



University of Venda
Creating future leaders

UNIVEN Senior Managers deliberate on Annual Performance Plan and Strategic Risk Review

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) held an important strategic Annual Performance Plan and Strategic Risk Review Workshop to identify performance indicators and targets that the University should achieve in 2022. The objectives of this workshop were also to review possible risks that may arise during 2022 academic year and to put in place, mitigating action plans to reduce the identified risks to an acceptable level. This workshop was held at Skukuza Safari Lodge Rest Camp of Kruger National Park from 22 – 24 November 2021. The workshop was attended by Executive and Senior Managers.

This strategic planning process contained steps, exercises, and opportunities to develop a culture of alignment and follow-through within an organisation. Without alignment among University departments including individual University staff members, there are high chances that the institution might not achieve its intended goals. Further objectives of this Annual Performance planning and Risk Review workshop were to foster the aforementioned alignment and to ensure that everyone is moving towards the University direction and working towards achieving similar intended goals. Moreover, to mitigate against the risk of non-achievement of strategic goals and objectives, it is always important for the management of every institution to regularly perform risk assessment and risk reviews. During this workshop, senior managers improved alignment between the Annual Performance Plan objectives to risk. Thresholds, risk tolerance levels and risk indicators were revisited to assist the University management to optimise the risk reporting in the manner which will best allow the institution to respond in a timely manner.



The workshop was officially opened by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni. Dr Nthambeleni's welcome address was centred around the Positioning

Statement of 2021-2025 UNIVEN Strategic Plan; Enhancing the implementation of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan; Senior Management initial approach; A year down the line and Desired outcomes from the workshop. UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal also highlighted the road map for the year 2022 Annual Performance Plan. He mentioned that the University management has envisaged to finalise the 2022 Annual Performance Plan before end of 2021 so that the plan could be ready for implementation at the beginning of 2022. Dr Nthambeleni alluded that, managers should be able to identify the risks associated with the achievement of the new targets and most importantly to ensure a significant improvement in the alignment between performance reporting and risk reporting so that the University may have valuable information for both management purposes as well as to share with governance structures. Dr Nthambeleni concluded his talk by mentioning that this workshop was organised to assist the University to timeously detect pitfalls and lags in performance achievement that will enable corrective measures to be implemented.



Dr Robert Martin (left) and Dr Sannah Mativandlela (right) during presentations

The workshop received presentations/facilitation from Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin, and the Director Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance, Dr Sannah Mativandlela.



Chairperson of Transversal Committee, Mr Aluwani Magadani addressing Senior managers about matters of Business Continuity.



Dr Gerhard de Coning (left) and Mrs Alicia Swart from Universum Strategy and Risk Advisory during facilitation

External facilitators of this workshop were, Dr Gerhard de Coning and Mrs Alicia Swart from Universum Strategy and Risk Advisory.



Closing remarks on the last day of the workshop were conveyed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza. She thanked the delegates for their commitment, participation and engagement that made the workshop a success. Prof Feza further applauded the presenters and facilitators for their sterling job. She concluded her talk by quoting two philosophers Lombard who talks about dedication and Aristotle who talks about perfection.



Executive and Senior Managers who attended the Annual Performance Plan and Risk Review Workshop posing for a photo with Facilitators from Universum Strategy and Risk Advisory

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UNIVEN holds physical graduation ceremonies for the first time since the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic

On Friday, 19 November 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held physical Spring Graduation ceremonies for the first time since the world witnessed Covid-19. The Graduation Ceremonies took place at the University Auditorium and live streamed on the University social media platforms.



In June this year, 2578 students graduated virtually. "In this November graduation, we celebrate the success of 653 students". This brings the total to 3231 graduates in 2021. Among these 3231 graduates, 17 graduated with PhD.



In his congratulatory message, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni highlighted that Graduation ceremonies affords us a unique opportunity to reflect on the journey we have collectively – as students, parents, and lecturers – traversed in this quest for knowledge. Dr Nthambeleni said he is proud that even during our struggles against Covid-19, these graduates sought refuge from education. He told them that their graduation epitomises the triumph of education over adversity.

"It is your quest for knowledge that I am proud of; and all of us as the staff of this great University are honoured to have been a part of your academic journey." The dominant view of the purpose of education is that of its utilitarian value: its ability to equip people with the necessary skills for them to earn a living. This is indeed, a critical area of life, for how else would people survive, or how would they build economies without skills? Dr Nthambeleni mentioned that it is for this reason that our University places an emphasis on practical areas of learning, to enable our graduates to be competitive in various places of work.

"Our vision is ; a University leading in engaged scholarship. We have spelled it out clearly that our mission is to produce graduates that are locally relevant and globally competitive. We take cognisance of the fact that to realise our vision and fulfil our mission we have to be driven by the values of quality and excellence; espouse accountability; practice transparency and be open to public scrutiny; promote respect and value integrity; embrace diversity; promote social responsibility, protect and preserve our environment", he said.

He highlighted that these are the values that we seek to promote and inculcate among UNIVEN students and the community at large.

Dr Nthambeleni thanked parents for showing confidence in our institution, its programmes, and the staff by enrolling their children at UNIVEN. He concluded by mentioning that UNIVEN was founded more than four (4) decades ago and will be celebrating 40th Anniversary next year (2022). He said the University continues to contribute enormously to the socio-economic development not only of the province but the entire country by producing graduates that occupy significant positions in both public and private sector.

"Our University staff with doctoral qualifications has increased to 41% which is above the national average of 37% in the entire higher education sector. Our researchers are making good strides in innovation. We now have 11 complete registered patents in different fields, including in health (food technology), engineering and management sciences."



In his welcome message, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford highlighted that the graduation ceremonies took place at a time of great hardship for many of our people, who have suffered not only the loss of loved ones to Covid19, but also, in many cases, the loss of livelihoods. We have seen the Covid19 pandemic deepen the divisions in our society, exacerbating poverty and inequality, and having a devastating impact on teaching and learning at our schools and to a lesser extent at our universities. "You may have heard previously that in Chinese writing, the Chinese character for "crisis" happens to be indistinguishable from the character used for "opportunity". He said indeed we are in the midst of the current crisis that the University of Venda sees the opportunity to evaluate, re-think, and redirect its business.

Prof Crafford further highlighted that it so happens that 2021 is the first year of implementation of the bold 2021 – 2025 strategic plan developed by the University under the leadership of our Vice-Chancellor and Principal. This plan is underpinned by a completely new business model and a reconfigured academic structure. "We are particularly pleased that the 17 Doctoral degrees, 62 Masters degrees, 80 Honours degrees, 501 Bachelors degrees, 6 Diplomas and 4 postgraduate certificates that will be awarded, would have been completed in our four new Faculties."



PhD Graduates posing for a photo with Executive and senior managers outside Life Sciences building



Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education and Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law PhD graduates



Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture and Faculty of Health Sciences PhD graduates



Happy Moments: 'Lenna keya e nyaka kobo ya thuto'

Council on Higher Education (CHE) facilitates Institutional Audit Workshop at UNIVEN

On Friday, 26 November 2021, the University of Venda had an institutional audit workshop that took place at the Research Conference Centre. The workshop was facilitated by Dr Britta Zawada from the Council on Higher Education. UNIVEN participants were led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin.

After the workshop, a team of Nendila newsletter had an in-depth interview with the Director Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance, Dr Sannah Mativandela who took the team through the journey of Institutional Audit. This is how Dr Mativandela responded to the questions:

Please give us the background of institutional audit

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) as a quality council for higher education (HE) plays a critical role in terms of the national qualification framework act, and one of its mandate is to promote quality assurance (QA) in HE, audit QA mechanisms of higher education institutions (HEIs) and accreditation of academic programmes. The first round of institutional audits of the QA mechanisms of HEIs were conducted by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) during 2004 to 2011 guided by 2004 Framework for Institutional Audits. The 2021 Framework for Institutional Audits and the related Manual were finalised and approved by HEQC and CHE designed to assist institutions to strengthen their Internal Quality Assurance systems (IQA). There will no longer be a sector-wide audit cycle, but each institution will enter its own audit cycle based on its QA maturity to prepare for the new QAF.

A letter dated 30th March 2021 from CHE to the University of Venda (UNIVEN) Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni was circulated to inform the University community that the Council will be conducting institutional audit for all public universities as well as the private higher education institutions (HEIs). The letter outlined that the first set of audits was scheduled to start immediately and in accordance with CHE endorsed schedule. The letter served to initiate the institutional audit of UNIVEN in terms of section 4.1 (i) of the Manual for Institutional Audits 2021.

In terms of the process described in section 4.5 of the Manual (2021) and after receipt of the letter to initiate the process, a first interaction between UNIVEN and CHE took place in April 2021 to determine the nature, scope and date for UNIVEN audit. The CHE team met with UNIVEN Executive Management and senior staff engaged in the quality management of the institution's core academic functions.

What is the Importance of this institutional audit?

The overarching purpose of institutional audit as an external quality assurance mechanism, is to evaluate the coherence and effectiveness of an institution's internal QA system in enabling student success and improving its core academic functions (teaching, learning, research, and community engagement). The evaluation is based on institutional self-reflection followed by peer-driven and evidence-based, validation and verify the institutional self-evaluation and recommends improvements. An additional purpose of the institutional audit is to provide baseline information that forms an input into the institutional track record.

The institutional audits are based on differentiation of institutions in terms of size, shape, location, context, and mission

Who are the participants in this process of Institutional audit?

The University of Venda constituted an internal Steering Committee to drive the institutional audit processes and procedures guided by the CHE Framework and Manual for Institutional Audits 2021. The Committee is composed of executive leadership, academic, student representative council, union representatives and other directorates staff members. The Committee is divided into four (4) groups as per the 4 focus areas indicated within the CHE Framework and Manual (2021). Each focus area group has a Chairperson who is the lead facilitator. All meetings are held in accordance with COVID-19 regulations. UNIVEN also established a Review Committee which consists of Director IPQA (Chair), nomination from each of the 4 Faculties, academic representatives, Student Representative Council (SRC) member (Minister of Education). The role of the Review Committee is to review, verify, monitor compliance, and ensure that the university's institutional audit SER is in line with the CHE Framework for Institutional Audits and the Manual for Institutional Audits 2021.

The CHE introduced the capacity development programme which covers webinar series and online short course with institution-specific workshops as the need arises. The University liaised with CHE to conduct an online workshop aimed at Chairpersons of the 4 focus areas' groups including newly appointed Executive Deans. The objective of the workshop was for UNIVEN to clearly understand the scope of the institutional audit, guidelines, and expectations from the CHE in preparation of the institutional Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

Tell us the purpose of the visit by CHE at UNIVEN

In building the institutional SER, the CHE has series of themes online where HEIs participate to clearly understand the scope of this project. UNIVEN also participates in those forums, which include workshops. The SER comprises on an institutional profile, a self-reflection, and Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) based on the focus area(s) and 16 standards identified by CHE for the audit. The institutional profile, SER and PoE must be approved by all relevant governance structures of the institution before submission on the agreed date in an electronic format, with hard copies as agreed between institution and CHE.

The purpose of CHE for the planned contact regional workshop with UNIVEN on 26 November 2021, was for engagement in terms of progress in preparation for the SER and quality checks of the institutional audit. The SER submissions by the 21 universities start at the end of November 2021 until the end of June 2022, and the institutional site visits start in the first week of April 2022 until the first week of November 2022. The institutional audit panels are in process and inductions will start in February 2022.

What are they intending to achieve through this audit and what will UNIVEN benefit out of this process?

Audits assist HEIs to develop reliable, robust, and evidence-based QA processes that are reflected in their policies, rules, standards and indicators such that the HEQC is assured

of the coherence and effectiveness of the quality management of their core functions. Audits serve as one external mechanism, among others, to protect students from inferior educational provision and negative student experiences; they also assure society that the internal quality assurance system in an institution is an important safeguard for protecting the quality of an institution's qualifications. Audits also provide the HEQC with baseline information about institutions using a common set of expectations within a differentiated system to identify and disseminate nuanced good practice in quality management throughout the higher education sector, facilitate the design of capacity development and improvement programmes by the HEQC and other stakeholders, and generate an informed national picture of institutional quality arrangements in higher education.

UNIVEN will benefit to better understand and deliver its mandate in the context of its Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 to ensure that the institution is adequately prepared for constructive participation in the institutional quality audit (IQA) and a fair and transparent audit process. The institution is encouraged and supported by the statutory bodies (DHET, CHE and SAQA), internal and external stakeholders, partners nationally and internationally to develop, implement, maintain and strengthen its internal QA systems within a culture where institutional self-reflection leads to continuous quality improvement through verifying and validating own compliance with its quality assurance arrangements.

How is this process going to unfold?

A timeframe of 3 and 7 years is recommended to allow patterns and trends to emerge. Time frame includes 2020 and the responses around the pandemic. The institutions respond to the sixteen (16) Standard and the Guidelines are there to assist and guide, not necessarily to be responded to individually. The new set of standards and guidelines are not just based on the existence of an IQA system in an institution and input quality, but also focus on coherence, efficiency and effectiveness, and impact in terms of outcome quality. The use and role of technology and 4IR has been included throughout, for example, in how institutions make decisions based on data, how technology is incorporated into the curriculum, how technology is used in learning and teaching, and 4IR in society. A strong focus on data, information- and research-based and evidence-based decision-making by institutions has been introduced. Each Standard will have an outcome in the focus area on institutional audit focusing on institutional policies, systems, procedures, strategies, etc.

The University of Venda is considering a timeframe from 2016 – 2020, and not excluding 2021. Executive summary of an institutional audit report will be published on the CHE website.

How long will be the process of Institutional Audit?

Each institutional audit should be completed in approximately 18 months. Thereafter a submission of draft audit report to the institution (within 3 months of site visit based on institutional responses to provide further documents to the audit panel). The institutional audit outcomes (approximately October / November 2022) will be followed by improvement plans (one year following the 18 months).

When will be the actual date of the institutional audit?

The CHE date and mode of the site visit is from April – June 2022. The Council will communicate the final date for UNIVEN which will be during that period in 2022.

What role are UNIVEN stakeholders (particularly staff and students) expected to play towards the audit process?

Participation of the entire university community in the IQA provides the opportunity for UNIVEN to reflect on its practices and identify good practice as well as areas of development, which will ultimately lead to enhancement across the university. This can only bode well for the University's goal to achieve excellence in teaching and learning, research and community engagement and will have a positive impact on its reputation as a credible comprehensive higher education institution.

Institutional audits are developmental and intent on supporting continuous quality improvement and enhancement, and these audits are key component of the HEQCs broadbased QA mandate. The student experience, student engagement and participation and the student voice are central to an evaluation of an institution's quality management system. The outcomes of which will be used for enhancement of University processes and will feed into the new Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

The planned audit site visits are between 1 – 5 days. The nature of these visits (virtual or in person) will be determined by COVID-19 regulations and other contextual factors at the time. The audit panel will conduct interviews with different stakeholders/constituencies (staff and students) accompanied by visits to facilities and campuses/sites of delivery.

What are the expectations from UNIVEN?

The institution is expected to:

- Familiarise itself with the content of the 2021 Framework for Institutional Audits and the Manual for Institutional Audits (particularly the institutional audit context, principles, objectives, purpose, scope, key focus areas and prescribed standards).
- Prepare and ensure readiness for the next round of institutional audits.
- Ensure that reliable and credible PoE is readily available.
- Ensure cooperation and devoted participation throughout the audit process (from preparation to development of improvement plans).

Progress

The Steering Committee continues engaging stakeholders in finalisation of the SER, and with the Review Committee assisting with the compliance, review and to ensure that there is reliable and credible PoE available guided by the CHE 2021 Manual and Guidelines institutional audit.

Outcome

The feedback will be given on the improvement plans with recommendations in the audit report which will form the basis of the activities to consider. Any essential recommendations will be non-negotiable, and those that are for advisory purpose may be considered or adjusted. Institutions will be required to motivate why any recommendations are not implemented as an activity.

UNIVEN partners with Vhembe Biosphere Reserve to celebrate UNESCO's Man and Biosphere programme's 50th Anniversary

On Thursday, 18 November 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) and Vhembe Biosphere Reserve (VBR) hosted an event to celebrate UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB) 50 years anniversary under the theme 'It's about life'. This hybrid event took place on Microsoft Teams at the University's Research Conference Centre.



Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal prefaced his keynote address by acknowledging the wonderful work being done by Phathutshedzo Mudau through his recycling company, Dziphathutshedzo Green Surfacing. He said UNIVEN will assist his company to grow, starting from patenting his products and he went on to urge the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies to engage Phathutshedzo in order to explore the possibility of providing him the necessary support.

Dr Nthambeleni highlighted that the UNESCO MAB Programme is a landscape-based management of areas using local efforts and practical conservation solutions to resolve the current environmental challenges and promote sustainable development. He said South Africa already has established 10 Biosphere Reserves across various provinces. "This is a multi-sectoral programme geared towards implementing local solutions to the environmental challenges through inclusive approach."

He highlighted that UNIVEN is the only university, which is located within a Biosphere Reserve in Africa. "We are right in the middle of the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2009. Our unique location has influenced the vision, mission, and the strategic plan of the university, which places engagement – at the very centre of our existence. It has also informed our UNIVEN Integrated Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Biodiversity Plan, which is an overarching institutional plan to operationalise our strategic objectives.

The University also leveraged its location within the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve to be awarded its first and only AST/NRF SARChI Research Chair, in Biodiversity Value and Change in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve.

He said the Chair is a key driver of quality research and postgraduate training at our institution. The University is proud of the role it has played as a key stakeholder of the VBR, from the instigation of the VBR, and the compilation of the original Biosphere proposal that was submitted to UNESCO by the University, to its current representation on the Board of the VBR.

"The Vhembe Biosphere Reserve endeavours to integrate people and nature to live in harmony. As we continue with the celebration, as you all know, we are currently in the implementation phase of Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and at the

same time we have the Lima Action Plan on Biosphere Reserves."

He concluded his talk by mentioning that already the University has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve. "There are opportunities to work on the following areas, which are a strong focus of the university"



In her opening and welcome message, Prof Vhonani Netshandama mentioned that celebrations offer us opportunities not only for the dancing but also for the reflections and feedback and milestones on how we have done so far. She said UNIVEN is privileged because it is positioned in the middle of the biosphere. Prof Netshandama said that opportunities such as this offers a platform to interact meaningfully with stakeholders who respect and honour humanity. "Biosphere reserves are about engagement especially nowadays when there is so much threat in our environment." She advised attendees to contribute towards saving nature and environment.



Prof Stan Foord, Chair of UNIVEN SARChI on Biodiversity Value and Change in the Vhembe Biosphere said UNESCO has left a very good legacy in the Vhembe Biosphere. He spoke about sustainability and the need to conserve biodiversity. Vhembe Biosphere Reserve is a very important strategic partner and there are only few if there are any universities located in the biosphere area. He went on to highlight the role that UNIVEN's SARChI Chair has played in the various programmes of the VBR especially when it comes to conservation planning and the submission of the Ten-Year Periodic Review.



VBR Coordinator, Mr Tonderai Makoni said no amount of teaching would exceed the experience that he was given at VBR. Mr Makoni said that he is grateful for the opportunity that he was given at VBR.

When we celebrate, we need to be clear on what we have achieved so far. "We exist to showcase the role of VBR in promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable." Some of the key milestones that Mr Makoni spoke about include VBR ten-year review, strategic environmental management plan, Limpopo conservation plan, Ndima community services heritage database, Vhembe District environmental management plan forum and UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme. Over the year, the VBR has also been trying to identify and support some "demonstration project" for example bridge site cleaners, Nombhela gardens, Basani recycling and PWK Waste Management, Baobab guardians and Tshumisano Women's Cooperative. He said that the VBR is a vehicle for conservation and sustainable development, it is a meeting place for like-minded stakeholders to come together and tackle the many challenges affecting their communities.

"We want to bring more youth to be part of these achievements. Young people want to work, and we are providing them with opportunities and a platform to be part of the solution". The VBR has so much potential, and we believe that with this relationship that we have with UNIVEN, we can continue to shape the discussions, change the lives of our stakeholders and use research to find solutions to the many challenges that we are facing in the landscape. Mr Makoni concluded by saying that the UNESCO MAB Programme is about people living in harmony with nature and he thanked UNIVEN for their support and offering to host the MAB 50th anniversary celebrations.

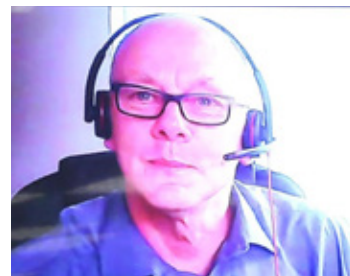


DVC Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza presented about research contribution in the VBR. In her presentation, Prof Feza said the VBR should not be separated from who we are because we live in it. She further said that celebration is about the journey of lot of achievements. "Human beings are part of the biosphere reserves, and we need to live harmoniously with our environment. Do not destroy nature. We need to think about animals before we destroy nature. We live to create a legacy." Prof Feza mentioned that she believes that, at UNIVEN, we are forced to come out of comfort zone to become interdisciplinary. "We started as early as 2008 to come to contribute into the biosphere. We were tasked to find solutions for the VBR and the surrounding communities through research. We are also on our way to commercialisation. In 2012 and 2013, we had an opportunity to clean people's mind and show them the need to save our environment. This is done because we are supreme to what and how the mind thinks," she said.

Prof Feza presented about the organic growth of initiatives, research projects and innovation. She presented the journey from 2008 until 2021. "This is how we have grown as UNIVEN on the role that the University has played since working together with VBR," she concluded.



Director Institute for Rural Development, Prof Joseph Francis said the biosphere is about people. He presented about strategic intent of IRD core business, operationalisation of IRD strategic intent, inherent strengths or expertise and next areas of IRD investment. In his presentation, Prof Francis highlighted that UNIVEN is a leading University based in an engaged scholarship in combating rural underdevelopment. He said that his Institute always strives to take the University to its rightful owners. "Our approach is also about working with local traditional leaders. Over the past years, our drive was about working with the surrounding communities. Honours, masters and PhD students are the ones conducting research within the surrounding communities to rescue unemployed graduates. We know that if we want to develop our communities, we need to work closely with traditional leaders," said Prof Francis.



Mr Broucke Guy from UNESCO who addressed the attendees through Microsoft Teams said Biosphere Reserves are about connecting people. Mr Guy further presented the history and milestone of MAB Programme. In his presentation, he advised attendees to educate everyone about preservation of environment. "Everyone should be sensitised to save what we have. Some areas must be protected." Amongst other things Mr Guy presented about guiding principles of MAB Programme where he mentioned that MAB Programme has many partners globally and have many scientific programmes in various countries. He further said that, in every ten years, they sit for a new action plan to the next ten years. We strategize and plan on what to achieve in the next ten years. "Of course, reflecting on the past ten years whether the goals were achieved or not." Mr Guy concluded his talk by indicating that UNESCO now has sixteen (16) biosphere reserves that are in different countries in the SADC region.

UNIVEN partners with Vhembe Biosphere Reserve continued...



The first VBR Youth Network Chairperson, Mr Ntakuseni Godzwana, said this celebration is very important for VBR Youth Network because this means the VBR is growing and has achieved a lot. He mentioned that Vhembe Biosphere Reserve is the only biosphere in the globe with an active youth network. Mr Godzwana is in his final year doing Bachelor of Environmental Sciences at UNIVEN.

"Although Africa is rich in biodiversity, there is still lack of youth participation when it comes to the various discussion on biodiversity loss. We saw it fit to be part of the VBR by setting up the youth Chapter because there won't be sustainability without youth participation. We are the champions of tomorrow. VBR concept is only known by students and staff members, we need youth to participate in saving our environment. The VBR Youth Network has been engaged in several activities including hosting cleaning campaigns, career expos and participating in the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework review. He concluded by saying that young people are not just the future but also the present, so the time is now to act, he called on other young people to join the Youth Network



In Creating space for young people in the VBR, Mr Phathutshedzo Mudau founder of Dziphathutshedzo Green Surfacing said his organisation use plastic waste (plastic bags and bottles) to produce useful paving bricks, valuable building and construction products and tombstone and road surfacing technologies. This company do not use sand and cement to make bricks, instead, they use plastic waste materials. Their bricks don't take time to be dry for use, they could be made and be used on the same day. The 29-year-old from Tshikwi in Nzhelele area said these Biotechnology products are more affordable than the sand and cement bricks.

"There are lot of problems worth solving through this plastic made products."

His company also produces charcoal briquettes and organic fertilisers from 100% organic waste including sawdust and agricultural waste. He concluded by urging other young people to be the change and not wait for a degree only. Mr Mudau is an active member of the VBR Youth Network



Chairperson of VBR Board, Dr Lutendo Mugwedi said he brought Phathutshedzo to the event because he knew that the University creates future leaders and will nurture Phathutshedzo through his business to do even well in his business. Dr Mugwedi highlighted that all research conducted in the VBR should be part of the VBR performance review. He advised more researchers to contribute in the VBR through research. "VBR is here to take us to the direction where we will be making impact in communities."



Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga who was the Programme Director of this 50th Anniversary celebration, highlighted that UNIVEN is committed to working closely with Vhembe Biosphere Reserve.



DVC Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford gave a vote of thanks. In his vote of thanks message, Prof Crafford said Phathutshedzo now belongs to UNIVEN and the University will assist him to reach greater heights because he has the potential of becoming one of the University's future leader.



UNIVEN Choir entertaining the guests during the 50th Anniversary Celebration



A group photo of speakers and the programme director



A group photo of some of the attendees

UNIVEN signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Limpopo Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The University of Venda and the Limpopo Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) signing of the MoU took place on Wednesday, 01 December 2021 at the University Council Chambers. UNIVEN and the LCCI cooperated with the purpose of skills and expertise transfer between students, staff, and industry experts, in terms of exchange programmes, training, career development and knowledge generation, with SMMEs, and including big industries. The key objectives of the partnership are to create a conducive environment for an inclusive economy, advanced transformation by supporting/incubating specific enterprises and grow them to global competitiveness; and enhance the image of UNIVEN as an entrepreneurial and community-centred University.



The University Registrar, Adv Edward Lambani welcoming participants during the event. He appreciated Limpopo Chamber of Commerce and Industry for choosing to work together with UNIVEN.



Limpopo Council of Chambers and Industries Provincial-Consular who is also the President of the National Union of the Municipal Chambers of Commerce and Industry (NUMCCI), Mr Albert Jeleni when addressing the audience said, "We must build a global competitive region through this partnership and ensure that we provide skills which will also enhance the image of the University. We are ready to work with the University. The University of Venda (UNIVEN) and the Limpopo Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) recognise that Industry and Academia are two partners of the entrepreneurial

ecosystem that can connect to merge the discovery-driven culture of academia with the innovation-driven environment, and that fostering such collaboratives is critical for the creation of the knowledge-based economy to enhance commercialisation efforts for South Africa to sustain global competition".

"Hence UNIVEN and the LCCI have agreed to enter a partnership, through a formal MoU, which will see the parties working together to continuously and jointly identify and explore possible areas of collaboration and business relationship between the two. The partnership comes at a critical time when the world is grappling with COVID-19, and in search of ways to preserve and rebuild the economy. Mr Jeleni indicated that the partnership is therefore, ascending to the call by President Cyril Ramaphosa to forge a new economy in a new global reality, by harnessing the job-creation potential of the digital knowledge economy, in order to recover the ground that was lost due to the coronavirus pandemic, and to place our economy on a fundamentally different growth trajectory.



The University of Venda Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin expressed his excitement that UNIVEN and LCCI tie a knot. "I am very much happy that through this partnership, we are following a developmental approach. Universities need these types of partnerships to grow. Urban based universities are also what they are today because they partnered with various industries and businesses. We (UNIVEN) also have a vital role to play by developing business that will create opportunities which will be beneficial to our communities. The partnership will collaborate with other already established Communities of Practice (CoPs) at UNIVEN and shall be administered by the Director of the Institute for Rural Development (IRD), Professor Joseph Francis.



The Director Legal Services, Adv Eric Nemukula facilitated the process of signing the MoU. "I would like to commend the standard of the draft documents submitted by the Limpopo Chamber of Commerce regarding this partnership. We will ensure that the interest of these two institutions are well protected. We are signing this MoU to achieve our intended goals.", said Adv Nemukula.



The MoU was signed by the UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni and LCCI Provincial-Consular, Mr Albert Jeleni. Dr Nthambeleni said this partnership will help the University to achieve its strategic goals. "The University alone cannot be able to achieve its strategic

objectives, so it is very much important to have strategic partners like LCCI. We want to be one of the institutions which is entrepreneurial and that our governance structure is relevant in the production of good scholarship".



The expected outcomes of the partnership include the establishment of a well-resourced One Stop Business Services Centres, Business Incubation hubs, Trade Centres, Community Business Centres, Applied Research Institutes, and Skills Centres, amongst other things. The partnership is therefore, also a step in the implementation of the UNIVEN Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator (UCFERI) recently approved and funded by the Small Business Development Enterprise Agency (SEDA) aimed at linking and collaborating with other stakeholders to provide start-up and business development support to staff, students and members of UNIVEN's broader local and provincial community.



The Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga was the facilitator of the programme.



: Delegates from the Limpopo Chamber of Commerce and UNIVEN staff members led by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal pose for a group photo during the signing of the MoU.

UNIVEN students successfully host the 2nd Annual Univen Social Entrepreneurship Empowerment Exhibition Network (SEEEN)



The 2nd Annual Social Entrepreneurship Exhibition Network was held at the University of Venda student cafeteria on the 24th of November 2021. 25 student and local businesses ranging from clothing brands, artistic portraits, books, food and organic beauty products showcasing their products and services to the Univen Community for the purposes of networking and selling. The event was headlined by Limpopo's number one podcast "Podcast with Vho Tssii" established by University of Venda Bachelor of Arts in Media students Kokesto Mphela and Given Mudau.

The Social Entrepreneurship Empowerment Exhibition Network (SEEEN) is a collaborative concept by the University of Venda student based organizations Aphrodite Global and Youth Evolve with the mentorship in the Directorate of Community Engagement. The objective of SEEEN is to promote collaboration and network of entrepreneurs, provide spaces for educative engagement, awareness and sensibilities towards achieving youth active citizenry, economic independence and to alleviate Gender Based Violence (GBV), this in line with United Nations Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals 5 for Gender Equality and 8 for Economic Integration. The social entrepreneurship exhibition is a fast-growing network of student and local small businesses in Partnership with the Directorate of Community Engagement.

The Social Entrepreneurship Empowerment Network is 2nd year running, and growing as one of the largest business exhibition in Thohoyandou. The intention, is to escalate the exhibition to the rest of Vhembe and Limpopo in the near future. The theme for this year's exhibition was "The future of the Socio-Economic dimensions of Health & Empowerment (S.H.E)" in line with the social and health regulations of the "new normal" due to the Covid19 regulations. The concept encourages businesses to be digitally savvy, adapt and rethink business. The hosting organizations, Aphrodite Global and Youth Evolve have a strong value for influencing social impact.

The social entrepreneurship exhibition is a fast-growing network of student and local small businesses in Partnership with the Directorate of Community Engagement.

SEEEN initiative create a support network of local small businesses in Thohoyandou with interest in propelling the social enterprises that contributes into alleviating poverty, unemployment, inequalities and gender-based violence. Enterprises that exhibited included amongst others, such as Paz Crafts, VSTD, New Hope Group, Longrich, NoxxCreations, ENACTUS, Mutshinyani's cakes, Sam's Crochets, Vha-G's art and Hope in Poetry. The network keep alive the activities of the Community of Practice (COP) for social entrepreneurship and sustainable development goals. The exhibition adds value to the University's 2021-2025 strategic thrust 1 and 2 namely "Student centeredness and engaged scholarship and Entrepreneurial University respectively. Tis as the University prepares to launch the youth based entrepreneurship development centre.

The Exhibition was concluded by announcing the winners of the exhibition which was secretly facilitated and adjudicated by visiting the stall to observe customer interaction, presentation, network and if Covid-19 regulations were followed. The 1st place went to Paz Crafts who had a great presentation (professional website design with 20% off hosting fee), 2nd place went to Sam's crochets (professional logo design) and at 3rd place went to VSTD who offered free pass tickets to the After -exhibition Bonfire Celebration. The pictures of the event, stalls and exhibitors were taken by self-taught professional photographer, Kalahari Sidwell of "Kalahari's photos".



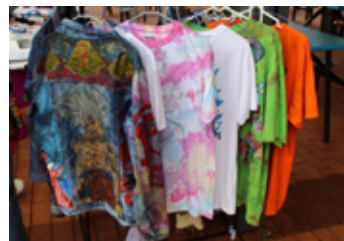
Some of the Paz Crafts products

Paz Crafts focusses on handmade beaded jewellery for 'queens'. Paz crafts is a student owned enterprise that aims at promoting body positivity amongst female students by crafting confidence- boosting such as waistbands, necklaces and bracelets. Rhulani Mashela, the founder of the enterprise takes it upon herself to educate young women about divine femininity and how to channel those energies towards their internal peace and success.



Some of Sam's crochets products

Sam's crochets is a hand-crocheted clothing brand for kids and adults. It creates stylish clothing such as crop tops, jerseys and beanies from wool. The clothes are high quality from years of practice and harnessing the skill of knitting, stitching and crocheting. The business is 100% black women owned and takes pride in making outfits that hug and compliments one's body.



Some of the VSTD products

VSTD is an expression of art and creativity through branded apparel. It is a student owned clothing brand that designs clothes for the coolest students by painting well-known animations, expressions and quotes on clothing as an innovative way to brighten people's day and think in colour. VSTD specializes in color-coded designs because they believe fashion is a form self-expression because everybody is unique and deserves to stand out from the crowd.

Exhibitors Reflections

"Thank you for pulling off such a wonderful exhibition. It was actually my first time and I had never been this motivated about my book. The networking and getting to know other people's businesses was too much. May God bless you to do more" – Selu Mkhathswa, author "Hope in Poetry".

While Rolivhuwa from "Longrich" (external) said "The exhibition was fire! Thank you so much for hosting us, please continue to host more of these events and opening doors to entrepreneurs".

"Thanks a lot for hosting us, we have learnt a lot..." – New hope group.

"It was an awesome experience thank you for having Greenlight" – Greenlight sex shop.

List of Some of the SEEEN 2021 Exhibitors...

1. Paz Crafts: Handmade beaded jewelry for queens. Paz crafts is a student owned enterprise that aims at promoting body positivity amongst female students by crafting confidence- boosting such as waistbands, necklaces and bracelets. Rhulani Mashela, the founder of the enterprise takes it upon herself to educate young women about divine femininity and how to channel those energies towards their internal peace and success.

2. Noxx Creations: Inspired by the colorful Ndebele clan, Noxx Creations crafts handmade traditional jewelry such as neck pieces, bracelets and beaded accessory. Nontokozi, the founder of Noxx Creations is a University of Venda graduate who decided to take charge of her life by using her talent to make money in the midst of high unemployment rates in the country.

3. Vintage Style Tshedza (VSTD): An expression of art and creativity through branded apparel. VSTD is a student owned clothing brand that designs clothes for the coolest students by painting well-known animations, expressions and quotes on clothing as an innovative way to brighten people's day and think in color. VSTD specializes in color-coded designs because they believe fashion is a form self-expression because everybody is unique and deserves to stand out from the crowd.

4. Vudu: Some people hang their art on walls, we wear ours. Vudu is a free-hand portrait drawing enterprise, their drawings are inspired by day to day interactions with people and nature. Vudu is also works in collaboration with VSTD to draw and paint designs on the apparel.

5. Hope in poetry: Selu Mkhathswa is a self-published writer and poet, a student at the University of Venda and the author of "hope in poetry" a poetry compilation book. Selu's poems are inspired by he's lived experiences and that of other people, he writes of loving, letting go and finding your truest self in an age of all possibilities, where anything goes

6. Greenlight Sex shop: Sells sex toys to encourage people to explore their sexuality especially women. Muvhuso of Greenlight sex shop is of the sentiment that many women are not comfortable with their bodies because they have been conditioned by society not to express sexual desire or intimacy. The sex shop has much to do with her activism not only for female orgasm but also for female reproduction.

UNIVEN students successfully host the 2nd Annual Univen Social Entrepreneurship Empowerment Exhibition Network (SEEN) continued...

7. Before anything else, you: Beloved Thandiwe is a University of Venda student and author of "Before anything else, you". Her book addresses the importance of standing up for oneself even when it seems selfish to the general public, in the book she talks about the power of saying no and its benefits for mental wellness. She was inspired to write the book due to various trials and tribulations she has faced in relationships, family and losing her unborn child because all those circumstances that compelled her to choose herself, peace and happiness.

8. Albert and C lectures and private tutors: Private tutors that specialize in all subjects and modules for both University students and high school learners to assist people reach their highest academic potential at their personal pace and comfort. Albert and C private tutors are big on collaboration, excellency and accountability because indeed a good education qualifies one to open locked doors of success and wealth

9. Thuxalushaka marketing and admin: A private entity for digital content creation and marketing. Thuxalushaka Marketing and admin assists businesses and individuals run their social media pages by ensuring maximum page engagement through conducting online campaigns, promotions and marketing. Thuxalushaka also email enquiries, data entry and schedule management for companies.

10. Longrich: A multinational company that sell organic health products, food, nutritional supplements, homecare and beauty products. Longrich specializes in health through holistic balance of science and nature. They sell products such as organic toothpaste, foundation and soap for a noticeable glow.

11. Zanzuri skincare: An organic beauty range straight out of Venda. Aluwani Ramabulana, founder of Zanzuri skincare experienced skin problems for a while and when many store products did not work for her she started a DIY skincare routine by mixing raw, easy to access ingredients such as turmeric and honey to apply on problematic areas. When her self-experiment turned out great she expanded into creating homemade beauty soaps to heal acne prone skin.

12. AIME: Australian Indigenous Mentorship Experience is an Australian founded student organization currently operating at the university of Venda and university of Pretoria in South Africa. The organization bridges the gap between High School and University to assist learners with a healthier and positive transition through outreach programs such as "tutor squad" where they assist learners with school work and mentor them about life and personal development.

13. Loyalty Graphics: A digital company that assists companies with digitization in the virtual function era. Loyalty graphics designs professional logos, websites and electronic businesses cards to ensure a smooth online operation for companies. Loyalty designs is female owned by a university of Venda student who wishes to encourage more female students to be more digitally and computer savvy to be able to navigate the 4th industrial revolution.

14. Vha-G's art: Vhahangwele is university of Venda student with a strong eye for art. She draws and paints portraits of patterns, intimacy, nature and mundane things. On every canvas Vhahangwele delivers visual poetry and internal expression, Vha-G's art is typically colorful, eye-catching commands attention to detail.

15. Mutshinyani's cakes: A small yet rapidly growing business by Mutshinyani Netshandama, she bakes cakes and scones for occasions. The business was inspired by Mutshinyani's love and passion for baking fresh, delicious cakes, scones and condiments for people's convenience for events such as party's. She currently views the business as a side hustle but would not pass the opportunity to bake for a good and sustainable living.

16. Muvango: natural blend of 100% fruit juice produced through non-processed fruits, fresh from the farm. Muvango is a nutrition-packed, healthy and convenient for on the go juice that comes in various thirst quenching flavors; guava, cranberry and Mango. The company values and takes seriously their packaging, presentation and taste because they pride themselves with customer satisfaction.



17. ENACTUS: Well known as the "University of Ndaa" because of their serial winning record and reputation in the national student entrepreneurship and impact competition. ENACTUS is a global nonprofit community of student, academic and business leaders who are committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to transform communities and the lives of people. ENACTUS Univen closely works with local farmers and pottery makers to assist them in making sales for their products.

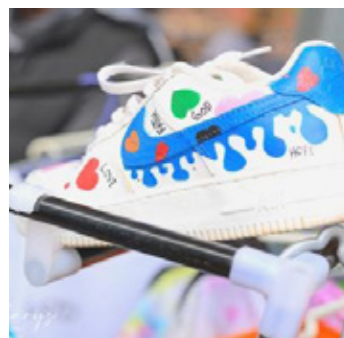
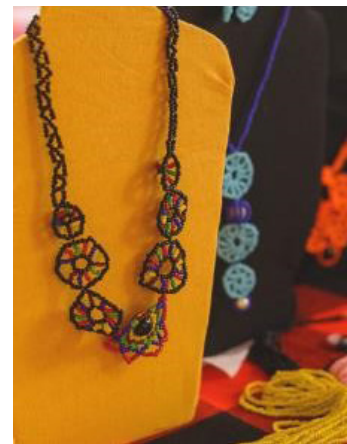
18. Sam's crotches: A hand-crocheted clothing brand for kids and adults. Sam's crocheted creates stylish clothing such as crop tops, jerseys and beanies from wool. The clothes are high quality from years of practice and harnessing the skill of knitting, stitching and crocheting. The business is 100% black women owned and takes pride in making outfits that hug and compliments one's body.

19. New Hope Group (Dande Dande): A storyline about fatal corruption at Bokamoso Holdings. The story follows a newly appointed accountant who in he's investigation finds himself caught up and framed by the culprits to an extent where he loses he's property, reputation and nearly he's family and marriage.

20. Mabade M Books and Beads: Muneiva the author of the Tshivenda poetry compilation "Mutoli WA vhurendy vhanamusi", she is an avid reader, poet and wordsmith. The book is about the benefits poetry and recitation in African indigenous knowledge, it talks about the cultural importance of poetry as a way of communicating a message and intergenerational learning as well and how the current generation is currently ie losing that essence.

21. Zwa Straight: A popular local clothing brand, known for setting trends and dressing people for the occasion. They say "people will stare, make it worth their while "for a reason. Fashion is a multibillion industry, everyone, everywhere is dressed and Zwa straight is searching for a piece of that pie, a seat at that table by designing hoodies, t-shirts, caps and bucket hats for every day smart wear.

Additional pictures taken on the day



Department of Nutrition signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Kago ya Bana Foundation



The University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s Department of Nutrition in the Faculty of Health Sciences signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kago Ya Bana Foundation (KYF), a non-profit organisation based in Mpumalanga Province, Nelspruit. The signing ceremony took place on the Wednesday, 03 November 2021, at the University Council Chambers.

The agreement entered between UNIVEN and KYF is to collaborate in the field of community engagement, including work integrated learning; with respect to clinical training of students mainly the BSc Nutrition professional qualification. UNIVEN shall place students in the third- and Fourth-year level to implement the intervention of nutritional aspects in all areas to promote nutritional health in the public and expose them to the workplace setting.

KYF is a community development non-profit organisation based in Mpumalanga Province, Nelspruit. The organisation was founded in 2013. Their focus area is Household Food, Nutrition security of the impoverished communities which is key to achieving Public Health Nutrition. The organisation work in collaboration with other NPOs and other stakeholders that target education, health, nutrition, and development.

Mulaudzi said that this Department strives to train students and promote good nutrition. "We work with different stakeholders to promote nutrition. Each year, we place our final year students at NPOs such as Kago Ya Bana Foundation where they work with communities and at the same time gaining work experience and exposure as recommended by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)."

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Partnership Officer at UNIVEN's Department of International Relations, Mr Thabo Dikgale said there has always been this junction between work, learning and community engagement. Mr Dikgale mentioned that this MoU is the essence which speaks to the University's daily business. "We need to facilitate action to ensure that this MoU is nurtured and bear fruitful results."



Kago Ya Bana Foundation Managing Director, Ms Khumo Moele said they are happy to sign this MoU and to be associated with institutions of higher learning such as UNIVEN because she always knew that UNIVEN strives to make impact in various communities. "This partnership will benefit both the University and Kago Ya bana Foundation, at the same time giving work experience to UNIVEN students."



In his welcome address, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford said this MoU will ensure that our students get workplace exposure and at the same time, contributing to the communities and this resonates well with the University's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, particularly Strategic Thrust 1: Student centeredness and engaged scholarship.



Ms Vanessa Mbhatsani, Lecturer in the UNIVEN Nutrition Department expressed that this partnership would assist the Department of Nutrition to produce graduates that are skilled and thus add value to the qualification that the Nutrition Department is offering.



Khumo Moele and Prof Jan Crafford Exchanging the signed MoU



Dr Lindelani Mushaphi HoD, Nutrition representing Acting Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Tshilidzi



A group photo of attendees of the MoU ceremony, from Left Dr James Takalani (HoD, Psychology), Dr Lindelani Mushaphi (HoD, Nutrition), Mr Thabo Dikgale (Partnership Officer), Ms Khumo Moele (Managing Director, KYF), Prof Jan Crafford (DVC, Teaching and Learning), Mr Prince Ngwenyama (Project Coordinator, KYF) and Ms Vanessa Mbhatsani (Lecturer).

Directorate of Research and Innovation Hosts University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) Staff Capacity Development Workshop



Workshop Participants posing for the Group Photo

Recently, the Directorate of Research and Innovation (DRI) at University of Venda (UNIVEN) within the auspices of the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) held its University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) Staff Capacity Development Workshop for staff members who have been funded in 2021 to pursue their Masters and Doctoral studies. The Workshop took place at the Ranch Hotel Polokwane.

In his opening and welcome remarks, Senior Professor Georges Ekosse said that for our tomorrow to be better than our today, we must focus on our academic achievements and research endeavors. Senior Prof Ekosse advised attendees not to give up whenever they are faced with challenges, obstacles, distractions, and frustrations in their studies, but should remain fully focused and committed to the cause, unmovable and not shaken. He further indicated that we all have 24 hours a day and we should not waste any second. As you make your bed, so you must lie on it. He encouraged the workshop participants to be more determined to have their masters and doctoral degrees and advised them to make use of the UCDG funding and achieve their academic goals.



Senior Professor Ekosse giving the Opening and Welcome Remarks

The guest speaker from the University of South Africa, Professor E Fosso Kankeu, presented strategies on how candidates can complete their masters and doctoral studies in the prescribed timeframe. He took the participants on how to become an established academic, proposal writing (purpose and structure of a proposal), ethical clearance, research integrity, hazard identification and risk assessment and relationship between supervisor and supervisee.



Professor Fosso making his presentation

Professor Lufuno Makhado of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UNIVEN, made his presentation on Article Writing and Research Data Management. He shared ideas on Article Format (Minidissertation, Dissertation or Thesis), key impact of using Article format, and Dissertations/Thesis Guidelines. Professor Takalani Mashau of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, UNIVEN, presented on Article writing for publications during postgraduate studies. He indicated that the Journal Article Writing is a journey and getting an article submitted is a major undertaking coupled with acceptance and rejection. He further shared with participants on how to effectively deal with rejection. Dr Angelina Maphula of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UNIVEN, spoke on overcoming academic challenges as a postgraduate student who is a staff member. Dr Maphula shared with participants the challenges faced by postgraduate students who are staff members/employees common reactions to stress as a scholar, and how to overcome such challenges advancing certain solution pathways.

Ms Avhatakali Raphaelalani from DRI, UNIVEN, explained the terms and conditions of the grant, and how progress made by the beneficiary should be reported. Mr Bandile Mpukwana, also from DRI, UNIVEN, explained how the UCDG should be utilised following the University processes and procedures of using funds. The programme was directed by Mrs Julia Sigama of DRI, UNIVEN.



Professor Lufuno Makhado presenting to Participants

On the way forward, Senior Professor Ekosse encouraged participants to promote Apogee (Super Excellence) and Eustress (Positive Stress) for Successful Achievements. He advised Participants to empty their minds from negative thoughts, distractions, and frustrations. Participants were further advised not to allow themselves to be distracted by things that generally distract people; and never to be afraid of pressure. Hence, the important thing between success and failure is the person who continues to pursue whatever goal he/she is pursuing without giving up despite the pressures will most definitely succeed. When success comes and victory attained, they should be celebrated. Senior Professor Ekosse used the six words: Who, What, Why, When, Where, and How to emphasise on how success can be realised. He said that having answers to these six words at any circumstance or situation including studies to obtain higher qualifications and implementing them will always convey success.



Dr Angelina Maphula presenting to Participants



Presenters/facilitators during questions and answers section

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education hosts a Webinar on Psycho, Socio-Economic Aspects of Covid-19

Recently, the University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, Social Work Department hosted a Webinar themed Psycho, socioeconomic aspects of COVID-19. This Webinar took place on Microsoft Teams, University Facebook, and YouTube channels.

During this webinar, speakers shared knowledge and experiences about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on people's lives. The idea was to forge ways to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and rebuild the society.



The webinar was graced by the presence and presentation of Limpopo MEC for Department of Health, Dr Phophi Ramathuba who thanked UNIVEN for hosting this kind of webinar which aims to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and rebuild the society. She said this is a clear indication that this University cares about the people of this country. Dr Ramathuba said that no one ever thought this pandemic would shut down our country and bring the world to a standstill. "The history of the world will be divided into two chapters, that is before and after the pandemic. Our lives will never be the same again. Amongst other challenges brought by COVID-19, there were challenges such as universities having to find new ways of teaching to complete their academic year, loss of jobs, loss of lives and businesses. Even though COVID-19 has brought these challenges, it has brought other solutions that we were not aware of, such as travelling to places just to attend meetings that could be held virtually."

Dr Ramathuba said load shedding is another pandemic because it has a serious impact on our daily lives. She encouraged researchers to come up with solutions for electricity supply in our country. She said a higher number of people in rural areas still lack basic needs such as clean running water, basic health and basic food. "This can only be achieved if we work together to assist those who need assistance. This COVID-19 pandemic has deepened the gap between the haves and the have not. "The level of poverty has deepened, and we need to find solutions to these challenges while we still can, before it becomes too late. If we don't deal with it now, we will have serious challenges if it happens that we come across another pandemic in future." She expressed that COVID-19 might not be the last pandemic, therefore, we need to prepare ourselves for possible pandemics ahead of us.

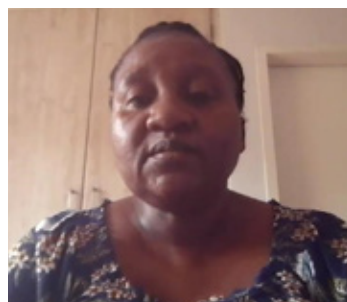
"Hard lockdown had to be there for the health system to prepare itself for high number of people admitted in our hospitals. We need to start focusing on recovery. She said all her health care workers in Limpopo are surviving COVID-19 because they are vaccinated and

people who were not vaccinated died due to COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines are science based and have proved to be saving lives. We can overcome the COVID-19 pandemic if we can work together to fight against it. There are people who died because of stress and from the fear of dying. People should stop thinking about death when they test positive for COVID-19 because that itself could lead to death. Being afraid of dying causes death." She concluded her talk by encouraging people to vaccinate and prepare themselves for the fourth wave. People should remember that lockdown regulations and lockdown were put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



In his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said this webinar is taking place when our country is in a difficult time of COVID-19. He said universities exist to address social needs of our communities, existential problems that our communities need. Dr Nthambeleni indicated that, through this webinar, UNIVEN contributes to the national needs of our country. The pandemic has brought to us unprecedented times. COVID-19 invaded our social spaces. According to the literature, COVID-19 had a large impact that has disrupted our economy. It has also brought high loss of employment, loss of our loved ones and has restricted our freedom of movement.

"Our government implemented measures to control the virus. Nonetheless, we are still facing the long road ahead of us because COVID-19 is still part of our lives and will be with us for a long time. Let us continue to observe and obey the COVID-19 restrictions. He encouraged attendees to take vaccine jabs because they have proved to be saving lives." He mentioned that it is through this engagement that we can save the lives of many people. He concluded by thanking the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education for organising this webinar that aims to come up with solution to the challenges that the country and the world need.

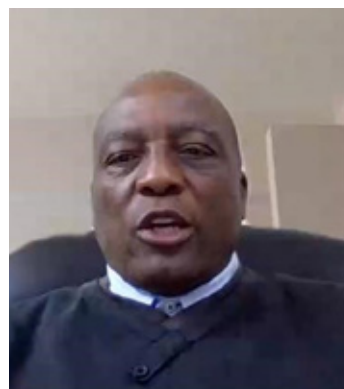


Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza said as an engaged University, UNIVEN was able to

observe the challenges brought by COVID-19 within the surrounding communities through community visits. She mentioned that this webinar was organised to provide solutions and strategies that will assist communities to survive the pandemic.



In his remarks, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, Prof Bongani Bantwini said COVID-19 pandemic has made our lives difficult. He said, recently we have noticed research highlighting that more people are experiencing distress due to COVID-19 pandemic. "These presentations will assist us to deal with psycho-social distress of staff and students. Our success depends on multidisciplinary approach." Prof Bantwini mentioned that this Webinar advocates for social work students and other frontline health care workers to know what to do when they come across people who are traumatised by the challenges brought by COVID-19 pandemic. "We need responsive activities to address new normal in our communities. We need all stakeholders to work with us to address challenges faced by our communities."



When giving departmental remarks, Head of Social Work Department, Dr Lobelo Mogorosi said currently, South Africa has lost close to 90 000 lives due to COVID-19 and still counting. "We still have other social ills that our country continues to experience, including high number of unemployment and gender-based violence. As we talk about the challenges brought by COVID-19 pandemic, we shouldn't forget about other challenges that might cause future pandemics in this country." He concluded his talk by mentioning that the Social Work department has planned this platform for information sharing and to find ways to solve the challenges brought by COVID-19 pandemic.



Dr Nontembeko Bila from the University of Pretoria spoke about COVID-19 impact on socio-economic and Mental Health Aspects. In her presentation, she spoke about COVID-19 labelled as black swan event and linked to the economic scene of World War II; Detrimental effect on global healthcare systems; A ripple effect on every aspect and human life; and increased mental burden via socioeconomic disadvantage such as insecurity, housing, instability, discrimination, and food insecurity. She said COVID-19 has deepened the already existing challenge of inequality. Dr Bila concluded by encouraging attendees to go and vaccinate.



Ms Zambia-Lorraine Bam from the University of Cape Town said this pandemic has brought difficulties in our lives. She indicated that people with intellectual disabilities were living in fear because their routine was disturbed, and this had a lot of impact in their lives. "The wearing of masks was also imposed on people. students were faced with difficulties in continuing with their studies. We are moving into virtual learning but are students with disability ready for this move imposed on us by the pandemic? The old age grant and disability grant is not enough, the R350 cannot afford to get one person a basic need for one week. She highlighted that, although some universities could cater for some of the needs of students with disability, this was possible only on campus. The challenge was that these students had to go home during lockdown. Many homes cannot afford resources such as braille to cater for visually impaired students, for example. That means students with special needs would be left behind. Therefore, the universities should make sure that the students with disability are not left behind. It is only through education where students with disability can be taken out of South African Social Services Agency (SASSA) database."

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education hosts a Webinar continued...



Prof Puleng Segalo, from the University of South Africa said COVID-19 has deepened the already existing inequalities. For many communities, access to running water and other basic needs was a challenge even before COVID-19 pandemic. She further said that COVID-19 has put a spotlight on inequalities. Prof Segalo mentioned that class, gender, and racial disparities, including technological access are some of instances of inequalities. "Technology allows people to continue working and shopping with the possibility of minimising movements that could cause the spread of COVID-19 but not everyone has gadgets to perform virtually." Amongst other things, Prof Segalo spoke about towards psycho-social equilibrium; scars left by COVID-19 where she said people need to create spaces of reflection, forge solidarities and possible spaces for healing.



Mr Victor Mavhulula from Limpopo Human Rights Commission said the COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on the citizen's human rights. "During the pandemic, a lot of people were complaining about their rights being infringed due to restrictions of movements in the country. There were so many rights that were violated during lockdowns. The challenge that we faced is that there were situations where we found out that the government didn't follow proper procedures, but people should also know that our rights could be limited due to government trying to deal with difficult situations. As the human rights commission, we had to intervene between citizens and the government, looking at validity of reasons for government to impose lockdowns."

He expressed that the country is now faced with another challenge of people rejecting vaccines. "We support vaccinations, but employers shouldn't force employees to take vaccines but to engage with them and show them reasons why they should be vaccinated. There should be an amicable solution between employers and employees on the way forward of vaccinating. People shouldn't be fired because they don't want to take vaccines. It is illegal to do so." He concluded his talk by mentioning that there are other institutions of higher learning that forces students to vaccinate, even though there are no formal complaints yet, that is an illegal act. He said organisations should always know that their policies must be in line with our constitution. "Policies should be drafted in line with the constitution of the country. We believe that the pandemic has brought uncertain challenges. Citizens also need to know that their rights could be limited. We do not encourage mandatory vaccination but encourage people to vaccinate."



Mrs Langi Malamba, Registrar at the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) spoke under the topic, 'The state of community mental health post COVID-19' where she shared her experience during the first, second and third waves of COVID-19. She said that she was afraid that she was going to lose her life because many people were dying during these waves. "I couldn't bury my uncle who raised me due to lockdown restrictions" She concluded her talk by mentioning that there is a need for mitigation strategies for other pandemics and social ills-poverty of the mind (ignorance), poverty, gender-based violence, HIV AIDS, Mental Health, bullying and retrenchment.



DVC: Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford gave a vote of thanks.

Chief Nkhumbuleni Ratshitanga obtains Doctor of Philosophy in Business Information Systems at UNIVEN



UNIVEN's Head of IT Support Services, Chief Nkhumbuleni Ratshitanga graduating a Doctor of Philosophy in Business Information Systems at UNIVEN

Chief Nkhumbuleni Ratshitanga of Ngulumbi Village, who is the Head of IT Support Services since 2009, at the University of Venda has received his Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) in Business Information Systems during the morning session of UNIVEN 2021 Spring Graduation Ceremonies.

The topic of his study is "A Systems Perspective to Implement IT Governance." His study focused on ensuring the alignment of information and communication technology (ICT) and the organisational activities as it is critical for ensuring that ICT enables the organisation to attain its strategic objectives. His study further identifies IT governance (ITG) mechanisms and their roles.

Chief Ratshitanga expressed that, during his study, he discovered that, people from the surrounding communities had an influence on shape and look of one's future. "Our parents and the Ratshitanga family gave us a great foundation. My wife and our children continue to remind me of the fact that I am born to achieve". He said he walks and works with giants in the information and communication technology (ICT) arena at the University of Venda and he always interact and learn from the diverse "top-of-the-game" talents and leaders at the University and within the community that he leads. "For instance, I was once a member of the University Council, which is the highest decisionmaking body of the University. I have learned a lot from being part of the University Council and I will continue learning," he said.

He started schooling in 1978 at Luvhalani Junior Primary School which is based in Tshakhuma. He then progressed to Phiphidi and Tshimbiluni Senior Primary Schools respectively. In 1985, Chief Ratshitanga started Standard six (6) at Guvhukuvhu Secondary School, he proceeded to Standard eight (8) and ten (10) at Mbilwi Senior Secondary School where he passed Standard 10 (Grade 12) in 1990.

In 1991, he enrolled for a degree in Computer Science at the University of the North, currently known as the University of Limpopo (UL). In the same year (1991), he failed all the courses/modules. "However, I did not give up. I thank my parents for encouraging me to stick on my dreams. I then graduated in 1994," he said. In 1995 Chief Ratshitanga enrolled for Higher Education Diploma (H.E.D) and in 1996 enrolled for B.Sc. (Hons) at UL. In 2006, he registered for Master of Public

Management at UNIVEN.

"I am considered and valued as a great motivational speaker by the local communities, and I encourage people to set goals and work on them until they achieve their goals. I have been to Phalaphala FM on several occasions, preaching the 'never give up' message. I would go from one school to the other reminding learners about the benefits of prioritising their studies. Hence, this doctorate degree put me in a better platform in this regard," added Chief Ratshitanga. He enrolled for a PhD in Business Information Systems in 2018 and worked on it without giving up. He mentioned that, from his experience, he thinks that he is in a better position to tell people that real success comes after a series of hard work, quick wins, and disappointments.

Chief Ratshitanga joined UNIVEN in 1996, as a Teaching Assistant in the then School of Maths and Natural Sciences. A year later he joined the Department of ICT Services. "I am also a member of the University ICT Steering Committee. From 2017 to 2018 I worked as the Acting Director ICT Services. I also interacted and liaised with the Audit Committee and Risk Management Committees." Furthermore, Chief Ratshitanga also attended Council meetings as ICT resources person. In 2008 he was elected as the Chairperson of the University of Venda Admin Staff Constituency where he represented the constituency on Council.

He plays a leadership role as Vhamusanda (Chief) of the Ngulumbi village under the Tshivhase dynasty. In all these leadership positions, he is also expected to perform his duties without compromising the expected quality of service. He has achieved success through scheduling, prioritising, and delegating responsibilities. In 2009 he pioneered the building of the Ngulumbi Nyaphophi Community Library. In 2014, he founded the Mighty Power Christian Ministries.

"When the announcement (what announcement) was made – I didn't know what I should do to express my joy. However, I ended up crying. It was indeed a long but worthwhile journey. The study equipped me with some of the following competencies: research skills; patience and determination focus and goal-oriented mentality. You are your achievements. Today, I am called Dr. Nkhumbuleni Ratshitanga because I achieved a doctorate qualification," he concluded

"We support vaccinations, but employers shouldn't force employees to take vaccines but to engage with them and show them reasons why they should be vaccinated. There should be an amicable solution between employers and employees on the way forward of vaccinating. People shouldn't be fired because they don't want to take vaccines. It is illegal to do so."

Internationalisation evening fosters cultural diversity for collaborations during Covid-19 era



Students displaying African traditional attire

In the evening of Friday, 12 November 2021, the International Relations Department of the University of Venda (UNIVEN) held an Internationalisation evening event under the theme 'fostering cultural diversity for collaborations during the Covid-19 era'. This evening event took place at the University Auditorium.

During the event, different African cultural attires and indigenous food were displayed to showcase and educate students about African cultural attire and indigenous food.



Programme directors Mr Takalani Thabo and Ms Mutshidzi Rambau



In her message of support, Director International Affairs at the University of Limpopo, Prof Nonceba Mbambo-Kekana spoke about collaborations. She said usually when we talk about internationalisation, we speak about working with organisations from outside Africa. Prof Mbambo-Kekana mentioned that those agencies from outside Africa fund African institutions for projects where they usually control the agenda. "We need to drive our own agenda; we need to get hold of and handle the African agenda and not be controlled, because of money that is brought by foreign agencies. We should on our own accord have events like this without funding from outside Africa."

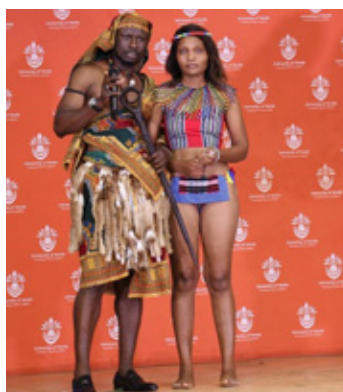
She said the University of Limpopo strives to strengthen its partnership with UNIVEN by supporting UNIVEN's initiatives. "Remember before we produce graduates that are globally competitive, we need to be locally relevant first."



In his opening and welcome message, Senior Prof Georges Ekosse said Covid19 has taught us that when one person is infected then we are all affected. Senior Prof Ekosse indicated that, distance is a thing of the past because technology has bridged the issue of distance. "It is now easy to talk with people who are located at different sides of the world at the same time. This was not possible in the past. Technology has brought so much change in our lives." He expressed that; knowledge has increased; therefore, we all need to keep up with the world of today. On the aspect of Internationalisation, Senior Prof Ekosse advised attendees not limit themselves to only one part of the world. "Make use of the available opportunities while you are still at the University because once you leave the University, you might not get access to these opportunities."



The Acting Director International Relations and Partnerships (IRP) Department, Dr Segun Obadire said this is a great opportunity for students and staff members to learn about various African cultures. He advised attendees to make sure that when they leave this University, they have learned something about other cultures. "We are all interconnected, and we need each other, irrespective of coming from different countries. South Africa is blessed with unique multicultural diversity and this diversity is an asset for our universities." Dr Obadire concluded his talk by highlighting that for us to succeed we need to start working together. "It takes a collective effort to achieve an intended goal," he concluded.



Mr Joseph Mundadi (left) and Ms Mercy Raphaelalani (right) during cultural food and traditional attire display

When giving a message of support, UNISU President, Mr Joseph Mundadi, said this was a partnership between UNIVEN and UNISU. He said UNISU is happy that all international students are gathered as one to celebrate Africanism and show unity. "As Africans we have a mandate to develop our continent. "For us to be locally relevant we need to be one so that when we go international, we could compete with other graduates from outside Africa. UNIVEN students are the future leaders of African continent, and we need to work as one."



Cultural attire presentations and stage play during the event



Some of the indigenous food displayed



Dr Wiseman Ndlovu presented findings from a pilot project that they have conducted, and this study was about Internationalisation, partnerships/collaborations, and international versus local community at the University level. Some of his recommendations were that UNIVEN should consider establishing an incubation Centre, re-evaluate existing partnership, conduct feasibility studies and identify start-ups, including providing flexibility of degree programmes.



Food tasting



Director Community Engagement Prof Vhonani Netshandama gave a vote of thanks. She said the internationalisation engagement shouldn't end there but should be "translated into practical activities." She advised students to familiarise themselves with opportunities that are present at the University.



Some of the performers during the event

Univen Donates Funds to “Stop The Spot” NPO

On 01 December 2021, The University of Venda (UNIVEN) held a meeting to donate funds to “Stop the Spot” Non-Profit Organisation to assist disadvantaged students at UNIVEN and the surrounding communities. The meeting was held at University Council chamber and was chaired by Mr. Thabo Dikgale, Partnership Officer, International Relations and Partnerships (IRP), UNIVEN. Mr. Dikgale acknowledged the leadership of the university represented by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni and his Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin. Mr. Dikgale highlighted the purpose and background of the event, noting that this event signifies and underscores the solidarity between UNIVEN and the community that it serves.



Ms Mercy Raphalalani (middle) receiving the donation

Providing the vote of thanks, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Corporate Services, Dr Robert Martin acknowledged all the guests and further commended “Stop the Spot” for the incredible work and service they are providing to the university and the community. He expressed his gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor and the university management for providing an environment where such initiatives can thrive. He thanked the IRP Directorate staff under the leadership of Dr Obadire for taking the initiative to recognise the incredible service spirit espoused by “Stop the Spot”. In his final remarks, Dr Martin pleaded with “Stop the Spot” to also deal with first year student issues and provide them with the guidance and support that will lead them towards a brighter future.



Vice Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni during his opening remarks

During her appreciation message, Ms Mercy Raphalalani, Founder, “Stop the Spot” gave a brief background about the Organisation including its goals, values, and achievements. She stated that the aim of the Organisation is to uplift students around campus, the Thulamela municipality schools and communities through various programmes which include fostering cultural diversity, eliminating domestic violence and gender-based violence. The NPO also donates food parcels sanitary towels and stationaries to destitute families. About 40 students benefitted from the NPO this year.



Mr. Thabo Dikgale giving the background of the event



Dr Martin giving vote of thanks

During his opening and welcoming remarks, Dr Nthambeleni mentioned the importance of this event to the university, particularly its intimate connection to civil society, NGOs, activist groups as well as small to medium-sized enterprise (SME’s) around the community. Dr Nthambeleni noted that it is paramount that the university foster meaningful engagements with the community, as this will ensure its survival as well as guarantee its contribution towards the development of all its stakeholders. He further explained the role played by the university in supporting organisations such as “Stop the Spot”, noting that the university must applaud the organisation for the work undertaken thus far and continue to provide the requisite support.

The Vice-Chancellor further stated that he is delighted to see a programme initiated by students endeavoring to serve and assist fellow students and surrounding communities. This type of initiative aligns very well with university’s mission of “being locally relevant and globally competitive”. Dr Nthambeleni concluded by expressing his gratitude to the “Stop the Spot” organization and commended Dr Segun Obadire, the Acting Director, IRP in facilitating such programmes.

Dr Nthambeleni mentioned the importance of this event to the university, particularly its intimate connection to civil society, NGOs, activist groups as well as small to medium-sized enterprise (SME’s) around the community.



Group picture after the event

Justice Moseneke Annual Lecture will now become a permanent event on the University of Venda academic calendar

On Thursday, 04 November 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN)'s School of Law, under the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, hosted the Justice Dikgang Moseneke Public Lecture to honour the retired Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke for his contribution to the Judiciary of the Republic of South Africa. This Inaugural Public Lecture took place on Microsoft Teams and other University social media platforms under the theme 'Judicial oversight and the separation of powers doctrine'.

This highly attended August Inaugural Public Lecture attracted legal professionals, LLB students, and experts from government and private legal organisations, including the UNIVEN Chancellor, Advocate Mojanku Gumbi, an esteemed legal practitioner and former presidential advisor.



The flyer publicising the lecture outlined that without being prescriptive, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa enjoins the state to take steps to respect, protect and promote constitutional obligations. When the state fails to take the steps or the measures adopted are inadequate, courts may be compelled to step in and suggest remedial action. The prerogative of the courts to exercise their judicial oversight has stirred a lot of debate in political and other circles. In some extreme cases, veiled references have been made to 'judicial dictatorship'. In South Africa, where inequality and poverty are high, the realisation of economic and social rights becomes a highly contested area. South Africans want access to food, water, housing, jobs, affordable medicines, and education. Where the state has committed itself to providing certain services and later reneges, litigation may ensue.

In civil and political rights, the Constitutional Court recently guided the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs on holding Local Government elections within constitutionally mandated timeframes.

Justice Moseneke unpacked the above-outlined and related issues and indicated the extent and limits of judicial oversight, including how it interfaces with the separation of powers doctrine.

In his address, Justice Moseneke indicated that this annual public lecture created space to engage in rigorous if not robust conversations about the elusive intersections, which include justice and society. He talked about the shifting boundaries between the judicial and the executive functions of the state deployed to achieve constitutional ends.

Justice Moseneke also unpacked the issues of inequality against the high levels of poverty that impact the lives of most South Africans. He mentioned that courts have required the executive to give effect to socio-economic claims of the poor and the vulnerable. He clearly showed the extent and limits of judicial oversight and how it interfaces with the separation of powers doctrine. When dissecting this topic, he indicated that all arms of state must be responsive, accountable, and transparent in their dealings with each other and the public. Justice Moseneke pointed that the doctrine of separation of powers is not rigidly defined. Therefore, there is no universal model of separation of powers, and in the government, there is no absolute separation.

He shared with the audience that it must be well-understood that organs of state are "not immunised from judicial review" simply by virtue of the doctrine. The checks and balances embedded in the doctrine of separation of powers demand quite the opposite; courts must ensure that all branches of government, including other courts, act in accordance with the Constitution.



When welcoming attendees, the University of Venda Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni, indicated how UNIVEN is grateful for hosting Justice Moseneke Inaugural Lecture. Dr Nthambeleni said, "the Justice Moseneke Annual Lecture will now become a permanent event on the University of Venda academic calendar". He commended the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Professor Lonias Ndlovu and the organising committee for planning such a judicious event. Dr Nthambeleni further mentioned that the University of Venda, like other universities in South Africa and elsewhere, aspire to establish meaningful local, regional, national, and international linkages". He indicated that, in positioning the University of Venda for impact and relevance, the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan emphasises four interrelated strategic thrusts: Student Centeredness and Engaged Scholarship, Entrepreneurial University, Governance for Outstanding Scholarship, and Linkages, Partnerships and Internationalisation. "Universities should lead the charge in addressing developmental challenges by providing relevant contextualised knowledge, insights and locally relevant recommendations for policy formulation and implementation; solving existential problems; creating technological products; and producing new knowledge that can be adapted for economic, political and social improvement", added Dr Nthambeleni.

He explained Justice Moseneke as an illustrious jurist of national and international repute whose contributions to the struggle for liberation and access to justice are known to many. Hence, it was befitting for the University of Venda School of Law to name this Public Lecture in his name. In his conclusion, Dr Nthambeleni mentioned that UNIVEN is excited to be associated with such an illustrious jurist.



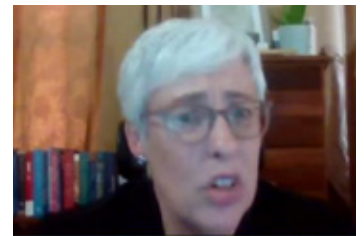
The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law, Professor Modimowabarwa Kanyane, mentioned that the lecture came right after UNIVEN recently signed a MoU with the Law Society of South Africa's Legal Education and Development Unit. This was another monument of history that the University made. The lecture's theme, which is Judicial oversight and the separation of powers doctrine, is also a controversial subject matter to engage with



When introducing the guest speaker, Judge of the Limpopo Local Division, Thohoyandou High Court, Judge Legodi Phatudi, gave a comprehensive eloquent background of Justice Moseneke.



Prof Lonias Ndlovu presented a thematic introduction of the Inaugural Justice Moseneke Lecture. He further revealed plans and activities that will be associated with the lecture from 2022 onwards.



Judge of the Gauteng Division of the High Court and Adjunct Professor in the School of Law at the University of Venda, Professor Elmarie van der Schyff proposed a vote of thanks.



Prof Tharien van der Walt (top) and Dr Douglas Mailula (bottom) facilitated the programme.

"Universities should lead the charge in addressing developmental challenges by providing relevant contextualised knowledge, insights and locally relevant recommendations for policy formulation and implementation; solving existential problems; creating technological products; and producing new knowledge that can be adapted for economic, political and social improvement"

Meeting between UNIVEN and NSFAS concludes with agreement to closeup all outstanding projects

On Monday, 08 November 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) hosted a delegation from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to explore possibilities of solving outstanding issues that UNIVEN NSFAS beneficiaries have. This meeting took place at the University Council Chambers.



The University of Venda CFO, Mr Botwe Kraziya said the purpose of this meeting is also to propose key resolutions, find a way to solve some of the challenges that we have with regards to NSFAS funded students.



SRC President, Mr Smile Manganyi echoed most of the challenges highlighted by Ms Ramathavha. He said UNIVEN has many students who still need funding not because they don't want to pay fees but because they cannot afford. "Since we commenced our duties as student leaders, we have resolved several issues internally, but we realised that other challenges are for NSFAS to assist the university to resolve them." Mr Manganyi has amongst other challenges highlighted the issue of appeals where he mentioned that only nine appeals were approved so far. He said SRC needs NSFAS to clarify them on issues related to appeals.

"The board has only nine months in the office and so far, we can see some of the fruits of this new board. The CEO explained the importance of the board to be part of the meeting in order for them to understand the frustration and challenges faced by each institution. Most of our challenges can be solved through the closeout of the previous projects." He proposed that they meet again with UNIVEN to solve all matters including closing-up projects. He said NSFAS will dedicate a week or so to work closely with UNIVEN SRC and management to close all projects and that should happen within the next two weeks from the date of the meeting.

Mr Nongogo concluded by addressing the issue of dual registrations where he proposed offering SRC training to assist them understand NSFAS application process and how NSFAS operates. This will enable student leaders to address queries from students and to be able to solve other challenges in future. He thanked the University management and UNIVEN SRC for agreeing to meet with NSFAS delegation and applauded SRC leadership for their approach when trying to find solutions for student challenges.

Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni indicated that UNIVEN has more than 11 800 students who depend on NSFAS to fund their studies. This makes NSFAS a very huge partner of this University. He thanked NSFAS for playing a very key role in making sure that UNIVEN students are funded every year. Dr Nthambeleni acknowledged the presence of Student Representative Council (SRC) and mentioned that the SRC is the key partner for leading any University.



Ms Glenda Ramathavha, UNIVEN Finance Manager indicated the statistics of students who are funded by NSFAS dating back to 2019.

She said more than 11850 UNIVEN students are today funded by NSFAS. Ms Ramathavha highlighted some of the challenges regarding students funding where she said there are students that are currently struggling financially and there is a need for UNIVEN and NSFAS to come up with a communication mechanism on how to solve issues going forward. Amongst other challenges, she emphasised issues relating to appeals (2020 appeals); students who are on SARS review; outstanding remittances; DSU funding including conversions; Capped students – wherein their accounts are not settled; historical debts dating as far back as 2018 impacting on students upon graduating; amount that is still outstanding from NSFAS dating as far back as 2019; inaccurate media announcements, inaccurate call centre responses to students and the closeout process that is likely to address most of the above mentioned challenges. She concluded her talk by mentioning that there is still a lot of money owed to the University by NSFAS.

He thanked the University management for bringing NSFAS to UNIVEN because this has assisted all parties to clarify each other about challenges and to solve student issues.



NSFAS CEO, Andile Nongogo listed the challenges that NSFAS has. Amongst other challenges, Mr Nongogo mentioned systems and internal control within institutions of higher learning. He further highlighted the issue of student funding policy. "We are almost done with our organisational redesign. NSFAS is now re-aligning its operational policies to be in line with those of institutions of higher learning." Mr Nongogo mentioned that NSFAS is familiar with some of the challenges highlighted, but the challenge is that NSFAS currently has inadequate funds.



SAUS President, Mr Moses Nkambako said UNIVEN has always been a home for many students and has been showing support to SAUS since its establishment. He further mentioned that he was elected in this institution earlier this year. "Historically disadvantaged institutions of higher learning are where most of the poor students are. 80% of students from poor background are found at universities that are historically disadvantaged. I am happy that there is a constructive engagement to solve challenges happening at institutions of higher learning. This engagement is very important because it prepares us for the 2022 academic year," he said.

Mr Nkambako mentioned that if all things go according to the way we have planned, in the next academic year, we will never see any students protesting because all issues would have been addressed. "SAUS encourages this kind of engagement because it strives to solve challenges that could cause future damages and protests." He said universities should start providing scarce skills qualifications.

In his remarks, Dr Nthambeleni thanked the NSFAS delegation for the visit. He said that their visit will assist the University to solve outstanding students' challenges. He concluded his talk by mentioning that there is a need to communicate the same message to students, therefore communication between the university and NSFAS should improve. "The University is doing by all means to empower the office that works closely with students, with the aim of resolving all student challenges and to avoid recurrence of similar challenges in future."



When highlighting the purpose of the visit, NSFAS Board Chairperson, Mr Ernest Khosa said that the NSFAS is on a road trip to engage with all their stakeholders, trying to solve previous and current challenges including trying to find solutions for challenges that were happening every year. He said that UNIVEN has produced many resourceful leaders that are making impact in our country. "It is one of the universities with relevant curriculum to our country." Mr Khosa mentioned that the NSFAS board had an agreement to attend to the issues of historically disadvantaged universities first. We are taking the role of NSFAS serious, not only providing financial assistance, but also to provide education to our future generations. "We are here to listen and engage with our main beneficiaries (students). The idea is to build solid relationships with our stakeholders. He also congratulated the newly elected SRC President and his cabinet in their new term of office.

"We need to find ways to directly interlink NSFAS with other institutions of higher learning. We need to integrate our systems."



A group photo of attendees of the meeting between UNIVEN and NSFAS



University Registrar, Advocate Edward Lambani who was the programme director has on the behalf of DVC Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford rendered a vote of thanks. He said indeed, this was a constructive engagement which will bear fruitful results.

Policy reviews an essential ingredient for aligning to the new strategic direction

Various divisions and departments convened to review postgraduate studies policies prompted by several reasons. The session was recently held at the Manhattan Hotel in Pretoria. As a University, policies are supposed to be reviewed timeously. Furthermore, the new post-graduate studies accreditation process with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) as well as South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has been reviewed and included very stringent processes including checking systems in place to ensure that the relevant measures are taken in the selection of postgraduate students as well as the appointment and monitoring of supervisors and lecturers. It was noted that no new programmes would be approved by the CHE without the updated/ relevant reviewed versions of all related policies, hence the importance of this workshop.

Some comments raised by the CHE touched on other requirements such as infrastructure, systems developments, etc. In the absence of an integrated approach, the University will struggle to get post-graduate courses accredited.

The CHE is also concerned about how the University protects the vulnerable communities from unethical behaviour by researchers. It is also important to ensure that these policies are bench-marked with those of other universities. Participants were drawn to the need of multi-dimensional approaches to ensuring quality of teaching, learning community and scholarly engagement.

In her opening address, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza, highlighted that it was very important for all divisions and departments to collaborate. She warned that silos should be avoided in the interest of the institution. She continued: "as an engaged University, we must first be engaged in the same direction and align our promises we made in line with the strategy 2021-2025".

"Through these policies, we are expected to regulate our activities. However, we cannot regulate our processes in an unaligned space. These policies are meant to regulate ourselves by keeping us aligned to the vision and values of the University. All various departments must fit themselves to this alignment so that we can make it possible for our students to get the best tuition even during this pandemic", said Prof Feza.

In preview to the process of policy review, the Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance (IPQA) Department has been engaged with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) who have challenged the University to consider several factors to ensure compliance for all postgraduate programmes. As a result, a presentation was made by the IPQA Department to guide the three-day session to ensure that all areas of concern are considered and embraced in the policy review session. Director of IPQA, Dr Sannah Patience Nkami Mativandelela, together with the Head: IPQA Mr Lufuno Netshifhefhe, presented on the requirements set by the CHE regarding postgraduate programmes accreditation and



Participants from various department during the workshop



Acting Executive Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences, Prof Tshilidzi Mulaudzi and Director Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama facilitating deliberations on the community engagement policy.



Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza appealing to participants to engage in robust but effective deliberations during the workshop.



To ensure coordination, the policy review session was attended by Executive Deans, Directors in Research and Innovation, Community Engagement, Institute for Rural Development, International Relations, Student Affairs, Legal Services, Audit & Risk, IPQA, CHETL, Library Services, Academic Administration, Facilities Management; Protection Services, as well as representatives from Procurement and Expenditure Control, and Marketing, Branding and Communication.

the new processes aimed at consolidating systems to reduce duplication.

During the policy review session, participants took time to review in detail the Postgraduate Policy, Ethics Policy, Community Engagement Policy, as well as Internationalisation Policy. An important document, "Policy Framework for Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa" gave guidance to the discussions on matters of Internalisation based on the SADC protocol.

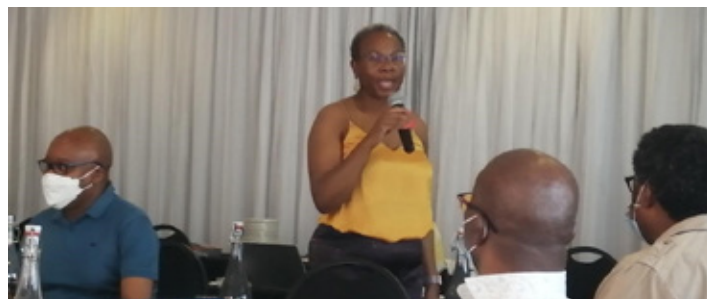
Discussions



Discussions over the Ethics Policy being led by Prof Takalani Mashau from the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education.



Mr Lufuno Netshifhefhe presenting on the CHE requirements during the workshop.



Executive Dean: Faculty of Science, Engineering and Agriculture, Prof Nlebogeng Mokgalaka-Fleischmann, facilitating deliberations of the closing session.

The development and review of policies is an integral part of promoting effective institutional governance and management systems. Recently a register of all policies has been developed by the Legal Services Department, and this will assist in reminding departments to review their policies timeously whilst ensuring regular compliance. As a result, all divisions and departments are encouraged to identify all policies in their

sphere, review them and submit to the Legal Services Department. This will ensure that the next reviews will be well-timed.

In her closing remarks, DVC Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Feza thanked all members for setting time aside and actively participating during the workshop. She believes this was a good start and creating good ground for ensuring governance, quality assurance and coordination.

“Research findings must be disseminated and implemented to help in solving societal challenges”

The University of Venda's Faculty of Health Sciences held a successful Research symposium at 210 Hotel, Sibasa. This was a successful two-day symposium which took place from 23-24 November 2021. The research symposium's purpose was to provide the academic staff and postgraduate students the opportunity and platform to share information and gain skills in quality research presentation and poster development. Participants also learnt to present their work with the aim of information dissemination. This also provides them with an opportunity to practice the skills towards defending their studies on a broader audience.



Prof Rachel Lebesse, during her opening and welcome remarks

Prof Rachel Lebesse from the Faculty of Health Sciences welcomed everyone in the symposium. “Firstly, I would like to thank the organising team for ensuring that our plan to host a research symposium is now a reality. The Faculty of Health Sciences is dedicated to conducting research on aspects that will help the community. I won't forget the Department of Research and Innovation for funding the symposium and academics to fulfil their research goals”, said Prof Lebesse.

“The Faculty is prepared to provide assistance to students through support structures available at the University such as finance, library, research office so that they could

progress well in their studies. She also said that it is expected that all research activities should be engaged by involving structures such as communities. Prof Lebesse indicated that communities must benefit from the research outcomes. She emphasised that communities should be left with skills on how to solve their problems. “Faculty of Health Sciences niche areas are communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS and COVID 19; sexual and reproductive health; maternal and child health; non-Communicable disease (epilepsy and mental health); ubuntu and traumarelated studies” added Professor Lebesse.



Prof Makhado elaborating on research implementation and dissemination

During the Keynote address, Professor Lufuno Makhado was concerned about the gap between scientific discovery and population benefit, meaning that their research findings are not helping in solving community problems that much. In his opening statement, he quoted words from Kahlil Gibran “A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle”, meaning we need to implement what we learnt, researched, and developed. People must know and learn and benefit from our research outcomes. We must start unravelling the black box through our research outcomes, i.e. moving from passive to active participants in solving people's challenges”.

“Be explicit so that anybody can follow your research or benefit from your research. Conceptual models for implementation of research are moving from answering the what and providing patients outcomes to answering the ‘what’ and ‘how’, and providing implementation strategies, service outcomes and patient outcomes as a goal. To successfully sustain implementation of research, we need to be transdisciplinary or work together to achieve our research goals. Academics must note that there are vast opportunities for dissemination and implementation in health sciences research. Although as scholars, you can publish and produce more student’ researchers, but if there is no application of the research afterwards, you did nothing”. He concluded by emphasising the need for scholars to design their studies with dissemination and implementation in mind to stand out from the crowd and make a difference in the communities they serve.

This was a two day conference, with each day having presentations with various research topics:

During the first day of the symposium, the following topics were presented: Guidelines to facilitate professional socialisation of learner nurses at public hospitals of Limpopo Province, South Africa; An Integration of HIV, STI and Teenage pregnancy Prevention services in Africa; The barriers and facilitators of disclosing HIV positive status to minors, An exploratory study of primary caregivers in South Africa; A Model to Prevent

Substance Use/Abuse by Student Nurses at Limpopo College of Nursing, South Africa; Challenges contributing to Loss to Follow Up as experienced by glaucoma patients in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa; Prevalence and risk factors of myopia amongst Grade 8 learners in the Vhembe district, South Africa; Global availability of epilepsy intervention programmes; Global availability of epilepsy intervention programmes; Ubuntu boot camp: Experiences and perception of high school

learners from Greater Giyani Municipality, Limpopo Province; A model to enhance the continuity of postnatal care by primary caregivers in selected districts of Limpopo Province; Risk factors related to mixing the management of mental health care users with that of forensic observation referrals, South Africa; Development of strategies to improve rehabilitation programmes for violent behaviour youth in South Africa; Challenges experienced by children heading families at Makhado Municipality in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province, South Africa and lastly A closer look at the experiences of people living with epilepsy in South Africa.

On the last day of the symposium, the following topics were presented:

Knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of cyberbullying among students in a ruralbased university in South Africa; Perceived strategies to improve provision of quality healthcare services in selected hospitals of Vhembe district, Limpopo Province; The knowledge of female students regarding human papillomavirus and vaccines at the selected universities in South Africa; Exploring the provision of early antenatal care at local primary health care facilities in Limpopo Province, South Africa; Assessing the nutritional status among learners in selected Secondary Schools of Thembeisile Hani Municipality, Mpumalanga; Contributing factors to violent youth behaviours: A study in the Limpopo Province, South Africa; The Impact of Socialisation Factors on the Prevalence of Substance Use/ Abuse by Student Nurses in Limpopo College of Nurses;

Traditional mixed dishes eaten by Vhavenda and Vatsonga in the Vhembe district;

Nutritional status and feeding practices of children aged 0 to 36 months in Thulamela Municipality; A systematic review of Caregivers experiences regarding the care of people living with epilepsy in a global context; Menu evaluation, plate waste and patients satisfactory survey at hospital setting in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province.



Attendees of the Symposium posed for a group photo

“Research findings must be disseminated and implemented to help in solving societal challenges” continued..



Ms. Vanecia Khoza from the Research Directorate explained how to apply for ethical clearance and all the processes it involves

The Research and Innovation Directorate, Human and Clinical Trial Research Ethics Committee also provided information on how to apply for ethical clearance by both students and academics.

Prof Rachel Lebesse thanked the all the delegates for their participation in the programme, including the organising committee, for their efforts. “I am happy now because students learnt about the importance of research dissemination, networking with peers and staff, peer review of their research, capacity building, poster development, presentation skills as well as engagement in research issues”. Prof Lebesse further indicated that the availability and participation of 4th year undergraduate students in the symposium was heart-warming and shows that the future is bright

for the Faculty of Health Sciences. She also announced an upcoming international conference that will be hosted by the Faculty of Health Sciences in the 3rd week of September 2022 and the call for abstracts

Below : Photo gallery of the two day symposium



Professor Netshandama completes the rigorous Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Innovation Leadership Bootcamp

Professor Vhonani Olive Netshandama was recently sponsored to take up the innovation leadership Bootcamp at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She completed the rigorous Innovation Leadership Bootcamp that led to her Team voted as top of the class by the panel of judges.



Professor Netshandama during the winning team interview session

“A special thanks go to my team members who I referred to as the A-Team namely Aradhana Venkat, Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, and Antonio Bojorges,” she said.

This was mostly facilitated by the lecturing team at MIT. The MIT Innovation Leadership Bootcamp is a 10-week online team-based action-learning course where each of the six module builds on the previous modules. Prof Netshandama highlighted that successful engagement with one module creates the foundation for success with the next module.

She pointed that MIT Bootcamps team and project-based action-learning programmes, in which we learned and practiced innovation principles and frameworks, taught at MIT and received lectures on entrepreneurship and market dynamics from MIT faculty and practitioners. The curriculum also includes training leadership and effective collaboration. Prof Netshandama shared the learning objectives of MIT Bootcamps which are as follows: Identify a significant opportunity for innovation; Understand your stakeholders profoundly; Conceptualise your solution and its position in the customer journey; Evaluate the financial viability and the longterm growth and potential of your venture; Sustain a high-performing team and communicate with influence.

She indicated that Educational Strategies and Techniques included Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Team Deliverables: Coaching Sessions; Individual Study; Interactive Live Sessions; Connective Learning, etc. Her team was assigned MIT Bootcamps Coach, an experienced innovator- entrepreneur who supported them (team) throughout the Bootcamp. “In addition to the coaching sessions we delivered several Elevator Pitches that were reviewed by peers. The ultimate was the final pitch in front of a panel of esteemed judges”, said Prof Netshandama.

The key lesson for Prof Netshandama was MIT BootCamp’s emphasis on the power of hard work, learning by doing, failing productively (Perez-Breva, 2017) while staying at it and trusting the process. “When I started, I felt like a Grade 1 learner starting school. Now I have that feeling of excitement having graduated top of the class with my team. I was encouraged and assisted a great deal by my student -mentees some of whom are innovators and social entrepreneurs and of course by members of my Ateam! It was an exciting new journey- one that I intend taking further- to apply the knowledge with my mentees”. The BootCamp’s philosophy is that anyone can be innovative, and this is

the message she would like to advise staff, students, school children and everyone in the community. She appreciated the BootCamp team for endorsing this way of thinking about innovation!

Professor Netshandama’s favourite Quote is “But if you are hoping for a straight path to impact, innovating may appear daunting at first. You need a lot of information to trace changes at the outcome all the way back to the beginnings. That’s why the stories of innovations in hindsight reveal so little of what one needs to do, and forecasting an outcome, or a product, or a user, or an organisation, or a business model, or the specific technology needed from the hunch that characterises the genesis of an innovation requires obtaining an insurmountable amount of knowledge of the dynamics ahead.” (Perez-Breva, 2017).

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/55563284-innovating-a-doers-manifesto-for-starting-from-a-hunch-prototyping-pr>. Innovating: A Doer’s Manifesto for Starting from a Hunch, Prototyping Problems, Scaling Up, and Learning to Be Productively Wrong by Luis Perez-Breva

The Directorate of Research and Innovation hosts a successful NRF Evaluation and Rating Preparation Workshop

On Thursday, 11 November 2021, the Directorate of Research and Innovation hosted a successful virtual and physical workshop in preparation for the 2022 submission of applications for the NRF Evaluation and Rating. UNIVEN has started considering creative ways to operate physically again in pursuing academic activities. Initially, NRF Evaluation and Rating preparation workshop is organised annually in order to prepare applicants through the process of applying for consideration which will close on the 28 February 2022.

In his opening remarks addressing 16 prospective applicants for 2022 submission, Senior Professor Georges Ekosse, Director of Research and Innovation, alluded to the fact that being rated would be a benefit which would give an added advantage of joy and selfactualisation to researchers at UNIVEN.

More than 60% of UNIVEN research output is generated by the rated researchers through their significant research contributions.

The University of Venda is continuing to experience numerical growth of NRF rated researchers from 01 in 2008 to 32 in 2021.

The rated researchers contribute quantifiably to the Research Publications Outputs of the university.

The facilitation of the 2021 was organised in a way that it was both virtual and physical workshop. Mrs. Joyce Olivier, Director of Reviews and Evaluation, National Research Foundation (NRF) started her facilitation virtually from 09:00 to 13:00 and Senior Professor GE Ekosse, Director of Research and Innovation who conducted his facilitation physically from 14:00 to 17:00.

Joyce Olivier

Senior Professor GE Ekosse, Director of Research and Innovation who conducted his facilitation physically from 14:00 to 17:00.

Mrs. Joyce Olivier, Director: Reviews and Evaluation, National Research Foundation (NRF). According to Mrs. Olivier, all people affiliated with NRF recognised institutions, whether permanently employed researchers or academics or fixed term contract researchers are eligible to apply for evaluation and rating. There are seven (7) steps in preparation for rating that applicants should take into consideration, which are as follows:

Step 1: Update CV (Your Details and Your CV);

Step 2: Create Application and complete Rating Application Specific Fields (Pay special attention to select your fields of specialization as they appear in the invitation to the reviewer);

Step 3: Add "Own Contribution" for multi-authored Research Outputs (This field will only become available after you have created a rating application. The system will not allow anyone to submit unless this field is completed for every research output);

Step 4: Complete Narrative Fields;

Step 5: Select "Best Five" Research Outputs (Be circumspect in your choices, do not select keynotes PowerPoints);

Step 6: Attach copies of the "Best Five" (Be sure to select the correct attachments for those selected in step 5 above – if the attachment and the entry do not correspond GMSA will reject your application); and

Step 7: Select Primary Panel and Reviewers (Do not select close collaborators or reviewers not working in your field, motivate well why you have chosen them).

The NRF Evaluation and Rating applicants play a very crucial role to get the best possible outcome by giving special attention to these steps.



Senior Professor Ekosse, Director of Research and Innovation and Dr Tendai Chari, Senior Lecturer, Department of English, Media Studies and Linguistics, sharing their personal experiences of being rated researchers in guiding the new applicants.



In selecting the "Best Five" Research Outputs according to step 5 above, Dr. Chari believes that "it is advisable to select outputs that speaks to researchers' area of their specialisation or niche area. Hence, the selection of peer reviewers should be sufficiently familiar with the field of study (field of specialisation(s)) of the applicant is also important.

In conclusion, several South African universities use the outcomes of the NRF evaluation and rating process to position themselves as research-intensive institutions, while others like UNIVEN provide incentives for their staff members to acquire and maintain a rating and give special recognition to the current 32 rated researchers.

Integration of Ubuntu Philosophical Values into Hiv and Aids Prevention and Management

Mbigi (1997) defines Ubuntu as a concrete manifestation of the interconnectedness of human beings, which is an embodiment of South African culture and lifestyle. Ubuntu enables awareness of one's own being but also of one's duties towards one's neighbour, thereby enhancing promotion of development of positive human relationships. Not only are UBUNTU philosophical values applicable in our everyday lives, but even in the prevention and management of diseases. On the 1st of December as we commemorate World AIDS Day, let's integrate the following few philosophical values of Ubuntu into HIV and AIDS prevention and management as UNIVEN community:

Love

Whilst an HIV positive person expects to be loved by the community, it is imperative that one starts by loving oneself despite the HIV positive status. The fact that one is HIV positive does not necessarily mean the end of life.... Therefore, don't lose hope. Love helps you to protect yourself from further risks and infections. Show love to others and protect them from harm. Avoid multiple partners, sleeping around and engaging in unprotected sex, for all these put your life and that of your loved ones at risk. In the same breath, community around an HIV positive person need to provide love and warmth to an HIV positive person, as a supportive measure.

Acceptance

Acceptance of others is another component embraced by Ubuntu. An HIV positive person needs to have positive attitude towards himself/herself as an individual and towards the condition. This will enable him/her to comply with

treatments; consequently, a positive mind enables the body to respond positively to the condition itself and to treatments. In addition, community members around an HIV positive person should treat an HIV infected person the same way they treat any member of the community; without any discrimination.

Respect

As an HIV positive person, treat yourself with respect and avoid being ignorant.

A person who doesn't respect himself/herself goes around "spreading the infection intentionally" to as many as possible in the name of ".... I also was infected...". That is ignorance and lack of self-respect, which puts one's life in danger as one becomes infected by different strands of the virus. On the other hand, uninfected members of the community should take it upon themselves to accord an infected individual respect he/she deserves; avoiding any form of humiliation and labelling based on HIV positive status.

Sharing

Sharing also forms the basis of Ubuntu philosophical values. HIV positive individuals can form support groups. It is in these groups whereby they can share ideas, experiences, encouragement and any other form of information around HIV and AIDS (e.g. taking of treatments) and life issues in general.

In conclusion, integration of Ubuntu philosophical values into disease prevention and management can promote case identification, treatment adherence, prevention of loss to follow-up and ultimately help the country achieve 2030 HIV global targets.



Senior Professor GE Ekosse, Director of Research and Innovation, addressing 16 prospective applicants for 2022 submission



16 prospective applicants for rating together with the Directorate of Research and Innovation staff members

UNIVEN and UP Partner with UNIE on Albinism to Highlight Challenges faced by persons with Albinism

The Disability Rights Unit at the University of Pretoria (UP) and the Disability Students' Unit (DSU) at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) recently collaborated with the Mandate of the United Nations Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights of Persons with Albinism (UNIE on Albinism) in hosting the 1st virtual Chat with an Independent Expert on Albinism. The virtual event sought to: create awareness about the mandate of UNIE and its roles in advancing advocacy on albinism in Africa; create good working relations between the UNIE, activists and leaders of albinism related associations and civil society organisations advocating for the rights of persons with albinism in Africa; and recognise National Albinism Awareness Month in South Africa as well as encourage other states to adopt the same.

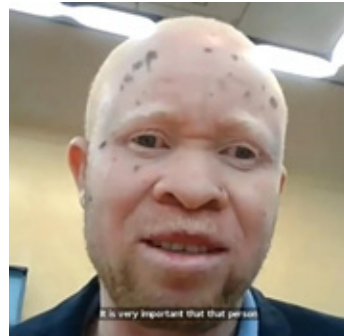
The 1st virtual Chat with an Independent Expert on Albinism convened over 100 participants which included inter alia academics, activists, civil society, and persons with albinism from Africa and across the globe.

rights through advocacy, research, and capacity building on the contemporary human rights theme, including the rights of persons with disabilities in Africa. He then outlined the Centre's long-standing support and collaboration with the former UNIE – Ms IK Ero, through the Disability Rights Unit and pledged the Centre's continuous support to the current mandate holder – Ms MulukaAnne Miti-Drummond.



Ms IK Ero

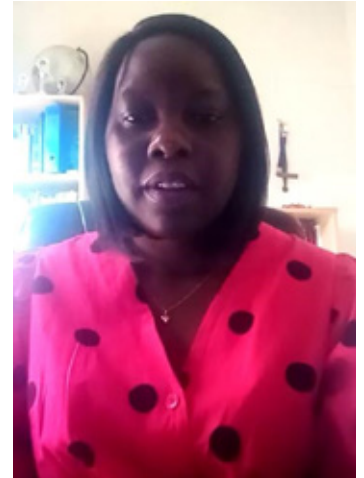
The Keynote address was delivered by the former mandate holder of UNIE on Albinism, Ms IK Ero. In her address Ms Ero, highlighted some of the essential outcomes from collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, including the drafting of the African Union (AU) Plan of Action on Albinism and the Pan-African Guidelines on accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks: towards eliminating harmful practices and other human rights violations. She then foregrounded some recent harmful practices targeted at persons with albinism, such as the grave desecration and mutilation of body parts of children with albinism. Ms Ero concluded by stressing the need for intensified advocacy to eliminate harmful practices by calling on human rights advocates to speak out against harmful practices and injustices targeted at persons with albinism on the African continent.



Mr Andrews Kwame Daklo

Reacting to the keynote address, Mr Andrews Kwame Daklo, a Masters student at the Centre for Human Rights, who was on Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law Internship programme at the Directorate of International Relations and Partnerships at the University of Venda, reiterated the need for action to be taken to avert the challenges faced by persons with albinism and highlighted some of these challenges and human rights violations faced by persons with albinism.

In the Questions and Answers session, Ms Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond, an alumnus of both universities and the current UNIE on Albinism mandate holder, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to speak and interact with stakeholders on key issues relating to albinism in Africa. Ms Miti-Drummond indicated that her role as the independent expert on albinism is to amplify the voices of persons with albinism, adding that she is ready to engage with associations of persons with albinism across the globe. In full awareness of her positionality as someone without albinism taking up this role, she assured the albinism community of her commitment to "ensuring inclusion, genuine consultation and participation of the voices of persons with albinism, making sure that "nothing will be done for persons with albinism without persons with albinism".



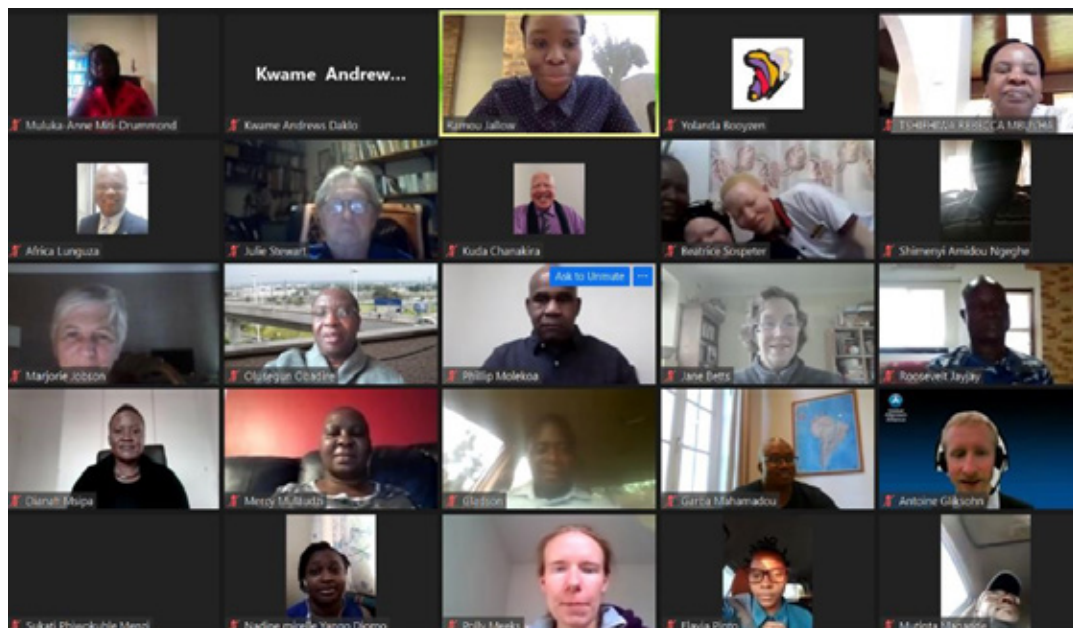
Ms Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond

Ms Miti-Drummond also took the opportunity to speak to two key issues, she first spoke to the utility of the UN resolution on the elimination of harmful practices related to accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks and its relationship with persons with albinism. In this regard, Ms Miti-Drummond indicated that persons with albinism are subjected to harmful practices such as grave desecration, mutilation of body parts, ritual killings, and banishment. The UN resolution would assist in easing the challenges faced by persons with albinism as it calls on member states to take the necessary steps to eliminate the harmful practices through legislation, advocacy, and awareness. Secondly, Ms Miti-Drummond spoke to the issue of human rights defenders advocating for the rights of persons with albinism, in this regard, Ms Miti-Drummond indicated the UNIE on Albinism is planning to produce a stand-alone report on the issue human rights for persons with Albinism to help create the required awareness to address the challenges faced by persons with albinism.



Prof Frans Viljoen

The event was opened by Prof Frans Viljoen, the Director of the Centre for Human Rights at UP. In his address, Prof Viljoen underscored that the Centre for Human Rights, with its dual mandate as an academic department and CSO (write in full) , is committed to promoting human



Some of the participants at the Live chat



Dr Tshifhiwa Mbuva

The event was concluded by Dr Tshifhiwa Mbuva, the Head of DSU at the University of Venda. Dr Mbuva recapitulated the need to create awareness on albinism across the continent to end the challenges befalling persons with albinism. She finally congratulated the new UNIE, Ms Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond on her appointment and pledged her support for the work of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human rights by Persons with Albinism.

UIGC BOARD commits to effectively implement a Turn Around Strategy



Group photo of participants

The University of Venda Executive Management and UIGC held a very successful workshop on Monday, 06 December 2021. The workshop took place outside Pretoria. The UIGC was represented by the Chairperson of the Board Thovhela Masia, CEO, Dr John Mudau and the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Mr Shoni Khangale. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss re-engineering of UIGC and alignment to its original purpose of generating 3rd Stream income for the University.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni prefaced the workshop by stressing the need for UIGC to be re-focused towards the critical mission of ensuring its own financial sustainability, as well as contributing to income generation for the University.

The Chairperson of the UIGC Board expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to engage with EMC and pledged UIGC Board's commitment to the University's expectations. "As the Board, we are determined to be at another level. When we took over, we realised that there is indeed a potential to advance UIGC".

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Nthambeleni concluded the workshop by providing a way forward which included a decision that a follow up meeting in February 2022 will be convened to look at progress made at that point. He further indicated that EMC would want to continue to support the company, however the UIGC needs to also ensure that governance and strategic areas are properly taken care of within the company.

Mrs Mutheiwana is the new Director Supply Chain Management and Expenditure

Mrs Ndiambani Beauty Mutheiwana joined the University of Venda (UNIVEN) as the new Director Supply Chain Management and Expenditure with effect from 02 November 2021.

She is currently a PhD candidate at UNIVEN, and her areas of research interest are on Public Finance Management Accountability and Responsibility as a Managerial Function.



Mrs Mutheiwana is a seasoned finance professional who obtained her MBA (Finance) at Regent Business School. Her career in finance spans over 20 years with eight (08) of those as Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

She has a vast of experience working in both public and private institutions. Mrs Mutheiwana brings her senior managerial expertise in Finance, most importantly in Supply Chain Management and Expenditure.

Before joining UNIVEN, Mrs Mutheiwana was an Administrator (under PFMA Section 18) and Head of Department at the Department of Education; Deputy Director-General – Assets, Liabilities, Supply Chain Management and Financial

Systems at Limpopo Provincial Treasury; Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at NorthWest Gambling Board; Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Senior Manager – Finance, Manager- Executive Council Support at Office of the Premier; and many strategic positions.

UNIVEN's Chief Financial Officer, Mr Botwe Kraziya congratulated Mrs Mutheiwana and urged the University community to give her the necessary support in her new role as Director Supply Chain Management and Expenditure.

The University Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said "Mrs Mutheiwana's remarkable skills and talents will be a great addition to our Supply Chain Management team and the entire University. I am thrilled to welcome her to the University of Venda. We are confident that she'll deliver results, excel and make us all proud".

Univen Council Adopts Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination

At its meeting held on Friday 03 December 2021, the University of Venda Council resolved to implement mandatory vaccination effective from 01 January 2022. This implies that no one will be allowed access to the University of Venda Campus without proof of being vaccinated.

The University management is committed to implement this Council resolution in a manner that will not alienate staff and students and other members of the public. We continue to encourage staff

and students as well as other stakeholders to get vaccinated. The University's vaccination site which is operated by our Campus Health Clinic would continue to be available for vaccination.

For inquiries regarding the nearest vaccination centres, kindly contact Head of Campus Health Clinic, Ms Faith Mashau on 015 962 9157/ 072 630 0025 or send an email to faith.mashau@univen.ac.za

UNIVEN SRC sworn into office amid COVID-19 pandemic



On Thursday, 18 November 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) officially inaugurated the 2021/2022 SRC cabinet into the office during the Inauguration ceremony that took place at the University Sports Hall.

The inauguration process was presided by Magistrate Farhana Hussain of the Thohoyandou Magistrate Court. All members of the SRC cabinet took oath of office.



In his keynote address, UNIVEN Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Bernard Nthambeleni said "To be voted into office is a symbol of trust that students have entrusted you to represent them". Dr Nthambeleni alluded that he had a brief talk with the SRC leadership few weeks ago and during such brief interactions, the SRC leadership demonstrated high level of understanding and maturity in dealing with difficult issues facing and affecting the higher education system in general.

Dr Nthambeleni challenged the SRC leadership to identify four to five issues to serve as a guide of their strategic focus that will drive their programme during their term in office. That plan will be a good indicator and barometer to measure if the SRC has been successful at the end of their term.

He pointed out that, "While you discharge your responsibilities, be mindful that you should not shift your focus away and forget about the sole reason of what brought you here, the primary aim is to study, pass and graduate so that you could contribute back to your communities".



Magistrate Farhana Hussain (left) and SRC President Smile Manganyi (right)

Dr Nthambeleni provided the highlights of developments at UNIVEN. He stated that UNIVEN continues to be on an upward trajectory in terms of its infrastructural development, student throughput and research outputs. He indicated that the University staff with doctoral qualifications has increased to 41% which is above the national average of 37% in the sector. "The number of our National Research Foundation rated researchers continues to grow enormously. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal said the University will continue to provide best education and produce quality graduates capable to compete with their peers both locally and internationally."

He also shared some good news about the Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting Sciences programme which received the accreditation by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) and students can now study and complete their qualification without having to do bridging course at any SAICA-accredited university in South Africa.

Towards his conclusion, Dr Nthambeleni touched on the impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education. UNIVEN as one of the 26 public universities in South Africa, is not immune to the financial challenges facing universities. "We too must navigate this terrain accompanied by serious budget cuts that without a doubt will seriously challenge our operations", he added.

As he concluded his speech, Dr Nthambeleni spoke about the 2022 Academic Year that will be the third academic year under COVID-19 pandemic. He said the epidemiologists are forecasting fourth wave of COVID-19 by December 2021. Consequently, there is likelihood that fourth wave may disrupt our first academic quarter. However, science has proved that fourth wave can be avoided through vaccination. "To win the war against COVID-19, we all should remain vigilant, responsible and wise. Let us continue to observe and adhere to the COVID-19 protocols".



When giving the parliamentary address the SRC president, Mr Smile Manganyi emphasised on leadership and said "we are now inaugurated and that means officially we are constituted, let's go and represent our students, applying innovative approach which distinguishes between a leader and a follower. A leader manages operation and solve problems. Let's be strategists and represent students. We appreciate the establishment of faculties, initiating law school and research programmes and funding into our institution. You are indeed moving prodigiously but we can't be fixing the University whilst restricting students from getting what is due to them, like Tablets for first entering students. That initiative must come back to students".

He appreciated the President of Convocation, Mr Silvester Motadi for compiling a list of students who have completed their studies with outstanding debts and encouraged him to fast-track the process so that those students who are owing should get their certificates after settlement of their outstanding debts.

"While you discharge your responsibilities, be mindful that you should not shift your focus away and forget about the sole reason of what brought you here, the primary aim is to study, pass and graduate so that you could contribute back to your communities".

UNIVEN SRC sworn into office amid COVID-19 pandemic continued..



The President of Convocation, Mr Silvester Motadi congratulated the SRC President and his cabinet in their new responsibilities irrespective of where they are coming from. He reminded them that they are representing the marginalised constituency and therefore, they should adopt a discipline approach and symbiotic relationship. He finally advised that as student leadership, they should not resolve issues by closing the gate, but to engage management in negotiations and work together in unity.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, Prof Nosisi Feza welcomed the guests during the inauguration. She indicated in her welcome remarks that to have student leadership is very important. She further indicated that we want our student leaders to be trained and compete at international level. Hence, we want them to take us to the future. Prof Feza said as leaders, what do you want to be known for and how do you want to be remembered, because to be a leader is quite dynamic and different. She mentioned UNIVEN as the best University where you can grow, think bigger and be able to take people with you as per the University's vision of leading in engaged scholarship. In our University we talk about entrepreneurship because the world today is no longer looking for employees but employers. As you take the students with your leadership, remember that the world is looking for employers because there are more employees.



The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mr Unarine Mulaudzi proposed a vote thanks and cautioned cabinet members to be disciplined as they are going to form part of the decision-making body of the University.



Handling the item of announcement, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Prof Jan Crafford said "you can learn and pass".



The SRC Speaker of Parliament, Umpha Sadiki talked about the roles and responsibilities of SRC members as guided by the Constitution.



The programme was directed by the Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga.

UNIVEN as the best University where you can grow, think bigger and be able to take people with you as per the University's vision of leading in engaged scholarship.

UNIVEN explores possible mutual collaboration with Hewlett-Packard

A delegation from Hewlett-Packard (HP) comprising Mr Yesh Surjoodeen and Ms Nazley Davies had a very fruitful exploratory meeting with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate

Services, Dr Robert Martin on Friday 03 December 2021. The meeting took place in the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services' Office. Present in the meeting was the Director Community Engagement, Prof Vhonani Netshandama and Director Marketing Branding and Communication Dr Takalani Dzaga.

During the meeting, the delegation from HP Inc, the manufacturers of personal computers and printers, presented that they had initiated a series of online courses including those that are intended to promote entrepreneurship on their platform HP Life. They also shared information about a project called "Be Change maker". The presentation stimulated interest of the University team.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Corporate Services shared with the delegation the University's strategic direction and focused more on the Entrepreneurial University Strategic Thrust. He also shared the issues that differentiate the University and unique matters like the University's location in the Vhembe Biosphere and that the University is strategically located as a gateway to Africa.

The parties had a mutually fruitful engagement and they unanimously settled to take the discussion forward at the beginning of 2022.



Dr Martin, Mr Surjoodeen, Prof Netshandama, Ms Davies and Dr Dzaga

UNIVEN hosts a successful 16 Days of Activism for no Violence against Women and Children Seminar



On Thursday, 25 November 2021, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) hosted a No Violence against Women and Children Seminar on Microsoft Teams under the theme "the year of Charlotte Manny Maxeke – 16 Days of Activism – Moving from awareness to accountability".

In her welcome and purpose of the event message, Dr Thivhulawi Malwela, a Lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences said women need to start believing in themselves. "Sometimes we are the abusers of ourselves". She further said, "if women could love each other and start being aware of each other's presence and treat each other in the right way, a lot could change".

She based some of her talk in the book of Genesis 1:26 where she emphasised that both men and women are made of God's image and that this scripture was misinterpreted by men who wanted to possess power over women. "There is no one in the image of other, God made both male and female equally".

Dr Malwela mentioned that women are men with womb, and we are all humans made by God. "As a woman love yourself first, do not expect a man to love you before you love yourself". She emphasised that man love women with confidence and high self-esteem which is "why men abuse us, because we do not have confidence, so some men see an opportunity to abuse women realising a woman's low self-esteem".

"if women could love each other and start being aware of each other's presence and treat each other in the right way, a lot could change"



Dr Chiedza Simbo, a Lecturer in the School of Law said "in every woman, there is a man and in man there is a woman. She said she is not surprised by the transgender community hence, Dr Malwela said from the beginning man and woman were merged in one body. She said according to statistics by United Nations, there are about 137 estimated daily cases of women who are killed by family members in Africa alone. Dr Simbo pointed that the Domestic Violence Act must introduce measures to make sure this domestic violence is eliminated. According to Dr Simbo domestic violence happens in domestic relationships, people who are married, parents or family members. She further broke down different types of domestic abuse such as physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence.

She said victims must report and get protection orders and protection from perpetrators by the police. She mentioned that when complaining about being abused, one must be reasonable. "Sometimes a protection order is not granted because it's coming from malicious intent," said Dr Simbo.

Ms Tshimangadzo Tambani, Human Resources Business Partner in the Department of Human Resources said a human being was created as complete human being. She urged women to try to discover who they are and stand their ground. Ms Tambani said both man and women were created equally, no one was created incomplete.



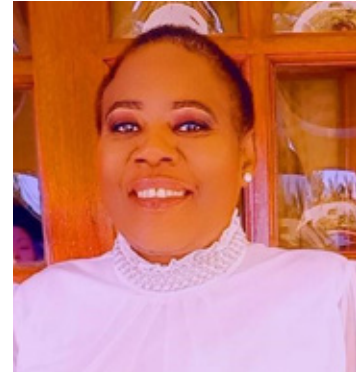
In her presentation titled 'Why People Stay in Abusive relationships', Dr Angie Maphula, a Clinical Psychologist in the Faculty of Health Sciences began by asking whether relationships are meant for love and why are we talking about abuse.

She said abuse starts with arguments and it does not only affect women and children, but also affects man. She indicated that man do not speak out most of the time. "Abuse comes in various ways. There is verbal abuse which is undetectable until the victim comes out and say something, and on the other hand financial abuse is where one is controlled and does not have freedom".

She further elaborated on sexual abuse which is the most common abuse known to humans and this happens behind closed doors. It can even happen to a married couple where the wife says no, and the husband feels entitled to the sexual right. Dr Maphula said that the society has normalised not saying anything, but they accuse victims of "hanging their dirty linen in public".

Dr Maphula said there are people who will never get out of abusive relationships because they want to maintain a status or their religious beliefs. She said there are women who believe that divorce is a sin and these women stay in the relationships because they have fears from the threats that the perpetrators make, as well as when they are married, they get told "marriage does not have a return ticket" or myths such as "if your partner beats you it means they love you" or their family or friends telling them to "Solve it as grown-ups or adults."

She said wanting your kids to live in a house where mom and dad are together is ideal but not at the expense of women's lives and being abused. Dr Maphula encouraged victims to speak out and tell friends and family and report it to the police.



In closing, Dr Thizwilondi Mudau commended the speakers for they knew what they were talking about. She closed the ceremony by encouraging attendees to change the narrative of being strong in marriages, "have an option of getting out. Let us stop being part of the statistics," she said.

We would like to hear from you!

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