



University of Venda
Creating future leaders



University of Venda



@Univenofficial



universityofvenda



University of Venda Official

SRC plays an important role in ensuring a balance between students' academic performance and their social support



Dr Rejoice Simelane, Dr Takalani Dzaga, Precious Moloi-Motsepe and Mr John Ndaka

As part of solving the financial challenges which the student leaders are facing in higher education institutions, the Co-Founder and CEO of Motsepe Foundation, Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe donated a total of R1.3m towards the support of the SRC Programmes, namely: Student debt, student mental wellness, gender equality

and women's wellbeing. The UNIVEN SRC President, Mr John Ndaka accompanied by the Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga, received the donation at an event held at Sandton Convention Centre, Sandton, Johannesburg on Friday, 23 February 2024.

When handing over the donation, the Co-Founder and CEO of Motsepe Foundation, Dr Precious Moloi Motsepe expressed that the Foundation is committed to reduce the level of poverty in South Africa and beyond. The Foundation is inspired to play a role of easing the struggle of students in improving access to quality higher education. The Motsepe Foundation has initiated several interventions to support the access, throughput and wellbeing of bursary recipients, they believe that supporting student led initiatives adds value to the various interventions deployed by diverse stakeholders.

In 2023, the Motsepe Foundation donated the same amount of R1.3m to the University of Venda.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni on behalf of the University of Venda said "I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Motsepe Foundation's kind donations towards the support of our SRC Programmes which are quite critical to the life of our students. All these pertinent issues are at the centre of the University's efforts to ensure a conducive learning environment. We are honoured that your esteemed institution has committed to help our institution to implement these programmes. These donations will certainly alleviate some of the pressures with which we are confronted."

The SRC President, Mr John Ndaka thanked the Motsepe Foundation for their incessant support. He said that these donations will indeed go a long way in the University's endeavour of Creating Future Leaders.



Mr Patrick Thaba, Mr John Ndaka and Dr Takalani Dzaga

Read inside

SRC plays an important role in ensuring a balance between students' academic performance and their social support	1
Aspiring to be a high performing institution	2
Reconfiguration of Community Engagement Directorate	4
An attempt to assist students through the Office of the Public Protector	4
Council plays a key role in the governance of the University	5
A successful Campaign empowers students with knowledge and resources to make informed choices in their lives	6
Adv Lambani's legacy will remain at the University for many years to come	7
Internship marks the beginning of your career	8
Limpopo Provincial Government partners with local universities to find solutions through research	9
Celebrating Excellence in Research and Innovation at the University of Venda	10
The Faculty of Health Sciences organizes a Life Skills Orientation for first-entering students	10
UNIVEN Joins Vhembe District Municipality in the celebration of Wetlands Day at Tshiheni village	11
Campus Health Clinic trains 77 Students as Peer Health Educators	12
The Faculty of Health Sciences held the Ubuntu Orientation of First-Entering Students	12

Aspiring to be a high performing institution



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) held a three-day interactive executive and senior management workshop that focused on the University high level performance overview based on the implementation of 2021-2025 strategic plan, strategic risks, and the new strategic trajectory, 2026-2030. The University aspires to be a high performing institution anchored on Results Based Management (RBM) approach. This exercise allows the University to anticipate and respond to changes in the corporate environment. It also helps to forecast potential opportunities and threats, which are crucial for the University's sustainability and survival in today's dynamic corporate world. The 2023 Performance Feedback, 2024 Strategic Planning and Institutional Risk workshop took place at Kruger Gate Hotel in Mpumalanga from 26 to 28 February 2024.



Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni setting the scene for the 2023 Performance Feedback, 2024 Strategic Planning and Institutional Risk Sessions

When setting the scene, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni stimulated the participants about the issues pertaining to strategic imperative. He gave a detailed presentation on performance feedback towards achieving the five years strategic objectives contained in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. In his exciting presentation, the Vice Chancellor and Principal reflected on the University's position and the direction that the University intends to take, through the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

What came very strongly about the importance of hosting this strategic planning session was when Prof Nthambeleni alluded that this is an opportunity for management to gather and discuss the University's future whilst promoting the team spirit for optimal performance. He said, "Strategic planning meeting aims to assess the current position, set long-term goals, create a success roadmap, and bring diverse perspectives together." He pointed that strategic planning sessions are necessary to determine the direction of the University. "It focuses on staff members' efforts and ensures that all University staff are working towards achieving a common goal."

Prof Nthambeleni reflected on the process of developing a successive strategy and important Strategic Thrusts that are consistent with the Strategic Plan 2025. He mentioned that UNIVEN is on a transformative journey focusing on becoming an Entrepreneurial University, strengthening student-centredness and leading in engaged scholarship. He underscored that in this journey, there should be effective contribution to government interventions to address the triple challenges that are Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment. Prof Nthambeleni further gave an overview of the UNIVEN Integrated Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Biodiversity Plan (UIEIBP) which is a visionary roadmap that propels UNIVEN as it redefines its role on the higher education landscape. He stressed the

importance of aligning the vision and values that anchor the UNIVEN IEIBP goals into the new Strategic Plan."

At the end of his presentation, Prof Nthambeleni projected a high-Level Engagement Process towards 2026-2030 Strategic Plan development and detailed project scope that should be completed within 24 months.

The University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi presented on the navigation of the Governance - strategy interface. He projected interface between governance and strategy planning processes which are essential for setting the direction, making decisions, managing performance, managing risks, ensuring accountability, engaging stakeholders, and adapting to change. Dr Baloyi asserted that UNIVEN can effectively manage its resources, mitigate risks, and achieve its long-term objectives by aligning governance and strategy planning efforts.

The Director Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr Mutshinyalo Ratombo provided feedback on the implementation of 2023 Annual Performance Plan.

The Director Internal Audit and Risk, Mrs Diana Makwabela shared the overview of the Institutional risk status. She further shared evaluation of results from risk rating. On the other hand, the Risk Officer, Mr Tinyiko Sibiya talked about the Risk reporting indicators.

On day two of the workshop, the University Registrar, Dr Baloyi provided an update on the 2024 student admission and registration process where he highlighted successes, challenges, lessons learned and intervention measures. The participants had a lengthy deliberation around admission and registration processes.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Teaching and Learning, Prof Eucebious Lekalaka Mokgele gave an update on 2024 enrolments against three-year rolling Ministerial-approved Enrolment Plan (successes, challenges, and interventions). She also provided highlights of 2023 performance

against the Annual Performance Plan. There was also a discussion around the Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL) intervention mechanisms to strengthen student support.

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Mr Botwe Kraziya gave an overview of 2023 financial performance and budget considerations for 2024 in support of 2024 Annual Performance Plan implementation. Mr Kraziya also spoke about UNIVEN student funding matters, including NSFAS and other private sponsors – successes, challenges, and mitigation factors.

This was followed by a presentation from the DVC Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza who shared information on 2024 postgraduate enrolments against three-year rolling Ministerial-approved Enrolment Plan (successes, challenges, and interventions).

Later on the day, the DVC Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin presented the overview of 2023 Corporate Services performance in support of the University Strategic Plan 2025. His presentation also covered the following topics: update on the 2024 staff performance agreements, including performance recognition and rewards; plans for the effective academic programme quality reviews; update on the current recruitment status and plans for improving turn-around time for the filling of vacant positions; plans for improving the efficiency of infrastructure provisioning in support of university business and update on the implementation of Brand Enhancement Strategy (successes, challenges, and interventions).

On the last day of the workshop, Mrs Mavis Madzhe (Director Financial Management and Reporting), Mrs Beauty Muthewana (Director of Supply Chain Management and Expenditure) and Ms Tshilidzi Ramulondi (Director Revenue and Financial Aid) respectively presented the University's 2023 financial performance, 2024 cost efficiency measures, supply chain management processes and the plans that are in place to generate income and save money for the University as well as student funding.

Aspiring to be a high performing institution continued..

What emerged from these three presentations was an emphasis that there is a need to be responsible when spending public funds.

The Director Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation Directorate, Prof Vhonani Netshandama shared an exciting presentation that focussed on the issues of Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation. Dr Mlungiseleli Ganto presented the University Commercialisation strategy.

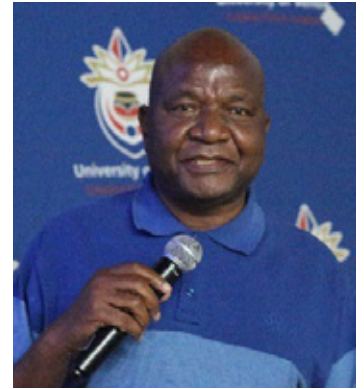
The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Prof Modimowabarwa Kanyane provided the summary of key issues and resolutions of the three day workshop.

The outgoing University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani in his remarks when giving a vote of thanks, encouraged the Executive and Senior Management team to have this kind of session annually. He thanked the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, in particular Mrs Esther Munano and Dr Mutshinyalo Ratombo for working so hard to make that the workshop be of this magnitude.

This three-day workshop was facilitated by the Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga.

When closing the workshop, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni shared a high-level summary of key issues emerging from the workshop and guidance on the next steps. He summarised the way forward in nine points, namely: Taking of ownership and Accountability; Resistance to Change; Communication; Culture; Lack of Teamwork; Effective delegation; Responsive Leadership; Celebrating wins and inadequate Resources.

Pictures of presenters



Reconfiguration of Community Engagement Directorate



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) is in the fourth year of the implementation of the strategic plan 2021-2025, it has been considered necessary to reconfigure the **Directorate of Community Engagement to Directorate of Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation**. The reconfiguration and rebranding of the Directorate came at the right time, and it is intended to strengthen the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 with the goal of positioning the University of Venda for impact and relevance. The University of Venda's Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation under the Directorship of Prof Vhonani Netshandama was established to create an inspiring and supportive environment where entrepreneurial values and innovation culture thrive. Our intention is to integrate

entrepreneurship into the fabric of the University, creating a vibrant and inclusive entrepreneurial culture. UNIVEN is committed to becoming an entrepreneurial University."

This Directorate will ensure that various functions do not operate in silos and that the University's strategic intent to establish an Entrepreneurial University culture is appropriately focused and transversely coordinated to build a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem.

We are committed to fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, innovation, and commercialisation that empowers our students, staff, and the broader community to thrive in a rapidly evolving global landscape. Our purpose is to cultivate an environment where creativity flourishes, ideas transform into viable solutions, and knowledge is translated into tangible societal

and economic impact. Through this, we seek to position UNIVEN as a hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and commercialisation, contributing significantly to regional development and global knowledge advancement."

Our Strategic Plan 2021-2025 creates an enabling environment for positioning UNIVEN to make an impact and to be relevant both locally and globally, and to strengthen it to become an efficient and effective institution of higher learning.

The Directorate will play an enabling role in the Strategic Plan and UNIVEN Integrated Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Biodiversity Plan (UIEIPB) which is a visionary roadmap that propels UNIVEN as it redefines its role in the higher education landscape.

The Vice Chancellor and Principal implored the entire University Community to give Prof Netshandama and her team the necessary support they would need.

We are committed to fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, innovation, and commercialisation that empowers our students, staff, and the broader community to thrive in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

An attempt to assist students through the Office of the Public Protector



The session was attended by members of the Senior Management and Student leadership of the University of Venda.

On Tuesday, 13 February 2024 the Limpopo Provincial Office delegation led by the PPSA Senior Investigator, Mr Bernard Mahloko brought the services of the Public Protector to the University of Venda community by conducting outreach and sharing information on services offered by the Public Protector South Africa (PPSA). The session took place at the UNIVEN Research Conference Centre.

The main aim of the visit was to check the state of readiness of the 2024 Academic year, most importantly challenges faced by students when it comes to registration and NSFAS funding so that processes can go smoothly. The Office of the PPSA in Limpopo

was on a proactive effort to try and mitigate and offer a hand of assistance where it can be possible from their side to some of the challenges faced by the institutions from management and student perspective. Mr Mahloko appealed to all the participants to feel free and contribute to the discussions as their visit is not to investigate anyone. This is an initiative that the Office of the Public Protector is carrying throughout the country, and they are represented in all the provinces.

Meanwhile the University would like to create a platform where learning takes place in a conducive environment.

The delegation received management input

from the Director Revenue and Financial Aid, Ms Tshildzi Ramulondi who shared pressing issues that are impacting negatively to the service delivery of the University such as student debt.

Students through the Minister of Finance, Bursaries and Projects, Mr Mulalo Makhaya also made their inputs that are heavily hindering students' progress, NSFAS in particular. He showed that majority of the students at UNIVEN are coming from poor families, and they cannot afford even a meal for that matter.

As a way forward, Mr Mahloko acknowledged the issues raised by the management and

students and that they are taking those issues seriously, hence the issues will further be presented to the Public Protector, Adv Kholeka Gcaleka.

The outgoing University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani in his welcome remarks highlighted the importance of the Public Protector's Office and that it is one of the chapter 9 institutions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.

When rendering vote of thanks, the University Registrar applauded the Office of the Public protector for their attempt to lay a helping hand to students.

Council plays a key role in the governance of the University



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) held an induction workshop that provided Council Members with a comprehensive understanding of the mission and vision as well as the overall operation of the University. The workshop which was officially opened by the Chairperson of Council, Mr Juneas Lekgetha, focused on the roles and responsibilities carried by Council members as well as the latest strategic developments of the University. Council members play a key role in the governance of the University. It is important to note that the University, led by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, is required to ensure that Council is provided with full and timely information to enable it to carry out its responsibilities. A two-day workshop took place at Protea by Marriot Ranch Resort outside Polokwane on 14 and 15 February 2024.



When setting the scene, UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni updated the Council members about the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan, its achievements and shortcomings as well as mechanisms for addressing the identified shortcomings. Part two of his presentation reflected on the process for developing a successive strategy and important strategic thrusts. He mentioned that UNIVEN is on transformative journey focusing on becoming an Entrepreneurial University, strengthening student-centredness and leading in engaged scholarship. Prof Nthambeleni gave an overview of 2026-2030 strategy development.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal also provided an understanding about the UNIVEN Integrated Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Biodiversity Plan (UIEIBP) which is a visionary roadmap that propels UNIVEN as it redefines its role on the higher education landscape. When concluding his presentation, Prof Nthambeleni stated that there is a need to align the vision and values that anchor the UNIVEN IEIBP goals into the New Strategic Plan." During this workshop, Prof Nthambeleni detailed a high-level overview about the establishment of Green Technology Confucius Institute (GTCI) that was launched in December 2023.



Council members also received a presentation from the University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi, who gave the overview of the Governance Framework of Higher Education Institutions- with reference to the King 1V and Corporate Governance.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Teaching and Learning, Prof Lekalaka-Mokgele shared the highlights of the current trends of topical issues around the Higher Education Sector.



The DVC Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza spoke about topical issues around Research and Innovation.



Dr Christopher Whittle's presentation brought Council members to the world of Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) which is a critical concept and something trending. Dr Whittle is from Universum Advisory.



The Chief Financial Officer, Mr Botwe Kraziya addressed topical issues around funding

in higher education and his presentation covered the critical matter centred around the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).



The outgoing University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani presented on Council member responsibilities – Higher Education Act, Institutional Statute, Code of conduct and Terms of Reference.



The workshop was officially closed by the Chairperson of Council, Mr Juneas Lekgetha.

A successful Campaign empowers students with knowledge and resources to make informed choices in their lives

STI, Condom, Pregnancy Campaign (Sexual and Reproductive Health) is one of the most important annual health awareness campaigns, especially for students. This awareness campaigns are organised annually following the National Health Calendar to raise awareness on the importance of using condoms to prevent STI and unplanned pregnancies. The week serves as a reminder to prioritise sexual health, reduce STI transmission and combat the spread of HIV and AIDS.

It is against this background that the University's Campus Health Clinic, recently conducted an STI/ Condom /Pregnancy (Sexual and Reproductive Health Campaign) awareness campaign on campus. This awareness campaign took place at the School of Law parking and has attracted high number of students who participated during this campaign. Various health IEC materials regarding TB, Cancer, STIs, GBV, Mental Health, Alcohol and Substance abuse were distributed. Partners brought by the Department of Health, PAPSWA and ANOVA were available to render service to the LGBTQI+ community within the campus and giving out Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).

During the campaign students were empowered with knowledge and resources to make informed choices of their lives. A total number of 909 were reached through IEC materials. A total of 1158 students and staff received counselling for HIV and other related diseases and were tested during the campaign. This campaign reached a total of 513 first entering students. A total of 12000 male condoms, 200 female condoms and 200 lubricants were distributed.

During this health campaign, Campus Health Clinic distributed gift packs with condoms as a preventive measure to all students who attended the event. The day was supported by the SRC Minister of Health and Safety, Mr Tsireledzo Munzhedzi. During the event, various activities were conducted including demonstration of condoms usage, health education about STI, HIV and PrEP by students, and gifts were given as tokens of appreciation by Campus Health. Ms Maggie Hlungwani who is the HIV Coordinator at the University's Campus Health Clinic advised staff and students to promote health and safety, including well-being on and off Campus.



Ms Maggie Hlungwani (middle) handing gifts to students who participated on Valentine's day (left) and student posing with packs of condoms during the awareness campaign (right)



Campus Health staff with Valentine gift pack for students



Students on the que for HIV Testing Services by Campus Health, ANOVA and PAPSWA



Campus Health staff members and Peer educators on Valentine's Day

Adv Lambani's legacy will remain at the University for many years to come

In the evening of 14 February 2024, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) Council bid farewell to the University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani at an event held at The Ranch Hotel, Polokwane.



In his farewell message, the Chairperson of Council, Mr Juneas Lekgetha told Adv Lambani that there is a season for everything. He said that, as the Council is bidding farewell to a great giant of this University, we need to remember that Adv Lambani has long been associated with UNIVEN, tracking back from 1988 when he was still a student. He came back as a staff member to make an immense contribution to this University. "Adv Lambani continued to give Council the support that it needed. Your commitment to UNIVEN is an honour to many people who

have worked with you. Thank you for your immense contribution to this University." Mr Lekgetha said he is confident that Adv Lambani's legacy will remain at the University for many years to come. "We are now ranked amongst the top universities globally because of contributions of people like Adv Lambani." He wished him a healthy and joyous retirement.



When expressing retirement wish, Deputy Chairperson of Council, Ms Ndanduleni Makhari reminded Adv Lambani that during his retirement he may worry about many things because retiring may be worrying to many, especially the first 6 months, but there are lot of benefits after retirement. She advised Adv Lambani to do things that he was not used to. "This will relieve stress. This is the opportunity for you to enjoy yourself

without anyone asking you to do your job." Ms Makhari encouraged him to eat good food and stay healthy. "Seek social support. Strengthen your social network. Often when you think you are at the end of things, know that you are at the beginning of greater things. There are lot of opportunities out there. Keep yourself busy. Being busy does not mean that you should do something and expect someone to pay you in return. She wished him a happy retirement.



In her opening and welcome remarks, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and

Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza described Adv Lambani as an incredibly wise person. She advised Adv Lambani to always avail himself to guide the upcoming generations.



In his response, Adv Edward Lambani thanked Council members for all messages of farewell in his retirement. "I have enjoyed my stay at UNIVEN, and I have worked with many people that I didn't want to part ways with." He thanked Council members for organising this farewell ceremony for him.



L-R: Mr Juneas Lekgetha, Adv Lambani, Ms Ndanduleni Makhari, and Prof Bernard Nthambeleni



As she rendered vote of thanks, Dr Reyneth Mbhele wished Adv Lambani well and appreciated his wisdom and knowledge that he has imparted to many colleagues that he has worked with. "May the Lord protect you; may the Lord show you his favour and bless you, expressed Dr Mbhele."



Mr Bolwe Kraziya, Dr Robert Martin, Adv Edward Lambani, Prof Nosisi Feza, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni and Dr Joel Baloyi

Internship marks the beginning of your career

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) Human Resources Department (HR) recently hosted the MICTSETA Induction and vetting of interns who started their internships on Friday, 01 March 2024. This induction and Vetting session took place at the University's Research Conference Centre.



In her purpose and welcome message, Director HR, Mrs Uanda Ndou told attendees that looking at stats of unemployment globally, unemployment is very high, but these partners have afforded you (referring to the appointed interns) an opportunity to learn skills that are in line with your qualifications. She advised them to make sure that there is something that sets them apart from others. "Bring a lot of learning and teachable spirit. Strive to be a better person than the one you were yesterday. Be that learner that everyone wants to work with and give it your all," she said.



Mr Takalani Tshidada told new interns that "we all have started somewhere and this marks the beginning of your career. Make use of the opportunity that you are given. Do what you are here to do, and you will thank yourselves."



When presenting the condition of service, Mr Matamela Matibe advised the new cohort of interns to be careful about what they do because this experience marks the beginning

of their career. "Your supervisors will be your referees for your future. Make sure that what you do have an impact in achieving the university's vision." Mr Matibe guided them to make sure that whatever they do, should make them become marketable. He requested the supervisors to make sure that these interns are provided with the necessary tools that will enable them to perform their duties.

"Always remember that when you go out there, fly the flag of this University high. Let's always make sure that there is something good that people see in you and that is attached to the University brand. If you want to grow in your career, allow your supervisors to guide you." He concluded by advising them to avoid posting negative things about the University and tarnishing the name of this institution.

learn through the accredited or approved centres. Again, your role is to attend the trainings organised for you. Always be punctual and submit your work on time. Make sure that you comply, and you do everything that needs to be done on time," she said.



In his word of support, Mr Mesia Hlungwane advised interns to make use of this opportunity. "Learn as much as you can. Bring a positive attitude to what you do. Do not wait for supervisors to give you tasks, make yourself useful by being innovative."

"Learn as much as you can. Bring a positive attitude to what you do. Do not wait for supervisors to give you tasks, make yourself useful by being innovative."



Ms Sindiswa Kawula from MICTSETA highlighted that the mandate of MICTSETA is to support skills development programmes such as this one. "Your role as a learner is to



Limpopo Provincial Government partners with local universities to find solutions through research



Some participants at the LRF on day one of the 2024 Limpopo Research Forum

Limpopo Provincial Government in partnership with University of Venda, University of South Africa, University of Limpopo, and Tshwane University of Technology hosted the annual Limpopo Research Forum (LRF) from the 15-16 February 2024 at the Ranch Hotel. The forum was hosted under the theme: 'Advancing Economic Renewal through Research: Growing Limpopo Together.'

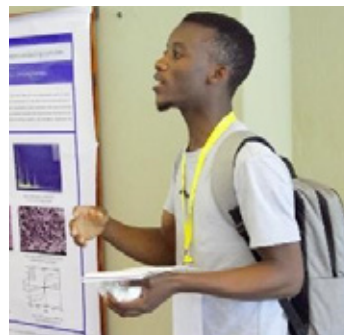
LRF was established to provide a system to facilitate and coordinate research within the province. It serves as a platform for sharing best practices among stakeholders in support of research. Its primary goal is to offer researchers in the Limpopo Province, serve as a platform to share ideas, experiences, and research trends. It aims to provide the basis and empirical evidence for the province's future planning, policy making, monitoring, and evaluation of service delivery improvement.

Over a hundred participants, including presenters were in attendance. Oral and poster presentations from academic and research institutions as well as government departments were presented. Stakeholders displayed their research work and products in an effort to expand their horizon.

The University of Venda was well represented by the Director of Research and Innovation, Prof Jabulani Makhubele, and some members of staff in the Directorate of Research and Innovation who served in scientific and logistics committees in preparation of this gathering.

Some of the University of Venda's academics and active researchers participated through poster and oral presentations, as well as chairing the sessions at the forum.

Some of the University of Venda's researchers participating during the Limpopo Research Forum at the Ranch Hotel, 15-16 February 2024



In his opening and welcome message, Dr Thembinkosi Mabila from University of Limpopo highlighted that the 2024 LRF was also attended by researchers from Nelson Mandela University and the University of the Western Cape. He said, although participants are from various institutions, the LRF was formed for all researchers to contribute towards the development of this province and the country at large. "This is one of the biggest research forums in the country, hence we say it is no longer a provincial research forum but a national forum." He thanked the Limpopo Provincial government for their continuous support. As the leader of Limpopo Research Forum, Dr Mabila told participants that they should all be proud of this forum because it shows that we are one irrespective of the institution from which we are coming. "Let us continue to make this forum the best research forum in the country," said Dr Mabila.



When giving remarks, the Acting Deputy Director General, Dr Martin Sehlapelo encouraged participants to always make sure that the information or research findings are relevant to Limpopo Province and the country at large. "We need to go beyond sharing only within research community. We need to spread our research in the rest of the society. We need to make sure that our research is translated into information that everyone will understand." He said Limpopo province is in the process of establishing Limpopo Research Hub. "Let us ensure that whatever research we do is relevant to the communities we serve, and that research is translated in a manner that is user-friendly."

Limpopo Provincial Government partners with local universities to find solutions through research continued...



As the keynote speaker, Prof Kgabo Moganedi from the University of Limpopo presented the 'Marula fruit wine: Harmony of tradition and innovation.'



On day two of the research forum, Dr Sinah Sekhula from UNIVEN Research and Innovation Directorate gave a recap of day one where she highlighted some of the Limpopo Provincial research and development framework key determinants.



Mr Nthambeleni Mukwevho from Statistics South Africa (CENSUS) was the keynote speaker on day two of the 2024 Limpopo Research Forum. He told participants that the statistics that he has presented are not for Statistics South Africa but for all citizens to use. Citizens, especially researchers can access these statistics any time.



In his vote of thanks message, Prof Mkhonza from Tshwane University of Technology highlighted that they have learned a lot from this 2024 Limpopo Research Forum. "This partnership has proved that we can achieve a lot when working together."

Celebrating Excellence in Research and Innovation at the University of Venda



Professor Pascal O. Bessong

The National Research Foundation has awarded Professor Pascal Bessong a B-2 rating as a scientist. This rating is given to individuals for whom "all or the overriding majority of reviewers are firmly convinced that the applicant enjoys considerable international recognition for the high quality and impact of his/her recent research outputs."

Prof Pascal Bessong who is attached to the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, is a virologist and currently Professor of Microbiology and Global Health, and the Founding Chair of the HIV/AIDS and Global Health Research Programme at the University of Venda (UNIVEN). He received his doctoral and postdoctoral training in South Africa, France, and the United States. He is an elected member of the Academy of Science of South Africa, Visiting Scholar at the Center for Global Health Equity, University of Virginia; Honorary Professor at the School of Health Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal,

and Associate Editor of the South African Journal of Science.

Professor Bessong's work has sought to understand the dynamics in the acquisition, burden and transmission of antimicrobial resistant germs, and the impact of gut infection on child growth and development, and vaccine response. He is also leading a team of researchers at UNIVEN on the surveillance of Covid-19 through wastewater-based epidemiology in selected districts in Limpopo Province. His scientific contributions and opinions have been published in top-tier and influential journals such as Science, Nature, Bulletin of the World Health Organization, the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (USA), Lancet Global Health, Lancet HIV, Clinical Infectious Diseases, and PLOS Medicine.

In 2022, the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), following a competitive process, recognized the research excellence and leadership

of Professor Bessong with an award to establish the SAMRC-UNIVEN Antimicrobial Resistance and Global Health Research Unit, the first of its kind at the University, for which he serves as the Founding Director. The vision of this SAMRC extramural Unit is to become a reference programme for antimicrobial resistance epidemiology, global health research, and human capital development. The multidisciplinary team of the Unit, comprising national and international partners and collaborators, through coproduction of knowledge with study communities, local and national government agencies, will provide evidence for policy development and targeted interventions for an enhanced antimicrobial resistance stewardship.

The University welcomes the NRF rating for Professor Bessong and wishes him and his team success in seeking solutions to nationally and regionally relevant biomedical challenges and building research leadership at the University.

The Faculty of Health Sciences organizes a Life Skills Orientation for first-entering students

This was the first life skills orientation conducted at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) for the first entering Health Sciences students, held on 07 February 2024. The purpose of the life skills orientation was to empower first-entering students with the information needed to assist them in making a successful transition from secondary school to university environment. This is to assist first entering students to bridge the ever-widening gap and adjust easily to the huge demands in the higher education environment.



UNIVEN Joins Vhembe District Municipality in the celebration of Wetlands Day at Tshiheni village

Vhembe District Municipality celebrated Wetlands Day in an event held at Tshiheni Revelation Christ church. The event was attended by Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), Department of Economic Development, Thulamela municipality, and local primary and secondary schools. The event was also meant to provide a platform to launch the Lake Fundudzi Development project pioneered by the late Mr. Tshilizzi Musingadi from Pundaria Investment Group. The launch of the Lake Fundudzi Development Project was cancelled due to his passing a day before the event. Vhembe District Municipality Executive Mayor Councillor Tsakani Freda Nkondo paid tribute to Mr Musingadi and declared that the event's purpose would solemnly be to celebrate the wetlands and acknowledge the presence of the University of Venda (UNIVEN) in the event.



Vhembe District Municipality Executive Mayor, Councillor Tsakani Freda Nkondo delivering keynote address



Learners during their wetlands presentations

Thirty-five percent World 's Wetlands and forests have been lost due to human activities," said Executive Mayor Cllr Nkondo.

She also warned that there is a vicious cycle of wetlands loss and life-giving sources of jobs. Mayor Nkondo added that there is a need to change the mindset of communities and governments to prioritize preserving and protecting the Wetlands.

She finally encouraged traditional leaders to take the lead in protecting the wetlands and dealing with the dangers faced by the wetlands.

Local schools participated in the form of presentations from the foundation, intermediate, and senior phases. Local schools that attended this ceremony were from Tshidzivhe, Ha Khakhu, Thononda and other primary schools. The school learners presented about what they think are the hazards that destroys the wetlands, interventions, definitions of wetlands, and the importance of wetlands. During their presentation, they defined wetlands as land areas where water covers the soil, seasonally or permanently and characterised by the presence of water at or near the surface for at least part of the year, creating unique ecosystems that support a diverse range of plant and animal species and gave the local Lake Fundudzi as an example.

They mentioned that climate change, overexploitation, and natural processes such as erosion, sedimentation, and



Khakhu Secondary School learners celebrate their first-prize achievement



Vhembe District Municipality Executive Mayor, Councillor Tsakani Freda Nkondo handing over awards to learners (right) during Wetlands celebration day at Tshiheni

The Executive Mayor provided the background on the celebration of Wetlands that was adopted during the Convention of Wetlands on 02 Feb 1971. "It should become our responsibility not to abuse our Wetlands because they are homes of plants and animals. Practices such as overfishing, deforestation, and overgrazing are a severe threat to our wetlands.



Awards giving ceremony

subsidence contribute to the destruction and degradation of wetlands, significantly exacerbated by human activities. Climate change could exacerbate wetland destruction through sea-level rise, altered precipitation patterns, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and other factors that could

negatively impact wetland ecosystems and over-harvesting of wetland resources such as timber, fish, and wildlife could lead to the depletion of these resources and the degradation of wetland habitats. Khakhu Secondary School was awarded the best presentation award on the day.

Campus Health Clinic trains 77 Students as Peer Health Educators

Peer education as an educational intervention is an approach or intervention strategy that typically involves the training and support of members of a given group to effect change among members of the same group. Peer education is used as one of the main strategies to promote general health and holistic wellness of students at

the university in order to graduate alive. The training is conducted at the beginning of every year to equip, develop their skills and knowledge, enabling them to deliver accurate information and guidance to students (seeking health and wellness and psychosocial support) in a supportive and nonjudgemental manner.

On 7 – 9 February 2024, Ms Maggie Hlungwani who is the HIV Coordinator at UNIVEN Campus Health Clinic and Mrs Alvina Makumbane who is the Health Promoter at the same Health Clinic facilitated Peer Education Training Workshop. This workshop was held at the University's Education Hall 1. The training content covered the following

themes: Definition of Peer education, Roles, and qualities of a good peer educator; basic HIV/AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health, STIs, TB, GBV, Mental Health, PEP, PrEP; Counselling Skills; Communication Skills; Alcohol and Substance abuse Prevention; and Monitoring and Reporting.



A total number of 77 students participated in this training.

The Faculty of Health Sciences held the Ubuntu Orientation of First-Entering Students



New Students: Ubuntu Movement Ambassadors with Coordinators posing for a photo outside the orientation venue

Ubuntu is an African philosophy that emanates from a proverb that is derived from the Nguni proverb 'Umntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu', which means 'a person is a person because of or through others'.

The Faculty of Health Sciences conducted the orientation for eighty three (83) first-time entering students to revive indigenous knowledge through teaching students

more about the Ubuntu philosophy. The orientation aimed to devise strategies for integrating the Ubuntu principle into students' daily lives and practices.

We would like to hear from you!

Nendila is your communication channel.

Nendila editorial committee:
Dr Takalani Dzaga
Chief editor

Ms Welheminah Mabogo
Coordinator

Mr Peter Mashishi
Contributor

Ms Mushoni Mulaudzi
Preservation (Library)

Send your contributions to:
Welheminah Mabogo,
Nendila Coordinator
University of Venda,
Private Bag x5050
Thohoyandou, 0950

Contact Details:
Tel: 015 962 8525
e-mail:
welheminah.mabogo@univen.ac.za

If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the University Hotline by calling toll free number **0800 212 755 or email: **univenhotline@tip-offs.com****

Improper conduct includes the following...

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