



New UNIVEN SRC Leadership makes bold promises to students



The new SRC Leadership pose for a group photo with the university management

On Thursday, 09 October 2025, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) inaugurated the new 2025/26 Student Representative Council (SRC). This inauguration ceremony took place at UNIVEN Sports Hall. The inauguration ceremony, led by

key University and community figures, celebrated the swearing-in of the incoming student representatives. The swearing-in ceremony was officiated by Magistrate Mulatedzi Suzan Mahada.



Mr Tirani Mathye, the new UNIVEN SRC President



Mrs Suzan Mahada from the Thohoyandou Magistrate Court

In his inaugural address, the new SRC President, Mr Tirani Mathye extended greetings to various University leaders and stakeholders. He acknowledged students who participated in recent SRC election, stating that their trust and votes had brought the SRC to its current position. Mr Mathye noted that the SRC's mandate is

to serve students and uphold the University's constitution, rules, and regulations. Mr Mathye urged SRC members to fearlessly advocate for students' rights and interests, assuring them of his support and leadership. He stated that the SRC would work tirelessly to address students' demands and concerns.



Mr Azwidowi Mukheli, Dean of Students at the University of Venda

Mr Azwidowi Mukheli, Dean of Students at the University of Venda welcomed guests and students to the inauguration ceremony of the newly elected Student Representative Council (SRC). Mr Mukheli mentioned that leadership is not all about power but about purpose. It is

about listening more than speaking, actioning more than promising, and building more than criticising. He congratulated the newly elected SRC, led by Mr Tirani Mathye, and urged them to lead with humility, advocate with wisdom and to serve wholeheartedly.



University Registrar Dr Joel Baloyi

University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi congratulated the newly elected SRC, stating that "student representation is in fact at the core of university governance. He noted that student governance is a critical part of university governance, as outlined in the Higher Education Act of

2007. Dr Baloyi encouraged the SRC to work collaboratively with the university management to serve students. He concluded by expressing his commitment to supporting the SRC and ensuring that student interests are taken care of.



Ms Vhonani Daswa, the new Deputy Speaker of Parliament

In her vote of thanks, Ms Daswa Vhonani, the new Deputy Speaker of Parliament, expressed gratitude to the university leadership, the Dean of Students, and the Department of Student Affairs for their support and guidance. She

also acknowledged the outgoing SRC for their dedication and service to the students and thanked the invited guests and organisers for making the day possible.

University of Venda held a Transformative Internationalisation Week 2025



Internalisation week audience

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) marked a new milestone in its journey towards global engagement with the successful conclusion of its fourth Internationalisation Week, held from 30 September to 2 October 2025 at the Research Conference Centre. The event, held under the theme 'Building Global Bridges, Creating Shared Futures,' was organised by

the Directorate of International Relations and Partnerships within the Division of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies. It attracted a diverse group of local and international delegates, students, and policymakers for three days of strategic dialogue, capacity building, and celebration.



Mr Thabo Dikgale Acting Director International Relations and Partnerships

In his opening address, Mr Thabo Dikgale, Acting Director of International Relations and Partnerships, acknowledged the limited implementation of internationalisation efforts to date and called on faculties to fully embrace it as a core academic mission. He outlined three strategic priorities aligned with UNIVEN's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan: expanding joint research publications with global partners, developing joint

degrees and collaborative programmes, and increasing international students' enrolment to meet the SADC-mandated 5% target, which UNIVEN has yet to achieve. Importantly, Dikgale stressed that UNIVEN's internationalisation should be grounded in Africanism, decoloniality, and Ubuntu, thereby prioritising equitable South-South collaboration.



Dr Ahmed Shaikjee Deputy Registrar from the University of the Western Cape (UWC)

The first day focused on joint and collaborative degree programmes. Speakers included Dr Ahmed Shaikjee from the University of the Western Cape (UWC), who shared insights from UWC's long standing partnership with Ghent

University, resulting in 12 joint PhDs developed through a co-designed framework addressing accreditation, supervision, and examination alignment.



Dr Sibongile Manzini Dean of the Faculty of Commerce from Lupane State University (LSU) (Zimbabwe)

Dr Sibongile Manzini of Lupane State University (LSU) (Zimbabwe) highlighted the importance of heritage-based education and student-led innovation as drivers of development.

Representatives from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), and Universities South Africa (USAf) clarified national regulatory frameworks and cautioned against 'MoU tourism'-the signing of memoranda without meaningful implementation. A dynamic panel discussion featuring voices from the University of the Free State (UFS), UWC, and LSU acknowledged that while establishing joint degrees is complex and time-consuming, often taking two to four years, such programmes bring deep academic, administrative, and cultural renewal. The day concluded with the

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Awards, recognising UNIVEN students who collaborated with peers from Coventry University (UK) and Cape Coast University, Ghana.

Day two centred on the human dimension of internationalisation: supporting the international student experience. Presentations from Stellenbosch University (SU), Central University of Technology (CUT), National University of Science and Technology (NUST)-Zimbabwe, and UNIVEN's own Kha Ri Farane Buddy Programme demonstrated how peer-led initiatives promote belonging and intercultural competence. Students showcased projects related to food, art, language, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems, including Venda beadwork and Congolese textiles.



Prof Joseph Francis, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies

Prof Joseph Francis, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies, reminded participants that internationalisation must serve both African identity and global citizenship. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) provided guidance on visa compliance, emphasising the 60-day

renewal window to avoid deportation risks. The day concluded with a lively student debate on geopolitics and South Africa's economic sovereignty, chaired by Mr Nyasha Mabuwa, Chairperson of the UNIVEN International Students Union.

The final day highlighted funding and mobility opportunities, including presentations on the UK's Chevening Scholarships, Germany's German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) postgraduate programmes, and the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation/Horizon Europe research grants supporting African innovation. A notable moment was the testimony of UNIVEN students from the Green Technology Confucius Institute, who shared experiences from their two-week

immersion in Wuhan, China, including cultural reflections and Mandarin language learning, with calls for expanded language opportunities. The internationalisation week concluded with the **Launch of the Internationalisation Excellence Awards at the Gala dinner**, held at the UNIVEN Auditorium. The ceremony brought together academics, students, and international partners from across Southern Africa, including delegations from LSU and local universities such as SU and CUT.



Delegates dressed up for gala dinner

The awards recognise outstanding contributions to UNIVEN's internationalisation journey across ten inclusive categories-ranging from International Student Support and Global Partnership Development to Cultural Ambassador and ***Community Engagement in Internationalisation***.

In his address, Acting Director, Mr Thabo

Dikgale reflected on UNIVEN's progress since establishing its International Office in 2011, noting that "internationalisation is no longer a privilege but a necessity for relevance and impact." Keynote speaker Dr Julius Tapera of LSU spoke on "The Future of Higher Education in an Interconnected World", emphasising South-South collaboration and the co-creation of knowledge across African institutions.



Prof Joseph Francis, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies

Prof Joseph Francis, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Studies, in his remarks, reminded attendees that internationalisation extends beyond travel; it includes lecturers who introduce global perspectives in rural classrooms, support staff assisting international students, and researchers tackling local challenges with global insight.



Some gala dinner pictures

As the evening transitioned from reflection to celebration, a captivating musical performance blended local rhythm with contemporary influences, beautifully capturing the university's ethos of being "deeply local, boldly global. The Internationalisation Excellence Awards are set to become an annual celebration of inclusive, sustainable global engagement.

As UNIVEN advances its 2026-2030 Strategy,

Internationalisation Week 2025 reaffirmed the university's commitment to African-rooted, student-centred, and equity-driven global engagement; laying the foundation for deeper collaboration and impact in the years ahead.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." - African Proverb, echoed throughout the week.



32ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

HOSTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

Theme:

Towards Excellence: Enhancing Funding Pathways and Student Outcomes through Human-Centric AI, Impactful Research, and Operational Intelligence

Date: 27 - 31 October 2025

Location: Kalahari Waterfront,
Thohoyandou, Limpopo

Registration Is Open

Members:

Only attending the pre-conference workshop = **R1,000.00**

Only attending the conference = **R6,900.00**

Attending both the pre-conference and conference = **R7,900.00**

Non-Members:

Only attending the pre-conference workshop = **R1,600.00**

Only attending the conference = **R7,500.00**

Attending both the pre-conference and conference = **R8,500.00**

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The University of Venda,
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Tshivenda National Lexicography
Unit & PanSALB invites you to the

2025

INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY DAY DICTIONARY LAUNCH



**THEME: INTELLIGENT LEXICOGRAPHY:
INCLUSIVE DICTIONARY-MAKING IN THE AGE OF AI**

The Event is scheduled as follows:

International Dictionary
Day Celebration



**16 OCT
2025**

**VENUE: UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
AUDITORIUM | TIME: 08:30**

Dictionary
Launch



**16 OCT
2025**

**VENUE: PORCHE-VILLA HOTEL
TIME: 18:00**

Live Stream: <https://youtube.com/live/MhitRWYw-r4?feature=share>