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A Distinguished Scholar, Prof Kutame Rising Beyond Retirement and Appointed as Emeritus Professor



Acting Director of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education Emeritus Professor Azwidohwi Philip Kutame

For the University of Venda (UNIVEN), the story of Emeritus Professor Azwidohwi Philip Kutame is one of unwavering dedication, intellectual resilience, and leadership that transcends retirement. His recent appointment as Acting Director of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, while the position is being formally advertised, marks not simply an administrative milestone, but

a profound affirmation of a lifetime of service.

Prof Kutame's journey began humbly in 1974 as a classroom teacher. From rural and township schools to secondary school leadership, he spent decades shaping young minds before transitioning into higher education. Across 51 years in the profession, his path reflects steady growth rooted in

discipline, scholarship, and a deep belief in the transformative power of education. What began in 1974 as a young teacher evolved into a distinguished career that bridged classroom practice, school leadership, and university scholarship. At every stage, he embraced continuous learning, upgrading his qualifications, refining his research expertise, and expanding his leadership responsibilities.

His growth was never abrupt or opportunistic; it was deliberate and values-driven. From principalship to postgraduate supervision, from local school engagement to international research collaboration, his trajectory demonstrates how consistency, ethical leadership, and intellectual rigour build lasting impact. For Prof Kutame, education has never been merely about content delivery. It has been about empowerment, dignity, and social transformation, particularly in rural and underserved contexts. His career embodies the conviction that education remains one of the most powerful tools for societal renewal.

Academically, his pursuit of excellence took him across South Africa's leading institutions. He obtained a BA from the University of South Africa (UNISA), followed by a BA Honours and Master's degree from the University of Cape Town (UCT), culminating in a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Social Science Research Methodology from Stellenbosch University. These qualifications were not endpoints, but foundations upon which to build and develop others. Over the years, Prof Kutame has supervised more than 55 doctoral and 47 master's graduates, scholars who now occupy influential academic and leadership positions across Southern Africa and beyond. His mentorship philosophy is grounded in Ubuntu: scholarship must uplift communities, strengthen institutions, and create generational impact.

After serving UNIVEN for ten years before retirement, he continued contributing in a post-retirement capacity at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) for eight years, mentoring

and strengthening postgraduate research. In February 2025, he returned to University of Venda as an Emeritus Professor, a title bestowed in recognition of sustained scholarly excellence, institutional contribution, and distinguished academic leadership. Emeritus status is not merely honorary; it recognises a scholar whose work has significantly shaped postgraduate education, research culture, and institutional development.

For Prof Kutame, the conferment represented both affirmation and responsibility. It affirmed decades of supervision excellence, research productivity, and capacity-building initiatives that strengthened UNIVEN and partner institutions. At the same time, it symbolised continued service beyond formal retirement. His return to UNIVEN reflects a reciprocal relationship between scholar and institution, one built on trust, legacy, and shared commitment to advancing knowledge production in Africa. Rather than marking closure, the Emeritus title opened a renewed chapter of contribution, mentorship, and leadership.

Yet what makes his story extraordinary is not simply longevity, but relevance. Post-retirement, Prof Kutame has intensified his research capacity-building initiatives: research webinars, proposal development workshops, collaborative supervision models, and national and international partnerships funded by the NRF, DHET, and global collaborators. His work continues to strengthen postgraduate throughput and institutional research culture.

His recent appointment as Acting Director of the Faculty is a clear demonstration of the confidence placed in his wisdom, integrity, and vision. It is uncommon for retirement to signal the beginning of a new chapter in leadership; however, for Professor Kutame, this period has become one of renewed influence. He regards this appointment not merely as a personal achievement, but as an affirmation that experience, consistency, and sustained commitment remain essential in shaping the future of the University. Professor Kutame often emphasised that success is not

He believes that true success is measured not by titles held, but by people developed and systems improved. Mentorship, in his philosophy, is an investment in institutional sustainability. Service, whether through leadership roles, collaborative projects, or community engagement, is an expression of gratitude for the opportunities received.

In accepting the role of Acting Director post-retirement, he exemplifies this principle.

Leadership, in his view, is stewardship; it is guiding others, building capacity, and ensuring that structures, policies, and academic programmes outlive one's tenure. His journey affirms that the highest form of success is legacy. His story demonstrates that leadership is not confined by age, nor scholarship limited by formal titles. When passion meets purpose, even retirement becomes a new beginning. UNIVEN celebrates not only an Emeritus Professor and Acting Director, but a legacy still in motion.

Prof Mushaphi Steps in as Acting Executive Dean of Health Sciences



Acting Executive Dean of Health Sciences, Professor Lindelani Mushaphi

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) has appointed Professor Lindelani Mushaphi as the Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, effective from 1 February to 30 September 2026. She assumes the role while the Executive Dean, Professor Tshilidzi Mulaudzi, is on extended vacation leave.

A respected scholar and seasoned academic leader, Prof Mushaphi brings more than two decades of experience in nutrition science, teaching, and institutional leadership. Her appointment reflects the University's commitment to academic excellence, continuity, and strong leadership within one of its most critical faculties.

Prof Mushaphi began her professional career as a dietitian at Donald Fraser Hospital before joining the Department of Nutrition at the University of Venda in 2002. Since then, she has steadily advanced through the academic ranks, serving as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, and Head of Department from 2009 to 2022. In 2022, she was appointed Deputy Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Throughout her career, she has played a central role in shaping future health professionals. She has taught community nutrition to BSc (Nutrition) students and coordinated work-integrated learning for students in their second, third, and fourth years. Her academic influence extends beyond UNIVEN, where she serves as an external examiner for several institutions, including the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, the University of Limpopo, Tshwane University of Technology, and the University of the Free State.

Prof Mushaphi has supervised numerous

undergraduate and postgraduate research projects and has published widely in national and international journals. Her research contributions have been presented at conferences worldwide, reinforcing her standing as a leading voice in nutrition and community health.

Her achievements have earned her notable recognition, including the Women in Science Award from the National Department of Science and Technology in 2006. More recently, she was selected as a fellow in the prestigious Future Professors Programmes at Stellenbosch University from 2020 to 2022.

With her extensive academic, research, and leadership experience, Prof Mushaphi is well-positioned to guide the Faculty of Health Sciences during this period, ensuring the continuation of its teaching, research, and community engagement mandate. Her appointment underscores UNIVEN's dedication to nurturing capable leaders who drive excellence in higher education and health sciences.

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

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.

NEW VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION AND MISSION

"Vision is the art of seeing the invisible"
~ Jonathan Swift

Our vision defines what we want to become by 2040. It is an aspirational description of what we would like to achieve in the long term.



VISION

A University leading in engaged scholarship



MISSION

The University of Venda produces graduates who are locally relevant and globally competitive

INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

The University of Venda is guided by a set of core institutional values that shape its culture, inform decision-making, and underpin the university's strategic priorities. These values include:



EXCELLENCE

Striving for the highest standards in teaching, research, and service



INTEGRITY

Acting with honesty, ethics, and transparency in all we do



ACCOUNTABILITY

Taking responsibility for our actions and delivering on our commitments



DIVERSITY

Embracing and promoting inclusivity, equity, and different perspectives



RESPECT

Valuing the dignity and contributions of every individual

POSITIONING STATEMENT

Positioning the University of Venda for Relevance, Excellence and Impact



University of Venda
Creating Future Leaders



HUAWEI

HUAWEI CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

The **University of Venda** invites unemployed graduates and registered students in Computer Science, BIS, or any IT-related qualification to register for **Huawei certification programmes**.

HCIA – Data Communication (Datacom) classes will begin on **16 February**, offering practical networking skills and industry-aligned training. The programme is **free of charge** and ideal for graduates seeking to enhance their CVs and students wanting to complement their studies.

To register and receive further details,
SCAN THE QR CODE AND JOIN THE WHATSAPP GROUP

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PROJECT BRIEF & AIM

SacredTravels4Growth is an international Erasmus+ initiative aimed at strengthening higher education and tourism and pilgrimage studies. The project promotes inclusive, technology-enabled, and sustainable approaches to religious tourism education, workforce development, and regional heritage promotion.



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MAJOR 2026 ACTIVITY

UNIVEN will host a training workshop and seminar from 30 November to 6 December 2026. The training will enhance students, academics, and industry-professionals' competences in sacred travel and religious tourism development.

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