



University of Venda
Creating Future Leaders



VICE-CHANCELLOR'S EXCELLENCE AWARDS

BIOGRAPHIES FOR AWARDEES



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Title: “Thoughts on Repositioning Historically Black Universities (HBU) into Local Relevant and Globally Competitive”

Dr Azwitevhelwi Prins Nevhutalu is a native of the Northern part of South Africa, a region called Venda. He grew up in Venda and attended local schools until he went to the University of the North, where he completed BSc, BSc Honours, a Master of Science, and started his lecturing profession there in 1980. He left South Africa in 1986 to study at the University of Northern Illinois in Dekalb, Illinois. He was conferred a PhD in 1990. He returned to South Africa in 1990 and rejoined the University of the North. In 1993, he joined the Foundation for Research Development (FRD) as an Executive Director responsible for “regstillende aksie” research capacity development. In English, it was referred to as Corrective Action. This was the conceptual framework and policies designed to correct the past, which excluded Black people in Science, Engineering, and Technology. This led to the development of programmes for Building Research Capacity in Historically Disadvantaged Universities and Technikons (now Universities of Technology), Equity Programmes for the development of Black Academics and women Academics, Student support, and the Multi-User equipment programme. He developed specific programmes such as Thuthuka, which saw the development of many young Black academics. Many current Academic and Research leaders have benefited from these programmes. During the merger of the FRD and the Council for Social Sciences Development (CSD) to form the current National Research Foundation, he was appointed as Executive Director for Research Capacity Development. In this role, he forged several multiple partnership programmes such

as The Royal Society-NRF programme, the French South Africa Institute for Electronics, and other Bilateral programmes.

In 2006, he joined Tshwane University of Technology as the founding Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation until 2012. During this term, Tshwane University of Technology was ranked as the number one University of Technology in Africa.

In 2013, he joined the University of Zululand as a Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic and later became the Vice-Chancellor of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology until his retirement in 2018. In 2020, he was appointed by Minister Dr Blade Nzimande as a member of the Administrator’s team at the Vaal University of Technology until 2022. In 2022, he was appointed as a Strategic Partnership Advisor at the Pele Energy group, a company that installs solar and Wind Energy farms in South Africa. He was appointed Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the Durban University of Technology in August 2023 until December 2024

As of November 2025, he serves as an Advisor (Consultant) of the DVC Research and Postgraduate Studies at the University of Venda. Dr Prins Nevhutalu has served as a chair on many boards, such as the National Metrology Institute of South Africa (NEMISA), South African Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), and in 2008 was assigned with the establishment of the first Lottery Fund Distribution Agency and served as its Inaugural Chair in 2008. He has received many awards, including the Order of Merit from the French President.

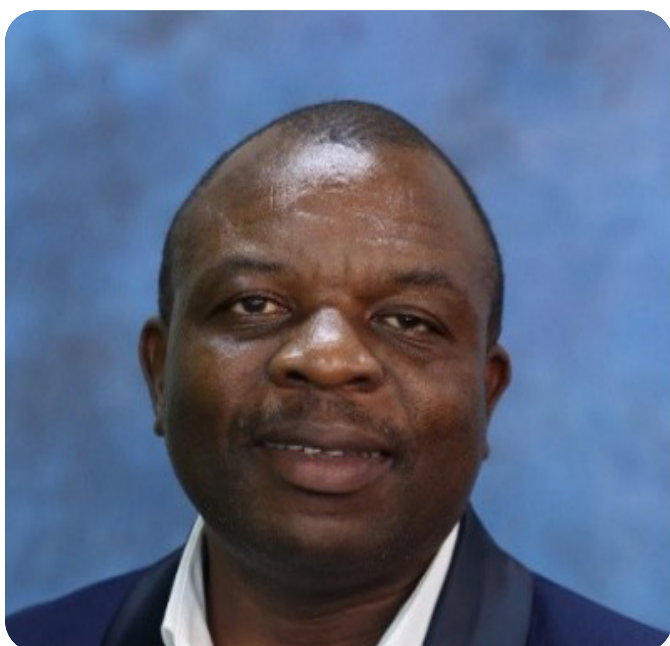
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' REPRESENTATIVES



Dr. Mmboneni Muofhe is an experienced public servant with over 25 years' experience in the science, technology, and innovation system. He has occupied various roles, initially as a scientist, then in management of science, technology and innovation programmes at the National Research Foundation (NRF) as well as development and implementation of various science,

technology and innovation policies and strategies at the Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation (DDSTI) where he currently serves as Deputy Director-General for Socio-Economic Innovation Partnerships. Dr. Muofhe serves in the Boards of companies and entities such as Biovac and Council for Geoscience and internationally, as the co-chair of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), and member of the Steering Committee for the World Health Organisation/Medicine Patent Pool's mRNA Vaccine Technology Transfer Hub. Dr Muofhe also serves on the Advisory Board of Digital Earth Africa and the Strategic Advisory Board of the daVinci Institute for Technology Management. As part of his job, Dr Muofhe also has oversight responsibilities for two of the DSTI entities, namely the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).

Academically, Dr Muofhe holds a BSc degree (UNIVEN), BSc (Hons), MSc (UCT), MBA (UP), and PhD in Management of Technology and Innovation (daVinci Institute), and has done an Executive Public Leaders Programme with Oxford University in the UK.



Prof Sylvester Mpandeli was appointed Professor of Practice (POP) at the University of Venda (UNIVEN), School of Environmental Sciences, from August 2013 to August 2018. Prof Mpandeli was appointed an Adjunct Professor at UNIVEN, Faculty of Science Engineering, and Agriculture from August 2018 to September 2023. He was reappointed as an Adjunct Professor from October 2023 to September 2028. In July 2024, he was appointed as a Professor Extraordinaire at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Faculty of Science. He is also affiliated with the University of South Africa (UNISA) as Professor Extraordinaries at the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences since August 2025. He has been working at the Water Research Commission since 2013 to date. In addition, he is

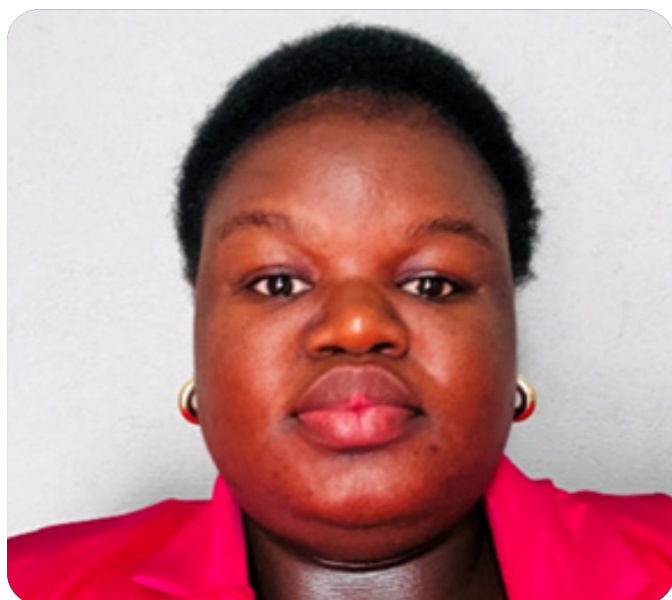
the Vice-President Honoraire of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), he is a member of the Management Board of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Chairperson of the Permanent Committee of Technical Activities (PCTA) of the ICID, Chairperson of the International Programme on Irrigation and Drainage (IRPID), Chairman of the South African National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage (SANCID) and Deputy Chairperson of the Board at the South African Weather Service (SAWS), Board of Trustees of the African Policy Research Consortium (APRC) from September 2025 to August 2030. Recently, he was appointed Deputy Chairperson of the Global Change Steering Committee (GCSC) by the National Research Foundation (NRF). Furthermore, he is a member of the Gauteng Premier's Climate Change Advisory team. Prof Mpandeli is the youngest ever recipient of the SANCID Leadership Award. He sits in Strategic Advisory

Committees across the globe; he is the former Chairman of the European Water JPI Advisory and Co-chairman of the NRF – NOW Consortium on Water – Energy – Food nexus from 2019 to 2023. He has been invited by Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, as a Visiting Professor in 2026. Prof Mpandeli has been invited by Tsinghua University in recognition of his distinguished contributions to agricultural water management, climate change adaptation, and the Water–Energy–Food Nexus. He completed his Bachelor of Agriculture degree at the University of Venda in 1997. He graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Climatology at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) in 2006. He has supervised several local and international Master's and Doctoral students and served as an external examiner for many universities in South Africa and other international universities. He has published more than 300 scientific papers, books, book chapters, technical reports, popular articles and conference proceedings.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S EXCELLENCE AWARDS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND RESEARCH AND INNOVATION 2025

SECTION A: CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. CHETL CATEGORIES | 1.1. CATEGORY: 1ST RUNNER UP FOR JNR LECTURER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, 2024



Ms Zwanga Tshidzumba is a Junior Lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education under the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Venda, Thohoyandou, Limpopo. Her research interest is in Education and language in Early Childhood Education. She holds a degree in Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase and Bachelor of Education Honours in Early Childhood Education. Before joining the University, Ms Tshidzumba worked as a teacher in the Limpopo Department of Education, facilitating the Foundation Phase from 2019-2023. She specialises in Early Childhood Education and is responsible for teaching undergraduate students for B.E.D (Foundation Phase).

1.2. CATEGORY: 2ND RUNNER UP FOR JNR LECTURER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, 2024



Dr. Thendo Gertie Makhado is a Junior Lecturer in Advanced Nursing Science at the University of Venda. With three years of academic experience and two years in clinical nursing, she specialises in teaching, clinical accompaniment, and community engagement. She holds a PhD in Nursing and has published extensively in epilepsy and public health. Recognised with the 2023 South African Women in Science Award and 2024 Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans honour, she also holds an NRF Y2 Rating. Dr. Makhado is passionate about inclusive education and empowering under-resourced communities through health outreach and research.

1.3. CATEGORY: 2ND RUNNER UP FOR LECTURER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, 2024



Ms. Usanda Bekebu is a Foundation English Lecturer at the University of Venda, serving in the Department of the Extended Curriculum Programme. With a strong academic background and a passion for language and literature, she brings a wealth of experience and insight into her role. Ms. Bekebu holds a Master of Arts in English from Nelson Mandela University, and she is currently pursuing a PhD in English at the University of Pretoria. Her doctoral research focuses on intra-African migration, with a particular emphasis on Afrocentric approaches to analysing representations of migration in literary texts. Her professional journey spans over five

years, including foundational teaching experience in primary schools and international exposure as an ESL and EFL language facilitator in China. She has also held academic positions at Rosebank College as a lecturer and Teaching Experience Coordinator, and at Nelson Mandela University, where she contributed to the Writing Centre and served as a Lecturer's Assistant. Ms. Bekebu is deeply committed to transformation in higher education. She has completed a short course on Humancentric Transformation in Higher Education through North-West University, equipping her with the tools to navigate and lead digital transformation initiatives in academic institutions. Additionally, she holds competency from Eiffel Corp in developing online teaching materials, particularly for Moodle and Sandbox platforms. Her academic contributions include presenting at three conferences, co-authoring a publication, and working on multiple research projects, two of which have been accepted for publication in reputable academic journals. She has also co-supervised postgraduate students at UNIVEN and mentored final-year students at the UP. Ms. Bekebu is an adept networker and relationship builder. She has established collaborations with both local and international stakeholders, including a Johannesburg Stock Exchange representative and the overseas director of the IEC China programme. These partnerships have enriched student experiences through webinars and upcoming educational visits.

1.4. CATEGORY: 1ST RUNNER-UP FOR LECTURER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, 2024



Dr. Mercy Dotty Mushwana earned her Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil.) in Psychology from the University of Venda. She currently serves as the Acting Head of the Department of Psychology within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Dr. Mushwana has extensive teaching experience across both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Her scholarly expertise encompasses various domains within the social sciences, with particular emphasis on gender-based violence, traditional circumcision practices, rehabilitation, mental health, and issues affecting the LGBTQI community. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Dr. Mushwana has demonstrated a strong commitment to academic

mentorship, having successfully supervised numerous Honours and master's students to completion. She has recently commenced the supervision of doctoral candidates, further contributing to the development of emerging scholars in her field. She has contributed to the academic community through presentations at numerous national and international conferences and has co-authored more than seventeen peer-reviewed journal articles. Dr. Mushwana's scholarly contributions are evidenced by her presentations at various national and international conferences and her co-authorship of over seventeen peer-reviewed journal articles.

1.5. CATEGORY 2ND RUNNER: SENIOR LECTURER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, 2024



Dr. Madiba is an experienced attorney, consultant, and lecturer. Dr. Madiba lectures on contract, tax, and commercial law. Since becoming an attorney in 2009, she has ventured into private banking since 2010. She enhanced her analytical skills and research approaches, displaying her dedication to ongoing learning and professional development. Dr. Madiba started teaching in 2011 and has worked at various universities, including Mangosuthu University of Technology and the University of Venda. In 2016, she joined the inaugural cohort of the New Generation of Academic Programme, a Department of Higher Education and Training initiative promoting academic careers for

youngsters. By accepting this programme, Dr. Madiba got a master's in taxation from the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal in 2019. In 2017, Dr. Madiba was invited to present at an E-Learning Seminar to discuss her teaching approaches with the academic community. She was recognised for her dedication to teaching by winning the Vice-Chancellor's Best Emerging Teacher Award in 2020. Academically gifted Dr. Madiba received the Fulbright Scholarship in 2019. This opportunity enabled her to conduct her doctoral studies at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. The trip enhanced her awareness of global legal challenges and extended her viewpoint. She earned her doctorate in Tax Law in 2022, specialising in Tax Deductions for Ponzi Scheme Victims. After returning to academia, Dr. Madiba is a Lecturer in the Department of Private and Mercantile Law at the University of Venda School of Law.

Over time, Dr. Madiba has held leadership responsibilities, demonstrating her ability to inspire and lead. She has been a faculty advisor for Enactus at Mangosuthu University of Technology, a worldwide organisation that promotes progress via entrepreneurship. She is a dedicated community-engaged academic.

1.6. CATEGORY 1ST RUNNER: SENIOR LECTURER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, 2024



Dr Memory Mabika is a Senior Lecturer in the English, Media Studies, and Linguistics department at the University of Venda. With over 15 years of experience in academia and a decade of professional experience in the media industry, she brings a rich, practical perspective to her work. Her research specialises in media and society, as well as Indigenous Language Media. Dr Mabika holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Fort Hare, a Commonwealth Diploma in Youth in Development Work, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning from Stellenbosch University.

1.7. CATEGORY: PROFESSOR FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, 2024



Prof Shonisani Agnes Mulovhedzi holds a PhD degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Pretoria. She is an executive committee member of the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAECE), a Provincial Early Childhood Development Inter-Sectoral committee member, serves as a Reviewer for the National Research Foundation's (NRF) Emerging Researcher programme Applications for Funding and a coordinator of the UNIVEN-Model Preschool. Shonisani worked as a preschool teacher for more than ten years at Mbilwi Childcare Centre. She also worked as a Foundation Phase teacher, teaching from Grade R-3 in various primary schools around Vhembe District. She joined the

University of Venda in 2014. Her research and teaching focus on special issues relating to Early Childhood Education, with a special focus on leadership, Life Skills education, and inclusive education. She won Vice-chancellor's excellence awards in Research and in teaching & learning. Shonisani has written and published book chapters and articles in accredited journals. She has authored and co-authored numerous articles and book chapters and reviewed articles, books and book chapters. Furthermore, she is a C3 rated researcher in Early Childhood Education and currently she is the Head of the Department of Early Childhood Education at University of Venda.

SECTION B: DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INCLUSIVE INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALISATION (CEEIIC)

2. CEEIIC CATEGORIES

2.1. CATEGORY: EXCELLENCE IN ENGAGED TEACHING AND LEARNING, 2024

The award is given to individuals who utilise exemplary community-based teaching and learning strategies that enhance student learning and engagement in public problem solving. Focus on Rural development and Poverty alleviation should carry more weight in the scoring.



Ms. Recheal Nthangeni Mathungeni is a Lecturer in the Department of Youth in Development at the University of Venda. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Free State. She holds a Master's and a BA degree in Youth Development at the University of Venda. She further attained a Certificate in Youth Development, Assessor, Moderator, and Facilitation from ETDP SETA. She serves as the Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Coordinator, where she liaises with various organisations to facilitate student placements across all levels of study. Through her dedicated efforts, many students have successfully transitioned into employment after completing their placements. She also administers student funding and

coordinates WIL training sessions for organisations and students, addressing key issues such as professional readiness, workplace ethics, and employability skills. Ms. Mathungeni played a leading role in securing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Youth Development Internship Programme at the University of Venda, under which eleven interns are currently placed across the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education (HSSE) for three years. She's currently part of the Higher Education Engaged Teaching and Research for Societal Impact project with UNIVEN, Rhodes, and Mangosuthu Universities. Her research and professional development interests extend to the intersection of youth Development, WIL, and technology. She has participated in Artificial Intelligence (AI) training initiatives with Microsoft Africa Hub, LinkedIn Africa, and through Chinese AID programmes, as well as in the DAAD Exchange Programme in collaboration with the University of Heidelberg, Germany. Ms. Mathungeni is an active researcher who has authored and co-authored papers published in accredited journals. She serves as a peer reviewer for academic journals and contributes to institutional governance through her service on the University of Venda Library

Committee and the University WIL Committee. She has been awarded research funds through the National Research Foundation (NRF), the University Staff Development Programme (USDP) with the University of Pretoria, and international collaborations. Her teaching philosophy is rooted in engaged teaching and learning, engaged scholarship linking students with communities to tackle real-world issues such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, youth Health, and bullying. Through her work, she continues to demonstrate her commitment to youth empowerment, innovation, and social transformation through education and community partnerships.

2.2. CATEGORY: EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH, 2024

This award is given to individuals/faculty and or community teams that provide pertinent data and responses to community needs with a focus on research. The Award is given to staff members who contribute to community-based research.



Dr. Shonisani Tshivhase is a distinguished Senior Lecturer in the Department of Public Health within the Faculty of Health Sciences. She is a passionate scholar, accomplished researcher, and dedicated community-engaged academic whose work exemplifies the transformative power of research and service in advancing public health and social wellbeing.

With several publications in accredited peer-reviewed journals, Dr. Tshivhase has contributed significantly to the fields of Community Nursing, Ophthalmic Nursing, and HIV/AIDS research. Her scholarship is grounded in the principles of inclusivity and empowerment, focusing on developing sustainable health solutions that directly benefit rural and underserved communities.

Dr. Tshivhase has presented her research at numerous national and international conferences, earning recognition for her insightful contributions and commitment to participatory approaches in health research. Her collaborations with community partners reflect her deep belief in the co-creation of knowledge, ensuring that research outcomes are relevant, impactful, and responsive to community needs.

Through her work, Dr. Tshivhase continues to embody the spirit of Ubuntu, advancing the University of Venda's mission of community empowerment, engaged scholarship, and rural transformation. Her leadership and dedication serve as an inspiration to both her academic peers and the communities she serves. Her community engagement initiatives have had a profound impact on several communities, including Ha-Muraga, Xweli, Malavuwe, Siambe, Mbahe, Tshitani, etc. Her work has improved livelihoods, strengthened community cohesion, and promoted health literacy and self-reliance among rural populations.

2.3. CATEGORY: EXCELLENCE IN OPEN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION, 2024

This category recognises the efforts of the academic/individual to commercialise research, develop new technologies, and transfer innovations to the market.



Dr Shonisani. E. Ramashia serves as a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Food Science and Technology (FST) at the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture at the University of Venda. She holds a PhD in Agriculture (Food Science & Technology), an MTech in Food Technology, and a B.Sc. in Food Science and Technology. She also earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education and a Postgraduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship Management & Leadership within Higher Education. Additionally, she completed the Women in Leadership (WiL) Short Learning Programme and graduated with a Master of Education Leadership and Management at Botho University, Botswana. Over the past 15 years, she has advanced from technical to academic roles, gaining extensive experience in educational (teaching) and research environments that have enabled her to

develop skills in planning and executing research projects across various sub-disciplines of FST. Dr Ramashia acquired valuable industry experience working with a reputable value-added food industry in South Africa. She has supervised and continues to supervise final-year and postgraduate students, and mentors' postdoctoral fellows.

She collaborates with organisations such as the Water Research Commission, the Agricultural Research Council (France), the European Union Erasmus Leap Agric grant, the Creating Postgraduate Collaborations (CPC (610305-EPP-1-2019-1NL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP), a European Union-funded initiative, the South African Agricultural Institute, BankSeta, and Vhembe District Municipality. She was appointed as a visiting Assistant Professor at Shoolini University in India. She has published over 40 articles in peer-reviewed international journals, one encyclopedia article, and authored two book chapters, achieving an H-index of 20. Furthermore, she has signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement with one of the SMMEs within the region, and the product is now ready for commercialisation. She is a life member of the South African Association of Food Science and Technology.

She serves as an academic reviewer for the Journal of Food Processing and Preservation, the International Journal of Food Science, the Journal of Food Quality, Discovery, Food Science and Nutrition, Trends in Food Science and Technology, Springer, among others, and reviewed two books. Her awards include (i) Best Product Display, Wheat-Bambara groundnut, (ii) women 2nd Runner Up and 1st Runner Up for Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards, (iv) a travel grant from the Global Sorghum Conference, and (v) a travel grant to Kauno Kolegija University, Lithuania.



Mr. Mpho Edward Mashau is a lecturer in the Department of Food Science and Technology within the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture at the University of Venda (UNIVEN), South Africa. His research interests revolve around food processing, functional and nutritional properties of foods, fermentation, and value addition of indigenous crops. He has authored/co-authored multiple peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. He has supervised/co-supervised 8 MSc students to completion and was nominated for the TW Kambule-NSTF Emerging Researcher Award in 2022/23 in recognition of his research contributions. With robust publication output, supervisory experience, and growing recognition, Mr Mashau represents an important contributor to Food science and Technology research in the South African context.

2.4. CATEGORY: EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROJECT OR PROGRAMME, 2024

This category considers an individual or faculty/ department that makes deliberate efforts to promote UNIVEN's core value of Ubuntu, social responsibility, and volunteer work; Engages in student coaching and mentorship programmes for community outreach.



Prof Shonisani Agnes Mulovhedzi holds a PhD degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Pretoria. She is an executive committee member of the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAECE), a Provincial Early Childhood Development Inter-Sectoral committee member, serves as a Reviewer for the National Research Foundation's (NRF) Emerging Researcher programme Applications for Funding and a coordinator of the UNIVEN-Model Preschool. Shonisani worked as a preschool teacher for more than ten years at Mbilwi Childcare Centre. She also worked as a Foundation Phase teacher, teaching

from Grade R-3 in various primary schools around Vhembe District. She joined the University of Venda in 2014. Her research and teaching focus on special issues relating to Early Childhood Education, with a special focus on leadership, Life Skills education, and inclusive education. She won Vice-chancellor's excellence awards in Research and in teaching & learning. Shonisani has written and published book chapters and articles in accredited journals. She has authored and co-authored numerous articles and book chapters and reviewed articles, books and book chapters. Furthermore, she is a C3 rated researcher in Early Childhood Education and currently she is the Head of the Department of Early Childhood Education at University of Venda.

SECTION C: DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

3. FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES AWARDEES

3.1. CATEGORY: SUPERVISOR WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF MASTER'S STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING MAY AND SEPTEMBER 2024



Associate Professor Mushaphi started working in 1996 as a dietitian at Donald Fraser Hospital under the Vhembe district municipality, Limpopo Province, after obtaining a Bachelor of Science (Dietetics) degree (MEDUNSA). She joined the University of Venda as a junior lecturer in 2002. She obtained a master's in nutrition from the University of Limpopo (then University of the North) in 2005. She graduated with a PhD in Nutrition from the University of Free State in 2012. She led the Department of Nutrition from 2009 as the Acting Head. In 2013, she was appointed as a Senior Lecturer and subsequently became the Head of the Department. She has served as Deputy Dean, Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Health Sciences since 2022. In August 2006, she won the Women in Science Award from the Department of Science and Technology for her PhD studies. She was also awarded the NRF Thuthukha grant to fund her doctoral studies.

In 2014, she was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship with Water Health in Limpopo (WHIL)

Innovation with the University of Venda and the University of Virginia. Her research areas include food security, maternal and child nutrition, as well as the indigenous food system. She has also supervised 42 undergraduate and 23 postgraduate research projects to completion (19 master's and 4 PhD). She has published ±30 peer-reviewed articles. Prof. Mushaphi presented research papers in both national and international nutrition congresses. In 2020, she was nominated to participate in the Future Professor's Programme (FPP) at Stellenbosch University, funded by UCDP.

3.2. CATEGORY: RESEARCHER WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LISTS OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Professor Lufuno Makhado is a distinguished scholar, researcher, and academic leader in public health and nursing sciences, currently serving as a full professor in the Department of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, at the University of Venda. Prof. Makhado holds a PhD in Nursing – Community Nursing Science from a joint programme between Johns Hopkins University and North-West University, complemented by postdoctoral studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His research expertise spans HIV/TB integration, community health, epidemiology, biostatistics, and epilepsy research, underpinned by a strong commitment to health systems strengthening and the philosophy of Ubuntu in healthcare. A prolific scholar, Prof. Makhado, has authored and co-authored over 140 peer-reviewed publications

and book chapters, making significant contributions to advancing public health research in Africa. He has successfully supervised and mentored over 50 master's and doctoral graduates, many of whom have progressed to senior academic and research leadership positions across South Africa and abroad.

His international collaborations include projects with institutions such as UCLA, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of California, San Francisco, among others, as well as the International Nursing Network for HIV Research, which focuses on HIV care, trauma, and mental health. He currently leads the SAMRC-funded GENIUS-CARE Project, which focuses on integrating genotyping for the management of TB-HIV co-infection in South Africa. Prof. Makhado's dedication to research excellence has earned him a National Research Foundation (NRF) Y2 Rating (2021–2026) and induction into the Forum of University Nursing Deans in South Africa (FUNDISA) Hall of Fame for Research Excellence. His academic leadership, mentorship, and community-centred approach continue to inspire innovation and inclusivity in African public health scholarship.

3.3. CATEGORY: 2ND RUNNER-UP FOR THE WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LISTS OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Hilda N. Shilubane, Professor in the Department of Advanced Nursing Science, University of Venda, and the chairperson of the Medical and Health Sciences Research Outputs Evaluation Sub-Panel Committee. She obtained her doctoral degree in 2013 from Maastricht University in the Netherlands. Prof Shilubane has 19 years of teaching experience at a higher education institution. She received the following awards: the Netherlands Fellowship Programme, the Boudewijn van Gorp Foundation, two Vice-Chancellor Excellence in Teaching Awards, and six Excellence in Research Awards, recognising researchers whose research publication output is

equal to or greater than 1.25 and, more recently, 1.35 units. Her research interests include adolescent health and mental health, and she has published 52 articles in accredited journals with 721 citations and an h-index of 14.

3.4. CATEGORY: 1ST RUNNER-UP FOR THE WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Ntsieni Mashau is an Associate Professor and the Head of the Department of Public Health in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Her research interests focus on community-based disease prevention and health promotion. Prof. Mashau supervises postgraduate students' research in this field and participates in various community-based disease prevention and health promotion projects. She has a strong publication record in accredited, peer-reviewed journals and has presented her work at both national and international conferences. Additionally, she serves as a reviewer for articles submitted to various national and international journals.

3.5. CATEGORY: WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Dr. Takalani Rhoda Luhlima is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Advanced Nursing Science at the University of Venda. She holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Pretoria and a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. With over 14 years of experience in Higher Education Institutions. She supervises Honours, Masters, and PhD postgraduate students. Dr Luhlima has led a project that supports family members of hospitalised patients at healthcare facilities in the context of COVID-19 in Limpopo Province. She is a member of the Democratic Nursing Association and is registered with the South African Nursing

Council. She has presented research papers both locally and internationally and published book chapters and articles on management and inclusive education in various national and international peer-reviewed journals. Additionally, she has evaluated book chapters and manuscripts from accredited journals. She also marks master's dissertations and module question papers from other local and international universities for Master's and Doctoral postgraduate students. Her research interests include Nursing Management, Nursing Education, and inclusive education.

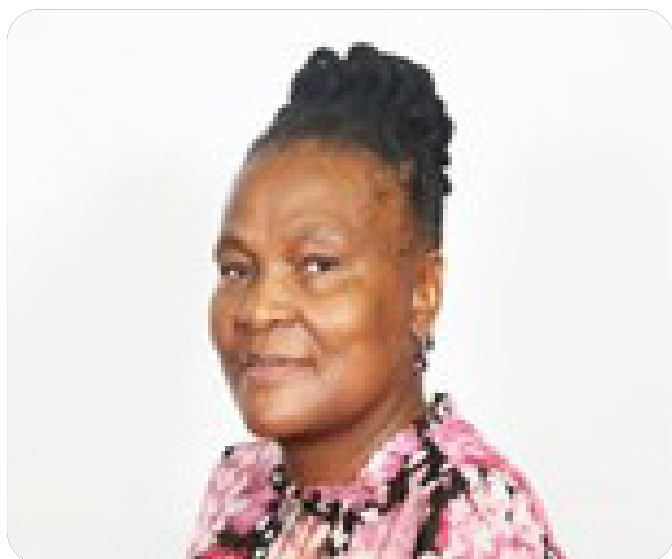
3.5. CATEGORY: WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Dr. Takalani Rhoda Luhailima is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Advanced Nursing Science at the University of Venda. She holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Pretoria and a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. With over 14 years of experience in Higher Education Institutions. She supervises Honours, Masters, and PhD postgraduate students. Dr Luhailima has led a project that supports family members of hospitalised patients at healthcare facilities in the context of COVID-19 in Limpopo Province. She is a member of the Democratic Nursing Association and is registered with the South African Nursing

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3.6. CATEGORY: WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN THE DHET-ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Prof. Maria Sonto Maputle was appointed as a Senior Lecturer from 1st February 2009 to 28th February 2011, as an Associate Professor from 01st March 2011 to November 2013, and as Professor from December 2014 to retirement on 31st December 2024. She was appointed as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Advanced Nursing Science, Faculty of Health Sciences, from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2027. Prof. Maputle is an NRF C3-rated researcher from January 2021 to 2026 and has successfully supervised/ mentored 78 Honours students, 32 master's students, and 17 as a co-supervisor. promoted 25 PhDs and 18 as a co-promoter. She has published 7 book chapters and 130 peer-

reviewed articles in accredited Journals from 2006 to date, with 1,595 Google Scholar citations and an h-index of 22. A Board member for the Curationis journal and was a member of the panel to evaluate NRF ratings 2021-2023. Prof. Maputle is an Advanced Midwife and was involved in teaching and learning various modules, including Research Methods and Techniques, Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Sciences, and Maternal Child and HIV.

reviewed articles in accredited Journals from 2006 to date, with 1,595 Google Scholar citations and an h-index of 22. A Board member for the Curationis journal and was a member of the panel to evaluate NRF ratings 2021-2023. Prof. Maputle is an Advanced Midwife and was involved in teaching and learning various modules, including Research Methods and Techniques, Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Sciences, and Maternal Child and HIV.

She has participated in numerous active research collaborations nationally and internationally. Actively participating in the South Africa Sweden University Forum (SASUF) from 2020 to date and in the Finland Africa Midwifery Education (FAME) project from 2023 to 2025, which includes the University of Zambia, UNIVEN, and Novia University.

Qualifications: Doctoral Degree in Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing (DCur, UJ), MCur (UJ), BACur Hons, and BACur (UNISA).

Research Specialisation: Maternal Health, Child Health, Sexual and Reproductive Health

ORCID: Maputle. Orcid <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2027-0601>.

Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=iiML8BUAAAAJ&hl=en>

ResearchGate: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sonto-Maputle>

Email: sonto.maputle@univen.ac.za

3. FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND EDUCATION AWARDEES

4.1. CATEGORY: RESEARCHER WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Dr. Seane Mabitsela is a seasoned academic and researcher with over 20 years of experience in education, facilitation, and analysis across public and private sectors. Currently a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Venda, South Africa, he specialises in historical studies, social justice, governance, democracy, and defense-related issues. His expertise spans teaching, archiving, research, writing, and training, and he is known for his collaborative spirit and passion for scholarly work. He has presented papers in national and international conferences and has, in addition, published over 17 articles in peer-reviewed or referred journals; 2 book chapters; and a book titled: Southern African Liberation Movements and the Campaign for Representation at the United Nations, 1962- 1975. Dr. Mabitsela holds a PhD

in History from the University of Venda, along with other postgraduate degrees from the University of Pretoria and an undergraduate degree from Vista University. He has also completed professional training in intercultural communication, peace support operations, and secretarial skills.

4.2. CATEGORY: 2ND RUNNER-UP FOR THE WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LISTS OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Professor Rendani Tshifhumulo is the Head of the Department of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Venda. With over 24 years of experience in university teaching, she has established a distinguished career as a sociologist. She holds a PhD from the University of Venda, an MA from the University of Pretoria, and a Postgraduate Diploma from Rhodes University. Professor Tshifhumulo has published more than 48 articles in peer-reviewed, accredited journals, as well as 11 book chapters, focusing on topics such as domestic violence, culture, and contemporary social issues. She is the author of two books, with two more forthcoming, and

has edited a special issue. Her first book, “A Handbook of Research in Managing and Protecting Indigenous Knowledge Systems,” was published by IGI Global Publishers. Additionally, she has supervised over 40 Honours, Master’s, and PhD students to completion. Prof Tshifhumulo is passionate about community engagement and actively works on various projects to support school learners. She is a member of the South African Sociological Association (SASA) and participates in various university committees, including the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee, the Research Ethics Committee for Social Sciences, and the Senate.

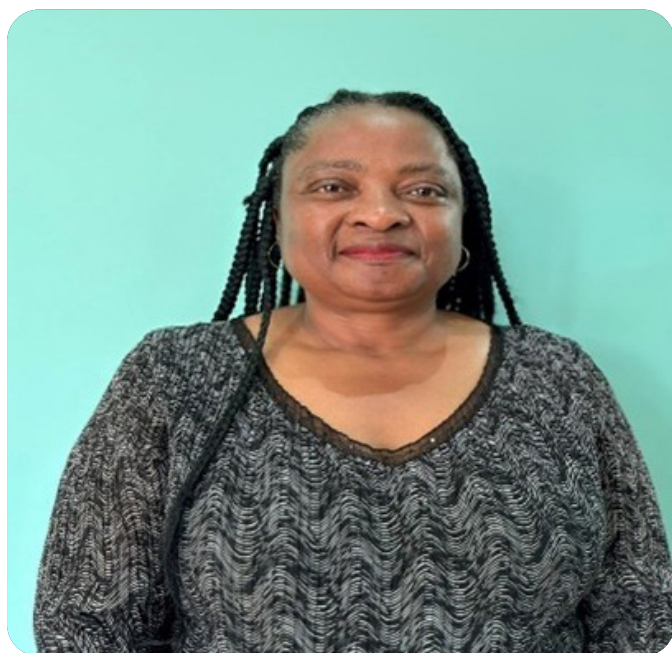
4.3. CATEGORY: 1ST RUNNER-UP FOR THE WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Prof Shonisani Agnes Mulovhedzi holds a PhD degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Pretoria. She is an executive committee member of the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (SARAECE), a Provincial Early Childhood Development Inter-Sectoral committee member, serves as a Reviewer for the National Research Foundation’s (NRF) Emerging Researcher programme Applications for Funding and a coordinator of the UNIVEN-Model Preschool. Shonisani worked as a preschool teacher for more than ten years at Mbilwi Childcare Centre. She also worked as a Foundation Phase teacher, teaching

from Grade R-3 in various primary schools around Vhembe District. She joined the University of Venda in 2014. Her research and teaching focus on special issues relating to Early Childhood Education, with a special focus on leadership, Life Skills education, and inclusive education. She won Vice-chancellor’s excellence awards in Research and in teaching & learning. Shonisani has written and published book chapters and articles in accredited journals. She has authored and co-authored numerous articles and book chapters and reviewed articles, books and book chapters. Furthermore, she is a C3 rated researcher in Early Childhood Education and currently she is the Head of the Department of Early Childhood Education at University of Venda.

4.4. CATEGORY: AWARD FOR THE WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LISTS OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Prof. Vhonani Olive Netshandama is an accomplished scholar and leader in decolonial community engagement in higher education, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Sustainability science, and social innovation. She holds a PhD in Nursing Education from the University of Johannesburg and has served for over 15 years as Director of Community Engagement, where she pioneered transformative approaches to societal impact through higher education. She is a DST Distinguished Woman Scientist, an MIT Innovation Leadership Bootcamp alumna, and an ELI-certified Entrepreneurial Mindset Facilitator. Prof. Netshandama is also an accredited Southern African Entrepreneurship Venture Builder (SAEVB) mentor, reflecting her commitment to fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Her research portfolio spans African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), participatory-emancipatory methodologies, and social entrepreneurship development and benefit-sharing principles. She has co-authored numerous publications on IKS and community engagement, entrepreneurship, and sustainability, contributing to the intellectual agenda for African-led knowledge production. Prof. Netshandama has published over 50 peer-reviewed works and supervised more than 30 postgraduate students, alongside mentoring over 100 undergraduate students in community-engaged projects. Her scholarship interrogates the question, “What is inclusive about our current research framework?”, advocating for decolonial paradigms, relational ontologies, and collaborative knowledge creation.

As Co-Director of the Southern African Future Earth Africa Regional Node, she plays a strategic role in advancing sustainability science and transdisciplinary research networks across the continent. Her leadership has positioned UNIVEN as a hub for inclusive open innovation, aligning with regional and global sustainability agendas. Prof. Netshandama’s work exemplifies a commitment to equity, societal impact, inclusivity, and African epistemologies.

5. FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT, COMMERCE AND LAW WARDEES

5.1. CATEGORY: SUPERVISOR WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING MAY AND SEPTEMBER 2024



Prof Gift Dafuleya is a Development and Social Economist with two decades of experience in higher education, research, and public policy. He currently serves as the Head of the Department of Economics at the University of Venda, where he leads three major commissioned research projects. The first involves leading and managing one of the largest databases on Social Assistance ever hosted by an African academic institution, implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The second is the Sacred Travels for Economic Growth research project, funded by the European Commission, which explores the

intersection of faith-based tourism and local economic development. The third focuses on Tourism Economics, commissioned by the National Department of Tourism (NDT) in South Africa. Together, these projects illustrate Gift's proven capacity to manage large-scale, multi-stakeholder research initiatives that strengthen the university's research profile while delivering tangible societal and policy impact. In recent years, he has actively participated in several strategic and international scholarly engagements, including serving as a Visiting Professor at Jagiellonian University in Poland; Guest Course Director for Social Investments in Africa at the United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning; Visiting Researcher at the Global Development Institute, University of Manchester, United Kingdom; and Research Associate at the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

5.2. CATEGORY: RESEARCHER WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LISTS OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Ademola Oluborode Jegede is a full Professor of Law, an NRF-rated researcher, and the Director of the Ismail Mahomed Centre for Human and Peoples' Rights in the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, University of Venda. He holds degrees from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Ibadan, and the Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria. He has been a research visitor to the Centre for International Environmental Law, USA, and the Human Rights Institute at Abo Akademi, Finland, and he is a Fellow of the Salzburg Global Seminar in Austria. His research focuses on the

intersection of climate change, biodiversity loss, and the human rights of vulnerable groups. His writings on these themes include co-edited books *Climate Litigation and Justice in Africa* (Bristol University Press, 2024); *Climate Change Justice and Human Rights: An African Perspective* (Pretoria University Law Press, 2022); *Human Rights and the Environment under African Union Law* (Palgrave, 2020); and the book: *The climate change regulatory framework and Indigenous Peoples' lands in Africa: Human rights implications* (Pretoria University Law Press, 2016). He is the Initiator and Convening Editor of the *African Journal of Climate Law and Justice (AJCLJ)* and an External Expert to the Working Group of Children's Rights and Climate Change established by the African Union Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

5.3. CATEGORY: AWARD FOR THE WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Dr Untalimile Crystal Mokoena is a dedicated scholar and emerging leader in the field of social security law and human rights. She attained her PhD in 2023, marking a significant milestone in her academic journey and reinforcing her commitment to advancing research that promotes social security and equitable access to fundamental rights. Currently serving as a Senior Lecturer and interim Head of the Department of Public Law at the University of Venda, Crystal Mokoena plays a pivotal role in shaping legal education and fostering a research culture within her department. Her work focuses on the

intersection of law, policy, and human rights, with a particular emphasis on strengthening social security systems and ensuring compliance with human rights standards. Dr. Mokoena's research is driven by a vision to influence policy and practice, addressing critical societal challenges such as poverty alleviation, social protection, and the realisation of constitutional rights. Having published several journal articles and book chapters, she continues to actively engage in academic discourse, mentors emerging scholars, and aspires to produce impactful publications that contribute to both national and global conversations on social security law and human rights. Through her dedication, leadership, and scholarly contributions, Dr. Crystal Mokoena exemplifies the values of excellence, integrity, and transformation that the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards seek to honor.

6. FACULTY OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND AGRICULTURE AWARDEES

6.1. CATEGORY: SUPERVISOR WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING MAY AND SEPTEMBER 2024



Ntakadzeni Edwin Madala is an Associate Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Venda, where he leads pioneering research in mass spectrometry. Through his efforts, the University of Venda has become the only historically disadvantaged institution in South Africa advancing research in this highly specialised field. Prof. Madala's research focuses on the use of computational metabolomics tools and chemometric modelling of mass spectrometry data to study nutraceuticals, with an emphasis on phytochemicals derived from health-promoting plants. He is among the few scholars globally investigating how climate change influences the chemical composition and pharmacological attributes of medicinal plants, an emerging

field with significant implications for both human and environmental health. He holds a BSc in Biochemistry and Biological Sciences from the University of Venda, and an Honours, MSc, and PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Johannesburg. His doctoral studies were completed under the Next Generation Scholarship programme, and in 2019, he was named the National Research Foundation's Emerging Researcher of the Year. Prof. Madala is also an Iso Lomso Fellow of the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study and currently holds a prestigious C1 NRF rating.

With over 135 peer-reviewed publications, Prof. Madala has established extensive international collaborations across Germany, Egypt, Japan, the USA, and the UK. He has supervised numerous postgraduate students and is widely recognised for his contributions to biochemistry, food chemistry, and analytical sciences. Notably, he was the first scholar from Africa to publish a paper employing ion mobility mass spectrometry. His research has been featured in leading journals such as Rapid Communications in Mass Spectrometry, Photochemistry and Photobiology, The Journal of Physical Chemistry Letters, Nature, and Phytochemistry, among others.

6.2. CATEGORY: RESEARCHER WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Prof Stanford Shateyi C2 NRF Rated Researcher with effect from the 1st of January 2023. Prior to the re-evaluation he held a C3 rating (2017 - 2022). He is a full Professor in Applied Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics at University of Venda. He is currently the HOD of Science Foundation. Prof Shateyi obtained his BSc Honours (1997) degree in Applied Mathematics from the National University of Science and Technology (Zimbabwe). In 1999, Prof Shateyi received a NUFU scholarship to do a master's degree at the University of Zimbabwe. He then graduated with

a Master of Science degree in 2001, specialising in fluid flows over compliant surfaces. His master's thesis was published in Australian & New Zealand Industrial and Applied Mathematics Journal in 2002. In 2008 he graduated with PhD degree from the University of Zimbabwe. His PhD focused on natural convection in boundary layer flows in the presence of a chemical reaction. He managed to publish five papers in peer-reviewed journals from his PhD thesis.

Prof Shateyi's research areas of interest are Fluid Mechanics, Differential Equations, Mathematical Modelling, and Numerical Analysis. He has been involved in research on topics such as magneto-hydrodynamics, steady and unsteady flows, stretching and shrinking surfaces, and nanofluid flows, among others. He has analysed the effects of different significant parameters affecting fluid flows in both Newtonian and non-Newtonian fluids, both Darcy and Non-Darcy flows. Prof Shateyi is a member of a research group in Fluid Mechanics, which is involved in developing new analytical and numerical techniques. This research group has even managed to improve well-known analytical techniques, such as the well-celebrated Homotopy analysis method. This research group has managed to breed methods like Spectral analysis and Homotopy analysis together to produce more accurate results. Currently, the research group is working on Block Hybrid Methods.

Prof Shateyi has so far published more than a hundred and seventy articles in peer-reviewed journals and nine book chapters. Prof Shateyi is the first to supervise and graduate a PhD student in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Venda.

6.3. CATEGORY: 1ST RUNNER-UP FOR THE WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LISTS OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Dr S.E. Ramashia serves as a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Food Science and Technology (FST) at the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture at the University of Venda. She holds a PhD in Agriculture (Food Science & Technology), an MTech in Food Technology, and a B.Sc. in Food Science and Technology. She also earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education and a Postgraduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship Management & Leadership within Higher Education. Additionally, she completed the Women in Leadership (WiL) Short Learning Programme and graduated with

a Master of Education Leadership and Management at Botho University, Botswana. Over the past 15 years, she has advanced from technical to academic roles, gaining extensive experience in educational (teaching) and research environments that have enabled her to develop skills in planning and executing research projects across various sub-disciplines of FST. Dr Ramashia acquired valuable industry experience working with a reputable value-added food industry in South Africa. She has supervised and continues to supervise final-year and postgraduate students, and mentors' postdoctoral fellows. She collaborates with organisations such as the Water Research Commission, the Agricultural Research Council (France), the European Union Erasmus Leap Agric grant, the Creating Postgraduate Collaborations (CPC (610305-EPP-1-2019-1NL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP), a European Union-funded initiative, the South African Agricultural Institute, BankSeta, and Vhembe District Municipality. She was appointed as a visiting Assistant Professor at Shoolini University in India. She has published over 40 articles in peer-reviewed international journals, one encyclopedia article, and authored two book chapters, achieving an H-index of 20. Furthermore, she has signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement with one of the SMMEs within the region, and the product is now ready for commercialisation. She is a life member of the South African Association of Food Science and Technology. She serves as an academic reviewer for the Journal of Food Processing and Preservation, the International Journal of Food Science, the Journal of Food Quality, Discovery, Food Science and Nutrition, Trends in Food Science and Technology, Springer, among others, and reviews two books. Her awards include (i) Best Product Display, Wheat-Bambara groundnut, (ii) women 2nd Runner Up and 1st Runner Up for Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards, (iv) a travel grant from the Global Sorghum Conference, and (v) a travel grant to Kauno Kolegija University, Lithuania.

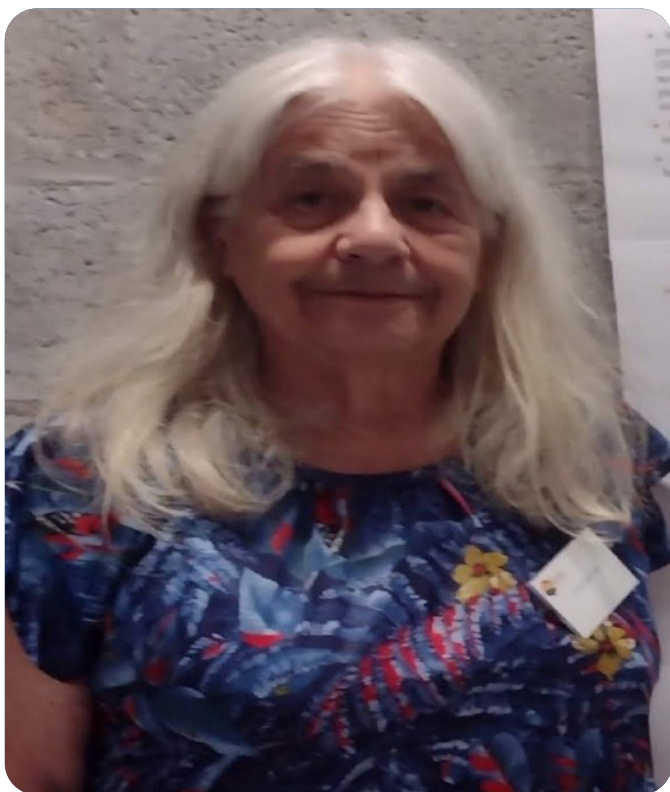
6.4. CATEGORY: AWARD FOR THE WOMAN WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LISTS OF JOURNALS FOR 2023

Prof Afsatou Ndama Traore holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Johannesburg and currently serves as a Full Professor and Head of the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology in the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture. Her research interests are on Tuberculosis, the One Health Concept, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, reflecting a strong commitment to addressing pressing global and public health challenges through interdisciplinary research.



An experienced educator, Prof Traore teaches courses in Introduction to Immunology (2nd year), Advanced Immunology (4th year), and Virology, where she integrates research insights into her teaching to inspire the next generation of scientists. Over the years, she has successfully supervised 70 BSc Honours, 26 MSc, and 13 PhD graduates, and is currently supervising or co-supervising 6 BSc Honours, 3 MSc, and 8 PhD candidates. Her academic leadership and dedication to mentorship continue to contribute significantly to the advancement of biomedical and public health research in South Africa and beyond.

6.5. CATEGORY: SPECIAL CATEGORY OF ADJUNCT/EMERITUS PROFESSORS WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET-ACCREDITED LISTS OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Liliana Mammino is a professor emeritus in the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture at the University of Venda, where she has taught general chemistry, physical chemistry, and process technology, and has initiated and developed computational chemistry research. She holds a degree in chemistry from the University of Pisa (Italy) and a PhD in chemistry from Moscow State University (Russia). Before joining the University of Venda in 1997, she had worked at the National University of Somalia, the University of Zambia, and National University of Lesotho.

Her main research interests comprise theoretical/computational chemistry (her field of specialisation) and chemistry education, with particular attention to the role of language in science, green chemistry education, and multidisciplinary. She has produced over 200 publications across these areas, has edited or co-edited 8 books, and is currently editing more. She

has been active in the IUPAC (=International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry) Interdivisional Committee on Green Chemistry for Sustainable Development for several years. In 2013, she was one of the recipients of the IUPAC Award for Distinguished Women in Chemistry and Chemical Engineering; in 2016, she received an award for sociolinguistics by ALASA (African Languages Association of Southern Africa); in 2024, she was awarded the Chemical Education medal by the South African Chemical Institute.

6.6. CATEGORY: POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW WITH THE MOST RESEARCH OUTPUT IN DHET ACCREDITED LIST OF JOURNALS FOR 2023



Dr. Ishmael Obaeko Iwara is a development economist whose scholarly pursuits focus on the critical intersections of rural sociology, business efficacy, and the transformative potential of higher education—particularly within the evolving landscape of entrepreneurial universities. His research aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, fostering sustainable rural development and entrepreneurial empowerment across diverse socio-economic contexts. Dr. Iwara's academic journey began with a B.Sc. (Honours) degree in Economics from the University of Calabar, Nigeria. He further advanced his expertise through a Master's degree and a Doctorate in Rural Development (Economics) from the University of Venda, South Africa. His doctoral research introduced a novel model emphasizing endogenous, exogenous, and performance-related entrepreneurial indicators, demonstrating how these measures can be

strategically harnessed to strengthen grassroots enterprises in South Africa and beyond. This work exemplifies his commitment to leveraging empirical models for practical development outcomes. Beyond his doctoral achievement and postdoctoral research at the University of Venda, Dr. Iwara has undertaken postdoctoral research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), South Africa, and Carleton University in Canada. These experiences have broadened his academic horizons and enriched his understanding of social and economic development across different cultural and institutional contexts. Such diverse exposure has profoundly influenced his research philosophy, which emphasises inclusivity, social justice, and the importance of understanding human dynamics within varied communities.

Throughout his career, Dr. Iwara has led and co-managed numerous impactful research projects. Notable among these are a Swedish Bank-funded study on women, informal finance, and entrepreneurship in KwaZulu-Natal; an NRF-funded project on social innovation and entrepreneurship at the University of Venda; the Entrepreneurial Champion Programme supported by the Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA), involving institutions such as UKZN, the University of Zululand, Mangosuthu University of Technology, and Durban University of Technology; and a MasterCard Foundation-supported initiative exploring indigenous African and Canadian methodologies related to entrepreneurship and career development. These projects have not only contributed to his scholarly output, culminating in over 60 peer-reviewed publications and 20 international conference presentations, but have also yielded tangible developmental impacts.

Dr. Iwara's academic reputation is further evidenced by his role as a research portfolio assessor for the South African National Research Foundation (NRF), where he reviews research ratings within his field. He actively contributes to postgraduate supervision at master's and doctoral levels and has served as a reviewer for numerous international journals. Additionally, he is actively involved with professional bodies such as the Nigerian Economic Society (NES), Entrepreneurship Development

in Higher Education (EDHE), the Society for Medicinal Plants and Economic Development (SOMPED), the African Association for Science and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AASIKS), the African Finance and Economic Association (AFEA), and the Canadian Association of African Studies.

In recognition of his scholarly contributions, Dr. Iwara was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Award in research for two consecutive years, 2023 and 2024. In 2022, he received a Y-2 rating from the South African National Research Foundation, an acknowledgment of his impactful scientific contributions and promising potential. His pioneering research on entrepreneurship and rural development earned him the Africa Young Graduates and Scholars (AYGS) Conference Excellence Award at the 14th AYGS Conference in 2020. With humility and unwavering dedication, Dr. Iwara continues to advance knowledge at the nexus of rural sociology, entrepreneurship, and higher education transformation, striving to empower communities and shape sustainable development pathways through rigorous scholarship and inclusive engagement.

6.7. CATEGORY: STAFF WHO BROUGHT MOST OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT'S EXTERNAL FUNDING TO THE UNIVERSITY FOR THE PERIOD 2024



Prof Pascal Bessong is a distinguished microbiologist and virologist whose academic journey spans France, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United States. He holds a PhD in Microbiology, a Master of Science in Medical Microbiology and Parasitology, and a Master of Science in Medicine in Bioethics and Health Law. His research is anchored in global health priorities, particularly antimicrobial resistance, pathogen surveillance, child health, human capital development, and community engagement. His contribution to science has been published in leading journals, including Science, Nature, Lancet HIV, PLOS Medicine, AIDS Research and Human Retroviruses, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA, Bulletin of the World Health Organisation, and South African Journal of Science.

Pascal Bessong has successfully trained 58 doctoral and master's students, contributing

significantly to capacity building in biomedical sciences. He is an elected member of the Academy of Science of South Africa, holds a B-2 rating from the National Research Foundation, and is a recipient of the South African Medical Research Council Gold Merit Award for outstanding contributions to health research.

He is currently a Research Professor and Founding Director of the South African Medical Research Council-University of Venda Antimicrobial Resistance and Global Health Research Unit, and Founding Director of the Institute for Pathogen and Global Health Research. In addition to his role at the University of Venda, he is a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Global Health Equity at the University of Virginia, an Honorary Professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Health Sciences, and serves as Associate Editor of the South African Journal of Science.

6.8. CATEGORY: SPECIAL CATEGORY WHO BROUGHT MOST OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT EXTERNAL FUNDING TO THE UNIVERSITY FOR THE PERIOD 2024



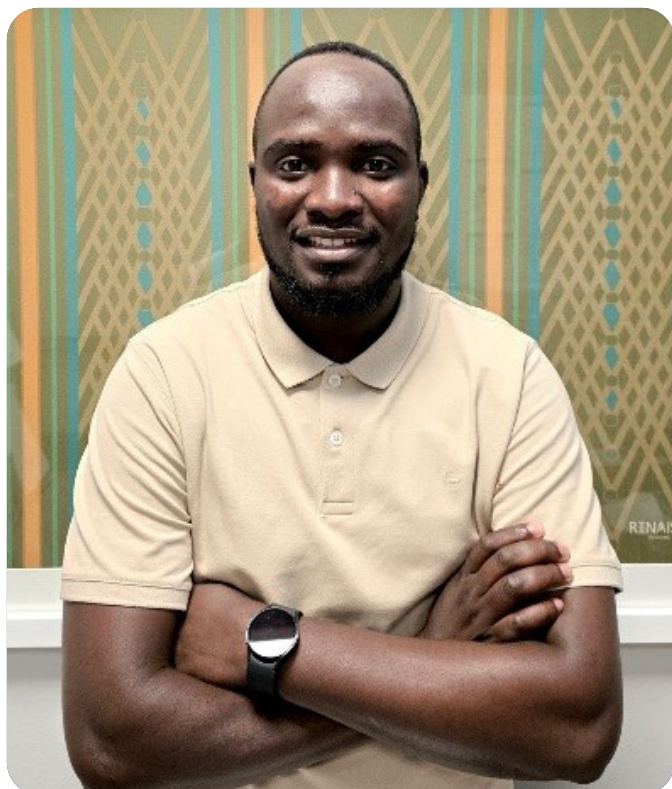
Prof Nthaduleni Samuel Nethengwe, a former FSEA Deputy Dean, Teaching and Learning, has served the University of Venda in various capacities for over 30 years, from 1993 to December 2024. He is currently an adjunct professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture. Prof. Nethengwe received his PhD in Geography from West Virginia University in the United States of America in 2007 and has been involved in school/faculty administration, teaching, and research on Environmental Geography, GIS, RS, and Water resource management since 1993. His key areas of research include mainstreaming GIS and RS into flood vulnerability assessment, gully erosion extraction, green economy (energy and transport), land reform, land use change and suitability analysis, rural livelihoods, and urban organisation. He is an accredited Assessor and a GIS and Remote Sensing specialist, trained in ArcGIS, Map Objects, Databases, and GIS technical issues by ESRI and GIMS, respectively. He has served as the leader of UNIVEN SAF-ADAPT (South Africa/Flanders Climate Change Adaptation Research and Training Partnerships) from 2020 to 2024. The project partners included South African Universities (UNIEN, UCT, and UFH), a Belgian consortium of universities (e.g., KU Leuven), and the SA Adaptation Network, with funding from the Government of Flanders. Table 1 below summarises Prof NS Nethengwe SAF-ADAPT research grant (2020-2024) for equipment, research, postdoctoral fellowship, and students’ scholarships over the years:

Table 1: Research Grants for research, postdoc, and students, scholarship

| Year | Sponsorship Budget | Activity |
|--------------|----------------------|---|
| 2020 | R 771 535.00 | Research, master’s and PhD sponsorship, and Postdoc |
| 2021 | R 287 000.00 | “ |
| 2022 | R1 724 434.80 | “ |
| 2023 | R1 883 248.00 | “ |
| 2024 | R1 777 788.68 | “ |
| 2024 | R 1 660 000.00 | For the procurement of UniVen DGES Lab Computers |
| TOTAL | R8 104 005.60 | |

Prof. Nethengwe has successfully supervised 29 master’s and 9 PhD students, and has published 31 peer-reviewed articles, six book chapters, and two books. He achieved all these amidst his teaching and administrative responsibilities as the Deputy and Acting Dean (former SES); HOD (Geography and Geo-information Sciences) and an interim Head of the Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences); as well as the FSEA Deputy Dean, Teaching and Learning from November 2023 to December 2024.

6.9. CATEGORY: EMERGING RESEARCHER WHO BROUGHT MOST OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT EXTERNAL FUNDING TO THE UNIVERSITY FOR THE PERIOD 2024



Dr Gudani Goodman Mukoma is an HPCSA-registered Biokineticist, an NRF Y2-rated researcher and lecturer in the Department of Biokinetics, Recreation, and Sport Science at the University of Venda. He also holds the position of Honorary Researcher at the SAMRC/Wits Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit (DPHRU) at the University of the Witwatersrand. With over 9 years of experience in academia, his work focuses on the surveillance and prevention of non-communicable disease risk factors, obesity epidemiology, and health equity, with an emphasis on improving health outcomes through lifestyle behavioural interventions in rural and underserved communities.

Dr Mukoma holds a PhD in Health Science and an MSc (Med) in Biokinetics from the University of the Witwatersrand, as well as a BSc in Biokinetics from the University of Venda. He leads the ongoing “Vhembe Household NCD Risk Factors Screening

Project”, funded by the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at Wits, which is screening 1,260 adults to generate local data that will inform future health policy and strengthen community-based health interventions. He has collaborated with researchers from various countries and institutions, including the University of Southampton and the University of Cambridge in the UK, as well as the University of Graz in Austria, among others. Some of the notable projects he worked on include “The Interbio 1st 1000 Days: Pregnancy and Infancy Project in Soweto,” the “Global Diet and Activity Research (GDAR) Project,” the “Mind-Food-Space Project,” and the IAEA project on “Biomarkers for Accurately Assessing Added Sugar Intake Among Young Adults in Soweto.” He has authored over 20 peer-reviewed publications in leading journals, including The Lancet Global Health and PLOS Global Public Health, which have received more than 270 citations. His h-index is 9, indicating his growing international research influence.

Dr Mukoma supervises research for undergraduate, Honours, MPH, and PhD students. He serves in several committees within the Faculty of Health Sciences, including the Human and Clinical Trials Research Ethics Committee (HCTREC) and the Faculty Research Innovation and Integrity Committee (FRIIC). He also serves as a non-examining chair for the Department of Public Health. Additionally, Dr Mukoma is a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee at the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development. His work supports the University of Venda’s goals of excellence and transformation by building research capacity and promoting health equity in South Africa.



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