

# Nendila

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA



University of Venda



@Univenofficial



universityofvenda



University of Venda Official



University of Venda  
Creating future leaders

## UNIVEN Celebrates Long Service and Bids Farewell to Retirees at Year-End Function



On Photo: UNIVEN Staff during the year-end function

The University of Venda on Wednesday, 11 December 2024 held its annual Vice-Chancellor and Principal year-end function, celebrating the hard work and dedication of its staff while marking the end of a remarkable year. The event was a fitting occasion to recognise employees who have shown exceptional loyalty and commitment to the university, as well as to bid a fond farewell to 16 retirees who have contributed to the institution's growth and success over the years.

The function, which took place at the University Auditorium brought together staff and senior leadership for a day of recognition, reflection, and gratitude. Key highlights of the event included the presentation of Long Service Awards to 87 staff members who have dedicated between 10 (53 recipients), 20 (13 recipients), 30 (20 recipients) and 40 (two recipients) years of service to the university. Messrs Calvin Mulidzi and Fhatuwani Netshiluvhi received awards for serving the University for 40 years. These employees were honoured for their steadfast commitment to excellence, their role in shaping the university's culture, and their contribution to the success of students and academic programmes.

In addition to the long service recognitions, the university also bid a heartfelt farewell to 16 esteemed retirees of whom 8 were females and 8 males. These individuals, whose careers span many decades, were celebrated for their outstanding work across various departments. The retirees were acknowledged for their leadership, mentorship, and unwavering dedication, leaving behind a legacy that will continue to inspire fu-

ture generations of scholars, staff, and students at the university.

"We are incredibly proud of the long-term dedication and passion our staff has shown over the years," said the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni. "As we bid farewell to our retirees, we express our deepest gratitude for their invaluable contributions to our university. Their work has not only shaped the institution but has also had a profound impact on the many students they mentored and the community they served."



On Photo: Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni

In his speech at the Year-End function, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni expressed heartfelt gratitude for the staff's dedication and hard work, highlighting the University's achievements in 2024, including stable academic operations, growing research

## READ INSIDE



Scan QR code to read more

UNIVEN Celebrates Long Service and Bids Farewell to Retirees at Year-End Function	1
The University of Venda and Lepelle Northern Water Sign MoU to Foster Collaboration	4
Wrapping Up the 16-Day Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in Mauluma with the Traditional Council of Mauluma	5
A Heartfelt Farewell to Prof. Nthaduleni Nethengwe: Honoured for His Outstanding Leadership and Service	6
Empowering Entrepreneurs: The University of Venda Joins Forces with Six Universities to Launch the Groundbreaking Entrepreneurship Venture Builder	7
Announcement from the Office of the University Registrar	8

outputs, and improved national rankings. He praised the university's international collaborations and ongoing infrastructure development, while also acknowledging the challenges posed by financial constraints and reduced government subsidies. He recognised the contributions of long-serving staff members and retirees, More on page 2



# UNIVEN Celebrates Long Service and Bids Farewell to Retirees at Year-End Function

remarking that their legacy would continue to inspire the institution. The Vice-Chancellor concluded by wishing everyone a joyful festive season and a successful 2025 academic year, thanking them for their role in the university's transformation.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Prof Sebi Lekalaka-Mokgele welcomed staff and guests. In her welcome remarks, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor thanked the retirees for their dedicated service, highlighting their vital contributions to the university's success. She expressed gratitude to both the support staff, whose behind-the-scenes efforts were crucial to smooth operations, and the academic staff, whose teaching and mentorship inspired excellence. She encouraged retirees to embrace their new phase of life by pursuing their passions, while emphasising that their impact on the university would be remembered. Concluding with a scripture from Isaiah, she wished them health, happiness, and fulfilment in their well-deserved retirement.

The Director of Human Resources, Mrs Uanda Ndou, emphasised that retirement is not an end, but the beginning of a new phase in life. She encouraged retirees to start thinking about how they will occupy themselves in this next chapter, viewing it as an opportunity to implement and realise their dreams. She urged them to embrace this phase, which is filled with endless possibilities, and to make the most of these "bonus years," enjoying the years ahead to the fullest.

The event also included speeches from Service staff, Admin and Academic representatives. They reflected on their years at UNIVEN and shared personal stories of the friendships, challenges, and milestones they encountered throughout their careers.

When representing Service Workers, Mr Alfred Mutoti said we are coming from far with this university. We have witnessed this university growing for many decades. He started working for UNIVEN in 1986 March.

Mr Amon Mbuva Represented Administrative Staff said that this is a moment of celebration, reflection, and gratitude as we bid farewell to our

friends and colleagues, leaving behind a legacy of excellence and progress at the university. Our journey has been marked by dedication, professionalism, and kindness, making us the heart and soul of this institution. Retirement marks the start of a new adventure, and though we will be missed, our impact will always be remembered. We thank our colleagues, university management for their support and opportunities to grow, and above all, God for guiding us to this moment. Thank you, and God bless.

Prof Rachael Lebese, speaking on behalf of the retired academics, expressed gratitude to the support staff, students, fellow academics, and university management for their contributions. She thanked the support staff for creating a conducive environment, the students for their engagement, and management for providing growth opportunities, including international exposure. She also praised the Executive Dean of Health Sciences for her compassion and leadership. She concluded by assuring the university that retirees would continue to be ambassadors, wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

To add the celebratory mood of the Year End function, Mr Jerry Mahlangu showed his special exceptional talent by performing a Stage play called Vhafunzi. The moral of the stage play was that not everyone entrusted with authority in society is trustworthy. Therefore, it is our responsibility to critically evaluate what we encounter and allow only those with integrity and strong moral character to be part of our lives.

The Chief Operating Officer (COO), Mr Botwe Kraziya in his closing remarks, highlighted the deep connection between work and personal life, celebrating the retirees for their pivotal role in the university's success. He thanked the event organisers, praised a creative stage play, and reflected on the university's growth over time. Assuring retirees that the university is in capable hands, he reaffirmed the commitment to excellence and future growth. He concluded by wishing everyone a joyful holiday and safe travels.

The university Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni reiterated his profound gratitude to all staff, both current and retiring, and emphasised the continued commitment to fostering a supportive and vibrant academic community for years to come.



On Photo: Retirees with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal and some members of SMC



On Photo: On group photo: Vice-Chancellor and Principal with the recipients of the 40 Years Awards (2nd and 3rd from left), alongside members of the Senior Management Committee (SMC), celebrating years of dedication and excellence





Group photo: Vice-Chancellor and Principal with the recipients of the 30 Years Awards and some members of SMC



Group photo: Vice-Chancellor and Principal with the recipients of the 20 Years Awards and some members of SMC



Group photo: Vice-Chancellor and Principal with the recipients of the 10 Years Awards and some members of SMC





# The University of Venda and Lepelle Northern Water Sign MoU to Foster Collaboration

On Monday, 09 December 2024, in a significant step toward enhancing community development and academic collaboration, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) and Lepelle Northern Water signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at a formal ceremony held at the University's Faculty of Health Sciences building boardroom. The agreement began a strategic partnership to drive skills development, capacity building, and collaborative research in water and wastewater treatment. The MoU represents a significant step in empowering UNIVEN students through hands-on training and practical exposure to critical industry processes while enhancing the University's curriculum.



On Photo: Prof Eucebious Lekalakala-Mokgele, DVC: Teaching and Learning

In her welcome remarks, Deputy-Vice Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Prof Eucebious Lekalakala-Mokgele, emphasised the University's commitment towards collaborative engagement, commended the signing of this MoU. She highlighted the contributions of the Centre for Teaching and Learning, research efforts, and social responsibility, reflecting the institution's alignment with the scientific community. Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele also commended the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture, Prof Natasha Potgieter, and staff members in this faculty for their instrumental role in fostering collaboration and addressing diverse areas such as water and microbiology.



On Photo: Prof Benard Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda.

In his address, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, highlighted the signing of this MoU as significant between UNIVEN and the Lepelle

Northern Water (LNW), reflecting the University's commitment to addressing community challenges, particularly in water research. He traced the origins of the partnership to strategic networking. He emphasised UNIVEN's focus on impactful initiatives, such as establishing a Research Chair on the Water Environment, supported by national and international collaborators, including Chinese institutions. The Vice-Chancellor outlined the University's strategic pillars, emphasising student-centered education, entrepreneurial growth, strong governance, and robust partnerships. "Plans for growth, including satellite campuses and smart city collaborations, aim to alleviate capacity constraints and align with local economic development," said Prof Nthambeleni. As he concluded, the Vice-Chancellor underscored UNIVEN's sound financial management, ensuring resources are effectively utilised for bursaries, research, and other core activities, establishing the institution as a trusted and dynamic player in higher education.



On Photo: Dr Ndwelani Mphephu, Chairperson of Lepelle Northern Water

Chairperson of Lepelle Northern Water Board, Dr. Ndwelani Mphephu, expressed optimism about the partnership, stating that he is excited to be signing an MoU of this caliber. He commended Lepelle Northern Water, which is comprised of a team of young, dedicated minds who work tirelessly to make a difference in people's lives. Dr. Mphephu highlighted that there is severe water scarcity in South Africa, but we must begin solving this challenge at home before we can even go outside this province. "We need these students to help us produce first-class quality water. Our water treatment plant systems are not running efficiently, and we now need students to conduct research that will help

solve these challenges. The security of the Water supply is critical. For us to come here is because we want to solve this water challenge in our province and country," he said.



Signing the MoU: Prof Bernard Nthambeleni (right) and Dr Cornelius Reuters (left), LNW Chief Executive Officer.

The ceremony culminated with the official signing of the agreement, followed by a symbolic exchange of gifts and a networking session. The partnership underscored the importance of uniting academia, government, and industry to address shared challenges and drive growth.



Prof Bernard Nthambeleni (right) and Dr Cornelius Reuters (left) holding the signed MoU

The Vice-Chancellor also briefly explained how the MoU would be effectively implemented.

Prof Jabulani Makhubele, Director of Research and Innovation, gave the vote of thanks. He appreciated the work done by the Vice-Chancellor in making sure that the signing of this MoU became a success.

As this MoU takes effect, stakeholders from both institutions expressed excitement about the potential for transformative projects that will benefit the University, municipality, and the broader community.



A group photo of attendees, participants and witnesses of the signing ceremony.

# Wrapping Up the 16-Day Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in Mauluma with the Traditional Council of Mauluma



On photo: Attendees of the 16-Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

On 8 December 2024, the Department of Youth in Development visited Mauluma Village under the leadership of Chief Ravele, to engage the community in a discussion about the significance of the 16-Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

With the support of the Executive Dean, Prof. Runhare, the department launched this workshop to address the ongoing issue of violence against women, which is primarily perpetrated by men against their spouses.

The discussion was initiated by doctoral candidate Ms Tshildzi Mulaudzi, who highlighted the debilitating psycho-social effects of gender-based violence on its victims. Prof Daniel Thobejane emphasised that the 16-Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence should be viewed not as a limited campaign, but as an ongoing effort to eradicate this scourge. He also detailed the Gender-Based Violence Act of 1998 to the community members. Dr Harry Mukwevho further addressed the economic factors that often enable gender-based violence, stressing their importance in the broader context of this issue.

Chief Ravele concluded the event by expressing his gratitude to the University of Venda delegation (which included Mr Akani Baloyi, Dr Mukwevho, Ms Mulaudzi, and Prof Thobejane). He also highlighted the various community programmes aimed at improving the livelihoods of the people of Mauluma.



## TIP OFFS

If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus

Contact the University Hotline

Toll free number 0800 212 755  
or email: [univenhotline@tip-offs.com](mailto: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.



# A Heartfelt Farewell to Prof. Nthaduleni Nethengwe: Honoured for His Outstanding Leadership and Service



On Photo: Prof Natasha Potgieter, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture

On Friday, 6 December 2024, staff members of the University's Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture gathered at the University's Agric Hall to bid a warm and heartfelt farewell to Prof Nthaduleni Nethengwe, who served as the Deputy Dean of Teaching and Learning. Prof Nethengwe retired after 31 years of dedicated service to the University. The farewell ceremony was marked by moving speeches, moments of reflection, and a celebration of his remarkable contributions to the University of Venda.

The event began with a speech from the Deputy Dean of Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Lutendo Murulana, who set the tone for the occasion. He announced that Prof Nethengwe had chosen to retire early and extended his gratitude to the Executive Dean, Prof Potgieter, and the dedicated team who organised the event.

Mrs Julia Sigama, Manager in the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture, eloquently explained the purpose of the gathering. She highlighted the profound impact Prof. Nethengwe had on both students and staff members, stating that the occasion was not only a farewell but also an opportunity to celebrate his exceptional contributions and to share cherished memories.

Dr Odesney Naicker, speaking on behalf of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, expressed mixed emotions in bidding farewell to Prof. Nethengwe. "His departure saddens us, but also joyful for the new adventures that lie ahead for him," she said. Dr Naicker emphasised Prof Nethengwe's dedication, passion, and wisdom, noting that he had left behind a lasting legacy. "As he embarks on this new chapter, we wish him rest, happiness, and continued growth, knowing that a legend like him will never truly be forgotten."

Dr Florence Murungweni, Head of the Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences, thanked Prof Nethengwe for his mentorship and

guidance. "You have been the beacon of wisdom in this Faculty," she said. "You have contributed so much, and we are grateful for your support." Dr Murungweni also mentioned that Prof Nethengwe would continue his association with the University as an Adjunct Professor. Prof Emaculate Ingwani described Prof Nethengwe as a pillar of strength, praising his straightforwardness and unwavering support for colleagues. "Prof Nethengwe is someone who always tells it like it is," she said. "We will continue to call on you for your guidance." She thanked him for always being there for his colleagues in the Faculty.

Prof Pascal Bessong admired Prof Nethengwe's commitment to quality work. "He always advocated for excellence, ensuring that everything was done to the highest standard," Prof. Bessong recalled. "He never gets tired until everything is right, and I have learned much from his leadership."

The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture, Prof Natasha Potgieter, delivered a thoughtful speech, emphasising Prof Nethengwe's crucial role in advancing teaching and learning within the Faculty. Prof Potgieter expressed her appreciation for Prof

Nethengwe's constant availability and willingness to support both colleagues and students, and she wished him all the best for his retirement.

In his response, Prof Nethengwe expressed deep gratitude for the recognition. Reflecting on his long tenure, he appreciated the farewell event. "I started working at UNIVEN in 1993, and it brings me great joy that the Faculty has organised this event for me," he said.

"It shows that my contributions have been valued." He thanked Prof Potgieter for the opportunity to serve the University and the Faculty, calling it a privilege to work alongside such dedicated colleagues. He concluded by wishing everyone a successful 2025 academic year and encouraged the team to continue upholding the Faculty's legacy of excellence.

The ceremony ended with a vote of thanks by Dr Emmanuel Mhlongo, Head of the Department of Earth Science. Although this farewell marked the end of an era, it also highlighted Prof. Nethengwe's enduring academic excellence and legacy of dedication. As he embarks on this new chapter, his contributions will continue to inspire both staff and students in the Faculty.



On Photo: Prof Nthaduleni Nethengwe, Deputy Dean, Teaching and Learning

# Empowering Entrepreneurs: The University of Venda Joins Forces with Six Universities to Launch the Groundbreaking Entrepreneurship Venture Builder



The University of Venda is proud to announce its participation in a transformative new initiative, the Entrepreneurship Venture Builder (EVV).

In collaboration with the Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA) and six other prestigious universities, this pioneering programme is set to foster a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem across Southern Africa.

The EVV is designed to empower entrepreneurs from Universities of Technology, Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs), and marginalised communities. The programme aims to provide a robust support system, equipping participants with the resources and expertise needed to turn innovative business ideas into sustainable, successful ventures.

At the recent launch event, Prof Michael Twum-Darko, the EVV Manager, highlighted the programme's commitment to fostering innovation and overcoming barriers to entrepreneurship. "We are dedicated to breaking down obstacles and creating pathways for entrepreneurs to flourish in the African market," he stated.

The EVV offers a comprehensive suite of services

to support budding entrepreneurs, including:

- **Mentor-in-Residence Programme:** Access to expert mentorship from university faculty specialising in technology transfer, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

- **Incubation and Acceleration:** Tailored guidance to help entrepreneurs progress from developing a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to scaling their ventures for commercialisation.

- **Focus on Inclusion:** A strong emphasis on empowering student entrepreneurs and individuals from historically marginalised communities, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities.

- **Regional Impact:** Initially based at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's Business Innovation and Incubation Centre (CPUT), the EVV will evolve into a decentralised model, expanding across multiple universities to reach a broader range of participants.

The EVV is the result of a powerful partnership between leading institutions in the region. In addition to the University of Venda, the other founding members include the Cape Peninsula

University of Technology (CPUT), Durban University of Technology (DUT), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), Central University of Technology (CUT), and Walter Sisulu University (WSU).

The initiative is generously funded by the Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA) fund, a UK International Development initiative. This partnership marks a significant step forward in strengthening innovation ecosystems within South African campuses and surrounding communities, supporting the transformation of research into commercial success.

The EVV represents a forward-thinking approach to addressing Africa's entrepreneurial challenges. By supporting young entrepreneurs, especially those from underserved communities, this initiative has the potential to drive economic growth and contribute to the long-term development of Southern Africa.

As this groundbreaking initiative unfolds, the University of Venda remains committed to its role in shaping an inclusive and dynamic entrepreneurial landscape, empowering the next generation of business leaders to thrive.

## UNIVEN wishes you Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year



# Announcement from the Office of the University Registrar

## CHANGE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S 2025 OPENING DATE FROM WEDNESDAY, 08 TO MONDAY, 06 JANUARY 2025

Please be advised that the University will open on Monday, 06 January 2025 in line with the approved 2025 University Annual Plan, and not on 08 January 2025 as shown in the 2024 University Annual Plan. The change was necessitated by a need to accommodate some of the activities that should be scheduled in the first quarter.

The change was duly approved by relevant approval structures, including the Executive Management Committee (EMC) and the Senate.

Issued by:  
Dr. J.J. Baloyi  
University Registrar

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

Interns  
Mr Liada Mavhusha  
Mr Rofhiwa Mukwevho

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](mailto:welheminah.mabogo@univen.ac.za)



Scan QR code to read more