



University of Venda  
Creating Future Leaders

# UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



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## Igniting Innovation and Opportunity Among Student Entrepreneurs



*Mr Calvin Mogale, SRC President of the University of Venda*

The University of Venda, in partnership with the South African Union of Students (SAUS), successfully hosted the Student Entrepreneurship Indaba from 24 to 26 April 2026, bringing together student leaders, policymakers, and industry stakeholders in a powerful show of collaboration and forward-thinking. Held at the University's Senate Chambers, the Indaba positioned entrepreneurship at the center of conversations on student debt,

unemployment, and inclusive economic growth.

The President of the Student Representative Council (SRC) at the University of Venda, Mr Calvin Mogale, officially welcomed delegates, stakeholders, and distinguished guests to the Indaba, setting a tone of inclusivity and purpose. He expressed sincere appreciation for the opportunity to host such a prestigious national

platform, highlighting its importance in advancing student entrepreneurship, leadership, and innovation. Emphasising the collective responsibility of young leaders, he noted that the Indaba serves as a critical space for students to engage, collaborate, and reimagine their role in driving economic growth and sustainable development. His remarks reinforced the university's commitment to empowering students as active contributors to South Africa's future. Johannesburg who delivered the second keynote address.



*Mr Vusi Karabo Mokoena, the Chairperson of the Entrepreneurial Committee in the South African Union of Students*



*Mrs Mavis Azwianewi Madzhie, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the University of Venda*

Representing the Vice-Chancellor, Chief Financial Officer Mrs Mavis Madzhie opened the engagements with a strong call for collective action. She highlighted the significance of the event's theme, 'Emphasising entrepreneurship as a vital strategy for addressing student debt, unemployment, and socio-economic transformation.' She underscored the urgency of addressing student financial challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions, highlighting entrepreneurship as a critical pathway toward socio-economic transformation. Mrs Madzhie emphasised the importance of partnerships between universities, government, and the private sector to unlock opportunities for student-led enterprises and ensure meaningful impact.

Providing strategic direction from a national student leadership perspective, Mr Vusi Karabo Mokoena, Chairperson of the SAUS Entrepreneurship Subcommittee, delivered a compelling address that set the tone for the Indaba. He urged student leaders to embrace unity, innovation, and collaboration in confronting systemic challenges such as student debt and unemployment. Mr Mokoena highlighted that entrepreneurship must be understood not only as business creation, but as a tool for problem-solving, empowerment, and nation-building, positioning young people as architects of South Africa's economic future.



*Dr Mimmy Martha Gondwe, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training in South Africa*

The keynote address by Dr Mimmy Martha Gondwe, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, reinforced this vision, presenting entrepreneurship as a transformative force within higher education. She challenged institutions to move beyond theory and actively cultivate entrepreneurial ecosystems that foster students as innovators and employers. Dr Gondwe further emphasised the need for practical support mechanisms, industry partnerships, and market access, culminating in a promising collaboration with Takealot aimed at creating real opportunities for student enterprises to scale and succeed.



*Andisani Mathelemusa, Head of Student Governance at University of Venda*

Complementing this, Mr Andisani Mathelemusa, Head of Student Governance at the University of Venda, presented the institution's student tuckshop model as a benchmark for success. He outlined how the initiative integrates business development, financial inclusion, and social support, equipping students with practical skills while addressing food security and economic participation. The model demonstrates how universities can create enabling environments that nurture entrepreneurship while supporting student well-being.

The Indaba programme further deepened these discussions through high-level panel sessions. A representative from the Office of the Minister of Small Business Development set the stage by addressing financing mechanisms for youth entrepreneurship, emphasising the role of student enterprises in driving social development and job creation. Subsequent panel discussions brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from NASDEV, SAASAAP, DHET, NSFAS, NYDA, and provincial government, to explore solutions for funding student enterprises, strengthening policy frameworks, and addressing funding gaps within higher education.

Deliberations also extended into commission-



*Mutshidzi Matidza, a student tuckshop owner*

Adding a grassroots perspective, student entrepreneur Mutshidzi Matidza shared practical insights from his experience as a tuckshop owner. He illustrated how campus-based enterprises are becoming engines of inclusive growth, providing affordable goods, creating jobs, and supporting fellow students. His testimony highlighted the role of student businesses in restoring dignity, alleviating financial strain, and fostering a culture of self-reliance and innovation within university communities.

based breakaway sessions, where participants engaged on critical themes such as student economic participation, funding reform, enterprise development systems, and the implementation of a national student entrepreneurship framework. These sessions allowed for focused dialogue and practical recommendations aimed at transforming ideas into actionable strategies.

The Student Entrepreneurship Indaba ultimately emerged as more than a dialogue platform, it

became a catalyst for change. By bringing together diverse voices and aligning them around a shared vision, the event reaffirmed the power of collaboration in unlocking student potential. It highlighted that with the right support, resources, and partnerships, students can move beyond being job seekers to becoming creators of opportunity, driving innovation and shaping a more inclusive and resilient South African economy.



# Faculty of Health Sciences Collaborates with SAMRC to Deliver the 2026 UNIVEN-SAMRC Health Sciences Conference



*Some of the Conference Participants on day 1*

The Faculty of Health Sciences recently organised the Health Sciences Conferences in collaboration with the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). This Conference took place at 2Ten Hotel from 22-25 April 2026 under the theme: 'Collaborative care for Healthier Futures'. During this Conference, thirteen (13) posters and 26 presentations were delivered. The conference aimed to develop a multidisciplinary model integrating

all relevant departments in the continuum of maternal and child health care, spanning preconception, conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and the first five years of life. This model incorporates expertise from human biology and microbiology to support genetic, immunological, and microbiome analyses, thereby enabling evidence-based interventions and informed reproductive planning to optimize maternal and child health outcomes.



*Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Fulufhelo Netswera*

In his Welcome and Opening Address, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Fulufhelo Netswera described this conference as a very good initiative that will find solutions for many communities. He highlighted that the practice should start on campus and solve the health challenges faced by students on daily basis before going out to the communities. "We need to solve our own challenges first because this will give a sense of trust by people outside". Prof Netswera thanked the 26 presenters who have submitted their papers and advised the organisers to get those papers published. He congratulated members of the committee for putting the conference together. Prof Netswera also thanked SAMRC for partnering with UNIVEN to make sure that the conference becomes a success.

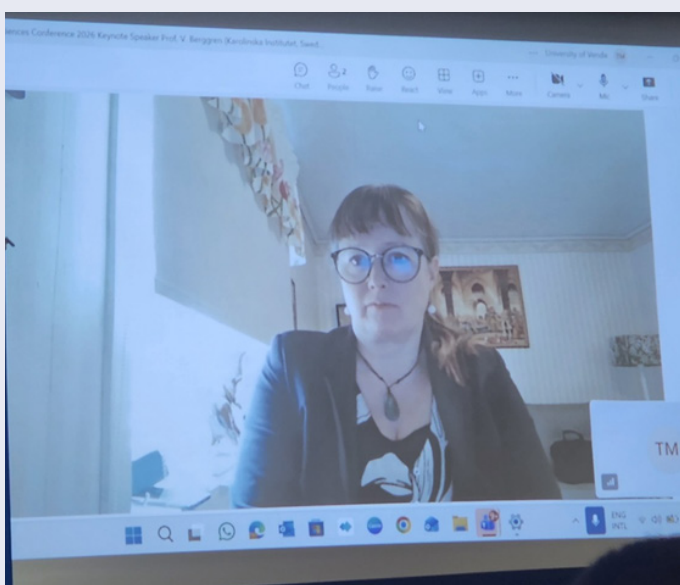
In her Keynote Address, Prof Vanja Verggren spoke about the importance of preconception care in improving global pregnancy. She presented case study of maternal mortality due to childbirth in Sweden. Prof Verggren gave the historical development and advancements in the health field including the development of the obstetrics care in hospitals.

Prof Verggren indicated that globally and regionally, progress on prevention of anaemia in women aged 15-29 years does not indicate that it could meet the World Health Assembly (WHA)'s global nutrition target by 2030. She said the prevalence of anaemia in children remains high. Prof Verggren indicated that a better understanding of the context on the specific causes of anaemia and quality implementation of multisectoral actions to address the causes of anaemia is needed.



*Prof Angelina Maphula*

As the Guest Speaker, Prof Angelina Maphula, a Clinical Psychologist at UNIVEN advised pregnant women to seek help when they need one. "Do not die inside in silence." Prof Maphula indicated that mental health cannot be optimal if other spheres of life are not well maintained. Depression is more than just a feeling of sadness; it affects mood and has an impact on the functioning of the mind. Prof Maphula highlighted that more than 10% of pregnant women globally experience depression. She



*Prof Vanja Verggren from Karolinska Institute, Sweden delivering the Keynote Address virtually*

said women are 1,5 times more likely to have depression than men. "South Africa has a limited access to mental health services, especially in rural areas." When talking about the impact of stress, anxiety and depression, she indicated that mental health care is essential before conception. "Early support improves maternal and child health." Her advice to attendees was that, when preparing for pregnancy, partners education must include emotional, financial and physical readiness. She concluded her talk by advising women to seek help, build support and to prioritise their mental health and well-being.

department to promote optimal health for healthier future.



Dr Ntoden Ndwmato



Poster presentations

On Day 2 of the conference, the guest peaker, Prof Takalani Tshitangano from the University of Limpopo presented the public health strategy to improve maternal and child health. She emphasised that failure to prevent maternal and child mortality is unethical.

Head of Department for the Limpopo Department of Health, Dr Ntoden Ndwmato presented policy and guidelines on maternal and child health. She said that their policy guidelines will add the preconception care recommendation. Dr Ndwmato also acknowledged the need of health promotion



Prof Takalani Tshitangano

This session added the aspect of culture and health. Presenters presented the model of culture that can facilitate proper preconception care that can promote maternal and child health. Isa Mathivha Foundation's presentation on teenage health care emphasised that preconception care should be initiated prior to conception and should encompass a comprehensive reproductive health education, psychosocial support, and the development of decision-making competencies among adolescent girls. They further indicated that approach extends beyond pregnancy prevention, aiming to optimise long-term health outcomes, empower autonomy, and promote overall wellbeing across the life course.



*Group Photo of some of the conference participants*



*Isa Mathivha teenage performance during the closing ceremony of the conference*



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# UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

## 2026 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Venda (UNIVEN), Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, invites you to the 2026 Autumn Graduation Ceremony that will take place at the University Auditorium from 19 -22 May 2026 and is scheduled to start at **09h00 am (First Sessions) and 13h00 pm (Second Sessions)**.

**NB:** Graduands and Guests should arrive TWO HOURS BEFORE the commencement of each ceremony.

For more information, kindly contact the Faculty Administrators as reflected in each session OR Visit our website: [www.univen.ac.za](http://www.univen.ac.za). The graduation will be live streamed.

SESSIONS	DATE	TIME	CONTACT
<b>SESSION 1:</b> Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law Management and Commerce	19 May 2026 Morning Session:	09h00	<b>Caroline Rampheri</b> 015 962 8827 Caroline.Rampheri@univen.ac.za
<b>SESSION 2:</b> Faculty of Health Sciences, and Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law Health Sciences + Law	19 May 2026 Afternoon Session:	13h00	<b>Aluwani Bugane</b> (Health Sciences) 015 962 8942 Aluwani.Bugane@univen.ac.za <b>Julius Netshidzivhe</b> (Law) 015 962 8961 Julius.Netshidzivhe@univen.ac.za
<b>SESSION 3:</b> Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture Environmental Sciences + Agricultural Sciences	20 May 2026 Morning Session:	09h00	<b>Mishumo Nengwekhulu</b> (Environmental Sciences) 015 962 8954 Mishumo.Nengwekhulu@univen.ac.za <b>Maxwell Maboho</b> (Agric Sciences) 015 962 8880 Maxwell.Maboho@univen.ac.za
<b>SESSION 4:</b> Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture Maths and Natural Sciences	20 May 2026 Afternoon Session:	13h00	<b>Mukondeleli Masia</b> 015 962 8086 Mukondeleli.Masia@univen.ac.za
<b>SESSION 5:</b> Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education Human and Social Sciences	21 May 2026 Morning Session:	09h00	<b>Mashudu Mainganye</b> 015 962 8969 Mashudu.Mainganye@univen.ac.za
<b>SESSION 6:</b> Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education Honours for the Faculty Education, Foundation Phase Teaching and Senior Phase Teaching	21 May 2026 Afternoon Session:	13h00	<b>Gumani Tshimange</b> 015 962 8888 Gumani.Tshimange@univen.ac.za <b>Mashudu Mainganye</b> 015 962 8969 Mashudu.Mainganye@univen.ac.za
<b>SESSION 7:</b> Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education [SEPGCE] + Masters and Doctoral	22 May 2026 Morning Session:	09h00	<b>Gumani Tshimange</b> 015 962 8888 Gumani.Tshimange@univen.ac.za <b>Mashudu Mainganye</b> 015 962 8969 Mashudu.Mainganye@univen.ac.za

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