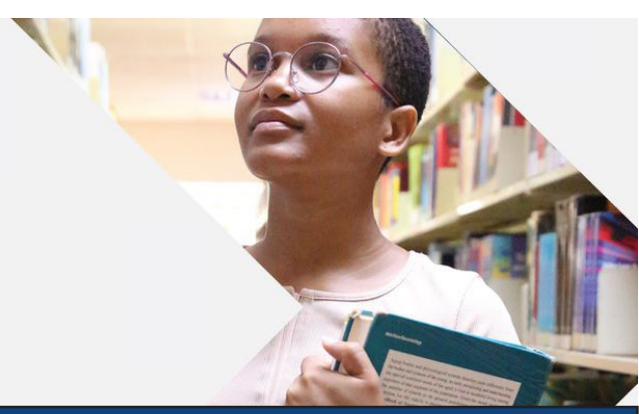




University of Venda  
Creating Future Leaders

# UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



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## Ms Mahlatshe Shokane Wins the SAIGA 2024 Most Impactful Associate Award



*L-R: Mr Phillip Rakgwale and Mrs Rakgwale*

The Southern African Institute of Government Auditors (SAIGA) hosted its prestigious Annual Awards Ceremony on 7 December 2024, at the University of South Africa (UNISA) Main Campus in Pretoria. This esteemed event recognised outstanding contributions in the field of public sector auditing and finance, with a special focus on promoting excellence, integrity, and leadership within the public sector.

The University of Venda (UNIVEN), an esteemed partner and ally of SAIGA, was invited to attend the ceremony. UNIVEN's presence underscored its strong relationship with the Institute, reflecting its shared commitment to fostering academic excellence and professional growth in government auditing.

During the ceremony, SAIGA President Mr. Phillip Rakgwale delivered a compelling address, emphasising the importance of the "Most Impactful Associate Member of the Year" award. Together with the panel of award judges, he underscored how this category acknowledges associate members who make remarkable contributions toward advancing SAIGA's mission — whether by exhibiting leadership within their organisations or by championing the value of Registered Government Auditors (RGA) qualifications.

The judges noted the difficulty in selecting a winner, given the need to evaluate each nominee's tangible impact in their fields. His reflections highlighted the exceptional commitment and influence of these professionals, reinforcing the vital role they play in enhancing governance, accountability, and public sector excellence.

“We interviewed the nominees and it’s as if they were campaigning for the presidency. But when you listen to their work, it becomes clear that they are taking their organisations to the next level by advocating for accountability and recognising RGA qualifications,” the President remarked.



**L-R:** SAIGA Council Member Mr Mavuso Chabalala and Ms Mahlatse Shokane

Ms Mahlatse Shokane from the University of Venda’s Internal Audit Department has been honored with the prestigious “Most Impactful Associate Member of the Year” Award.

Chosen from a pool of outstanding nominees, Ms. Shokane’s exceptional contributions to public sector accountability and governance set her apart. Her relentless efforts have been pivotal in elevating the recognition of RGA qualifications and championing the crucial role of government auditors in enhancing transparency and accountability within organisations. Through her dedication and vision, she has not only advanced her profession but also fortified the integrity of public service.



**L-R:** SAIGA CEO Mr. Russel Morena and Director Internal, Mrs. Diana Makwarela

SAIGA’s Annual Awards also highlighted an extraordinary moment with the Presidential Award bestowed upon retired Chief Justice Raymond Zondo.

This special recognition honored his exceptional contributions to public service and his unwavering commitment to advancing accountability in the legal and public sectors.

His leadership, integrity, and dedication have left an indelible mark on governance in South Africa, setting a standard of excellence and transparency for future generations.

The SAIGA Annual Awards serve as a beacon of excellence by:

- Recognising and rewarding academic brilliance in auditing and finance,
- Honoring individuals and organisations for outstanding contributions to the public sector,
- Inspiring continuous professional development and growth among SAIGA members, and
- Attracting and retaining top-tier talent to uphold SAIGA’s leadership in governance and public sector auditing.

The 2024 SAIGA Member Awards showcased the dedication, innovation, and impact that professionals like Ms. Mahlatse Shokane bring to the auditing and accounting fields.

The event was not only a celebration of achievements but also a powerful reflection on the progress made and the vast potential for the future of public sector auditing in South Africa.

# Forging the Future of Academic Leadership: UNIVEN Celebrates PGCELA Graduates in Style

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) proudly hosted the Postgraduate Certificate in Entrepreneurial Leadership for Academics (PGCELA) Final Assessment and Graduation on Tuesday, 03 December 2024 at the UNIVEN Research Conference Centre. The event marked a milestone in cultivating leadership and entrepreneurial prowess within the academic sphere.



**On Photo:** Mrs Uanda Ndou, Director: Human Resources

The session commenced with an inspiring welcome message by Mrs Uanda Ndou, Director of Human Resources at UNIVEN, welcoming attendees to celebrate the Postgraduate Certificate Programme in Entrepreneurial Leadership for academics, highlighting the institution's commitment to producing globally competitive graduates. The event acknowledges participants' dedication to leadership development, emphasising the importance of continuous learning to adapt to change.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Entrepreneurial Leadership for Academics is a transformative programme designed to align with the institution's objective of becoming an entrepreneurial university. This six-month programme is attended by university academic staff in blocks, allowing them to balance their professional duties with their studies. The programme aims to develop entrepreneurial skills, enhance leadership capabilities and promote the creation of innovative and sustainable solutions to address modern challenges. The PGCELA programme is coordinated by Human Resources Department's

Organisational Development and Training unit, spearheaded by lead facilitators Dr Robert Martin and Prof Vhonani Netshandama, supported by a team of facilitators including Dr Diko Makia, Dr Shonisani Ramashia, Prof Jethro Zuwarimwe, Dr Mlungiselile Ganto, and Ms Shumani Nembudani.



**On Photo:** Dr Diko Makia, Professor Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture

This was followed by a detailed outline of the event's purpose by Dr Diko Makia as he said that the event marks the final assessment and graduation of the postgraduate certificate in entrepreneurial leadership for academics, offering a platform to engage with participants and emphasise the personal essence of entrepreneurship. Attendees of the session witnessed a fusion of knowledge, innovation, and academic excellence.

The highlight of the day was the presentation session, where five groups showcased their groundbreaking projects. This engaging session, enriched by a question and answer with esteemed panellists — Dr Robert Martin, Prof Jethro Zuwarimwe, Mrs Uanda Ndou and Dr Diko Makia, demonstrated the participants' readiness to lead transformative initiatives in academia.

The event culminated in the graduation ceremony, a momentous occasion honouring the participants' dedication and transformative journey throughout the programme led by Dr Robert Martin and Mrs Uanda Ndou, celebrating the participants' dedication and growth with

the symbolic presentation of certificates, each graduate called individually to the stage to receive their accolade amid applause and cheers from their supporters.



**On Photo:** Dr Robert Martin, Deputy-Vice Chancellor: Corporate Services

At the end of the ceremony, attendees reflected on a journey of empowerment and innovation. Dr Robert Martin concluded the session by emphasizing the course’s aim to integrate entrepreneurship into academia,

fostering solution-driven academics and enhancing student employability through innovative, student-centred teaching. He urged participants to embed entrepreneurial thinking into their curricula, refine portfolios to demonstrate impact and focus on implementation in classrooms. He closed by commending their efforts and wishing them success and personal fulfilment.



Graduates posing for a group photo with Dr Robert Martin (seated 2nd from left) and Mrs Uanda Ndou (seated 3rd from left)

## Experimental Farm Manager Participates in the Human Rights Commission Indaba

From November 26th to 28th, 2024, various stakeholders, including the University of Venda from across Limpopo gathered with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) for an Indaba aimed at addressing the issue of instability and violence within farming communities. This crucial gathering focused on fostering dialogue and understanding in an effort to create lasting solutions to the tensions that persist in agricultural areas. By engaging in discussions such as these, the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture (FSAE) is fulfilling its mission to produce well-rounded agricultural scientists and farmers while tackling critical issues such as inequality in the agricultural sector.

One of the key speakers at the event was Ms Thifheli Kutama, the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture (FSAE) Farm Manager, who was invited to share insights on the impact of farm violence on food security.



Ms Thifheli Kutama – Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture Experimental Farm Manager

She underscored the importance of stability within farming communities to ensure food security during her address. According to Ms Kutama, a peaceful and stable environment is critical for agricultural productivity, and it is essential that all stakeholders work together rather than against each other.

She expressed concern that more than 30 years into South Africa's democracy, the country and Limpopo still find themselves engaged in difficult conversations about farm murders and attacks. This prolonged instability is not only a tragedy for those directly affected but also threatens the country's broader agricultural and food systems. Ms Kutama called for unity among all individuals, regardless of race, to bring an end to these violent incidents, which continue to plague the farming communities.

She also emphasised farm workers' crucial role in the country's food production system. Their well-being and protection are central to the sustainability of food systems in South Africa, as mistreatment of farm workers remains a significant issue in the country. Eliminating violence and improving labour conditions are vital steps towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims for zero hunger and food security for all by 2030.

The Indaba concluded with closing remarks from Mr Victor Mavhidula, the Limpopo Provincial Manager of the South African Human Rights Commission. He reinforced the importance of accountability, urging all participants to discuss these issues and take tangible steps toward implementing the solutions discussed during the sessions. Mr Mavhidula stressed that food security is a fundamental human right that should be accessible to everyone, regardless of background or socio-economic status.

He also reiterated the need for change within farming communities, highlighting the essential role of human rights in promoting a peaceful, equitable environment for all involved in agriculture. The discussions throughout the Indaba were a call to action for the stakeholders present to embrace transformation and prioritise human dignity, justice, and inclusivity.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) was established by Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996, with a mandate to promote, protect, and monitor human rights within the country.



Over the years, the SAHRC Limpopo Provincial Office has received numerous complaints from farming communities about human rights violations. These complaints often involve allegations of abuse of farm workers, racial slurs, assaults, and unlawful evictions without proper legal processes. Many of these incidents have been investigated, and some have even been brought to the Equality Court.

The SAHRC has expressed concern about how these incidents affect social harmony and nation-building efforts, particularly in Limpopo Province. The increasing divide between farm owners, who are often white, and farm workers, who are predominantly black, continues to fuel tensions within the farming sector. Such incidents threaten the safety of individuals and impede the progress of a united, stable South Africa.

The discussions at the Human Rights Commission Indaba were essential to the ongoing effort to address the critical challenges faced by farming communities in Limpopo and across the country. The collaboration between various stakeholders—from the SAHRC to agricultural leaders like Ms Thifheli Kutama—emphasises the need for dialogue, unity, and action to create safer, more equitable environments within the agricultural sector. Only through these collective efforts can South Africa hope to achieve long-term stability in farming communities and ensure that food security becomes a reality for all.

**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](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.**

## **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



*UNIVEN wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year*

