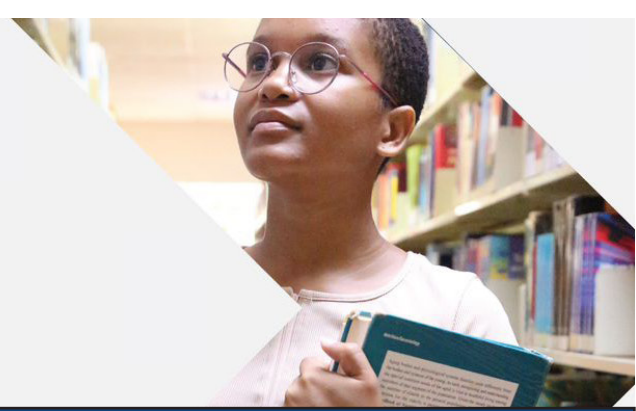




University of Venda  
Creating Future Leaders

# UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



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## Landmark, 15-Year UNIVEN Strategy workshop aims to Drive Innovation and Excellence

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) is in an ambitious strategic journey to move towards fostering innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The esteemed University Senior Management Committee came together under one roof to plan for UNIVEN's groundbreaking initiative 15-Year Strategy Development Workshop which is set to

- shape the institution's future trajectory. This comprehensive workshop was organised under the theme: '40-year UNIVEN dream: moving towards a new strategy trajectory underpinned by local and global needs.' The two-day workshop took place at The Park Hotel, Mokopane from 19-20 September 2024.



With a rich legacy of academic excellence and a commitment to pushing boundaries, UNIVEN is gearing up for this landmark process that promises to be a milestone in the history of higher education. This inclusive workshop brought together thought leaders, from diverse fields to chart a course for the university's journey over the next 15 years.

When speaking about this vision, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Bernard Nthambeleni underscored the significance of this workshop in driving strategic planning for the institution.

"As we stand at the cusp of a new era in academia, it is imperative for us to align our vision with the evolving needs of our students and the broader community. The 15-Year Senior Management Strategic Planning Workshop served as a platform for ideation, collaboration, and innovation that would shape our long-term future endeavours and solidify our position as a leader in education and research."

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal touched on various strategic aspects, including the trajectory of University Mission, Higher Education Imperatives, Dynamics of South-

African Higher Education Sector, South Africa Medium Term Expenditure Framework. He also explained what is meant by a long-term strategy, where he highlighted that it is a comprehensive framework for the institution/organisation or business that defines an institution's vision, goals and direction over an extended period, typically ten years or more, while providing a roadmap of how the institution intends to achieve its mission while adapting to its internal and external factors, such as trends, competition and changes in the economic outlook.



By amalgamating insights from internal stakeholders and external experts, the university aims to foster a culture of excellence, adaptability, and forward-thinking that would propel it to new heights of success. Furthermore, Professor Nthambeleni shared ten (10) Key and Emerging Technologies that should be considered as the University is gearing up to this long-term strategy.



As he was providing guidelines on the breakaway sessions, Director Strategy and Risk, Dr Mutshinyalo Ratombo mentioned that this 15-Year UNIVEN Strategy Development workshop would lay the foundation for cultivating a dynamic ecosystem that nurtures creativity, entrepreneurship, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Through interactive four commissions that were developed, participants had the opportunity to contribute and share their expertise and perspectives towards shaping a vibrant and future-ready academic environment. The commissions feedback session was characterised by insightful reflections.

As UNIVEN embarks on this transformative journey, Dr Ratombo invited all stakeholders to join hands in paving the way for a brighter, more inclusive, and innovative future that transcends boundaries and redefines educational paradigms.

In closing a resounding successful workshop, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal expressed his heartfelt gratitude to members of the SMC for their participation in discussions and valuable contributions that were quite insightful.

Professor Nthambeleni stated that both in their reports and deliberations they have underscored the critical need for forward thinking, collaborative approaches to address complex challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

He showed that “the success of the workshop is measured by the preparation that goes in it. Listening to the reports and exchange of ideas, it is evident that all of us have come prepared for the robust discussions. By fostering our integrated, Entrepreneurship, Innovation Biodiversity Plan, strengthening partnerships and remaining adaptable we are well positioned to navigate the uncertainties of the future.”

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal pointed out that our long-term strategy and commitment to sustainability, resilience and long-term value creation will not only benefit our university but also contribute to the broader societal and global goals.

Professor Nthambeleni highlighted the key messages that came through this workshop and the most pressing one is to ensure that every staff member is engaged on the new university long term plan that the University is developing.



He further encouraged SMC members to be the champions of the change we want to see and drive our university and stakeholders towards a brighter future.

Professor Nthambeleni thanked the four commissions and the chairpersons who are Professor Barwa Kanyane, Professor Vhonani Netshandama, Ms Beauty Mutheiwana and Professor Joseph Francis for leading the discussions in their respective commissions. In the same vein, he thanked the scribes and -

commissions presenters, Prof Kanyane, Prof Veldman, Prof Mulaudzi and Mr Ndou who did a splendid job.

He also appreciated the Director Marketing, Branding and Communication, Dr Takalani Dzaga, for efficient management of the programme and thorough management of discussions throughout.

Professor Nthambeleni commended his office, Dr Mutshinyalo Ratombo and Ms Esther Munano, for the overall planning and making sure that this SMC 15-Year Strategy Development Workshop was a success.



## The University of Venda continues to build global partnerships for sustainable development

The University of Venda held a successful Internationalisation week. “The theme for this year’s internationalisation week is ‘Building Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development. This theme emphasises the importance of collaboration and partnerships across borders to achieve sustainable development goals,” said Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Bernard Nthambeleni during the official opening of the 2024 Internationalisation Week that took place on Tuesday, 10 September 2024, at 2Ten Hotel, Sibasa.

Prof Nthambeleni mentioned that this theme aligns with the global focus (SDG17) on sustainability and cooperation in addressing climate change, health crises, and socio-economic inequalities. He said that in a 2022 study conducted by the British Council and the Association of Commonwealth Universities, it was established that international higher education partnerships are highly effective in supporting progress against all 17 of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.





*Official opening ceremony speakers posing for a group photo at 2Ten Hotel*

“The study’s outcomes reinforce the view that universities should be recognised as essential actors in the international development space and supported by donors to deliver projects that drive progress towards global goals. Universities here and elsewhere in the continent have multifaceted roles and mandates to lead through the production of Research, Teaching and Learning, and Community Engagement.”

-and found that we only had 7 south-south formal agreements out of a total of 122. Meaning that less than 10% of our agreements were with partners in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa).”

He pointed out that we have moved this number to 25 south-south collaborations out of a total of 273. This means that we are still mainly collaborating with partners outside the continent as opposed to partners within the continent.



Prof Nthambeleni concluded his talk by indicating that if we agree that Africa is generally collaborating with partners outside the region that these partnerships have been traditionally skewed towards the West, and that we as Africa haven’t had the opportunity to structure these partnerships in a way that would ensure that all parties would benefit equally. “Then perhaps we need to look within for solutions and knowledge that would resolve Africa’s challenges in our lifetime.”

Prof Nthambeleni highlighted that, as contributors to the knowledge base, we can improve our understanding of global challenges through partnerships and working together to develop practical solutions. “As implementers of new knowledge, partnerships not only conduct research to enrich the knowledge base but also implement their results in practice. However, what is more practical is how we relate to each other as Africans. In 2022, the University of Venda analysed its partnerships,

When talking about the significance and purpose of this Internationalisation week, Director International Relations and Partnerships, Dr Segun Obadire said that since he joined the International Relations Directorate at UNIVEN in 2011, he has seen tremendous change and improvement in the internationalisation agenda of the University. He mentioned that he believes this is just the beginning; there will be a lot of growth and increase in the activities of academics and researchers internationally-

in the future. "This goal cannot be achieved without working with strategic partners in Africa and beyond. The Internationalisation Week platform is meant to help in expanding our scope and exploring other opportunities among our partner institutions and others to enhance the quality of education and improve research output at the University." Participating staff and students were encouraged to make the best use of their time during this meeting to improve their research work and aim at publishing their papers.

In his keynote address, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, Prof Olubunmi Abayomi Omotosho, spoke on the topic of revitalising global partnerships: collaboration strategies for achieving sustainable development. He said the challenge with Africans is that they tend to feel inferior when they look at their culture. "One thing I like about the Chinese is that they have made progress economically, have also never neglected their culture.

The media space is owned by the West, especially the Americans, and they have easily influenced Africans who now believe that their culture is inferior."

He mentioned that most people who know a lot about indigenous information do not document or teach their young ones this knowledge; they die with that knowledge. "They should not die with important knowledge. We need to leverage technology to progress in life as Africans. We need to document our information so that it can be retrieved later. Knowledge, collaboration, and partnerships must be based on mutual understanding, which should benefit all parties."

In his closing remarks and message of support, the Director Research and Innovation, Prof Jabulani Makhubele, said it is through conferences like this that we promote collaborations and develop integrated research for cooperation.

This Internationalisation Week took place from 10 – 13 September 2024.

## UNIVEN's active participation in the China-Africa -UNESCO High-Level Dialogue underscored its commitment to international partnerships and academic exchanges

UNIVEN's active participation in the China-Africa Consortium of Universities, the China-Africa Higher Education Dialogue, the China-Africa-UNESCO High-Level Dialogue on Cooperation in Education and Cultural Heritage Protection, the Plaque Unveiling of the Joint Future Leaders Academy, and the Plaque Unveiling for the Joint Beidou Satellite Navigation Remote Sensing Laboratory in China, underscores the university's global standing and commitment to international partnerships and academic exchanges.

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) played a pivotal role in the 'First Exchange Mechanism Conference of China-Africa Consortium of Universities and China-Africa Higher Education Dialogue.' This significant event, co-hosted by the China Association of Higher Education (CAHE) and the Association of African Universities (AAU), was a platform for fostering academic and cultural exchanges between China and Africa. It took place in Beijing between 5 and 7 September 2024, and UNIVEN's active participation underscored its commitment to international-

partnerships and academic exchanges.



*Dr Blade Nzimande, Hon. Minister for Science and Innovation, Unveiling the plaque for the Joint Laboratory on BeiDou Navigation Satellite System and Remote Sensing*

UNIVEN, in partnership with Beihang University, has been awarded a Joint Laboratory on BeiDou Navigation Satellite System and Remote Sensing by the South African and Chinese governments.



The Hon Minister for Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande, unveiled the plaque on 6 September 2024 at the Beihang University, Beijing campus.

The conference 'Development of Higher Education in China-Africa Cooperation Under the Digital Age' featured various activities aimed at deepening exchanges and cooperation in higher education between China and Africa at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing. During the conference, Prof Nosisi Feza, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Postgraduate Studies, presented a paper on the above topic. She said, 'The digital transition impacts all aspects of our lives, including work, its content, its organisation and design, and its regulation and protection. Africa cannot be seen to lag in this rapidly-growing higher education digitalisation age.'



*Prof Nosisi Feza, DVC Research and Postgraduate Studies, presented a paper during the conference*

At the 'China-Africa-UNESCO High-Level Dialogue on Cooperation in Education and Cultural Heritage Protection,' the University of Venda (UNIVEN) actively participated in policy dialogues, sharing practical experiences and collective actions. The Dialogue, organised as a side event of the ninth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), was jointly hosted by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO. The theme of the dialogue was 'Jointly Promoting Education Development and Cultural Heritage Protection in Africa.' High-level government officials, policymakers, scholars, and practitioners from the education and cultural heritage sectors in China, Africa, and beyond participated in the -

dialogue. Through these interactions, the University of Venda (UNIVEN) was able to underscore the importance of the tripartite cooperation mechanism involving China, Africa, and UNESCO, promote policy exchange and coordination among these entities, and explore strategies and programmes for cooperative development and implementation.

The UNESCO meeting was attended by countries' presidents, ministers of higher education, science, and technology, Vice-Chancellors, university presidents, and other dignitaries. It was mentioned by many of the country's representatives that it is high time that countries incorporated strategies for digitalisation, and there should be a focus on increasing access to education to build more capacity in technology and green technology.



*Prof Nosisi Feza, DVC, Research and Postgraduate, UNIVEN and Prof Zheng, Vice President, HBUT, unveil the plaque for the Joint Future Leaders Academy*

The high-level strategic conference in China occurred in Beijing, China, from 5-7 September 2024. UNIVEN's research strategy, outputs, and internationalisation agenda formed part of the discussion. The visit allowed a range of specific discussions for the faculties, administration, and management, as well as cross-cutting issues that will benefit the entire University. It would also position UNIVEN as a critical partner and player in the African region. In the engagements, the UNIVEN delegation, Prof Nosisi Feza, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Postgraduate Studies, and Dr Segun Obadire, Director International Relations and Partnerships, positioned and marketed the University and its competencies and areas of strength. It also provided the opportunity to engage with the senior management of participating institutions on mutually beneficial areas of collaboration.

## Muimeleli Munyadziwa wins the Best Oral presentation Award at the Annual Young Scientists' Conference



Muimeleli Munyadziwa, the Faculty of Health Sciences second-year PhD Student at the University of Venda wins Best Oral Presentation at the Annual Young Scientists' Conference 2024 held at the Nelson Mandela University from 09-11 September 2024.

Ms Munyadziwa achieved a significant milestone by presenting her research at the Annual Young Scientist Conference. This prestigious event was organized by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), and the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) in partnership with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), National Research Foundation (NRF) and Nelson Mandela University (NMU).

Munyadziwa presented her research during Parallel Session 3 under the theme "Transformative Education for Lifelong Learning."

Her work focuses on developing a trauma-informed curriculum for primary school teachers aimed at supporting learners who have experienced trauma. She emphasized the critical need for early intervention to mitigate long-term adverse effects and help children reach their full potential.

Driven by a deep passion for supporting children, Munyadziwa highlighted the importance of addressing trauma to ensure that young learners are not hindered in their development and future opportunities.

Her dedication to this cause, combined with the significant impact of her research, earned her the Best Oral Presentation Prize at the conference—a notable achievement for both her and the University of Venda.



This latest accolade is part of a series of recognitions for Munyadziwa, who has consistently demonstrated excellence in her field. Earlier in 2024, she secured the First Prize for the Best Poster and Experimental Setup at the University of Venda's Research Open Day Awards, marking her third consecutive year of winning this award. Her public health research journey, mainly focusing on childhood trauma, began during her master's studies, where she first showcased her work and received top honours.

Ms Munyadziwa's achievements, particularly during Women's Month celebrations in South Africa, serve as a powerful testament to the potential of women in academia. Her story of perseverance, despite challenges, and her pursuit of excellence in her field inspire all. Balancing multiple roles as a mother, wife, and nurse, she embodies determination and resilience, encouraging others to follow in her footsteps.

Munyadziwa expressed heartfelt gratitude to her supervisors, Prof Lufuno Makhado and Prof Angelina Maphula, for their invaluable mentorship and support throughout her academic journey.

Their guidance has been instrumental in shaping her path toward becoming a leading academic researcher, underscoring the crucial role of mentorship in academic success.

As the University of Venda celebrates her success, Munyadziwa's story stands as a beacon of inspiration for women in public health and all those striving to make a meaningful impact through their research.



*L-R: Prof Basitere, Muimeleli Munyadziwa and Dr Natisha Dukhi*

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## 2025 UNIVEN Online Applications for Admission and Hostel Accommodation are underway

Prospective students who intend to enroll for programmes of their choice with the University of Venda (UNIVEN) in the 2025 academic year, are hereby advised that the process of ONLINE applications for Admission and Hostel Accommodation is still open and will close on Friday, 27 September 2024.

Do not hesitate to apply online on or before the closing date to avoid frustration in the year 2025. To Apply, visit UNIVEN Website: [www.univen.ac.za](http://www.univen.ac.za)

**If you spot anything out of the ordinary on campus - contact the University Hotline by calling toll free number 0800 212 755 or email: [univenhotline@tip-offs.com](mailto:univenhotline@tip-offs.com)**

### **Improper conduct includes the following...**

- 1. Financial misconduct,**
- 2. Misuse or misappropriation of University assets,**
- 3. Health and safety risks,**
- 4. Plagiarism,**
- 5. Fraud and corruption.**