SU and conveyed gratitude to Mr Müller for an insightful presentation.



The closing remarks were conveyed by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mr Botwe Kraziya, who encouraged colleagues to plan and budget appropriately for the next circle of planned reviews. “Tell us the review plans, costs and infuse them in your budgeting”, he said.



Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance Directorate staff members, interns and Mr Müller



# UNIVEN continues to embrace the Presidential Youth Stimulus Programme as it welcomes the second cohort of Interns



Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin

As part of reducing the current high level of unemployment in the country and positioning UNIVEN for impact, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) recently welcomed a cohort of 150 new Interns who are part of the Presidential Youth Stimulus Programme. The Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture will host 21 interns; Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law is hosting 05; Faculty of Health Sciences is hosting 05; Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education is hosting 02; and Support departments are hosting 66 interns.

This welcoming ceremony took place during the first week of July 2023 at the University's Senate Chambers. Since last year our Institution has been participating in the Presidential Employment Stimulus Initiative Programme in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training.

When welcoming new interns, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin, briefly shared the 2021-2025 Strategic objectives. He further encouraged the interns to take themselves seriously so that even other people could take them seriously. He continued to tell them to be respectful and treat people with dignity. He indicated that as they are graduates of this institution, they now have to transition from being students to employees of the University and they are expected to conduct themselves as such.



Human Resources Director, Mrs Uanda Ndou explained that an internship programme is a great opportunity for unemployed graduates because it exposes them to different fields in their career choices as well as provides them with valuable work experience. She concluded by advising interns to take this internship programme seriously because this is a milestone as well as a gateway to potential greater heights that they can attain.



Mr Esrom Phungo, Head of Organisational Development and Training addressed the interns about how to conduct themselves during this period. He told them that their professional life has just started and that the plan is to make sure that they are given a feel of what is happening in the workplace. Mr Phungo emphasised that the driving force for success in life is passion. He further said although the period of six months can be deemed short, they need to take this opportunity to learn as much as possible within this period.



Dr Sinah Sekhula who is a former UNIVEN Intern, and now working under the Directorate of Research and Innovation as a permanent employee told interns that their hard work should start on that day which is their first day at work. She further encouraged them to also take further strides in their development to further attain higher qualifications.



Prof Cebisa Nesamvuni representing mentors advised interns that, even though they are interns, they should be dedicated and be willing to do what they have been assigned to do. She further advised them to go through the values of the University and practice the Institutional Values of this University.



Head of Employee Relations, Advocate Rudzani Makhema, explained about workplace conduct where he advised interns to have the heart of willingness. "Be willing to learn". Adv Makhema continued to tell them that this six (06) month period may be the defining moment in their lives. He told interns that it is important that when they are participating in this internship programme, they should make sure that their conduct is proper. "Do not feel like you are at home," said Adv Makhema. He concluded by advising Interns to familiarise themselves with the University's code of conduct. "It is important that in whatever you do, always maintain a positive relationship with your mentor and colleagues."



Ms Poppy Masiagwala gave a vote of thanks and encouraged interns to take themselves seriously.

## Vhonani Maumela joins the Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication



The University of Venda is delighted to announce the appointment of Mr Vhonani Maumela as the new Website Content Officer in the Department of Marketing, Branding and Communication effective from 01 August 2023.

Mr Maumela has dedicated his life to the Information Technology profession since 2010. He has gathered more than seven years of IT experience from the educational sector and commercial banking industry combined.

He obtained his IT diploma (Commercial programming) at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). He furthered his studies at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) doing BTech IT (Software Development). Mr Maumela has recently completed his Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Science

with the TUT and the qualification will be conferred in 2023 September graduation.

The Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga said "I am excited that our website will now regularly be updated and there is no doubt that the presence of Mr Maumela will ensure that the University website will continue running at full capacity.

Welcome to the team Mr Maumela! We are always working to build a strong, enthusiastic and communicative team, and we believe that you will fit right in with us. We look forward to helping you make waves. The Website belongs to all of us and I urged the University Community to give Mr Maumela the necessary support in his new position."

# UNIVEN highlights international scholarship opportunities through DHET, Embassy of Ireland and Campus France



The University of Venda through the International Relations and Partnerships Directorate hosted an International Scholarship Information Session with Department of Higher Education and Training, Campus France, and the Embassy of Ireland in South Africa on 12 July 2023 at the UNIVEN Senate Chambers.



The programme was facilitated by UNIVEN's International Relations and Partnerships Officer, Mr Thabo Dikgale.

Mr Dikgale said the aim of these scholarship and bursary sessions is to give students an opportunity to experience internationalisation and be exposed to different settings of the world. Mr Dikgale mentioned that UNIVEN is engaged in other programmes such as the buddy programme where international students are paired with local students to engage with each other and be exposed to different cultures and experiences. He continued to say that UNIVEN has a coil programme where students could be in an international class online, interacting on an international platform with their peers from abroad.



The Department of Higher Education and Training, Assistant Director, Ms Joy Nogabe mentioned various international scholarships that the Department of Higher Education and Training facilitates such as the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship programme, which offers scholarship for Bachelor, Masters, and PhD qualifications. Ms Nogabe said this scholarship is offering 100 South African students an opportunity to study in the fields of Agriculture, Engineering, IT, and Architecture.

She also spoke of the Chinese Government Scholarships programme that is categorised on age limit, depending on the level of study a student is pursuing. Ms Nogabe also outlined Scholarships such as Russian Government Scholarships which offer a Bachelor's, Master and PhD, the world in Serbia which offers five scholarships to South African students in Bachelor's, master's, and PhD.

Most programmes are taught in Serbian, and the universities offer language preparatory courses for six months, Mauritius Africa scholarship scheme which offers 15 full scholarships, Excellence Scholarship of the Government of Mexico for Foreigners.

She mentioned that the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) is about transforming, teaching, learning, researching, and leading towards enhanced quality, success, and equity in universities.

She spoke of the Nurturing Emerging Scholarship Programme (NESP) and mentioned that the Department offers support to capable and interested postgraduate students to take first steps towards an academic career through a scholarship and academic internship opportunity.



Campus France Manager, Mr Janco Marais mentioned that Campus France Scholarship is offered to postgraduate students who are from South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi and are under 30 years of age. He said when applying, students must tailor their application letter and keep their CV and motivational letter short.

Mr Marais highlighted that this Scholarship offers a stipend, accommodation, Round-trip flights, Visa Fees, French lessons, and Internship before departure.



Embassy of Ireland Programmes Manager, Mr Malose Ledwaba presented on the Kadar Asmal Fellowship Programme. He said the Programme is a fully funded opportunity to study masters degree in Ireland, a

scholarship meant for South African students with leadership potential, who want to develop skills and knowledge to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of South Africa.

Mr Ledwaba said this Programme targets early career professionals who are committed to socioeconomic development and the achievement of the SDGs. He said since UNIVEN is a Historically Disadvantaged Institution, students are encouraged to apply. He said the Kadar Asmal Fellowship Programme supports the development of leadership in women.

To access more information and the presentations please contact Ms Vusani Mavhungu Vusani.Mavhungu@univen.ac.za at the International Relations and Partnerships office.



# UNIVEN launches CYBER EXCELLENCE ACADEMY with Take Note IT and Women in Tech SA



The University of Venda, Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation in collaboration with Take Note IT and Women in Tech, launched the CYBER Excellence Academy training programme. The event took place on Monday, 03 July 2023 at the University of Venda Research Conference Centre in Thohoyandou. This is the first of its kind historic event that took place at the right time and fits perfectly with the UNIVEN 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

The Cyber Security Academy's main focus is to equip students with critical scarce digital skills and knowledge to safeguard their organisations and startups from cyber threats, as well as work readiness skills that will enhance their employability. The launch featured distinguished guest speakers, experts, and industry leaders who shared their insights on the latest advancements, challenges, and best practices in the realm of cybersecurity.



In his presentation, the University of Venda's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC), Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin said he is excited to be part of the initiative.

He presented on the importance of cybersecurity education and Entrepreneurship. Dr Martin said the current UNIVEN strategy is paving the way for the University to be recognised as a world-class Institution of Higher Learning. He said, "UNIVEN is only located in a rural area, and this does not make the University rural. It is just rural based."

Dr Martin mentioned that UNIVEN wants to impact the community and the world by having programmes such as the CYBER Excellence Academy. He is happy that the students have taken a stand to invest in themselves by getting exposure from this Academy. He urged the students to learn the skills and implement them.



Take Note IT CEO, Ms Mamela Luthuli spoke of industry Collaboration and Partnerships. She mentioned how excited she was to see students' eagerness and willingness to learn Cybersecurity. Ms Luthuli said women have the mindset of getting things done hence she embraced the collaboration with "Women in Tech."

She urged the students to take the opportunity as a life-changing opportunity. Ms Luthuli thanked UNIVEN for the support and collaboration. She said, "The future is bright, you just need proper lenses to see." She indicated that it is a huge opportunity for this project to reposition the youth at UNIVEN and the country at large. On unemployment, Ms Luthuli emphasised how the academy will be bridging this gap by upskilling and reskilling the youth from marginalised communities with cyber skills. She said, "All we can do with this programme is to create more opportunities for the young generation." Ms Luthuli appreciated the leadership of UNIVEN and Vhembe District Municipality for embracing this initiative and for the dedicated support they gave to this project. "This is not a leap service project, we mean business and are committed to the success of this project", added Ms Luthuli.



The Women in Tech SA Country Director, and Chairperson of the University of Venda Centre for Entrepreneurship and Rapid Incubation, Ms Hwalani Mabaso highlighted the role of Women in Tech and Industry Collaboration. She said collaboration is important and believes in the power of collaboration for the greater good through entrepreneurship, technology, and finances. Ms Mabaso also describes her passion for women as contagious, brave, and fierce with indomitable will. Ms Mabaso briefly highlighted the background of the Women in Tech SA Country which is a non-profit organisation that aims to impact one million lives in 2030. Talking about entrepreneurship, she alluded to the fact that not every person will be an employee. She, therefore, encouraged the youth to work hard to open their own businesses.

She left the students with this on pacing themselves through the training: "I will do one thing every day no one is willing to do, after a week I will be uncommon, after a month I will be special and after a year I will be incredible."



"The launch of this project is a dream come true", says Mr Ignatius Gwabada in his presentation. He also noted that this is the first programme of this nature accredited by SETA. He mentioned that Cybersecurity is relevant to everyone. Cyber failure is one of the top ten global risks. He spoke of the Cyber Excellence Academy Programme overview and said the youth should be eager to upskill themselves and bridge the Cyberspace gap. Mr Gwabada left the students with this: "The world is looking for you to become a Cybersecurity consultant and be able to become a game changer,"



In her vote of thanks, the Acting Executive Mayor of Vhembe District Municipality, Cllr Maria Mametsi said technology is particularly important and encouraged the students to apply the skills they attained and collaborate with the UNIVEN IT Department to help the community and impact the world. She appreciated the launch of the Cyber Excellence Academy which will add value to Vhembe District Municipality.

Ms Reddy and Ms Shumani Nembudani handed over ten Laptops to ten (10) UNIVEN undergraduate and post-graduate students. Andisa Ramulonga (BSc in Computer Science and Information Systems), Londolani Sekwibulu (Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Mathematics), Ndivhuwo Mudau (BSc in Computer Science and Information Systems), Hope Nephphidi (BCOMIT (Bachelors in Information Technology), Zwanga Kimberley Nengovhela (BSc in Computer Science and Information Systems), Lufuno Malogwe (BCOMIT (Bachelors in Information Technology), Hudivha Maudu (Bachelor of Commerce (Business Information Systems)), Thendo Tshikota (BSc Honours in Computer Science), Rembuluwani Masia (Bachelor of Science in Computer Science ) and Dakalo Mathivha (MCOM (Business Information Systems).



The programme was facilitated by UNIVEN's UIGC CEO, Dr John Mudau.





Take Note IT beneficiaries pose for a photo with some of Take Note IT staff.



Dr Martin's interview with SABC during the CYBER Excellence Academy launch

Students receiving the laptops from Take Note IT



## University of Venda student was awarded as one of the 100 News24's Young Mandelas of 2023



Fhulufhelo Muvhali (21), a University of Venda (UNIVEN) final-year student in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning made it again. She has been awarded as one of the 100 Young Mandelas of 2023 in South Africa in the category of Social Justice. Earlier this year, she was nominated as one of the 200 Young South African Mail and Guardian.

Fhulufhelo serves her community as a literacy advocate for primary school learners. She serves as an ambassador of the World Literacy Foundation and an advocate for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education. Fhulufhelo has received international recognition for the work that she puts in for her community.

The News24's 100 Young Mandelas of 2023 programme is an initiative to honour and recognise young people who are making a

positive impact in South Africa and around the world. The awardees are selected based on their achievements in a variety of fields, including social justice, entrepreneurship, arts, science and technology. The programme was launched in honour of Nelson Mandela's legacy of service and dedication to building a better future for South Africa and the world.

The nominations were published on Mandela Day, 18 July 2023 by News24. Ms Muvhali is a passionate and goal-driven 21-year-old young woman from Thohoyandou who has emerged as a powerful voice and advocate for children's rights through literacy programmes. Through her organisation, The Child Upliftment Corner Foundation, she tirelessly works towards addressing the pressing issue of child illiteracy in South Africa.

Fhulufhelo Muvhali through her non-profit organisation, focuses on improving the language proficiency of Tshivenda and English among children in disadvantaged primary schools, particularly in the rural areas of Thohoyandou. She ensures that primary schools in these areas have access to vital reading resources, empowering young learners with the tools they need to excel academically. She hopes to create literacy initiatives that inspire a lifelong love for learning and reading among individuals of all ages in rural areas through various means of advocacy, technology, and books. Her passion is also to drive impact in rural spaces. Fhulufhelo thanked those who nominated her for this award. She also highlighted that this is a reminder that her efforts as an educational changemaker are making a difference in her community.

# UNIVEN Law Clinic trains members of SGB and SMT around disciplinary hearings for SGB-employed staff



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) Law Clinic under the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law hosted a training for the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and School Management Teams (SMTs) of schools in the Vhumbedzi Circuit on Wednesday, 05 July 2023. The event was aimed at training SGBs and SMTs around disciplinary hearings for SGB-appointed staff. The training took place at D-Block and was attended by about 220 people.

Ms Confidence Mphaho, Assistant Head at the UNIVEN Law Clinic, opened the training and welcomed all present. She congratulated the stakeholders present for attending the training in large numbers even though schools were closed for the winter vacation.



In her address, Ms. Mphaho introduced the Law Clinic as a law firm that offers free legal representation to indigent members of the community, including women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. She indicated that the Law Clinic also offers walk-in free legal advice to everyone who needs it, irrespective of their socio-economic standing.

Dr Thivhusiwi Sikhitha, who is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mercantile Law, with 16 years of legal experience, provided a detailed presentation regarding the Trends in the schools in Limpopo Province. The presentation focussed on the need for public schools to improve efficiencies in the professional management of schools as well as ensure a governance environment that could optimise teaching and learning outcomes. Dr Sikhitha explained the tripartite relationship envisaged in the South African Schools Act of 1996. She outlined the relationship between the community, the school and the State. She also detailed the issue of Stakeholder involvement and management which is a critical success factor in the achievement of learning outcomes.



Dr Sikhitha's presentation adopted a preventive approach, highlighting the typical risks that could negatively impact teaching and learning at a school, as well as the strategies to mitigate such risks. She discussed at length the school principal's responsibility in the management and utilisation of human and capital resources at the school and the role of the School Governing Body as a custodian of the assets of the public school.



Adv Walter Makulana gave a presentation under the topic Preparation for a Disciplinary Hearing. Adv Makulana indicated that his presentation was focused on educating SGBs and SMTs at schools in the Vhumbedzi Circuit - about preparations for disciplinary hearings to circumvent the arbitrary dismissal of SGB-appointed employees.

His presentation also dealt with issues of procedural and substantive fairness from the perspective of the Labour Relations Act. He emphasised that SGBs and SMTs must be mindful of the constitutional rights of people in their interactions with school learners and employees, as well as other stakeholders; and warned them about the inherent repercussions should their actions be found to be inconsistent with the constitution.

Mr Ndivhudzannyi Masindi, Assistant Head of UNIVEN Law Clinic, was the final presenter of the day. His presentation was titled Understanding quasi-judicial proceedings.



Mr Masindi outlined issues of procedural and substantive fairness relating to disciplinary hearings. He went on to explain the proper composition of the disciplinary hearing committee and the procedure of a disciplinary hearing from the opening address to the conclusion of the hearing. Masindi emphasised the essence of the proper constitution of disciplinary hearing committees and of strict adherence of proceedings to acceptable procedures.



In her vote of thanks, Ms Lauraine Maliavusa, the Governance Manager at Vhumbedzi Circuit, thanked the presenters for their wonderful presentations. She indicated that the presentations would go a long way in broadening the stakeholders' understanding of disciplinary hearings and would enable SGBs to better prepare for the disciplinary hearings going forward.



Law Clinic staff and presenters posing for a photo

# Young people should be at the front of global change and innovation



The University of Venda's Department of Youth in Development under the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education hosted a Public Lecture on Entrepreneurship Amongst the Youth, fighting unemployment and supporting disadvantaged Youth seeking employment. The guests from Rutgers University, Dr Darren Clarke and Mr Keywuan Caulk who were accompanied by a group of postgraduate students shared a joint presentation on the said topic at the University Auditorium on Monday, 17 July 2023. The Public Lecture marked the celebration of Youth and Mandela Month for the year 2023.



Senior Director, Strategic Alliances, Outreach and Online Education, Dr Darren Clarke, when presenting spoke about infusing entrepreneurship to be part of the University programmes. The issue of entrepreneurship has been discussed at length to the extent that it should start at the primary level. He listed Education system flaws that were not limited to lack of experience, internships, apprenticeships, opportunities to put theory into practice, the lack of career development, little to no networking opportunities, disempowerment, discouragement, national economy as the cause of youth unemployment.

Dr Clarke spoke of collective activism. He mentioned that the students and University must work together to formulate task forces. Young people should be at the front of global change and innovation. He indicated that if young people are empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. "If they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies." He said, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If

you want to go far, go together." He further said according to the South African statistics, graduates are the least affected by the underemployment rate at 1.2 % for quarter one of 2023.

He encouraged students to participate in student activism (Student Representative Council) to gain leadership skills and learn to be part of societal development which will assist with confronting issues related to unemployed graduates.



Student Affairs Professional, Rutgers State University of New Jersey, Mr Keywuan Caulk, said being curious brings discovery. He talked about Unemployment and Supporting Disadvantaged Youth Seeking Employment.

Mr. Caulk said that according to Stats SA people employed in private households were more likely to be underemployed than those in other sectors. He mentioned that being a student is an opportunity to change the social status of unemployability. He said, "Education increases the odds of creating a meaningful life for you." He further said although the graduate unemployment rate remains low in South Africa compared to those of other educational levels, unemployment among the youth continues to be a burden irrespective of educational level.

He continued to say that students need to do daily affirmations to build their confidence as job seeking can be discouraging but keep affirming that they are strong and can strive. Mr Caulk encouraged students to start projects in their communities.

"There are no simple solutions in solving complex problems," added Caulk.



When proposing a vote of thanks, Senior Lecturer, Department of Youth in Development, Dr Harry Mukwevho, encouraged the element of collaboration in order to achieve our goals.



Mr Rudzani Mamphweli, a Junior Lecturer in the Department of Arts and Social Sciences facilitated the Programme.



Head of Youth in Development Department, Prof Thizwilondi Mudau, in her welcome and purpose of the Public Lecture remarks, encouraged students to participate and make sure that they benefit from this Public Lecture. She urged them to create networks because that is the way to go global. "Grab the information that is shared by the speakers." Prof Mudau indicated that the purpose of the Public Lecture was to discuss and share ideas with other counterparts on how to solve the issue of unemployment since it has become a pandemic.



Senior Lecturer, Department of Youth in Development, Prof Daniel Thobejane introduced the speakers of the day.



## We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communication channel.

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