



UNIVEN students participate in the National EDHE Studentpreneurs Indaba



UNIVEN delegates at the EDHE Studentpreneurs Indaba 2024

UNIVEN students participated in a two-day National Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Studentpreneurs Indaba that took place at Wits University from 05-06 September 2024. The University of Venda was represented by eight (8) students from all four faculties and three (3) staff members, including Prof Vhonani Netshandama, Director of Community Engagement Entrepreneurship Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation.

Wits University hosted this annual Studentpreneurs Indaba under the theme "Sustainable Entrepreneurship: Building Businesses for a Better Future." This theme, in partnership with the University Capacity Building Programme (UCBP) of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), was not just a tagline but a mission that resonated with over 300 studentpreneurs from 26 South African universities.

The EDHE Studentpreneurs Indaba is aimed to support student entrepreneurs and existing start-ups or small businesses through sharing knowledge, best practices, learnings, and networking opportunities. This year's Indaba was hosted for the first time as a stand-alone event over two days in collaboration with the EDHE Communities of Practice (CoPs) and partner entities.



Dr Judy Dlamini - Wits University Chancellor

Wits Chancellor, Dr Judy Dlamini urged student entrepreneurs to capitalise on their varsity status and develop a network of friends and business partners. She emphasised the importance of supporting women entrepreneurs and ensuring the Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme (SWEEP) is active.



Dr Phethiwe Matutu, Chief Executive Officer (USAF) opening the 2024 Studentpreneurs Indaba

In the opening session of the Indaba, Dr Phethiwe Matutu, Chief Executive Officer of Universities South Africa (USAF), emphasised the EDHE programme's alignment with the broader goals of USAf, noting that universities play an important role in shaping entrepreneurial mindsets and fostering innovation. She highlighted EDHE's focus on harnessing and showcasing student businesses, promoting the scholarship of entrepreneurship, and getting universities to be entrepreneurial. Dr Matutu encouraged universities to embrace entrepreneurial practices as an academic pursuit and a means to achieve financial sustainability. As a standout feature of the EDHE programme, the Studentpreneur Indaba offers a platform for students to explore entrepreneurial opportunities, learn from successful business leaders, network with peers and industry experts. Dr Matutu acknowledged the vital role of partners like the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) in building a supportive ecosystem for aspiring entrepreneurs.

The crucial part of this year's Studentpreneurs Indaba was the quests visit where student groups successfully visited entrepreneurs in their workspaces. UNIVEN studentpreneurs who participated in this Indaba were (Lufuno Mukweho – Bsc Computer Science student, Maanda Ephraim Muofhe – Bsc Computer Science and Mathematics student and Phophi Phaswana - Bachelor of Psychology Student). The visits offer firsthand exposure to business operations, personal stories, and meaningful discussions with entrepreneurs. This immersive experience provided practical insights, fostered connections, and inspired entrepreneurial aspirations.

"Sustainable Entrepreneurship: Building Businesses for a Better Future" is not just a tagline but a mission that resonated with over 300 studentpreneurs from 26 South African universities.

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Deputy Auditor-General South Africa analyses the things that need to be done for improvement in the 7th Administration

Deputy Auditor-General South Africa analyses what should be done for improvement in the 7th Administration.

On Thursday 12 August 2024, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) through the Department of Public and Development Administration and Department of Accountancy under the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law (FMCL) hosted a public lecture by the Deputy Auditor-General (DAG) South Africa, Mr Vonani Chauke. The Public Lecture was a discussion of what should be done in the 7th administration to improve the lived experiences of citizens and was held under the theme 'Building a cadre of ethical, capable and servant leadership centred professionals that can drive service delivery, accountability and transparency'. This public lecture took place at the UNIVEN Auditorium.



Mr Vonani Chauke

The DAG, Mr Vonani Chauke highlighted that South Africa requires skilled, capable, committed and patriotic individuals to drive the country's socioeconomic development, accountability, and fiscal and resource efficiency.

Mr Chauke indicated that, one of the big issues on which we have made progress as a country is enabling historically disadvantaged communities to access opportunities that they were denied under apartheid and colonialism. He said this includes opportunities in business and, most importantly, education to fulfil their dreams. Mr Chauke further expressed that,

other issues that have yet to be fully resolved include the holistic inclusion of black people so that they are able to contribute meaningfully to the development of this country. He mentioned that it is about time that we reconsider the concept of active citizenship, which requires us all to do the right things and make opportunities at work, at home or in our communities.



Prof Modimowabarwa (Barwa) Kanyane

In his welcome remarks, Prof Barwa Kanyane, the Executive Dean of the FMCL spoke about transforming and shaping future leaders. Prof Kanyane indicated that the FMCL is dedicated to fostering a dynamic and supportive educational environment by ensuring graduates possess critical competencies that align with today's changing job market. He said the innovative programmes integrate these competencies through experiential learning and industry practicums. He further talked about the student-centric approach saying, "We prioritise our students' needs by fostering inclusive teaching and learning environment".

As a discussant on the public lecture Mr Liberty Maunzagona CA (SA), a Senior Lecturer and Subject Head-Financial Reporting, in the Department of Accountancy,



A photo taken during the panel discussion. Prof Barwa Kanyane (Left), Mr Vonani Chauke (Middle), and Mr Liberty Maunzagona (Right)

FMCL, buttressed what the DAG spoke about by focusing on ethical conduct. He alluded to the fact that ethics is the core to the development of citizens who are patriotic, individuals who will contribute to the success of South Africa and the global village at large. Mr Maunzagona raised a concern that ethics has been left to be taught at institutions of learning, thus leaving out the other critical partner in cultivating ethical behaviour. Mr Maunzagona stressed the need for the family, the local community and religious institutions to be involved and heavily so in developing a culture of ethical conduct. Liberty also alluded to the fact that there is a difference between what is legal and what is ethical with the need to put more emphasis on the moral values of a community in which case the legal component becomes easily manageable. In essence, Liberty pointed to the fact that for an ethical society, it starts from the home of the family rather than at the university space.

Dr Sanah Matloga from the Department of Public and Development Administration introduced the guest speaker while Mr Curtis Snyders who is an Acting Business Unit Leader from the Auditor General's office directed the programme.



Prof Freddy Munzhelele

In his vote of thanks message, Prof Freddy Munzhelele, Head of the Department of Accountancy said that the lecture presentation of the Deputy Auditor-General was informative and educational, that the panel discussions were thoughtful and thought-provoking. He further acknowledged all attendees who comprised of AGSA delegation, members of the Deanery of FMCL-UNIVEN, academics and students.



Empowering Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs: A successful workshop on Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP)



Prof Vhonani Netshandama (fifth from left in the front row) with STEP Participants and Master Trainers

The Economic Activation Office, under the Directorate of Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Inclusive Innovation, and Commercialisation (CEEIIC), hosted a transformative "Train the Trainer" workshop from 16 to 20 September 2024, at Premier Hotel, Thohoyandou. This workshop was a vital component of the Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) programme, which aligns with the University's Strategic Thrust 2: becoming an Entrepreneurial University.

STEP is a key initiative aimed at positioning

the University as a hub for entrepreneurial services, fostering local and regional economic development, and promoting enterprise development. This programme not only helps cultivate an entrepreneurial culture within the University but also strengthens its involvement in community development, ultimately equipping students to become impactful change agents.

The workshop was expertly facilitated by Mr. Tendayi Gondo, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and a STEP Master Trainer, alongside

Dr Anyway Mikioni, the Entrepreneurial Programmes Coordinator at CEEIIC. Professor Vhonani Netshandama, the Director of CEEIIC, delivered an inspiring message emphasising the importance of purpose-driven training that aligns with the University's mandate of entrepreneurial excellence and positive societal impact. The session began with an insightful introduction to STEP by Ms Janina Peschmann, a STEP Master Trainer from Leuphana University, Germany.

Participants who successfully completed the

workshop were certified as STEP Facilitators. This group included esteemed faculty members such as: Dr Emaculate Ingwani (HoD, Urban and Regional Planning (URP)), Ms Shylet Nyamwanza (Lecturer: URP), Ms Sedzani Tshikunde, Dr Moffat Frank (Lecturer: URP), Mr Brightness Risimati (Lecturer: URP), Ms Mmbulaheni Khwashaba (Lecturer: URP), Ms Funani Tshivhase (Lecturer: URP), Dr Thulani Zulu (Lecturer: Music Department), Ms Meisie Madzivhandila (Lecturer: Music Department), Ms Matamela Netshikulwe (Lecturer: Economics), Ms Doreen Morukhu (Lecturer: Human Resource Management) and Mr Rabelani Mamphogoro (Lecturer: Sociology).

At the certification ceremony, Prof Natasha Potgieter, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture, congratulated the participants and underscored the urgency of implementing the STEP programme across the University.

The workshop aimed to institutionalise the STEP programme throughout all faculties, directorates, and units, ensuring that students graduate with an entrepreneurial mindset. By fostering this orientation, the University seeks to equip students to tackle unemployment and other societal challenges effectively.

Through initiatives like STEP, the University is taking significant strides toward creating a vibrant ecosystem of entrepreneurship, empowering future leaders and innovators to make a lasting impact in their communities.

A collaborative IUCN, UGO, and DCEEIIC, GTCI thought leadership dialogue: Celebrating Arbor Day

The Directorate of Community Engagement Entrepreneurship Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation (DCEEIIC) International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Universal Greening Organisation (UGO), in partnership with the Green Technology Institute (GTCI) commemorate Arbor Month 2024: Themed "30 Years of Freedom: Promoting Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management," this initiative underscores the critical role trees and forests play in sustaining environment, economy, and communities. The partnership elevates environmental awareness, fosters stakeholder engagement, and enhances local environmental quality through targeted tree-planting initiatives. The programme was directed by Mr. Rudzani Mamphweli, Community Engagement Officer (DCEEIIC). Professor Netshandama, Director (DCEEIIC), provided the opening remarks, indicating that it is gratifying that UNIVEN alumni started the UGO and is today a thriving organisation. She encouraged students to emulate what the younger Talifhani and friends did and utilise time spent in the varsity to be a profile of being a decent citizen of the country and the globe. Reflecting on the transformations of Higher education over the years, Professor Netshandama indicated that the University of Venda saw it fit to reconfigure the directorate of community engagement to include entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial mindset,

Inclusive innovation, and commercialisation because these are interdependent core functions. The interdependence is non-negotiable, yet it is generally still tricky for universities to navigate. The directorate, in some ways, is still regarded as a stepchild. It strives for meaningful partnerships, such as one in celebrating Arbor Day.



Prof V.O. Netshandama, Director (DCEEIIC), delivering opening remarks

Setting the Scene was done by Mr Vhalinavho Khavhagali, UNIVEN Alumnus and Country Representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Mr Khavhagali highlighted that the social function of higher education goes beyond professionalisation, involving possibilities for interdisciplinary knowledge, critical dialogue, and actions that open new horizons for politics and citizenship. Secondly, crucial

research that diagnoses and suggests solutions to environmental changes is primarily carried out at research universities. Although universities represent only part of the higher education system, they are closely linked to the whole through training teachers and managers and developing public policy proposals for the sector. HEIs, therefore, represent a unique forum for producing and disseminating scientific knowledge to tackle the environmental emergency as a complex problem.



Mr Vhalinavho Khavhagali, Country Representative (IUCN)

During the discussion, Mr Mukundi Mushaphi, LED Manager of Vhembe District Local Economic Development, emphasised the importance of the concept of the people

shall govern, emphasising that what we do should be to serve the masses of the people during the open discussions facilitated by Mr. Talifhani Tshitwamulomoni, who set Priorities and actions. Chief Nyamande Mutulagole also graced the panel from Matangari village. He shared different initiatives from his village, such as preserving the trees and forest and encouraging people not to destroy indigenous trees, which are only locally available. He indicated the initiative he has taken in his village to solve the issue of the water crises and the support he is giving the villagers as they depend on crop farming.

In his closing remarks, Professor Maluta, Director of Green Technology Confucius Institute (GTCI), commended the UGO and IUCN fellows for thinking back home, remembering their roots, and starting the collaboration with the University. He further acknowledges the UGO as they have started with different programmes to assist the students at the university.



Community involvement in research commercialisation fosters the relationship between researchers and community stakeholders



Delegates

The Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) within the Directorate of Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation (DCEIIC) hosted a 3-day Commercialisation Training Workshop recently at 2TEN Hotel in Sibasa.

known for her successful innovation and commercialisation. She highlighted the significance of Prof Motaung's achievements in advancing research commercialisation and improving healthcare solutions. In her conclusion, she encouraged all participants to actively engage with Professor Motaung during the training workshop.

The following constitute the key points of her presentations:

- pivotal role strategic partnerships play in supporting technology commercialisation through providing access to resources such as funding, facilities, and equipment as well as technical expertise and market knowledge.
- the importance of technology readiness level (TRL) assessment as a guide for decision-making in IP protection and the commercialisation process.
- the importance of community involvement in research commercialisation as it fosters the relationship between researchers and community stakeholders.
- the importance of market analysis in commercialisation.
- various funding opportunities available for the commercialisation of research outputs.

Key recommendations included the amendment of the research proposal template to align with market needs, and that way students will look at research with the market in mind.

Amongst the highlights were the case studies presented by guest lectures as follows:

- 8th Season Capital's Thabo Ncalo virtually presented about the funding opportunities available from their company. 8th Season Capital has other services including strategy development and courses for entrepreneurs.

SEDA's Marcus Mukumela also shared information on funding options as well as other service from his agency. These include training and pre-establishment support, business viability and feasibility assessments, business planning, compliance support, quality management support, trade facilitation, mentorship, and coaching.

There were other group exercises/activities where the delegates developed a spin-off company template, conducted a SWOT analysis on the OTT and the DCEIIC, providing suggestions on how to address/mitigate weaknesses and threats. There were also suggestions for the amendment of the mission, vision, and values for the OTT and DCEIIC.

The Director of Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation – Professor Vhonani Netshandama and the Commercialisation Specialist in the Office of Technology Transfer – Dr Mlu Ganto provided concluding remarks and way forward – highlighting the priorities that need immediate attention, as well as medium- and long-term goals for both the Directorate and the OTT.



Professor Nosisi Feza DVC: Research and Postgraduate Studies,

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Research and Postgraduate Studies, Professor Nosisi Feza officially opened the event. She emphasised the importance of the workshop, stating that in the past universities have focused primarily on generating research outputs without adequately considering their societal impact. The growing societal pressure on higher education institutions to address real-world challenges was highlighted. She noted that universities are globally recognised as major investment areas and that there is now a demand for institutions to demonstrate their contributions beyond traditional academic boundaries.

Prof Feza stressed the University of Venda's commitment to evolving as an engaged and entrepreneurial institution. The university is positioning itself to address societal needs actively and to foster innovation. She expressed great excitement in hosting Prof Motaung, a prominent African researcher



Prof Keolebogile Motaung: Global Health Biotech CEO and Founder

Prof Keolebogile Motaung introduced technology transfer – including the different types of intellectual property (IP). These are patents, copyright, trademark, designs, plant breeders' rights, and trade secrets. She further discussed different commercialisation pathways – which include start-ups, spin-off, licensing, and assignment. She also had case studies which include her own Global Health Biotech, Dr Kea Ncube's Agriservices (a former student of hers). She mentioned the pivotal role that strategic partnerships play in supporting technology commercialisation through providing access to resources such as funding, facilities, and equipment as well as technical expertise and market knowledge.



Marcus Mukumela: SEDA



Prof Vhonani Netshandama



Dr Mlu Ganto: Commercialisation Specialist

The Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law Held a successful Annual Career Expo



The Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law in collaboration with Vhembe District Municipality, hosted a successful 2024 Annual Career Expo at the University of Venda Auditorium from 10-12 September 2024. A three-day Expo took place under the theme Charting the Course of future leaders: building professional pathways through the power of engagement and networking.

The purpose of this Career Exhibition was to expose faculty's exit level students to different career opportunities available in their respective industries. Different organisations were invited to make presentations. This career expo provided an opportunity for students to network and interact with industry professionals. Organisations were also invited to set up career exhibition booths for interaction and engagement, information booklets and various promotional goodies. After the formal programme, students were able to visit exhibition booths for more information and informal interactions.

On the first day, students from the Departments of Mercantile and Private Law, Public Law and Criminal Justice received presentations from companies and institutions such as Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID), State Attorney Thohoyandou, Master of high court, Human Rights Commission, Special

Investigative Unit (SIU), Limpopo Society of Advocates, South African Maritime Safety Authority, SAPS Forensic Division etc.

Students who came on the second day were from the Departments of Human Resource Management and Labour Relations, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Public and Development Administration and Business Information Systems. These students had an opportunity to engage and network, through presentations and exhibitions with companies and institutions such as Public Service Commission, Vhembe District Tourism Department, South African Board for People Practice, PMF Capital and Consulting, Thulamela Tourism Department etc.

On the final day of the career expo, students from the Departments of Accountancy, Economics and Business Management engaged with industry professionals from companies such as International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa, The office of Auditor General, National Treasury, Limpopo Chamber of Commerce, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants etc. After the presentations, students visited different stalls for direct engagements and information gathering.

Overall, the three-day career expo provided a rich platform for final year students in the faculty to interact directly with their potential employers. The faculty strives to

produce graduates that are locally relevant and internationally competitive. This can be achieved by closing the gap between academia and industry and thus producing employable graduates with desirable graduate attributes.

Most importantly, this career expo created a platform for engagement and networking between students and industry professionals. This assisted students in their quest to explore potential career paths, finding networks and mentors in industry professionals, and learning more about existing career opportunities. The engagement with industry professionals benefited students in that they were able to get clarity regarding appealing resume writing, interview preparation, career planning, and industry-specific insights.



Adv Gideon Joubert, Acting Director, School of Law

The event was officially opened by Adv Gideon Joubert, the Acting Director of the School of Law. In his opening remarks, he said that the faculty partner with local businesses, public sector, entrepreneurs, accounting experts, legal experts, law firms and many others to produce graduates that are locally relevant and globally competitive. Adv Joubert highlighted that the matter of Work-Integrated-Learning (WIL) is becoming more prominent, and in the FMCL it has already been made part of some programmes. WIL is envisioned to become an indispensable prerequisite for the completion of all programmes in the future" said Adv Joubert, as he also finally declared the Expo officially opened.

The Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law (FMCL) career expo offers students a unique opportunity to connect with employers from various sectors, gain insights into different career options, and develop essential skills for the job market.

The faculty collaborates with local businesses, public sector organizations, entrepreneurs, accounting and legal experts, law firms, and more to develop graduates who are both locally relevant and globally competitive.

The Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law Held a successful Annual Career Expo continued...



Phathutshedzo Mulaudzi, UNIVEN Third Year LLB Student

A final year LLB student at UNIVEN, Phathutshedzo Mulaudzi said the Career Expo was much fruitful and managed to enhance and expand his knowledge of what he could do after completion of his studies as he had the opportunity of being addressed by attorney/s and advocates who gave more insight in the Legal field.

In addition, the engagement with industry professionals benefited students regarding writing appealing CVs, interview skills, industry-specific and legal research. Students also participated in mock interviews with potential employers.

Students left the three day career expo inspired and motivated to pursue their respective careers. With the valuable insights and connections gained, they are well-prepared to take the next step in their professional journey.



Some of the officials from South African Border Management Authorities (BMA)

Green Technology Confucius Institute (GTCI) continues with its initiative to stive the drive of green technology research

The Green Technology Confucius Institute continues with its initiative to stive the drive of green technology research at the University of Venda by hosting the TELLUS Energy Company colleagues for starting the collaboration on the different green technology related research. TELLUS Energy Company is a leading innovator in sustainable energy solutions, dedicated to driving the transition towards renewable resources and fostering environmental stewardship. With a commitment to excellence and sustainability, TELLUS Energy Company leverages cutting-edge technologies to power a greener and more resilient future.

During the presentation and discussion by both parties, GTCI, TELLUS Energy Company and colleagues from the Department of Physics, the following key discussion points emerged: Formalising of collaboration through the MoU and project implementation plan; Developing a sustainable plan of action; Involving and encouraging staff and students on professional training exchange, students training and internship; Generate Innovation initiative and Collaborative fundraising.

The GTCI and the Department of Physics together with TELLUS, finally agreed to work on the following areas: (i) Outreach and Public Understanding of Energy (ii) Energy Storage and Battery Research, (iii) Hydrogen Energy and Fuel Cell research (iv) Renewable Energy Integration (Microgrids) and Smart Grids together with Energy Management and Sustainable Transportation.

The discussion was also joined by Mr Rudzani Mamphweli, the Community Engagement Officer attached to the Directorate of Community Engagement Entrepreneurship Inclusive Innovation and Commercialisation (DCEEIIC). The collaboration between the GTCI and TELLUS aims to engage the communities on different issues related to understanding on energy issues in line with the Food, Energy and Water Nexus.

During the final discussion and closing remarks, Professor Maluta, Director of Green Technology Confucius Institute (GTCI), commended the TELLUS Energy company for identifying UNIVEN as their partner on developing renewable energy research.



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