



A Legacy of Leadership: Registrar's Division Honours Dr Joel Baloyi

The University of Venda's Registrar's Division has paid tribute to outgoing University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi, celebrating a legacy of visionary leadership, integrity, mentorship and institutional transformation. Dr Baloyi was honoured during a Top-Down Meeting and Farewell Programme held at Premier Hotel on Tuesday, 21 July 2026. The gathering brought together directors, deputy registrars, heads of departments, management and staff from across the Registrar's Division.



Attendees of the Registrar's farewell function

The programme seamlessly combined a review of the Division's Quarter 2 operational performance with a heartfelt celebration of a leader whose influence, colleagues said, extended far beyond policies, systems and institutional structures.



Mrs Phemy Manganyi, Head of Records and Archives Management

Opening the programme, Mrs Phemy Manganyi, welcomed attendees and emphasised the importance of reflecting on the Division's performance while recognising Dr Baloyi's contribution to the University. She praised his commitment to staff development and his ability to create an environment where employees were encouraged to share ideas, embrace innovation and participate meaningfully in strategic planning. She further commended his commitment to treating every employee with dignity and respect, describing his departure as a significant loss to the University.



Mr Azwidowi Mukheli, Dean of Students

The business component of the programme focused on the Quarter 2 Operational Plan Progress Review, presented by Mr Azwidowi Mukheli, Dean of Students. He reported that the Registrar's Division continued to perform strongly against its Annual Performance Plan, with the Academic Administration and Governance Directorates achieving all their

planned targets.

Mr Mukheli reaffirmed the Division's commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous performance improvement. Representing the Student Affairs Directorate, he reflected on Dr Baloyi's transformative influence on student governance. He credited the outgoing Registrar's high standards and strategic guidance with strengthening the Directorate's ability to address complex student matters, improve service delivery and foster more constructive relations between student leadership and University management.

"Although Dr Baloyi's expectations were demanding, they inspired excellence, professional growth and improved service delivery," Mr Mukheli noted. He also expressed appreciation for Dr Baloyi's mentorship, compassion and personal encouragement, extending his gratitude to both Dr Baloyi and his wife, Mrs Baloyi, for the care and support they provided to colleagues beyond the workplace.

The tone then shifted from performance review to celebration as colleagues shared personal tributes to a leader whose impact has been deeply felt across the Division.



Ms Weyeni Tshivhenga, Personal Assistant to the University Registrar

Ms Weyeni Tshivhenga, described Dr Baloyi as a mentor, leader and constant source of encouragement. She expressed gratitude for the opportunities he created for her to participate in high-level strategic engagements,

which significantly broadened her professional development. She also praised his patience, humility and willingness to explain complex matters with kindness and respect. Beyond his professional role, Ms Tshivhenga acknowledged the personal support and prayers Dr Baloyi and his wife extended to her during difficult periods, describing their compassion as life-changing.

Office of the Registrar : Academic Administration, Student Affairs and Governance, around a common purpose. He commended Dr Baloyi's commitment to academic excellence, innovation, sound governance and service delivery, while highlighting his open-door leadership style, which encouraged collaboration and inspired confidence across the Division.



Mr Lugisani Managa representing the Registrar's Division Finance Business Partners

Representing the Registrar's Division Finance Business Partners, Mr Lugisani Managa reflected on the qualities of authentic leadership, praising Dr Baloyi's integrity, strong character and commitment to ethical leadership.

Mr Ligudu further recognised the Registrar's role in strengthening governance awareness, improving institutional systems and guiding colleagues through complex and challenging engagements with professionalism and composure.



Ms Martha Lewis, Deputy Registrar - Governance Directorate



Mr Mpfariseni Ligudu, Deputy Registrar - Academic Administration

Mr Mpfariseni Ligudu highlighted Dr Baloyi's ability to unite the three directorates under the

For Ms Martha Lewis, Dr Baloyi transformed the way governance was understood within the Directorate. She said that, under his leadership, governance evolved from being viewed primarily as a collection of policies and procedures to becoming a strategic pillar of institutional accountability, sustainability and excellence. Ms Lewis also praised Dr Baloyi's investment in staff development, accessibility and willingness to engage directly with colleagues in addressing complex challenges. She said the

systems, innovations and governance structures established during his tenure would continue to strengthen the University for years to come. Throughout the programme, one message resonated clearly: Dr Baloyi's legacy extends far beyond institutional systems and processes.

It is reflected in the people he empowered, the colleagues he mentored, the governance structures he strengthened, the institutional performance he advanced and the culture of excellence, integrity, accountability and respect he helped cultivate.



The Outgoing University Registrar, Dr Joel Baloyi

In his response, Dr Baloyi expressed his appreciation for the support, recognition and memorable farewell extended to him by colleagues. He said he was proud of the Registrar's Division and its strong culture of engagement and recent achievements. He urged staff to preserve and strengthen this culture through open communication, active listening, mutual respect and teamwork, emphasising that genuine dialogue is essential to resolving challenges and

building stronger relationships.

Reflecting on his leadership journey, Dr Baloyi said leadership was not defined by position, but by humility, integrity, service and the manner in which people treat others. He further emphasised the importance of regular staff engagement, positive collaboration with student leadership and keeping students at the centre of the University's mission.

As he embarks on a new professional chapter, Dr Baloyi encouraged colleagues to continue supporting one another, uphold the Division's shared values and build on the strong foundation already established.

The farewell served as both a celebration and a reminder that true leadership is measured not only by achievements, but by the people developed, lives touched and lasting institutions strengthened.

Although the University bids farewell to an exceptional leader, the values Dr Baloyi championed, the people he empowered and the systems he strengthened will continue to shape the Registrar's Division and the broader University community.

His legacy will endure as a powerful reminder that leadership, at its highest level, is ultimately about service, integrity and leaving people and institutions stronger than one found them.



Dr Joel Baloyi (Middle) posing with some of the staff members from his Division

Indigenous Knowledge Systems Department Prepares Students for Work-Integrated Learning



Students and facilitators during the Work-Integrated Learning Students Preparatory Workshop held at Khoroni Hotel

Preparing graduates for a rapidly evolving world of work remains a cornerstone of the University of Venda's commitment to academic excellence and societal impact. In advancing the objectives of the University of Venda Strategic Plan 2026-2030, the Department of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies hosted a three-day Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Students Preparatory Workshop at Khoroni Hotel on 15-17 July 2026. The programme formed part of the University's ongoing efforts to cultivate competent, ethical, and industry-ready graduates by equipping students with the professional knowledge, practical skills, and confidence required to excel during their Work-Integrated Learning placements and beyond.

By equipping students with practical workplace competencies before their WIL placements, the University continues to position itself as a responsive institution committed to developing graduates who are locally relevant and globally competitive and can contribute meaningfully to South Africa's socio-economic transformation.



Dr Thizwilondi Madima, Lecturer in the Department of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies

Opening the workshop, Dr Thizwilondi Madima on behalf of Dr Justice Makhanike mainly highlighted the workshop as an important milestone in their transition from university to the workplace. She encouraged them to embrace professionalism, ethical conduct, and the responsibilities of the working environment as they prepared for their Work-Integrated Learning placements. Dr Madima further urged the students to make the most of the programme, noting that the

knowledge and skills gained would contribute to their professional growth and future career success.

When outlining the purpose of the workshop, Dr Madima emphasised that the annual programme is designed to prepare final-year students for a successful transition into the workplace. He encouraged students to embrace the opportunity to learn from the experienced facilitators, conduct themselves professionally during their Work-Integrated Learning placements, and serve as ambassadors of the University of Venda and the Department of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies. Her remarks urged students to apply Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a means of addressing societal challenges while laying a strong foundation for their future careers.



Dr Leonard Tshikota, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Professional and Curriculum Studies and WIL Coordinator

The workshop then explored the broader context of experiential learning through a presentation by Speaking on the role of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in higher education, Dr Tshikota emphasised that the programme will bridge the gap between classroom learning and professional practice by equipping students with practical skills, workplace experience, and a strong professional identity. He encouraged students to uphold the University's reputation during their placements, reminding them that, "We want you to graduate not only with knowledge, but with the ability to apply it." Dr Tshikota further urged students to work closely with their mentors and supervisors, apply Indigenous Knowledge Systems responsibly in real-world contexts, and return from their placements as competent, ethical, and industry-ready graduates.



Mr Andani Budeli, Lecturer in the Department of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies

Mr Andani Budeli facilitated a session on Indigenous Knowledge Systems Work-Integrated Learning and speaking on the importance of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), he highlighted its role in bridging the gap between theory and practice while preparing students for the world of work. Mr Budeli encouraged students to develop practical skills, uphold professionalism, and represent the University of Venda and the Department of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies with pride during their placements.

Mr Andani Budeli also encouraged students to use their Work-Integrated Learning placements to develop practical skills, build professional networks, and explore diverse career opportunities. He reminded them that graduate employability is driven by skills and experience, urging them to embrace every learning opportunity. "Your competition is not your peers, but the world beyond the University," he said, encouraging students to support one another, work closely with their mentors, and return as confident, work-ready graduates who will proudly represent the University of Venda.



Dr Livhuwani Tshikukuvhe, Lecturer in the Department of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies

Dr Livhuwani Tshikukuvhe thanked the Department for organising the workshop and encouraged students to make the most of the opportunity. She reminded them to represent the University of Venda with professionalism during their Work-Integrated Learning placements.

The second day commenced with a reflection

on the key lessons from the previous day's sessions.

Some presentation focused on job search strategies, curriculum vitae development, and cover letter writing provided students with practical guidance on preparing competitive application documents tailored to employer expectations. Participants also received advice on presenting their qualifications and experiences effectively to prospective employers.

The workshop concluded with a discussion and reflection session, during which students shared their experiences, reflected on the knowledge acquired over the three days, and discussed how they intended to apply the lessons during their Work-Integrated Learning placements.

As the University of Venda continues implementing its Strategic Plan 2026-2030, initiatives such as the Work-Integrated Learning Preparatory Workshop demonstrate the institution's dedication to empowering students, advancing Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and producing graduates who are innovative, employable, and equipped to lead sustainable development within their communities and beyond.

Fundi Business restores students' hope

The University of Venda (UNIVEN), in partnership with Fundi Business, officially hosted the Thoho Ya Nzie Student Welfare Programme Food Parcels Handover. This handing over ceremony took place at CHETL Boardroom on 15 July 2026. The initiative underscores the University's unwavering commitment to supporting students facing financial hardship and food insecurity, ensuring that every student has access to the necessities required to succeed academically. Bringing together University management, Fundi representatives, student leadership, and key stakeholders, the programme celebrated the power of collaboration in advancing student welfare. Through messages of appreciation, commitment, and shared responsibility, the event reaffirmed both institutions' dedication to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and enabling learning environment where no student is left behind.



Attendees



Dr Morongwa Takalani: Student Counsellor (SCCDU)

Dr Takalani welcomed university management, staff members, and distinguished guests to the event, with special recognition for the representatives from Fundi. She described their presence as an honour while acknowledged their willingness to support students beyond their academic programmes by recognising their broader needs and potential. She commended Fundi for partnering with UNIVEN to create an environment where students can

thrive, emphasising that such initiatives play a vital role in promoting student success and well-being. Dr Takalani also expressed appreciation to everyone who attended the event and encouraged their continued support for initiatives that enhance the student experience.



Prof Lindiwe Mulaudzi, Director of the Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (CHETL), UNIVEN

Prof Mulaudzi outlined the purpose of the event, explaining that it was held to receive and acknowledge Fundi's donation

formally and to recognise the organisation's contribution to student success at UNIVEN. She emphasised that the university does not take such acts of generosity for granted and believes it is important to recognise partners who invest in students' well-being. She further explained that many students face challenges beyond academics, including food insecurity, inadequate accommodation and financial hardship, making donor support essential. Prof Mulaudzi highlighted the role of the Thoho ya nzie initiative and the University's Advancement Office in mobilising assistance for students, assuring donors that beneficiaries are carefully screened to ensure support reaches those most in need. She concluded by expressing appreciation for Fundi's partnership and her hope for continued collaboration in supporting students.

expand private funding opportunities and improve support for students in the future. He also acknowledged the University team whose efforts ensured the successful coordination and delivery of the donation.



Mr Zephred Macanda: Implementation & Key Accounts Manager (FUNDI)

Mr Macanda expressed gratitude for the opportunity to partner with UNIVEN through the Thoho Ya Nzie Student Welfare Programme. He noted that, as Fundi celebrates 30 years of supporting education, the organisation continues to provide services to students and institutions ranging funding, fund administration, disbursements, and psychosocial support to promote student success. Mr Macanda emphasised that giving back to communities is central to Fundi's values and reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to strengthening its longstanding partnership with the University of Venda through initiatives that positively impact students' lives.



Mr Mzwakhe Matukane, Director for Advancement, Commercialisation and Strategic Partnerships, UNIVEN

Mr Matukane expressed UNIVEN's appreciation to Fundi for its generous donation and longstanding support of students. He highlighted the university's financial challenges, including its heavy reliance on NSFAS funding, limited private bursary opportunities and significant student debt, emphasising the importance of partnerships with organisations such as Fundi. He further commended Fundi for its continued commitment to student development. Mr Matukane expressed confidence that the partnership would help



Mr Calvin Mogale, Students' Representative Council President, UNIVEN

Mr Mogale conveyed the Student Representative

Council's appreciation for Fundi's generous donation and its continued investment in student welfare. He highlighted the positive impact that the donation would have on students facing financial hardship and commended the partnership between Fundi and UNIVEN. Mr Mogale encouraged students to make meaningful use of the support provided and to remain focused on achieving academic success. He further encouraged continued collaboration to ensure that more students receive the support they need to succeed academically and personally.



Mr Lebo Mokaze, Senior Events Coordinator (UNIVEN)

Mr Mokaze expressed heartfelt gratitude to Fundi for its generous donation of food

parcels, noting that the initiative would have a meaningful impact on students facing financial hardship and food insecurity.

He also commended the Advancement, Commercialisation and Strategic Partnerships Division for cultivating valuable partnerships that support student success, while thanking the University management, Fundi representatives, student leaders, organisers, and all stakeholders for their collective efforts in making the programme a success. Mr Mokaze concluded by reaffirming that collaborative partnerships remain vital in promoting student well-being and creating an inclusive environment where every student has the opportunity to thrive.



Stakeholders posing with the donated food parcels

Beyond Translation: UNIVEN Graduate Uncovers the Hidden Role of Court Interpreters in Delivering Justice

University of Venda (UNIVEN) Language Practice graduate has shed light on the often-overlooked role court interpreters play in making South Africa's labour justice system accessible to ordinary people.

Elekanyani Dagada, who recently obtained her Master's degree in Language Practice from UNIVEN, conducted her research while working part-time as an interpreter at Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) hearing rooms in Makhado.



Elekanyani Dagada, who recently obtained her Master's degree in Language Practice from UNIVEN, conducted her research while working part-time as an interpreter at Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) hearing rooms in Makhado.

Her findings, published in the June 2026 edition of CCMA Intouch, reveal that interpreters do far more than translate proceedings. They routinely explain legal procedures, assist workers with completing forms and respond to help-desk queries, responsibilities that extend well beyond the traditional interpretation role.

"For many workers in Vhembe who arrive without lawyers, the interpreter is the only person who makes the process understandable," says Dagada. "When interpreters can explain both the language and the process, hearings run more smoothly and justice becomes more accessible."

The mixed-methods study involved interviews with CCMA Commissioners and Case Management Officers, as well as a survey of 10 interpreters working in labour tribunals. The participants unanimously recognised interpreters as a critical bridge between complex legal processes and ordinary people.

According to the study, this role directly supports the CCMA's mandate to provide fair and accessible dispute-resolution services. Dagada recommends that interpreter job descriptions be revised to reflect the realities of their work, while accredited training in labour law and ethics should be introduced. She also calls for greater support for interpreter wellbeing to help prevent burnout, as well as consistent professional standards across labour forums.

Her research underscores UNIVEN's commitment to producing graduates who use knowledge to address real-world challenges and contribute to the communities they serve. "I'm grateful to UNIVEN's Department of African Languages for training me to see language as a tool for social justice," says Dagada.

Dagada hopes her findings will help strengthen interpreter services nationally. She continues to work with the CCMA in Limpopo while pursuing opportunities in academia and research.

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

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