



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

UFH NEWS

MAY 2022





Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza SC reappointed for another five-year term as UFH Chancellor

The University of Fort Hare Council has approved the re-appointment of Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza SC as Chancellor of the University for another five-years.

Adv Ntsebeza was originally appointed Chancellor in 2017, joining the list of luminaries that have occupied this seat before, such as Makhenkesi Stofile, Justice Thembile Skweyiya, Govan Mbeki, Sibusiso Bhengu and Oliver Tambo.

Born in Cala in the Eastern Cape, Adv Ntsebeza was admitted as an attorney in 1984 practicing in the Eastern Cape, mainly in the area of human rights. He represented several political prisoners throughout the 1980's and 1990's.

In 1995 he was appointed as Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) where he became Head of the TRC's Investigative Unit and Head of its Witness Protection programme.

He has been instrumental in the founding and leading of various structures and organisation in South African legal fraternity, such as Founder and President of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL) and President of the Black Lawyers Association (BLA), just to mention a few.

He served as a Commissioner on the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry in Darfur, a position he was appointed to by the then UN Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan. In 2012 he was appointed by the Socio-Economic Rights Institute (SERI), as Lead Counsel on behalf of the families of the 37 Marikana miners who were killed by the police.

Since his original appointment as Chancellor, Adv Ntsebeza has received further recognition in several areas.

He has been nominated and appointed as Ombudsman by Cricket South Africa and was also appointed as a Judge of the African Court for Human and Peoples' Rights.

Adv Ntsebeza serves as a Council member of the University of Cape Town and has chaired the SAICA Ethics Inquiry. He was nominated by Rhodes University for a Doctor of Law [LLD (honoris causa)], which was conferred at the April 2021 graduation ceremony in recognition of his outstanding lifetime achievements and contributions to society, locally and internationally.

He has also been appointed by the South African Parliament to a three-member panel chaired by retired Constitutional Court Judge Bess Nkabinde to investigate the fitness of the Public Protector to hold her position.

UFH Council Chairperson Bishop Ivan Abrahams said: "Adv Ntsebeza is an illustrious alumnus of our institution, and an outstanding citizen of South Africa. We are grateful that he remains willing to serve his alma mater in this important capacity."

NEW APPOINTMENTS



Ms Tania Holmes-Watts joins UFH as the Executive Operations Manager (EOM) - Office of the DVC: Research, Partnerships and Innovation

The University recently appointed Ms Tania Holmes-Watts as the EOM in the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Partnerships and Innovation. Ms Holmes-Watts assumed her new role from the beginning of April 2022.

Ms Holmes-Watts has served in research management capacities advancing, developing and supporting research excellence for 15 years within the public higher education sector, as well as at the National Research Foundation (NRF)

Her highest qualification is a Masters in Social Science Research Methodology from the Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology (CREST) at Stellenbosch University. Currently, Ms Holmes-Watts is preparing the submission of her doctoral thesis for examination in June.

Prior to joining the University of Fort Hare, Ms Holmes-Watts held the position of Research Grants Manager at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) since 2009 where some of her duties comprised strategic planning, facilitating stakeholder-buy-in, intervention design, implementation, monitoring, budgeting, compliance, reporting, staff supervision, client-liaison, and policy development, among many others. Prior to that, she served as Professional Officer at the NRF.



Dr Reshma Subbaye joins UFH as Executive Operations Manager (EOM) - Office of the DVC: Teaching and Learning

Dr Reshma Subbaye is the EOM in the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning.

She joined the University on the 1st of May 2022, bringing with her a decade of middle to senior management work experience in higher education and institutional research.

Dr Subbaye holds a BSc with majors in Information Systems (UNISA) and an MBA (UKZN). Her PhD (UKZN) focuses on the topic of teaching in academic promotions in research universities.

She is a National Research Foundation C-rated researcher and a trained problem-based learning facilitator with advanced project management skills. She has experience in mentoring professional staff, including research supervision of those seeking Masters and Doctoral qualifications.

Prior joining UFH, Dr Subbaye was the Director of Monitoring, Evaluation and Research in the Directorate of Institutional Planning and Research at the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT). In this position, she was responsible for: coordinating institutional performance analysis and reporting; contributing to academic and enrolment planning and preparations for resource allocations; leading institutional research projects and conducting data analysis; overseeing HEMIS compliance and reporting to DHET and other stakeholders; and compiling various reports including annual university reports.

During this period Dr Subbaye served as Acting Senior Director of Strategy Coordination in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor. Prior to this position she was an institutional researcher in the University Teaching and Learning Office at UKZN.

Welcome to the University of Fort Hare.

UFH empowers Amathole West Maths Learners

On the 11th of May, about 800 Grade 12 Mathematics Learners from schools in Amathole West Education District in the Eastern Cape filled the Alice Campus Sports Complex for a Calculator Use Training Workshop and the handing over of scientific calculators to each learner.

The workshop that was organised by the University's Maths Department comes after a 2021 NRF-funded study on calculator provisioning in the Grade 12 mathematics jointly led by UFH DVC: Teaching and Learning, Professor Renuka Vithal, and Wits University's Professor Karin Brodie found that nearly one-third of learners (34%) in the District do not own calculators and only 41,9% of learners have been taught to use calculators.

An initial training was conducted to empower more than 70 teachers from the District. As part of the pilot study, teachers were provided with calculators, past mathematics exam papers, and Department of Basic Education (DBE) matric maths diagnostic reports.

The workshop for the learners focused on the proficiency and efficiency use of a calculator with the aim of improving the Matric Maths pass rate in the province. In addition to the calculators, the learners were also provided with past maths papers. The training was provided by Dr Odilo Ndiweni who is the Head of UFH Maths Department.

The event was graced the Vice-Chancellor Prof Sakhela Buhlungu and the Deputy Vice chancellor - Teaching and learning, Prof Renuka Vithal.

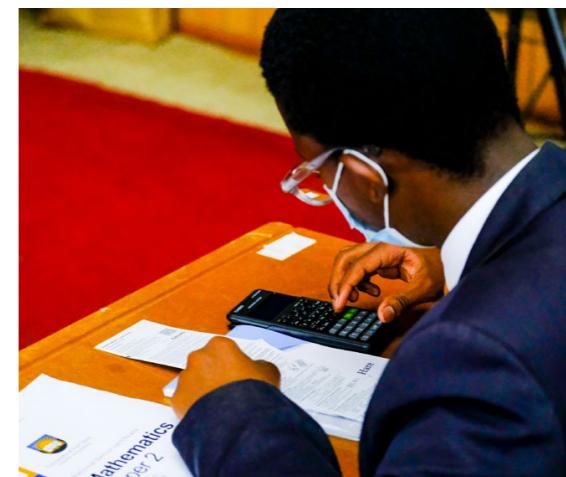
Addressing the learners, Prof Vithal who is a former mathematics teacher, said they were very special and were the cream of the crop. She urged the learners to take special care of their future as it is in their hands. Vithal urged them to pass mathematics with higher marks in order to gain access at university. "The only way to say thank you to this project is do really well in your exams."

The VC reminded learners that "Failing was not an option and passing with a good mark is what is needed. In you we see the future to run the country and its economy," said VC.

According to Mr Cakata from the District, in 2020, the District did not perform well in the National Senior Certificate exams, however through various UFH interventions, the District saw a spike in its performance in 2021.

The interventions include the Winter High-Flyer programme which involves the tutoring of Grade 12 learners. "We are looking forward to strengthening such programmes," he said.

Prof Vithal promised to track the current year performance and see if it reaches the targeted percentage of 70%.



May Graduation - UFH awards 3 161 qualifications while celebrating 42% increase in postgrad qualifications

A total of 3 161 graduands walked the stage to receive various qualifications from the institution during the 2022 May Graduation ceremonies held from the 18th to 19 May.

Altogether, 2 490 undergraduate and 862 postgraduate (including Postgraduate Diplomas, Masters and PHD) were conferred during the ceremonies spread across the three days.

Postgraduate qualifications made up one-third (27,2%) of qualifications that were awarded and the number of students graduating with postgraduate qualifications from the Institution increased by 42%, year-on-year, compared with 2021's graduation ceremony.

The highest percentage increase was recorded at Masters level with a 313% year-on-year increase (2022: 95 vs 2021:23). This was followed by Honours qualifications that increased 66,5% year-on-year (2022: 598 vs 2021: 359) and PHD qualifications which increased 87,5% year-on-year (2022: 45 vs 2021:24).

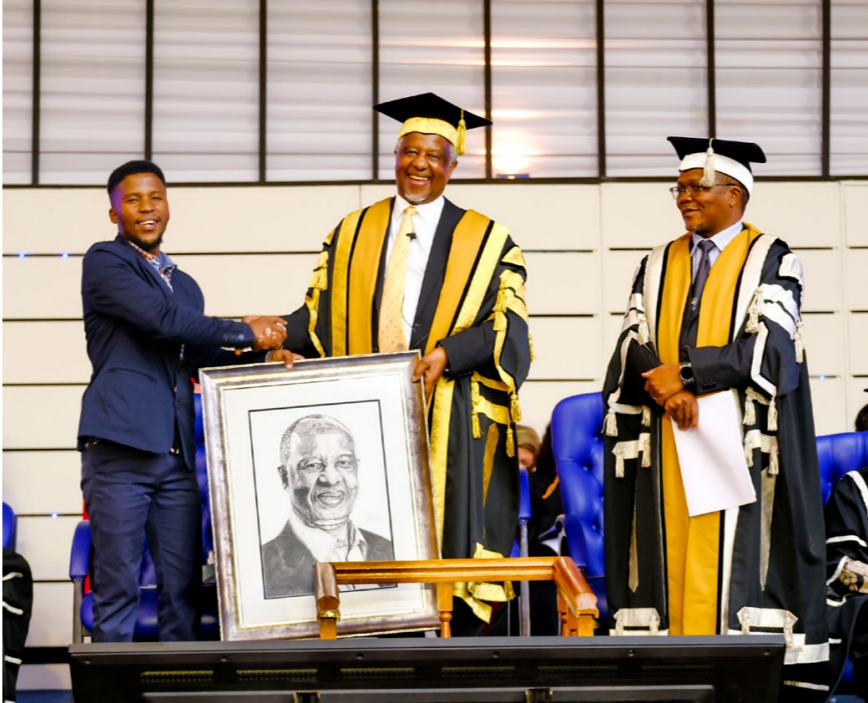
The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities produced 18 PHD qualifications, followed by the Faculty of Science and Agriculture (11), and the Faculty of Education (9). For Masters qualifications, the UFH Faculty of Science and Agriculture produced 26 graduates, followed by the Faculty of Health Sciences (20), and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (18).

In the undergraduate graduation category, the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities with 807 graduates held the largest number of graduates from all UFH faculties. The Faculty offers various qualifications in the fields of Music, Arts, Library and Information Science, Theology, Communication, Social Science, Human Settlement, and Social Work.

The second-highest number of undergraduate graduates were from the Faculty of Science and Agriculture (746). The Faculty celebrated graduating 40 additional graduates in comparison to last year. The Faculty of Education, with 711 graduates, had the third-highest number of undergraduate qualifications.

Congratulations to all our graduates and welcome to the list of esteemed UFH Alumni.

Photos: Tim Wilson







“At first I was intimidated being the youngest in my class, however, thanks to the support from my lecturers and peers, I soon found my feet and gained confidence. I am glad I chose Fort Hare because life on campus was a great experience.”

Zintle Dunga bags her first degree at 19

At age 19, Zintle Dunga is the youngest graduate capped during the 2022 UFH May graduation.

The aspiring Data Analyst graduated with a Bcom Degree in Information Systems (IS).

Originally from Willowvale in the Eastern Cape, Zintle was raised by her loving maternal grandparents.

She started school (Grade 1) when she was five years old and sailed through all her grades as the youngest learner in all her classes. She passed her matric with a Bachelor's pass at Nqabara Senior Secondary School in 2018 at age 16 and enrolled at Fort Hare the following year – a decision she says she will never regret.

“At first I was intimidated being the youngest in my class, however, thanks to the support from my lecturers and peers, I soon found my feet and gained confidence. I am glad I chose Fort Hare because life on campus was a great experience.”

The purpose of the UFH IS degree is to equip graduates with a variety of specialist skills in areas such as hardware and software development and programming, systems analysis and database systems and design.

Career opportunities in the field of Information Systems include Systems or Business Analysts; Project Managers; Information officers; Database administrators; ICT Consultants; Web Designers; Programmers and Systems Architects.

“I have gained a lot of knowledge, especially from the practical assignments we did. With this degree, I feel prepared to start a career in the Information Systems field,” she said.

During her studies, Zintle lived with her mother, Andisiwe Dunga, whom she regards

as her role model. “My mom is my greatest supporter. She always believed in me and my dreams.”

Ms Dunga who works as an Administrative Clerk at the Home Affairs Office in East London said: “As a child and throughout her life, failure was never her portion. Despite being the youngest in all her classes, her mind was advanced. She was inquisitive and always wanted to know how things worked and why they worked that way. She always strived for the best.”

Dunga, who is BAdmin and Human Resource graduate admits that she feared for her daughter when she applied for university at the tender age of 16 turning 17.

“She never left the province before and I was worried that she might not cope. I was at ease when she chose Fort Hare as her university of choice because it was closer to home and that meant she could live with me.”

“She is my one and only child and I am grateful that I was able to be there for her, emotionally and physically during her university studies. I am thankful to my parents for raising such an obedient, focused and strong young woman. My prayer for her is to study further and become the youngest PhD graduate.”

Dunga attended the graduation ceremony to celebrate with her daughter.

Zintle said: “I never imagined that I would be the youngest graduate to be capped. I am excited and feel honoured. I am inspired to achieve even more.”

By Aretha Linden
Photo: Tim Wilson

Meet our triple PhD Graduate

Dr Zandisile Dweba graduated with a Doctoral Degree in Theology during the 2022 UFH May graduation. This is his third Doctoral Degree from UFH.

He obtained his first PhD in Social Sciences in 2010 followed by a Doctor of Public Administration in 2017.

Dr Dweba who is a seasoned Human Resources and Leadership Practitioner is also our oldest graduate this season, at age 65.

The former gold miner's journey at Fort Hare started in 1981 when he enrolled for a Diploma in Public Administration which he obtained in 1984. He went on to complete his Bachelors and Honours Degrees from the University of South Africa, a Master Degree from University of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela University) and an Advanced Post Graduate Diploma in Strategic Human Resource Management with the University of Oregon.

Over the years, Dr Dweba has held several senior and executive management positions in both the public and private sectors such as the Anglo American Corporation, Coca-Cola SA, Telkom SA, the South African South African Police and the East London Industrial Development Zone.

"I served in the position of Chief HR Officer at Fort Hare before I started a family Management Consulting business which I currently head as its CEO. I also supervise and mentor some Fort Hare research students," he stated.

For his current doctoral research, Dr Dweba sought to assess the clergy leadership capabilities of the Ethiopian Episcopal Church in South Africa, and suggest

strategies that could be implemented to mitigate the leadership competency gaps.

The most compelling findings of his study was the confirmation of the inadequacy of clergy training.

The study also found large support for regulating admission to priesthood and ordination.

Open discussions on the church's doctrine, vision and mission were recommended, to capacitate the clergy with strategic leadership and an understanding of the direction of the church.

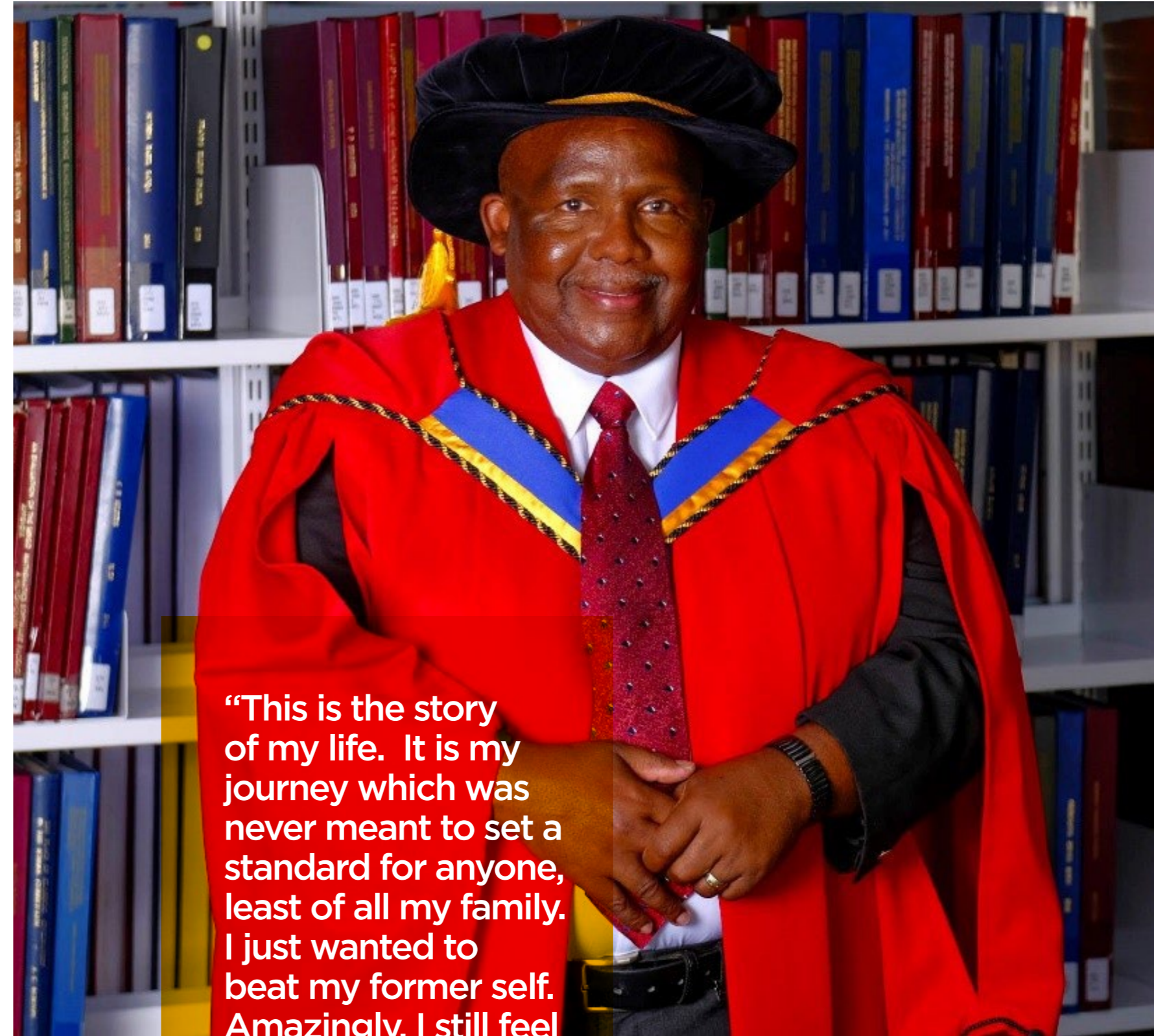
In the past two years, while reading for his PhD, Dr Dweba has published five articles in accredited peer-reviewed journals.

Commenting on being a triple PhD graduate, Dr Dweba borrowed from Ernest Hemingway's words which are as follows: *"There's nothing nobler in being superior to your fellow men. True nobility lies in being superior to your former self"*.

"This is the story of my life. It is my journey which was never meant to set a standard for anyone, least of all my family. I just wanted to beat my former self. Amazingly, I still feel so much energy to do more," he said.

Dr Dweba is married with three children.

By Aretha Linden
Photo: Tim Wilson



"This is the story of my life. It is my journey which was never meant to set a standard for anyone, least of all my family. I just wanted to beat my former self. Amazingly, I still feel so much energy to do more"

South Africa's first woman to graduate with a PhD in chemistry from UFH

Pamela Rungqu from Bathurst in the Eastern Cape has blazed the trail by being the first South African woman to graduate with a Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry from the University of Fort Hare.

The daughter of a domestic worker and a former store manager, Pamela who was born fourth of five children is also the first graduate in her family.

"I was born in a small rural town where I completed my Primary and High School. We had no Physical Science teachers, no laboratories and no computers in our schools."

Despite the lack of a physics teacher, Pamela developed an interest for chemistry while she was in Grade 11. "I became fascinated by the study of the composition, structure and properties of matter and I knew I wanted to pursue a career in the field."

"However, without a physics teacher, I knew it was not going to be easy and that I needed extra help. While in Matric I attended a Winter School Programme in Port Alfred, about 14 km from Bathurst. With the assistance from the lessons and tutoring sessions from the winter school, I was able to scale through and pass with flying colours."

Pamela passed her matric with distinction and applied to Fort Hare to study for a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Computer Science in 2008. "I chose Fort Hare based on its rich history and the quality of graduates it has produced."

"At first, life on campus took a lot of adjusting. I had to learn to use a computer because I only had the theoretical understanding and had no practical knowledge."

Despite the disadvantages she experienced at the start of her education during her primary and high school years, Pamela was able to study Chemistry to PhD level.

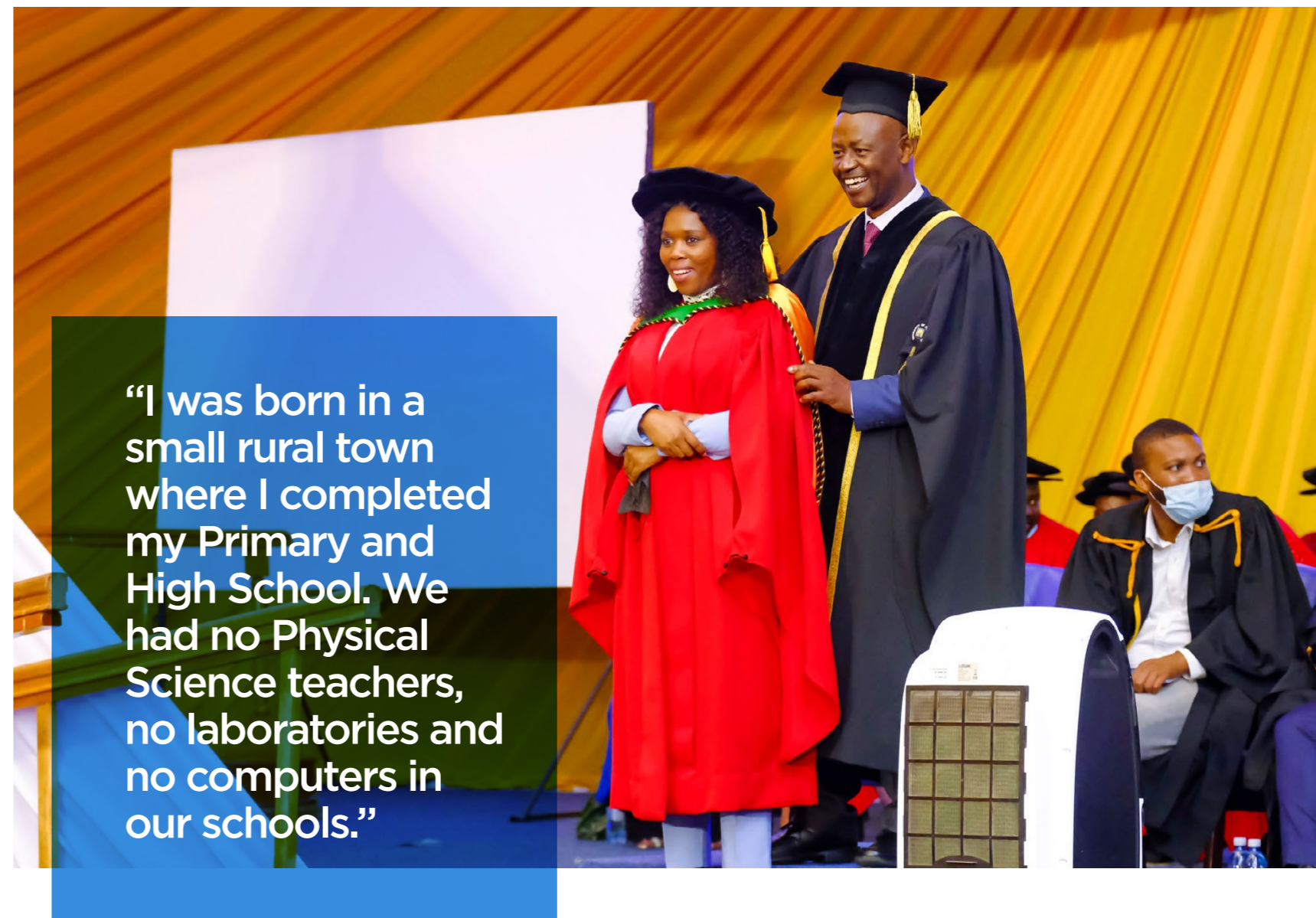
Her Honours, Masters and PhD study Supervisor, Prof Opeoluwa Oyedele said: "Pamela was such a dutiful and responsible student proving that determination and focus was the key, not her background."

According to Prof Oyedele, Pamela was his first Honours project student in 2012 when he joined the UFH Chemistry Department. "At the time she joined my research group there was no bursary for her, nonetheless, she was focused and completed her Honours degree. She graduated and proceeded for her Master and Doctoral study with me as her project/ research supervisor."

"Fortunately, we had a joint NRF-Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) funding project on medicinal plants used by traditional healers in the Eastern Cape for 2013-2015. She was among the students that benefitted from the funding along with Sasol stipend which enable her to complete her MSc with much ease."

During her MSc degree, she published two articles:

1. Rungqu P, Oyedele OO, Avoseh ON, Aremu SO, Nkeh-Chungag BN, Songca SP, Oluwafemi SO, Oyedele AO (2016). *Anti-inflammatory activity of the essential oils of Cymbopogon Validus (Stapf) Stapf ex Burt Davy from Eastern Cape, South Africa. Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Medicine, 2016: 1-6.* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.apjtm.2016.03.031>
2. Avoseh O, Oyedele O, Rungqu P, Nkeh-Chungag B, Oyedele A (2015) *Cymbopogon Species; Ethnopharmacology, Phytochemistry and the Pharmacological Importance, Molecules 2015, 20, 7438-7453; doi:10.3390/molecules20057438.* <http://www.mdpi.com/1420-3049/20/5/7438>



"I was born in a small rural town where I completed my Primary and High School. We had no Physical Science teachers, no laboratories and no computers in our schools."

On completing her MSc study, she immediately registered for her PhD in 2016, which was funded fully by Sasol.

Her PhD research is centered on the chemical composition, analgesic and anti-inflammatory activities of two Pelargonium species and Hypoxis species for medicinal use. Her findings suggest that the essential oils from the species collected can be used for pain management and arthritic inflammatory conditions, therefore, validating the plants' use in traditional medicine for pain and inflammation.

During her PhD journey, she traveled to Mauritius and the USA where she presented part of her findings. She has also published a book chapter from her thesis and is currently writing five manuscripts from her dissertation.

Pamela says she hopes her accomplishment will serve as motivation to young girls and boys who come from a similar background as hers.

"I am excited and also in disbelief that a child from a rural school, like me, will become the first South African woman to be conferred a PhD Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry from the University of Fort Hare. This is validation that your background does not limit how far you can go and what you can achieve in life."



Doctoral study highlights ineffectiveness of national credit act (2006) in dealing with over-indebtedness of SA households

Policy intervention through the National Credit Act (2006) has been ineffective in dealing with the over-indebtedness of South African households – this according to Mope Mabitle who graduated with a Doctor of Commerce degree from the University of Fort Hare.

Mabitle (49) is currently working as an Area Manager for popular fast food outlet McDonalds South Africa. He oversees a team of 200. He matriculated in Lesotho, and completed an undergraduate degree from Rhodes University of Fort Hare where he obtained both his Honors and Master's qualifications. In between his studies, he worked at Eskom as a Management Accountant, as a Business Consultant at Business Partners and as Sales Manager at Capitec.

Mabitle's thesis investigated factors that influence South African household debt at the macro level and micro level, explored the impact of the National Credit Act on household debt in South Africa, investigated various components of household debt at the micro-level, and examined the movement of household in and out of debt.

Experiencing first-hand the levels of debt entrapment by South African households while working in the banking sector inspired Mabitle to academically dig deeper into an issue affecting South African livelihoods.

"What intrigued me about this household behaviour was how the poorest segment of the population are the ones that are persistently borrowing to meet their basic needs", he said.

"The findings of my study were that household debt was mainly driven by consumption smoothing, and that the level of interest rate was not necessarily a deterrent for the household to borrow. Counterintuitively it was found that households tend to borrow more as the interest rate increases suggesting that they borrow to keep up with repayments," said Mabitle.

The results also showed that the policy intervention through the National Credit Act (2006) has been ineffective in dealing with over-indebtedness, he said.

"The study also found a higher transition frequency in and out of debt on loans that are normally accessed by the poorer households suggesting higher levels of debt entrapment and the persistence of debt at lower-income levels."

"What intrigued me about this household behaviour was how the poorest segment of the population are the ones that are persistently borrowing to meet their basic needs"

Mabitle said both the ordinary South Africans and financial institutions stand to benefit from his research.

"Ordinary South Africans can learn to be vigilant about the pit holes of debt entrapment that they can avoid if they are informed on all dynamics of household debt.

Mabitle strongly spoke against the banking sector.

"Financial institutions continue to find loopholes in NCA in pursuit of profit. They will not only cause financial harm to households, but high debt levels have a negative effect on the economic growth of this country," he said.

Mabitle advises people to save more.

"The general South African public need basic understanding of the nature and evolution of cases where debt can lead to problems as it will increase their understanding of why this can happen and so inform responses which seek to alleviate or prevent 'problem debt'."

Mabitle said studying and working at the same time was challenging and a balancing act.

"The environment of fast food retail demands time. Managing a team of over 200 staff is also demanding. Discipline and consistency helped to complete my studies."

Commenting on studying at UFH, Mabitle said: "The PHD output that the institution produced in the past years is very impressive. The accessibility to your promoter at all times is a huge advantage."

Armed robbery shooting survivor graduates against all odds

Fikile Ngcani from Comfimvaba in the Eastern Cape was shot in the head during an armed robbery in Johannesburg on the 18th of May 2008.

Fourteen years later to the day of the incident, (18 May 2022) he was conferred a Bachelor of Arts Degree during the UFH May graduation.

The shooting left the 40-year-old paralyzed on the right side of his body, caused damage to his bladder and speech impairment. He uses a walking frame to get around.

Recalling the incident, Fikile said: "I went to the local store to buy airtime. When I was about to enter the store, I heard gunshots and an order to lie on the floor, which I did. I was shot while lying on the floor, face down," he said.

After spending three months recovering in hospital, he decided to move back to the Eastern Cape.

"I lived with my grandmother who had no means of income. We only had one meal a day and there was no money for transport to attend physiotherapy sessions. I became hopeless," he said.

However, a strong desire to go back to school restored his hope for a better life.

"I dropped out of school in Grade 11. I knew it would be difficult to get back into the schooling system but I was determined.

"Fortunately, he was accepted at a local school where he was placed in the Grade 10 class at age 28. He passed his matric with a Bachelor pass in 2013 at the age of 31.

"My matric bachelor pass was my ticket to university."

He applied to UFH and initially studied towards a BCom Degree in Business Management and Industrial Psychology.

In 2016 while in the second year of his BCom study, Prof Willie Chinyamurindi (Business Management HOD) nominated him for an essay writing competition organized by JUTA and company (PTY) LTD. The competition sought to recognize students who inspire others despite their struggles.

Prof Chinyamurindi said the quote Fikile wrote in his essay which was "My footsteps may be slow but I will get there," applies to of all us in the different types of conditions we struggle with as human beings. "Fikile's story is testament that with proper guidance, support and understanding, we can all get there."

Fikile won the competition and walked away with R40 000 cash prize. Click here to watch the surprise announcement: <https://youtu.be/S6dmiunwM9w>

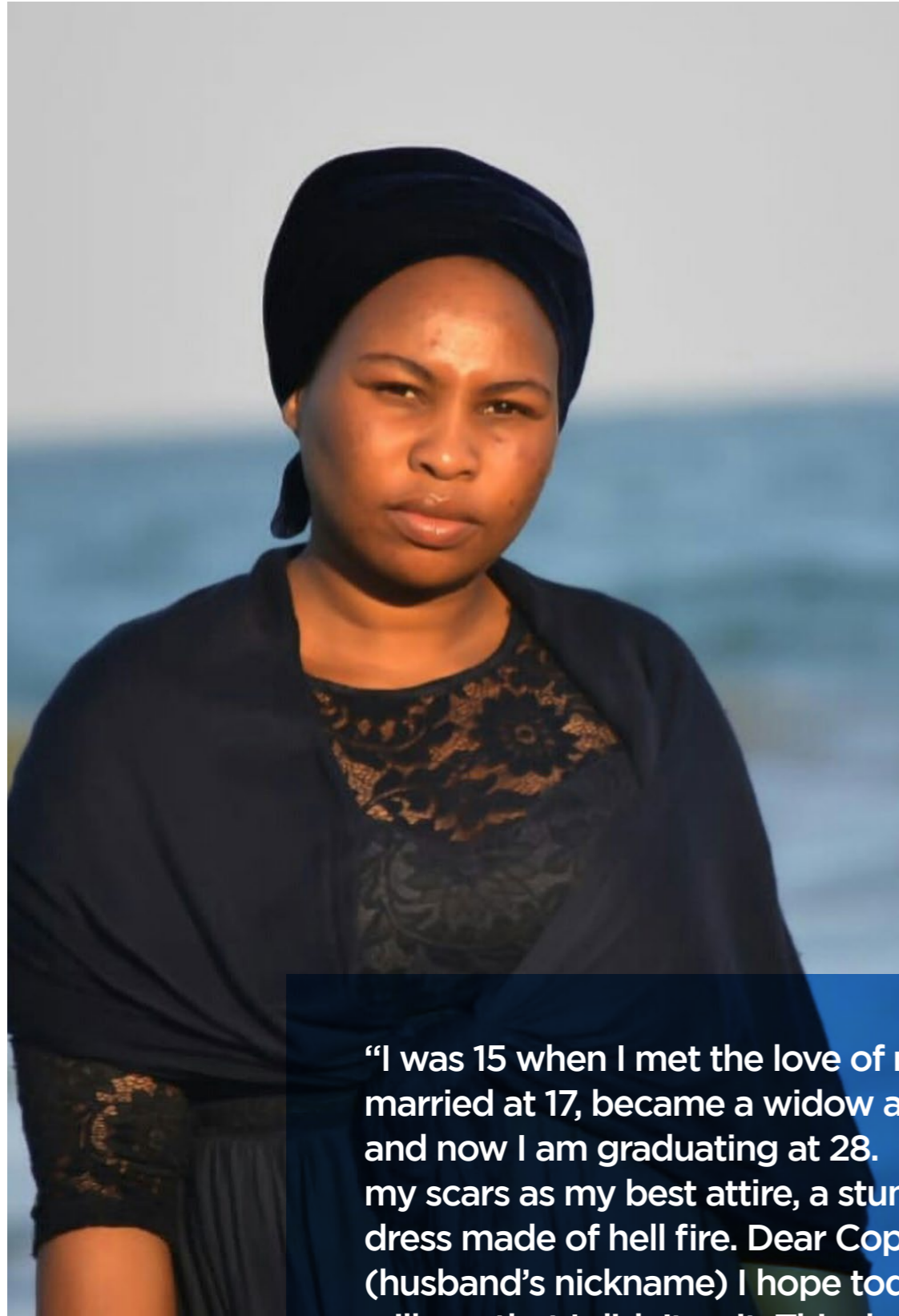
Unfortunately, he was unable to complete his BCom Degree due to some challenges. He then enrolled for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 2019. Using only one hand to write, he managed to complete his degree in the prescribed three years.

He had this to say about his graduation: "It is only now that I realize how far I have come from the day of the shooting. I had so many obstacles stacked against me but I never gave up."



"It is only now that I realize how far I have come from the day of the shooting. I had so many obstacles stacked against me but I never gave up."





“I was 15 when I met the love of my life, married at 17, became a widow at 25 and now I am graduating at 28. I wore my scars as my best attire, a stunning dress made of hell fire. Dear Cophelisa (husband’s nickname) I hope today you will see that I didn’t quit. This degree is my inheritance from my husband and I dedicate it to him.”

Young widow dedicates law degree to late husband who encouraged her to study

While sometimes in the name of culture and tradition, it is believed that a wife should stay with her husband and take care of her family, Precious Xaba’s husband defied that belief. Instead, he encouraged his young wife to leave their marital home in Mzimkhulu to pursue a university degree.

Sadly, Precious’ husband passed away before he could see her graduate.

The 28-year-old graduated with a Bachelor of Laws Degree on the 20th of May. Her husband passed away in 2019 while she was in her third year of study.

Precious shared her story with UFH News. “I met my husband when I was 15, he was my first love. We got married when I was 17 and I was enrolled for a BCom Degree at the time. However, due to the belief by some of the villagers that a makoti’s (African Bride) duty is to take care of her husband and birth him many children and not to be in school, especially university, I dropped out. However, my husband went against that belief and encouraged me to go back to school and get an education.”

Precious left her husband who was an Artisan and her daughter who was three years old in Mzimkhulu and made her way to the UFH East London campus where she was enrolled for a Law Degree. She commenced her studies in 2017.

“It was not easy being almost 500km away from my family. There were times when I wanted to drop out but my husband kept encouraging me, saying he wants his wife to become the first graduate makoti in the village, so I stayed on.”

Tragedy befell in 2019 when her husband, who had just finished building their dream home, fell ill and passed away. “He spent only four days in our new home and was admitted to hospital. I had to leave in the middle of my exams and go home. When I was at the hospital, I had a conversation with one of the Doctors where I mentioned that I felt like dropping out of university to take care of my ill

husband. While lying in his death, he overheard the conversation. Unable to speak, my husband lifted his hand and signalled his disapproval with my suggestion to drop out.”

Her husband was diagnosed with a brain abscess and passed away within one week.

“After his burial, I was clad in black as a sign of mourning his death and I returned to campus to fulfil his dream for me.”

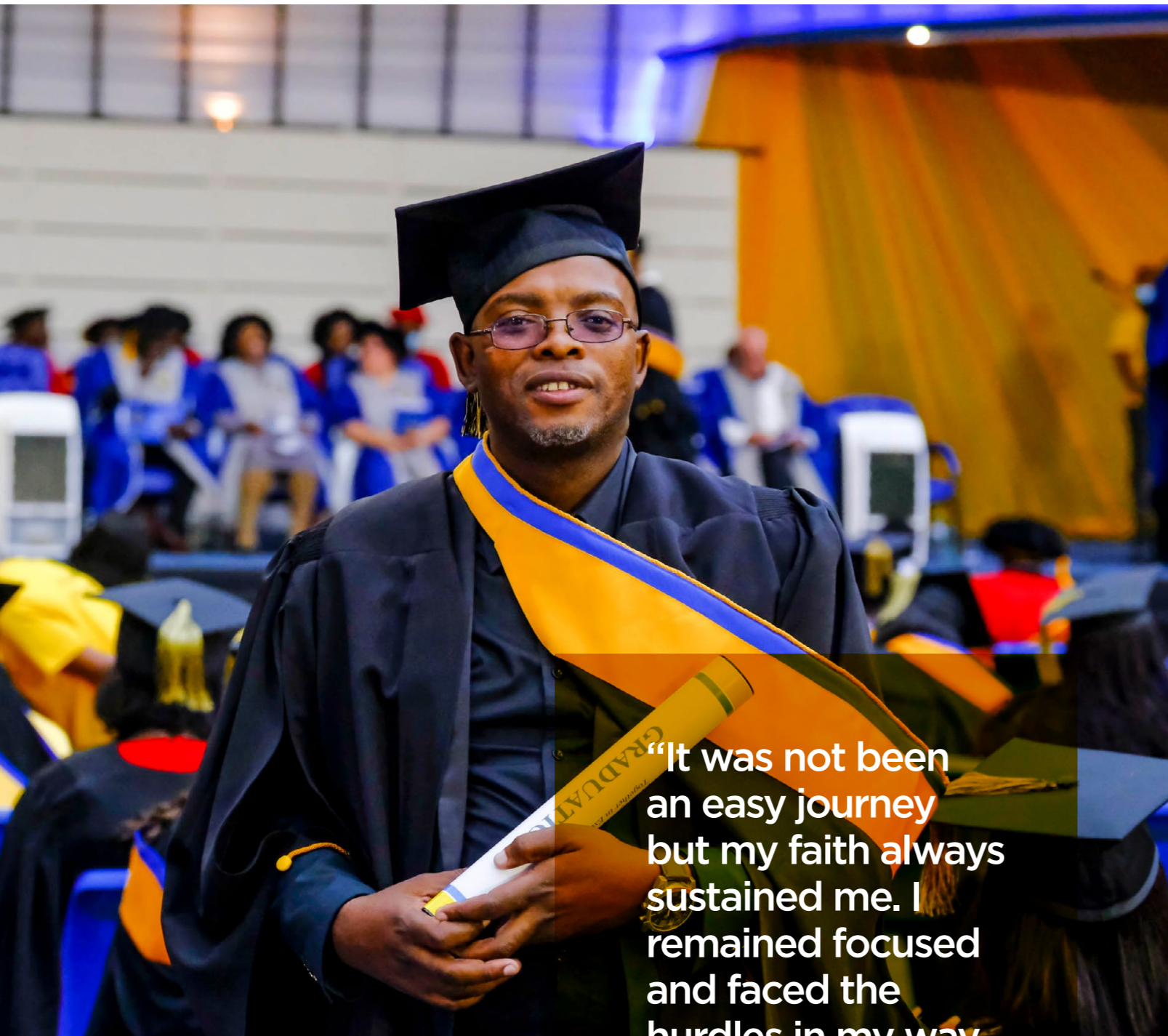
Continuing the journey without her partner who had been her pillar of strength and “go-to-person” when exams stressed her, proved to be difficult. “I shared a lot of tears and had near-collapsing moments while on campus and during my lectures.”

Sharing her pain, the Lecturers and staff at the Faculty of Law organized counselling sessions for her with the University’s Student Counselling Unit. “If it was not for the staff and Lectures at the Faculty of Law, I would never have made it. They held me through my studies and I will forever be grateful to them,” she said.

According to her, since completing her degree she has been approached by some of the makotis in her village requiring assistance to enrol at university. “I started a group which I named: The Sky is the Limit, where I help them with university and NSFAS applications.”

Precious has since worked as a paralegal and had a brief stint at a law firm where she did her articles in criminal law. She also has been to several job interviews. She hopes to publish a book detailing how she overcame all the adversities stacked up against her.

“I was 15 when I met the love of my life, married at 17, became a widow at 25 and now I am graduating at 28. I wore my scars as my best attire, a stunning dress made of hell fire. Dear Cophelisa (husband’s nickname) I hope today you will see that I didn’t quit. This degree is my inheritance from my husband and I dedicate it to him.”



“It was not been an easy journey but my faith always sustained me. I remained focused and faced the hurdles in my way heads on. I am finally graduating despite the challenges”

Music producer beats brain disease and graduates with a bachelor of music

After producing music as a Sound Engineer for over two decades, Sinethemba Bili aged 43 enrolled at UFH to put a qualification behind his music career, last week he graduated with a Bachelor of Music.

Sinethemba who hails from Pirie Trust in Dimbaza in Eastern Cape has worked with various local artists, such as the Lord of Comforters and Stars of Tomorrow gospel groups.

He started his music career in his late teen playing the keyboard in church.

“I always had a passion for music and wanted to learn and educate myself within its discipline. I enrolled at UFH Music Department and finally found my niche,” said Sinethemba who hails from Pirie Trust in Dimbaza in Eastern Cape.

As a Bachelor of Music graduate, he majored in Jazz Piano Performance, Music Technology, Contemporary Arranging and Advanced Harmony.

He commenced his studies in 2016. However, his journey to graduation hit a snag in 2018 when he fell ill and was diagnosed with meningitis - an inflammation (swelling) of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord.

“This was a difficult time for me as I was writing my dissertation. I had to put a halt on my studies and focus on my health.”

He spent two months in hospital and a few more months recovering at home. In 2019 he decided to give it another try at pursuing his studies. “I enrolled again, not fully recovered, but I was determined to further and complete my studies.”

He continued his studies in 2020. Upon his return, Sinethemba was appointed as a tutor at the Music Department in 2021 and earlier this year he joined the Eastern Cape Audio Visual Centre (ECAVC) staff as a Sound Engineer.

“It was not been an easy journey but my faith always sustained me. I remained focused and faced the hurdles in my way heads on. I am finally graduating despite the challenges.”

On his graduation day, Sinethemba was accompanied by his lovely wife who he regards as his greatest supporter.

He intends to give back to the community by sharing his musical talent and knowledge by teaching music to young underprivileged children.

“I cannot wait to see what opportunities await me. I want to inspire other students who might see obstacles as limitations to see beyond what they see and envision greater sights,” he said.



“We started our undergrad journey together, we had to conclude it together. We worked hard to get to this stage and graduating was a moment for us to celebrate.”



Acts of compassion make young man’s graduation day possible

Twenty-four-year-old Siphamandla Magananda had no plans of walking the graduation stage to collect his Bachelor of Science degree, sadly because he had no means of affording an attire to wear to this significant occasion in his life.

The young man from Dutywa, the first graduate in his family, took a selfless decision to miss this milestone to relieve his single mother, who solely depends on his younger siblings’ government child grant, from the costs.

However, his friend and classmate, Sakhumzi Kwaza and staff from the Vice-Chancellor’s Office and the Fort Hare Foundation rallied together to make the day possible for him.

On the 20th of May, Siphamandla walked the stage draped in the dignified black and gold UFH Alumni Blazer and a full graduation attire - thanks to acts of compassion that were set in motion by a letter written by Sakhumzi to the VC, highlighting Siphamandla’s plight.

Part of Sakhumzi’s letter that was emailed to the VC, unbeknown to Siphamandla read as follows: “I am asking for help from you, if you have something please help him. I have R200 towards the hiring of a graduation attire for him, which costs between R550 and R900.”

Within hours of receiving the email, the VC’s office staff sprang into action. Ms Zuki Mabombo who is the Manager of the Office and Khanyi Gola, who is a Senior Administrator, located the two friends and spoke to Siphamandla to find out how they could assist him.

According to Ms Mabombo, his plea was to get a suit and a graduation attire. “We offered to secure him a Fort Hare blazer instead and he was delighted, saying he would be honoured to wear the black and gold blazer.”

The blazer was secured through the Institutional Advancement Office.

Ms Nokulunga Mngqetha, Fort Hare Foundation Director and Ms Mabombo topped up the R200 contribution by Sakhumzi to make the total amount to hire the graduation attire.

Speaking ahead of his graduation, Siphamandla said he was overwhelmed with emotions. “I had no hope of attending graduation because I know the financial situation back home, does not allow.”

“I am grateful to everyone involved in making my graduation day possible. It really means a lot to me,” he said.

The two friends who met in 2018 during their first year are currently doing their Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computer Science.

Sakhumzi said he was unwilling to walk the stage alone, without his friend. “We started our undergrad journey together, we had to conclude it together. We worked hard to get to this stage and graduating was a moment for us to celebrate.”

Delivering his opening speech during the Faculty of Science and Agriculture graduation ceremony the VC mentioned the two friends and shared their story with the graduands and parents in attendance.

The VC commended Sakhumzi and the staff involved for being good Fort Hare citizens and congratulated the duo.

Doctoral thesis leading way for government's newly gazetted freshwater fishing policy

A University of Fort Hare doctoral graduate's thesis is leading the way for government's newly gazetted National Freshwater (Inland) Wild Capture Fisheries' Policy which focuses on how fisheries can benefit communities through sustainable harvesting.

Munetsi Zvavahera believes this will go a long way to help impoverished communities at least benefit from freshwater fishing. "However, a lot needs to be done and researched on the practicalities and sustainability issues. Further, communities may require education on the benefits of protecting their aquatic systems and also harvesting sustainably," he said.

His study is titled "*Aspects of the ecology of the estuarine round-herring *Gilchristella aestuaria* (Pisces: Clupeidae) and its small-scale fishery potential,*" and supervised by Associate Prof Niall Vine of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture.

The main objectives of his doctoral study was to investigate the characteristics of estuarine roundherring populations found in different areas; to determine the relationships between estuarine roundherring and other fish species; assess the nutrient composition of different populations of estuarine roundherring; and to find out if quantities of estuarine roundherring are large enough to allow sustainable harvesting.

Zvavahera graduated with a BSc Honours degree from Midlands State University in Zimbabwe in 2004. After graduating he then worked as a high school teacher for several schools in Zimbabwe and South Africa before deciding to enrol for an MSc in Zoology in 2014 at Walter Sisulu University in South Africa.

He joined the University of Fort Hare in 2017. "I persevered during the period of uncertainty and refused to drop out of my studies. In September 2018, I received funding from ACEP Puhlisa with the help of faculty members of UFH Faculty of Science and Agriculture my fisheries journey began," Zvavahera said.

"Balancing studying and being a husband and a father to three sons was never easy."

Academically, he faced a series of challenges along the way, however, the challenges taught him to be resilient.

Asked why he chose the University of Fort Hare for his doctoral studies, he said the university was a rural university that supported the nature of his study that seeks to improve food security and livelihoods for the rural poor communities.

In addition to this, Zvavareha says his research had shown he would be supervised and mentored by dedicated individuals as the department was well established.

Zvavareha said small fish species are widely used for food security and nutrient security across the world however, the utilisation of such small fish species is missing for South African coastal and inland fisheries.

"Considering that South Africa has more than 5400 impoundments across the country, many impoundments not used for fisheries present a missed opportunity to eradicate poverty, hunger and improve livelihoods for the poor," he said.

Moving with the current research paradigm that focuses research on benefitting the communities or people, Zvavareha said, the research looked at how one of the abundant fish species could become a beacon of hope in improving rural livelihoods.

The biology of estuarine roundherring was well researched, however, the possibility of harvesting introduced populations in freshwater systems has not been fully explored. Similar species, however, across the world play a central role in the eradication of nutrient deficiency diseases and creating employment for many.

"Given the nutritive value of estuarine roundherring, he saw potential in small-scale fisheries utilisation since his research mainly focused on small impoundments that are smaller than 10 hectares in size. The potential of export can be explored if the research can be done on larger impoundments," he said adding that Estuarine roundherring is of ecological importance in the estuarine environments



"Considering that South Africa has more than 5400 impoundments across the country, many impoundments not used for fisheries present a missed opportunity to eradicate poverty, hunger and improve livelihoods for the poor"

hence the species has attracted research interest for researchers.

Other small fish species are used in parts of the world that include the Lake Tanganyika sprat, Dagaa and Mukene, Omene and Usipa and Chisense. "The species estuarine roundherring has a short generation time which entails high biomass generation over a short period. The species has a high establishment rate which enables it to establish itself when introduced to novel environments. Population grows rapidly and which means the need for regular stocking or restocking and stock enhancement is reduced, which makes it an ideal species for rural fisheries

where communities may lack expertise, resources for enhancement and restocking," said Zvavahera.

Unlike many fisheries species, estuarine roundherring is a low tropic species which means it can grow with less need for stock feeds, making it a cheaper species to deal with. Harvesting of estuarine roundherring requires low technologies such as seine nets, making it affordable for poor communities who may not be able to maintain high-tech equipment such as motorised boats. Processing of the fish is fairly cheap requiring less energy and mainly affordable methods such as sun drying, salting or smoking which impoverished communities can at least afford.

SIX SRC MEMBERS GRADUATE

Congratulations to six Student Representative Council (SRC) members who have recently graduated.

The key role of SRC members is to advise and support the delivery of effective and efficient student support services and managing and administering student representation at different levels. The six graduates executed this role while successfully managing their own studies.

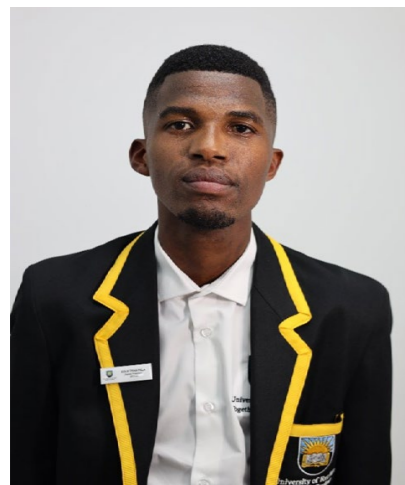
During the graduation ceremonies, the Vice-Chancellor Professor acknowledged and commended them. "What these six young people have done is to

demonstrate that they can lead, represent students and pass their courses and get their degrees."

The VC further applauded the role played by the SRC in solving students' issues and their willingness to always negotiate for amicable solutions to student problems.

"This accomplishment is important because it shows that, above all, you must always prioritize your studies and not deter from what you came here to do - which is to obtain a qualification."

By Asaduma Baloyi



Name: Xola Tshayela
Position: ISRC Deputy President
Qualification: Bachelor of Arts



Name: Fezile Mtyide
Position: ISRC Deputy Secretary General
Qualification: Post Graduate Certificate in (PGCE)



Name: Bongisisa Mtoti
Position: Treasurer
Qualification: Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)



Name: Xollie Mtamzeli
Position: SRC EL Academic Officer
Qualification: Bachelor of Social Science



Name: Aphelele Matinise
Position: SRC Alice Student Services
Qualification: Bachelor of Science in Geography & GIS



Name: Lindokuhle Mveleli
Position: SRC Alice Premier
Qualification: Bachelor of Administration in Public Administration



UFH CELEBRATES AFRICA

To mark the importance of Africa Month which is observed annually in May, the University lined-up several celebratory activities and events during the month of May.

Africa Month is a commemorative event to acknowledge the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor of the African Union (AU) on 25 May in 1963.

The event is intended to celebrate AU's successes in the fight against colonialism and apartheid while celebrating the progress that Africa has made and also reflecting on continental challenges.

"The University of Fort Hare is the cradle of African leadership with our notable alumni luminaries. This commemorative event holds a special place for the University."

This year the African Union selected the theme: "Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent: Strengthening Agro-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for the Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development."

The Fort Hare activities included Cultural dance, poetry, music and artwork, and exhibitions on African food and traditional medicines to celebrate the African cultural diversity that exists at the University.

Also, various UFH faculties collaborated to exercise public scholarship in the form of thought leadership and opinion-editorial pieces to provoke public conversations on developmental agendas for the African continent.

"The University of Fort Hare is the cradle of African leadership with our notable alumni luminaries. This commemorative event holds a special place for the University. We are grateful that various support functions across the University came together to create a festival line-up for our student communities, but also for the general public by harnessing synergies," said Dr. Nthabi Taole-Mjimba, UFH's DVC: Research, Partnerships and Innovation.

Published Opinion Pieces:



“Africa wake up. Stop paying lip service to public health funding.”
 - Dr Kevin Onyenankeya, UFH Senior Lecturer and Head of Communication Department.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/co...>



“Not Yet Uhuru – rethinking the meaning of African Freedom on Africa Day,” - Prof Willie Chinyamurindi, Head of the UFH Department of Business Management.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opin...>



Dr Chris Allsobrook, Director at UFH’s Centre for Leadership Ethics (CLEA) penned an opinion titled: Everyday Living in Africa with Dignity in Vitality, he was featured on eNCA for an Africa Day discussion.

https://youtu.be/4mel_0XzcFM



“Africa Day calls for spotlight on food security crisis,” – Dr Siyabulela Fobosi, Senior Researcher at the UFH Unesco ‘Oliver Tambo’ Chair of Human Rights: Faculty of Law.

<https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/...>



“Partnerships key to improving health system and food security for Africa,” - Prof Charles Mutengwa and Dr Alen Manyevere, senior lecturers, Faculty of Science and Agriculture, University of Fort Hare

OPINION | Partnerships key to impro...



PROF MINKLEY WINS PRESTIGIOUS HSS BOOK AWARD FOR CO-EDITED VISUAL HISTORY BOOK

Prof Gary Minkley who is our SARCHI Chair in Social Change has won the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences' prestigious HSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) Book Award for a book co-edited with Prof Patricia Hayes, SARCHI Chair in Visual History at the University of Western Cape.

Titled: ***Ambivalent: Photography and Visibility in African History***, according to Prof Minkley the focus of the book is to argue that Africa has its own histories of light, rather than continuing to be seen as the 'dark continent' and as a laboratory for northern and Eurocentric approaches and interpretations that continue to relegate knowledge and the visual to its own forms of subjection and dominant mastery.

"That is why in our subtitle we refer to photography and visibility – of wanting to make visible the important ways in which this new generation of African scholars challenged and overturned many aspects of these Eurocentric paradigms and offer alternative forms and histories of visibility and photography on the continent in an 'expanded milieu'. As such, the book and the authors aim to 'unfix' race and visibility and to offer new, cross-disciplinary and innovative alternative African readings and interpretations of photography and visibility on the continent," he explained.

In its seventh year, the awards are open to South African publishers, scholars based in South African universities and independent artists linked to universities.

According to Prof Minkley the project originated in a newly established postgraduate Visual History course developed at UWC by Prof Hayes and himself while he was still at UWC in the late 1990s.

"After I moved to UFH, we have continued to work together and jointly developed a strong focus on visual history and photography at both UWC and UFH. In particular, the postgraduate courses and subsequent masters and doctoral research undertaken by emerging scholars attached to the Visual History focus area and through the Chairs enabled the emergence of new approaches and interpretations of photography and visibility on the continent and we wished to showcase some of this important new work done by African scholar located on the continent, rather than in the 'North'."

The book was first published at the end of 2019 by the prestigious Ohio University Press in their New African Histories Series. However, partly due to Covid 19, and a concern for it to be available locally, it was subsequently published by Jacana Press in May 2021 as a local edition.

Giving an outline of the argument and approaches to the book Prof Minkley said: "Going beyond photography as an isolated medium to engage larger questions and interlocking forms of expression and historical analysis, *Ambivalent* gathers a new generation of scholars based on the continent to offer an expansive frame for thinking about questions of photography and visibility in Africa.

"The volume presents African relationships with photography – and with visibility more generally – in ways that engage and disrupt the easy categories and genres that have characterised the field to date. Contributors pose new questions concerning the instability of the identity photograph in South Africa; ethnographic photographs as potential history; humanitarian discourse from the perspective of photographic survivors of atrocity photojournalism; the

nuanced passage from studio to screen in postcolonial digital portraiture; and the burgeoning visual activism in West Africa."

"As the contributors show, photography is itself a historical subject: it involves arrangement, financing, posture, positioning and other kinds of work that are otherwise invisible. By moving us outside the frame of the photograph itself, by refusing to accept the photograph as the last word, this book makes photography an engaging and important subject of historical investigation. *Ambivalent's* contributors bring photography into conversation with orality, travel writing, ritual, psychoanalysis and politics, with new approaches to questions of race, time, and postcolonial and decolonial histories."

The book's contributors are largely postgraduate students in the Visual History Research programme.

In the award letter from Prof Sarah Mosoetsa, the CEO of the National Institute for the annual HSS Book, Creative and Digital Collections Awards stated that: "to honour outstanding, innovative, and socially responsible scholarship that enhances the Humanities and Social Sciences' she states "Thank you for the exceptional role you play in redefining the Humanities and Social Sciences landscape in South Africa".

Congratulations Prof Minkley.



"The volume presents African relationships with photography – and with visibility more generally – in ways that engage and disrupt the easy categories and genres that have characterised the field to date."

UFH AND WINDESHEIM UNIVERSITY PARTNER FOR RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

A delegation from the University of Fort Hare comprised of staff and students from the Department of Social Work and Social Development under the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities recently visited Netherlands to participate in an International Week for Health Care and Social Work Faculties, hosted by the Windesheim University of Applied Sciences.

According to Prof Ulene Schiller, Deputy Dean Teaching Learning and Community Engagement at the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, the visit was a direct result of a collaboration that was forged about six years ago.

“The collaboration was sparked in 2016 when myself and a colleague from Windesheim University met in the Netherlands to explore opportunities to work together. The partnership started with the two Social Work Departments working together on their undergraduate research project and after steady collaboration in the past five years, both Universities have now expressed keenness to explore broader collaborations that could involve more departments and faculties,” said Prof Schiller.

The programme was held in April and the UFH team that participated in the International Week included: Prof Schiller, Ms Robyn Coleman who is a second-year PhD candidate and Mr Lubabalo Genda, Ms Nicole Canham, Ms Yentl Temmers, Ms Chwayita Lisani, Ms Akhona Dayi-Mseleni, Ms Aneza Mafanya, Ms Nasiphi Tona who all Masters students in the Department. The opportunity was made possible this year through the UCDG funded project and sponsorship from Windesheim University.

The event brought together professionals in this field to network, and exchange research ideas and approaches. “The students were exposed to international presenters who presented on various topics which enabled perspectives and lenses to be broadened, discussed and challenged.”

“During our stay, the UFH delegation was fortunate enough to experience the most prestigious and festive public holiday in the Netherlands called King’s Day which fell on the 27th of April. King’s Day is when the country of the Netherlands celebrates the Royal King’s birthday. It is a day filled with fun and celebration, due to covid-19 the celebrations had been on hold for two years and this year (2022) the festivities and environment were exuberant. All festival-goers wear orange which is the traditional colour of the monarchy and the symbol of Dutch patriotism,” explained Prof Schiller.

On one of the days, the students accompanied one of the Social Work Lecturers from Windesheim University to an addiction centre. “This was a wonderful learning opportunity for the UFH students and they also had the opportunity to liaise with some of the students from Windesheim to share some practice experiences.”

The UFH Masters students also developed a presentation to share with the international cohort of students and lecturers about Social Work in South Africa, UFH’s approach to Social Work and four areas of specialisations were selected and discussed.

“The presentation began with an introduction and explanation of South Africa’s incomparable magnitude for cultural and language diversity, reflected uniquely on the National Anthem. The students then sang the National Anthem presenting the uniqueness of its diversity.”



“This was a wonderful learning opportunity for the UFH students and they also had the opportunity to liaise with some of the students from Windesheim to share some practice experiences.”

“The experience was indeed unique, eye-opening and definitely a step outside of our comfort zones. The students embraced the hospitality that they experienced and were proud South African and Forterian ambassadors. The Department would like to thank both the UCDG funders and Windesheim University’s sponsorship that made this dream a reality,” said Prof Schiller.



Fort Hare and Higher Health put students' wellbeing at the fore

The UFH Students Counselling Unit (SCU) in conjunction with Higher Health launched a Wellness Leaders Project with a particular focus on mental health. The project is aimed at improving students' wellbeing.

The launch was held on the 10th of May at the Student Centre on the Alice Campus.

SCU Head, Ms Thobeka Msengana urged students to take the lead and own interventions needed for their wellbeing. "We need to reimagine mental health and place students at the centre".

The Director of Programmes at Higher Health, Ms Thobekile Finger highlighted the importance of involving students' in matters that concern students. "Nothing about us outside us. Mental health issues should always be located within the local context so that we get relevant solutions to it," she said.

She mentioned some contributing factors such as religious and cultural issues and beliefs such as "men do not cry", power dynamics and the transition from home to the university that could talk to dependency syndrome - sugar daddy issues.

Dr Mariana Oelofsen from the UFH GBV Prevention Unit encouraged students and staff to work together against the culture and scourge of violence. She called on all to stand for what is right and report all forms of violence to the unit making use of the contact number that is available 24/7.

"We should all strive towards wellness, people should always be happy," The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu pointed. He also encouraged students to part take in the small group programmes at residence level and called on the bridging of generational gaps between young and old. The VC also acknowledged the roles that parents at home and university authorities should play to ensure the wellbeing of students.

By Mawande Mrashula





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