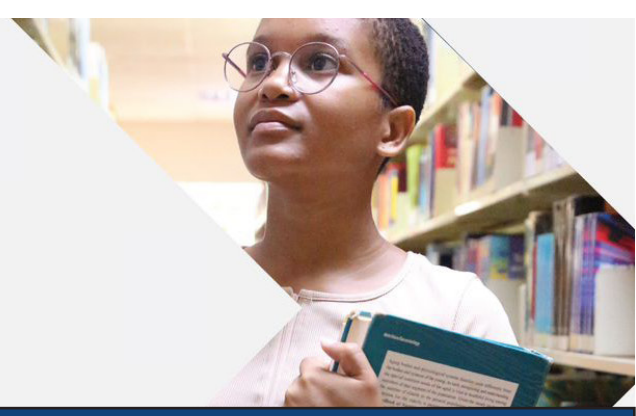




University of Venda  
Creating Future Leaders

# UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



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## Strategic Readiness and Performance Feedback: Paving the Way for UNIVEN's Future Success



The University of Venda (UNIVEN) recently convened a pivotal three-day session at the Monate Game Lodge in Modimolle from 25 to 27 February 2025, bringing together Executive and Senior Management committees to assess institutional performance and strategise for the future. This session was a critical review of the university's progress in 2024 and a stepping stone toward setting clear goals for 2025. The gathering's key focus was the review of the 2024 Annual Performance Plan (APP) and identifying critical strategies to achieve the university's long-term vision.

The session's opening was marked by a warm welcome from Prof Bernard Nthambeleni, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, who set the tone for an insightful and productive gathering.

A key theme throughout the session was aligning the university's 2024 performance with the plans and challenges ahead for 2025.

The Vice-Chancellor's presentation at the Strategic Planning Workshop focused on the University of Venda's long-term strategy, Vision 2040, and the institution's readiness for 2025. The session provided a comprehensive review of the 2024 performance, assessing institutional risks and ensuring alignment with strategic goals. The presentation underscored the importance of strategic planning in guiding the university's growth, optimising resources, and mitigating risks. A key component was the Mid-Term Strategy Review, which involved both internal self-evaluations by senior management and an external panel's objective assessment.

The review aimed to identify successes and weaknesses in the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan and provide recommendations for future improvements, setting the foundation for the next strategic phase (2026–2030).



The workshop addressed challenges in performance assessment, such as reporting delays, inconsistent documentation, and weak internal controls. The Vice-Chancellor stressed the importance of better record-keeping, stronger oversight, and clearer alignment between achievements and evidence. The session aimed to refine measurement metrics and prepare for institutional risks in 2025, ultimately supporting UNIVEN's long-term vision through accountability, strategic alignment, and effective governance.



Dr Mutshinyalo Ratombo, Director of Strategy and Risk, presented a detailed review of UNIVEN's performance, focusing on the ongoing implementation of its strategy. He highlighted challenges such as delays in data submission, performance reporting inconsistencies, and lack of portfolio of evidence, which could affect the annual audit.

Dr. Ratombo emphasised the need to meet the 2025 72% APP target, stressed management accountability, and the importance of real-time performance assessments. He called for better coordination, adherence to deadlines, and data accuracy. Additionally, he proposed introducing quarterly performance reporting in 2025 as a key improvement measure.



Another critical focus was the university's strategic risks. Mr Tinyiko Sibiyi, the Risk Officer, updated the risk register, highlighting key risk indicators and the proposed reporting templates and updates to the university's whistleblowing hotline.



Dr Sannah Mativandlela, Director of Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance (IPQA) shared her insights into the planning challenges identified in the 2024 APP and how the 2025 plans were set to address these issues. Her presentation underscored improvements and strategic developments for the upcoming year.



Regarding the enrolment and registration update, Dr Joel Baloyi, University Registrar, reviewed the status of student admissions and registration, detailing how the university plans to meet ministerial enrolment targets while tackling ongoing registration challenges.

The workshop included several presentations on the university's divisional performance from 2021 to 2024.

Dr Joel Baloyi, in his presentation, highlighted the Registrar's Division's achievements in implementing the University of Venda's strategic plan, particularly in Academic Administration, Student Affairs, and Institutional Governance. Despite some setbacks, the division successfully executed key interventions. Strategic recovery plans—including digitalisation, system improvements, policy enforcement, and stakeholder engagements—were proposed to enhance efficiency and student success.



Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Teaching and Learning, provided an in-depth analysis of the challenges and strategies for enhancing student success

and academic quality at UNIVEN. While students expressed general satisfaction with teaching quality, concerns were raised about staff shortages, poor infrastructure, inadequate support systems, and governance inefficiencies. The university aims to address these through improved institutional policies, investment in teaching resources, mental health support, and digital infrastructure, and a focus on student-centred interventions. Addressing these critical issues is essential to achieving sustainable academic excellence and institutional effectiveness.



Prof Joseph Francis, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research and Postgraduate Studies, underscored the importance of evidence-based decision-making, research commercialisation, and structural efficiency in achieving institutional strategic objectives. He pointed out challenges in gathering and utilising evidence, emphasised progress in research commercialisation, and addressed inefficiencies in postgraduate studies. He called for improved faculty engagement, better monitoring mechanisms, and the need to remove bureaucratic obstacles to foster a productive academic and research environment.



Mr Botwe Kraziya, Chief Operating Officer, outlined performance shortcomings and proposed recovery plans for underperforming areas. These reviews also covered infrastructure readiness, human resources, and budget projections for 2025. Mr Kraziya's presentation on strategic readiness emphasised the University of Venda's progress in security, infrastructure, Human Resources, finance, marketing branding and communication and governance while addressing key challenges. Major achievements included security enhancements, academic space refurbishments, improved financial systems, and HR digitalisation. The institution faced some hurdles in the Chief Operating Officer's division but recovery plans, such as automation, efficiency measures, and policy reforms, were implemented to ensure sustainable institutional growth and operational effectiveness.



Prof Modimowabarwa Kanyane, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management, Commerce, and Law, provided an update on the UNIVEN Graduate Business School's establishment. He emphasised the progress of the project, particularly its MBA programme, which aims for global impact through international partnerships with institutions in Africa, Asia, and the U.S. The programme incorporates emerging fields like AI and blockchain to boost competitiveness. With necessary approvals in place, the school is supported by strong governance, research in microfinance and innovation, and ongoing infrastructure development. Future plans include a friend raising dinner, expanded executive courses, and partnerships with universities and industry leaders to enhance its global presence.



The workshop also afforded Dr Thakhani Takalani, spearheading UNIVEN Continuing Education (UCE), a PTY entity within UIGC, an opportunity to share a presentation on UCE. He highlighted the strategic vision of UNIVEN Continuing Education (UCE) as a key driver of income generation and academic expansion at the University of Venda. By offering short learning programmes, consultancy services, and expanding partnerships, UCE aims to enhance access to education while achieving financial independence. Strengthening collaboration with university faculties, increasing online learning, and securing more partnerships with government agencies and private entities are essential for its growth. With the right support and strategic implementation, UCE can potentially contribute to the university's financial sustainability and academic impact.

On the final day of the workshop, Prof Nthambeleni, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, shared the university's strategic vision for 2026-2040, aligning participants with both long-term goals and immediate actions. The vision focuses on four key areas: a student-centred approach to improve employability and academic performance, prioritising entrepreneurship, research, and innovation to boost income and collaborations, promoting sustainability and cultural diversity through health and environmental programmes, and strengthening internationalisation and partnerships to enhance visibility and research funding. Prof Nthambeleni also thanked the groups that presented these strategic thrusts.

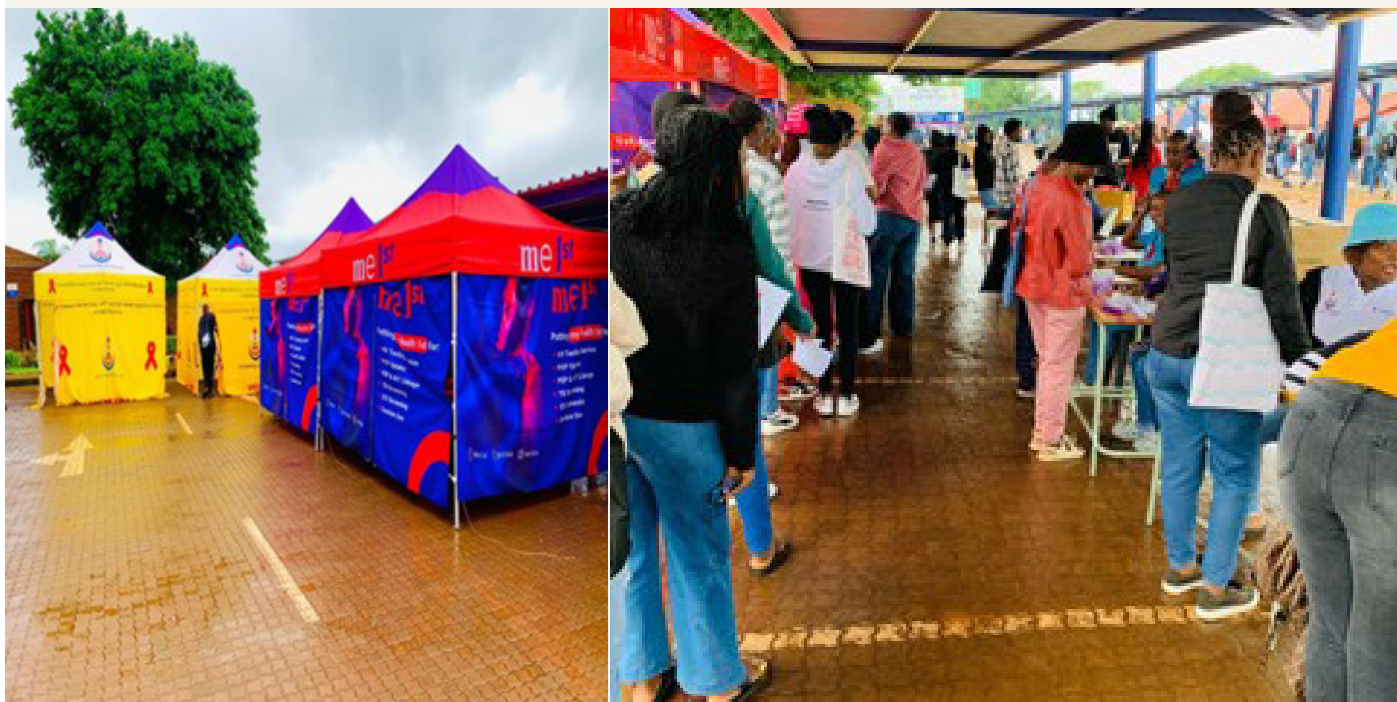
The session concluded with a high-level recap and a strong commitment to moving forward with actionable plans for 2025.

Prof Kanyane's workshop recap centred on strategic readiness for the University of Venda, highlighting the importance of positioning the institution for long-term excellence, impact, and relevance. Key priorities were outlined with a forward-looking vision extending 15 years beyond 2025. These include enhancing governance through effective consequence management, ensuring compliance with HR processes, and rolling out an Automated Monitoring and Reporting Framework by March 2025. There was also a significant emphasis on improving academic output, refining risk management practices, and ensuring accuracy in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Operational concerns are equally crucial, such as upgrading student accommodation standards, safeguarding exam integrity, incorporating

advanced technology with robust cybersecurity protocols, and addressing system inefficiencies. Moreover, the University aims to streamline its Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) and ensure the 2040 strategy approval process is concluded by September 2025. Prof Kanyane summarised the key resolutions and set the direction for the next strategic implementation phase. This comprehensive review and planning process ensures that UNIVEN will continue strengthening its position and reaching new heights as a leading educational institution.

As the university gears up for 2025, the collaborative efforts of the leadership team and their focused approach to institutional risks, strategy, and performance will undoubtedly shape the future of UNIVEN for years to come.

## **A total of 816 students and staff received counselling and HIV testing during the recent Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Campaign**



*Students queuing for HIV Testing Services by Campus Health, Me 1st and PAPSWA*

Peer education one of the main strategies of promoting general health and wellness of university students to graduate alive. From 06 - 08 February 2024, the UNIVEN HIV Coordinator Ms Maggie Hlungwani and the UNIVEN Health Promoter, Ms Alvina Muhali spearheaded a transformative Peer Education Training Workshop.

This training is coordinated at the beginning of every year to equip, develop student's skills and knowledge, enabling them to deliver accurate information and guidance to students who are seeking health and wellness and psychosocial support in a nonjudgemental approach.

During this three-days workshop, young leaders gathered at Student Parliament Hall for an immersive session aimed at empowering them with knowledge to assist other students to graduate alive and healthy.



*Ms Maggie Hlungwani facilitating the training*

Through dynamic methodologies and engaging activities, participants delved deep into crucial topics such as the Peer education, Roles and qualities of a good peer educator; Basic HIV/AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs), Tuberculosis (TB), Gender Based Violence (GBV), Mental Health, Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP); Counselling Skills; Communication Skills; Alcohol and Substance abuse Prevention; and Monitoring and Reporting. The total number of 75 students were trained.



*2025 Newly trained Peer Educators with facilitator Ms Maggie Hlungwani (second row right), and Ms Alvina Muhali (second row left)*

Campus Health conducts awareness campaigns quarterly to encourage University students and staff to gain knowledge to avoid HIV and other STI's; unwanted pregnancy; reduce the high drop-out rate; sexual gender-based violence; address mental health issues and promote health.

From 10 – 14 February 2025, Campus Health conducted an STI, Condom and Pregnancy awareness campaign. The campaign was conducted following the National Health Calendar to raise awareness of the importance of the use of condoms to prevent STI and unplanned pregnancy. The week served as a reminder to prioritise sexual health, reduce STI transmission and combat the spread of HIV and AIDS. During the campaign students and staff were screened for blood pressure, blood sugar level, HIV, TB, and STIs to encourage and promote their health. Different health IEC materials regarding TB, Cancer, STIs, GBV, Contraceptives, Mental Health, Alcohol and Substance abuse were distributed. Partners from PAPSWA and Choice Trust (known as Me 1st) were available to render service to the LGBTQI+ community within the campus and giving out PrEP and family planning.

Throughout the week, different activities were conducted, students were empowered with knowledge and resources to make informed choices about STI, HIV, Contraceptives and PrEP by Peer Educator. The campaign was supported by the SRC Minister of Health and Safety Ms Fhulufhelo Ravhandalala. A total number of 3364 students accessed these services through IEC materials. A total of 816 students and staff received counselling and were tested during this campaign. 260 were first entering students.

Campus Health distributed gift packs with condoms as a preventive measure to all students who attended the event at Law parking.



## First-Year Accountancy Students Receive Motivation Ahead of 2025 Academic Year



*Accountancy students during their departmental orientation session*

The Department of Accountancy at the University of Venda held a motivating and informative orientation session for its first-year students on Monday, 10 February, at Lecture Hall E1. This session aimed to prepare the new cohort for their academic journey and inspire them for the challenges ahead in the 2025 academic year.

Mr Aluwani Phineas Mudau, an academic trainee in the Department of Accountancy, delivered the keynote address, sharing his personal journey from being a Cum-Laude graduate in the University's Bachelor of Accounting Sciences programme to completing his Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting Sciences (PGDA) at the University of Johannesburg. He also spoke about his current pursuit of becoming a Chartered Accountant (CA(SA)) through his academic articles. His story resonated with students, showing what perseverance and dedication can lead to in accounting.



*Prof Freddy Munzhelele welcomes first-year accountancy students*

The session continued with welcome remarks from Prof Freddy Munzhelele, Head of the Department of Accountancy, who emphasised accountants' vital role in South Africa and globally. Prof Munzhelele encouraged students to seek help whenever they face challenges, assuring them that the department's faculty is always ready to assist.

Mr Muhali Ndou, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Accountancy, further encouraged students to take their studies seriously, reminding them that their success is in their own hands.



*Mr Genius Katekwe, during his presentation on ethics*

One of the highlights of the orientation was a session on professional ethics led by Mr Genius Katekwe, which highlighted the importance of ethical conduct in the accounting profession.

Ms Malanga Pandelani, a member of the Association for Black Accountants in Southern Africa (ABASA) Limpopo Chapter, introduced students to the benefits of joining ABASA, an organisation that supports the growth and development of black accountants in South Africa.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks from Mrs Caroline Tshikhovhokhovho, Senior Lecturer and Chartered Accountant (CA(SA)) in the Department of Accountancy, who expressed gratitude to the students for their participation and encouraged them to remain committed to their studies.

This orientation session served as an essential introduction to the programme's academic demands and inspired students to approach their studies with confidence and ambition, with the support of the University of Venda's dedicated Accountancy department.



*Mrs Tshilidzi Nemalili during the opening of the departmental first-year orientation session*

**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.**