



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

UFH NEWS

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EC ALUMNI CHAPTER OFFICIALLY LAUNCH THE STUDENT DEBT CAMPAIGN

Getting To Know Prof Lungisile Ntsebeza Newly Elected Council Chair



Visual credit for photograph: Lerato Mokhethi, University of Cape Town (UCT).

“I do not have any doubt that the Council I will be chairing is much stronger than the Council I joined at the end of 2021. My role is to ensure that the gains Council has made are defended and that lessons from our shortfalls are used to build on our achievements.”

In June 2023, the University announced the election of Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza as Chair of Council.

Respected in South Africa and abroad as a socially engaged researcher and scholar, Professor Ntsebeza has devoted his career to the struggles of social movements representing the disadvantaged. His contributions to theory, practice and research has explored the intersections of land and equity, democracy and social movements in the land sector.

In 2020, Professor Ntsebeza received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Leiden in the Netherlands for outstanding contributions in research and scholarship. The same institution conferred an Honorary Doctorate on UFH alumnus and former South African President, Mr. Nelson Mandela in 1999. Professor Ntsebeza is also the recipient of the prestigious NRF Hamilton Naki Award which he received in 2017.

Currently, Professor Ntsebeza is a Senior Research Scholar at UCT, as well as an Emeritus Professor in African Studies and Sociology. He held the SARCHI chair for land reform and democracy in South Africa, and the AC Jordan Chair in African studies.

He traces the start of his career to UCT where he enrolled for postgraduate studies in 1987. In 2004, he joined UCT as an Associate Professor and was promoted to Full Professor of Sociology and African Studies only three years later.

He holds a PHD in Sociology from Rhodes University (RU), a Master’s degree from the University of Natal, and an Honours degree from the University of Cape Town (UCT). Professor Ntsebeza obtained a BA in Philosophy and Political Science during incarceration in the late 1980s for organising study groups that explored alternatives to apartheid.

In 2021, Professor Ntsebeza was appointed to the Council of the University of Fort Hare.

“A lot has been achieved by the UFH Council in meeting its targets set up in our turnaround strategy of 2021.

“I do not have any doubt that the Council I will be chairing is much stronger than the Council I joined at the end of 2021. My role is to ensure that the gains

Council has made are defended and that lessons from our shortfalls are used to build on our achievements,” he said.

“Universities are public institutions, benefitting from taxpayer money. It is imperative for institutions of higher education to demonstrate how public resources are channelled back to the broader communities, specifically the historically and currently disadvantaged communities that comprise the vast majority of South Africa,” said Professor Ntsebeza.

Professor Ntsebeza believes in the importance and potential of UFH as a leading university in decolonial studies. He said Fort Hare is in a unique position to assume this role.

Born in Cala in the Eastern Cape, Professor Ntsebeza’s commitment to his home province ushered in a watershed moment for democracy. In 2014, Professor Ntsebeza’s research was critical in determining the outcome of a case that resulted in a landmark Bhishe High Court ruling in favour of South Africans living under tribal authorities.

Dr. Siphokazi Koyana, who served as Acting Chair after the resignation of Bishop Ivan Abrahams as Council Chair in March this year, was re-elected again as Deputy Chair of the UFH Council.

Bishop Abrahams resigned from Council in March this year due to significant obligations (including international travel) as General Secretary of the World Methodist Council, which represents a body and associations of Methodist churches in nearly 140 countries.

The UFH community extends deep appreciation to Bishop Abrahams for leading a new UFH Council immediately after the administration period of the University, and also to Dr. Koyana for overseeing Council affairs between March and June in an acting role.

The UFH community wishes Professor Ntsebeza the very best in his role and journey as the esteemed institution continues a bold journey into a new future to ascend as a powerhouse of research, teaching, learning and engagement on the African continent through institutional renewal.

Message from Council Chair

I am writing to update you on Council business, following the meeting of the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr BE Nzimande, with Council on 23 June 2023.

On 27 June 2023, the second ordinary Council meeting for the year took place. In the wake of the meeting with the Minister, it was decided to defer the issues the Minister had raised, which were widely reported, to a special Council workshop that will take place before the next ordinary Council meeting. Once the workshop has taken place, a formal Council response will be submitted to the Minister.

At its meeting, Council approved the Quarter 1 Performance Report, which is the management report on progress made towards realising the objectives as set out in the Annual Performance Plan 2023, which was approved by Council in December 2022, and which will be reported on to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The Annual Performance Plan for 2023 is aligned with the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, *Towards a Decade of Renewal*.

Given that the 2022 financial audit had not yet been completed, Council could not approve the 2022 Annual Report. Once the audit has been completed, the financial statements and other relevant sections of the Annual Report will serve at the Audit, Risk and Information Technology Committee (ARITC) before coming back to Council for final approval. The financial statements have already served at the Finance and Procurement Committee (FAPC). It was agreed that the University would be seeking from DHET an extension on the submission date for the 2022 Annual Report.

I am pleased to announce that Council has approved the purchase of Nashua House, a building in the University precinct in East London. This will go a long way towards consolidating the East London campus and resolving the space pressure. The newly established Space Planning and Allocation Committee will determine how the building will be utilised and thereafter it will be renovated.

Council also approved the appointment of Professor Renuka Vithal, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and

Learning on a one-year post-retirement contract, following a recommendation by the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee (HRRC) and a highly favourable review of her performance over the last four years. We are pleased to retain Professor Vithal's services for another year as Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, which will bring her total number of years serving in the role to five.

Four additional trustees were approved for the Fort Hare Foundation. They are Dr Eugenia Xoliswa Kula; Ms Phuthanang Cenea Motsielwa; Ms Rosemary Mosia and Ms Nomso Kana. We believe that the additional Trustees will add to the energy and dynamism of the Foundation – a very important fundraising entity of the University.

Council emphasised the importance of having Students Representative Council (SRC) elections this year and mandated the SRC to identify a date by which they will have concluded their deliberations with their constituents on revisions to the Student Governance Constitution. Thereafter consultations with the Student Affairs Division will take place so

that a revised Student Governance Constitution could serve at Council at its next ordinary meeting for approval in order to allow SRC elections based on a new Student Governance Constitution to take place.

Several other governance matters were referred to the Council workshop. An update to the University community will follow after the workshop has been concluded.

I have noted with concern the current problems in relation to the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) direct payment system. The Vice-Chancellor has written to NSFAS and DHET on this critical matter, which we trust will be addressed urgently.

I wish our students and the University staff a successful and productive second semester.

Sincerely

Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza Chairperson of University Council



EC Alumni Chapter Student Debt Campaign Gets Off to a Great Start

The Eastern Cape Alumni Chapter Executive Committee held a cocktail dinner to mark the official launch of its Student Debt Campaign and by the end of the evening over R331 000 had been raised towards the cause.

The philanthropical initiative by the Chapter will bring much-needed relief to some of the thousands of graduates who have been struggling to get their certificates because they still owe fees to the institution. Currently, graduates owe the University a staggering R1.4 billion.

According to the chairperson of the UFH EC Chapter, Mr Mosuli Cwele, the resolution to initiate the campaign was taken during a meeting in March this year where the Executive revised its programme of action – a resolution he says was officially adopted by the Convocation of the University.

“This University remains a beacon of hope to the African child, it is imperative that we ensure that we alleviate the burden of historic debt which has become a hindrance to many graduates who are struggling to find jobs because they do not have their certificates in hand. Likewise, we need to ensure that the historic debt does not hinder the financial viability of the University.” said Cwele.

The campaign was launched during a cocktail dinner held at Miriam Makeba Arts Centre on the East London Campus.

The initiative received resounding support from the University community, including generous contributions from alumni such as Dr Irvin Khoza and Ms Nolitha Fakude. The United Democratic Movement (UDM) leader, Bantu Holomisa also contributed to

the cause, affirming his support for this great African University that helped shape the minds of many astute African leaders.

UFH Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu commended the EC Chapter. “This is momentous. It is commendable to see alumni of the University coming together and join forces for a cause that will bring some relief to students who recently graduated and owe the university.”

“An overwhelming majority of our students are not able to pay their fees and depend on financial aid. About 80% of students are funded by NSFAS, 15% are receiving other forms of funding and only 5% of are able to pay their way. The challenge comes when some of the NSFAS funded students lose their funding due to not meeting certain criteria and the debt falls on them.”

“My aspiration for this venture by the EC Chapter is that it gathers momentum and becomes an example to other Chapters to embark on the same journey,” said the VC.

Messages of support and appreciation were shared by Ms Zenziswa Rabe who is a member of the Provincial Legislature; UFH Convocation member, Ms Buli Ganyaza; the Dean of Student Affairs, Mr Lufuno Tshikudo and SRC President, Ms Siphokazi Mbalo.

UFH alumnus, Mr Avuyile Xabidiya who is a Chief Economist at the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, urged alumni to join their respective Chapters. “We must ensure this University remains a great university of choice. Let us join forces and attain this renewal.”



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Nelson Mandela Institute at UFH Changing the Face of Rural Education Kancane, Kancane



“The MCC classrooms are different, they arouse the interest of the learners and the teachers have developed a wide range of skills. Our learners are able to read and write with confidence.”

The Nelson Mandela Institute (NMI) for Education and Rural Development is changing the narrative of rural education in the Eastern Cape, one school at a time, through its Magic Classroom Collective (MCC).

The collective is an educational hub that seeks to improve teaching and learning in primary education by bringing together rural foundation phase teachers (Grade R to 3), teacher educators and researchers into a long-term working partnership with the goal to build effective tools and materials to transform classrooms and the system at greater scale.

Currently, the MCC includes over 70 teachers serving over 2,100 children from Grade R to Grade 3 within 13 schools in the O.R Tambo and Alfred Nzo District Municipalities and its focus is on improving learners' proficiency in reading with comprehension and mathematics.

The Institute has managed to significantly improve the literacy levels of learners in the foundation phase in these schools. This is evidenced by its most current data that indicates that when the collective moved into the schools in 2007, 90% of the learners in the partnering schools scored 30% or less in reading literacy, today only 20% of the learners scored less than 30%.

In addition, the cohort of teachers and schools outperformed some of the best-performing districts in the country, despite Covid-19 backlogs.

To celebrate this milestone, the Institute held an MCC Awards ceremony to honour the teachers and the schools.

Speaking at the event held at the Mayfair Hotel in Mthatha, the Deputy Minister for Basic Education, Dr Makgabo Reginah Mhaule hailed the institute for its strides in placing the education of rural children at the centre.

“I express my heartiest gratitude to the collective efforts of the National Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development and its trustees towards the development of these young talents, grooming them to achieve in life and above all, raising their skills in Mathematics and Literacy with a caring attitude. Whatever our teachers and learners have achieved so far would never have been possible without your constant endeavor,” said the Deputy Minister.

Dr Kim Porteus, NMI Director, said when looking at the literacy crisis in the country, energies have focused on finding who to blame - most often blaming the department, teachers and even parents. “We believe that the MCC story suggests something different. It suggests that there are no quick-fix solutions; transforming schooling will take careful work over time. But it suggests that many of our children struggle to read because we have not done enough research and development to equip teachers to truly leverage African language resources for learning. The story of the MCC suggests that when we provide teachers with research-informed tools in a humanising environment, new relationships are developed, learners start to love classrooms, and over time, teachers start to love teaching again.”

NMI Deputy Director Brian Ramadiro, said the initiative is aimed at empowering teachers to enable

them to teach in two languages, one being their mother tongue.

“We view these schools and work with them as labs to create ideas that could work and once we see the results, we take them to other schools,” he said.

The chairperson of NMI Board of Trustees, Ms Makano Morojele said the work of the NMI has been game-changing. “The work shines a light on the “problem behind the problem” - the hidden obstacle that stubbornly prevents educational success for the majority of South African children. I have learned through the careful work of the NMI that the inequality of our national landscape has inadvertently led to weak investments into understanding how to leverage African language resources for the purpose of early reading, writing and mathematics.”

“While children across the globe fell back in their learning under Covid-19, the children of the MCC remained remarkably strong. A cohort of rural schools outperforming more resource schools in Gauteng? In mathematics? And literacy? Magic,” stated Ms Morojele.

Mr Thembekile Mzekandaba, Principal of Bijolo Junior Primary School has been part of the Magic Classroom Collective since the beginning and spoke fondly about the positive impact the programme has made at his school. “Since the MCC moved into our school, teachers, parents, learners and the community have developed a sense of interest towards the education of learners and there is a deep shared common goal of achieving the best results.”

“The MCC classrooms are different, they arouse the interest of the learners and the teachers have developed a wide range of skills. Our learners are able to read and write with confidence,” said Principal Mzekandaba.

Ms Andisile Mfunise, a Grade R Teacher at Bavumele Primary, which is a partial mud school, said the MCC has ensured that the school's motto: “Through hard work, we will reach the stars” is realised. “Reaching for the stars doesn't seem impossible anymore because we are the stars! I am extremely grateful for this programme.”

Climate Change Education Summit Deepens Environmental Ethics, Learning and Research

In a bid to strengthen its commitment to raise awareness on a matter that continues to impact the environment gravely, the Climate Change Education project team from the University of Fort Hare (UFH) Faculty of Education hosted a Climate Change Education Summit.

Themed: **Deepening Environmental Ethics, Learning and Research**, the summit was held at the Senate Chambers on the University's Alice campus. It brought together researchers, academics and experts to debate issues around environmental ethics. This includes the identification, description, analysis, and critical evaluation of the various ethical models and value systems that support environmental conflict and degradation, as well as the various ethical models and value systems that guide various environmental management and conservation methods.

Paper presentations were made by participants that comprise academics from UFH and sister institutions and stakeholders such as Walter Sisulu University (WSU), Witwatersrand (Wits) University, the South African National Biodiversity Institute and Emeritus Prof Rob O' Donoghue from Rhodes University as the guest of honour.

According to the project team members, the overall objective of the seminar was to bring about long-term, positive behavioural changes through public involvement.

Prof O'Donoghue presented a paper titled: Hand-Print CARE: Clarifying the cultural foundations for an ethic of care for informing deliberative learning in classroom settings. This paper was developed from a formative research process to inform a hand-print CARE to approach Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as ethics-led learning where school pupils might come to recognize sustainability concerns, assess value and undertake hand-print actions for more just and sustainable futures.

Shaun Misser from SANBI presented a paper titled: Making Sense of climate change in the National Curriculum. The presentation draws on three recent South African reviews of climate change Education undertaken in partnership with the United Nations' education scientific and cultural organization, and the SANBI in 2016 which produced a national case study

on climate change education in South Africa.

Misser's chapter also draws from wider studies being taken for international monitoring and evaluation of climate change education programmes.

UFH's Dr Kayode Olawumi presented A systemic review of the implementation of teaching and learning environmental ethics education. The study suggests the organization of an ethical awareness training programme by the Department of Basic Education for both pre-service and in-service teachers to expose learners to ethical and disciplined behaviour in their environment.

Dr Benjamin Damoah from WSU entitled his presentation: Tracing the footprints of environmental education in teacher education: A review of pre-service teacher's training in universities. This paper recommends that all teacher trainee universities and colleges make environmental education compulsory modules for all pre-service teachers.

Advocating for change projects at universities that will enlighten science education pre-service teachers on possible ways of changing human actions toward the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) on climate change, Dr Kwanele Booi from UFH made a presentation on the Design and development of climate change integrated science education curriculum for pre-service teachers: a multi-disciplinary perspective to knowledge integration.

Dr Caleb Mandinkonza from WITS talked to: Principles of the CAPS and ethics of care: implication for climate change education in teacher education. Preliminary findings of his research suggest possibilities of teaching climate change by foregrounding SDG 4 which is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all and promoting ethics of care for achieving SDG 13 which is to limit and adapt to climate change.





“I am immensely grateful to be recognised for my work and honoured to be rated as a researcher by the NRF. This indicates that I am going in the right direction. It motivates me to work even harder for more achievements.”

Meet Our Newest and Youngest Academic to be Awarded an NRF Rating in 2023 – Dr Overen

Dedication to finding sustainable and practical solutions to the ongoing energy crisis faced by the country and the African continent has earned Dr Ochuko Overen a Y2 National Research Foundation (NRF) rating.

At age 37, Dr Overen who is a Sustainable Energy Systems researcher at the Fort Hare Institute of Technology and a University of Fort Hare (UFH) principal investigator of the Eskom-funded initiative for Renewable Energy and Economic Development, is the youngest of nine (9) UFH academics to be assigned an NRF rating in the current academic year.

According to the NRF, a Y-Rating is awarded to promising young researchers (40 years or younger), who have held a doctorate or equivalent qualification for less than five years at the time of application, and who are recognised as having the potential to establish themselves as researchers within a five-year period after evaluation, based on their performance and productivity as researchers during their doctoral studies and/or early postdoctoral careers. The ratings are awarded for a period of five years.

Dr Overen holds a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in Industrial Physics from Enugu State University of Technology in Nigeria. Thereafter, he joined the UFH in 2011, where he acquired a Bachelor of Science Honours (BSc Hons.) in Physics and went on further to complete his Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Physics, focusing on thermal energy efficiency in the built environment based on building physics.

In 2022, he completed a second master's degree in urban studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, where he studied Sustainable Energy Efficient Cities. This degree broadens his perspective of buildings as an integral component of a city and their energy consumption regarding resident lifestyle, socio-economic status, policies, and environmental factors.

After his Doctorate, he won the NRF Innovation Fellowship Awards consecutively in 2019/20 and 2021/22.

He has been the principal investigator of the Eskom-funded initiative for Renewable Energy and Economic Development (FREED) at UFH since 2019.

To date, Dr Overen has over 20 scientific research publications with more than 160 citations. He is a member of the South African Institute of Physics

(SAIP) and the Southern African Energy Efficiency Confederation (SAEEEC).

In terms of professional services, Dr Overen is a seasonal reviewer for international and local scientific journals such as Applied Energy, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, Indoor and Built Environment, and Journal of Energy in Southern Africa. He is also a member of the NRF research grants virtual peer review panel.

Expanding on his research interest and objectives on sustainable energy solutions in the built environment, Dr Overen said: “In line with the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, my research strives to address current energy challenges in South Africa and Africa at large without negatively affecting people in other places and times. This will be achieved through data-driven research in advancing efficient energy use for effective renewable energy supply while being mindful of the social, economic, political and environmental factors. In addition, knowledge and skills transfer through postgraduate supervision have been employed to drive the research objectives.”

“The research impact is evident in some of our publications focusing on energy performance evaluation and optimisation of low-cost housing and sustainable clean alternative energy access in South Africa for improved quality of life for low-income households.”

Currently, Dr Overen is working on the “Dual Utilisation of Land for Agriculture and Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Power Production (Agrivoltaic System)”. This involves using a piece of land for food crops and solar PV power production, leading to natural resources efficiency and offsetting associated carbon emissions in the solar PV value chain.

He counts this rating by the NRF, his research grants, and the students that have graduated under his supervision as his greatest achievements in his young academic career.

“I am immensely grateful to be recognised for my work and honoured to be rated as a researcher by the NRF. This indicates that I am going in the right direction. It motivates me to work even harder for more achievements,” he said.

Congratulations Dr Overen.

Research that Seeks to Address Poverty and Marginalisation Earns Economic Prof a Well-Deserved C2 NRF Rating

An academic career that spans over 25 years has earned University of Fort Hare (UFH) Economics Professor, Munacinga Simatele a well-deserved National Research Foundation (NRF) C2 rating.

According to the NRF, a C2-Rating is granted to an established scholar who may but need not, enjoy some international recognition for the quality and impact of his/her recent research outputs.

Prof Simatele who has held the position of professor in the Department of Economics at UFH since 2014, started her career in 1997 at the University of Zambia. She has extensive practical experience in managing education and development-related projects and providing consulting and technical services and support to different organizations.

She describes herself as: “An economist focusing on transformative research with a special interest in development finance that addresses poverty and marginalization.” Her research seeks to provide deeper understanding of finance for development and how the poor interact with the financial sector.

“My research investigates how informality, small businesses, and financial markets can contribute and be harnessed to reduce poverty,” she stated.

Prof Simatele obtained her doctoral degree in Economics in 2004 from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. The dissertation title reads, Financial Sector Reforms and Monetary Policy in Zambia. She also obtained a MA in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education from the University of Hertfordshire in 2009.

Here at UFH, Prof Simatele has held several key positions, such as the Nedbank Chair in Economics from 2014 to 2020; Acting Dean of Research for the period April 2020 to December

2021. She also held the position of Deputy Dean of Research and Internationalization in the Faculty of Management and Commerce from January 2016 to December 2019.

In June last year, she delivered her Inaugural Lecture titled: “Accelerating Financial Inclusion: The Promise of digital finance.”

Her current research project is focused on financial market duality, business subsistence, and poverty research which investigates how subsistence businesses are funded and affect poverty and livelihoods in South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.

Prof Simatele has published 23 articles in accredited and peer-reviewed journals, 12 conference papers between 2018 and 2022, and three book chapters. She is the editor-in-chief of the accredited journal ‘Africa’s Public Service Delivery & Performance Review’.

Most recently, she edited a scholarly book titled: Financial Inclusion: Basic Theories and empirical evidence from African Countries.

Commenting on the book, she said: “Financial inclusion has been noted as a key driver of poverty alleviation and growth. Yet, most of the scholarly work that exists lacks a comprehensive discussion of how the poor interact with financial services and the channels through which such services can affect their livelihoods.”

According to her, the book offers researchers who focus on financial inclusion and African economies a one-stop resource for understanding the channels of transmission for financial inclusion as well as an application of these channels through original country-specific empirical papers.

Her remarkable academic career has also earned her seats on strategic tables in the economic sector such as the board of the Eastern Cape Social and Economic Consultative Council.

Congratulations Prof Muna!



“My research investigates how informality, small businesses, and financial markets can contribute and be harnessed to reduce poverty.”



Getting to Know the New Gender-Based Violence Prevention Unit Director

Developing gender-based violence programmes, conducting research, policy analysis and a strong knack for advocacy towards gender equality, are some of the expertise Ms Nonhlanhla Sibanda Moyo brings to her new role as Director of the University of Fort Hare's (UFH) Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention Unit. The University announced Ms Sibanda Moyo's appointment on the 1st of June.

Setting the agenda for the Unit, she shared her personal insights on the importance of tackling GBV at Fort Hare and her commitment and plans to effect positive change in this Q&A article.

Q: As the new Director of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention Unit at Fort Hare University, what is your perspective on tackling GBV within the university?

A: GBV is a pervasive problem that affects individuals from all walks of life, and it is crucial for educational institutions like ours to play a unique role in creating a safe and inclusive environment. Stepping into my

role as the Director of the GBV Unit, I feel a deep sense of purpose and firm commitment to lead the charge towards changing this narrative and creating lasting change. I firmly believe that we have a collective responsibility to combat GBV and ensure the safety and well-being of our university community. I am fully committed to spearheading efforts that create a university environment that is not only free from GBV but also fosters inclusivity, respect, and empowerment.

Q: What drives your passion for combating GBV?

A: My passion for combating GBV comes from a deeply personal place. I have witnessed the devastating impact of violence on individuals, families, and communities. This first-hand experience has fuelled my determination to work towards a world free from violence and discrimination. Taking up this position at the university gives me the opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of our students, staff, and the broader university community.

Q: What makes it imperative to address gender-based violence (GBV) at Fort Hare University?

A: Recognizing the pressing need to address GBV at our university is crucial. Over the years, various media reports have highlighted cases of GBV occurring at Fort Hare. Additionally, our internal data paints a grim picture of the situation. This state of affairs is unacceptable. Our institution should serve as a safe haven for learning and personal development, where both students and staff members can flourish without the fear of violence or discrimination. Regrettably, incidents of GBV have taken place both within and outside our campus community, leaving survivors traumatized and negatively impacting their academic and professional journeys. Ignoring this injustice is not an option; we must confront it directly and take decisive action.

Q: How does the GBV Prevention Unit support survivors and promote healing?

A: Supporting survivors and fostering healing is one of the primary goals of the GBV Prevention Unit. We are committed to establishing a safe and confidential reporting system that survivors can trust. Through collaboration with various departments such as student support services, legal affairs, and employee relations, we will provide comprehensive support that addresses the physical, emotional, and legal aspects of survivors' journeys. Our approach is guided by empathy, compassion, and a survivor-centered perspective, ensuring that survivors feel empowered to seek help and start their healing process. Additionally, given the backlog in cases over the past year, one of our immediate priorities is to increase our staff capacity to handle more cases.

Q: What approach will the GBV Prevention unit take to raise awareness and promote a zero tolerance approach to GBV?

A: Raising awareness and promoting a zero tolerance approach to GBV is crucial. We believe in a multifaceted approach that goes beyond supporting survivors. Through targeted awareness campaigns, engaging workshops, and educational programs, we will encourage open discussions about consent, healthy relationships, and gender equality within the entire campus community. By challenging harmful gender stereotypes and fostering a culture of respect and empathy, we aim to dismantle the societal norms that perpetuate violence.

Q: How will you ensure accountability and establish strong policies and procedures to address GBV?

A: Accountability and robust policies are essential to address GBV effectively. Currently, we are in the process of revising our GBV and Harassment Policy, and we highly encourage active participation from all stakeholders during the extensive consultations scheduled over the next few months. Through collaborative efforts with staff, students, and relevant parties, we aim to develop, reinforce, and enforce policies that unequivocally condemn GBV, clearly outline reporting protocols, and establish appropriate consequences for perpetrators. By fostering a culture of accountability, we send a resolute message that GBV will not be tolerated within the Fort Hare University community.

Q: How do you plan to collaborate with other organizations and institutions to combat GBV?

A: Collaboration is key in our efforts to combat GBV. We understand that we cannot do it alone, and we will actively seek partnerships with local organizations, NGOs, government agencies, and other universities that are working towards GBV prevention and support. By sharing resources, expertise, and best practices, we can strengthen our collective efforts and make a greater impact that extends beyond our campus boundaries. Together, we can amplify our voices and work towards a society free from GBV.

Q: What are your final remarks and commitments as the Director of the GBV Prevention Unit at Fort Hare University?

A: As the Director of the Unit, my commitment aligns with the university's strategic plan and approach 'towards a decade of renewal' and transformation. By addressing GBV head-on, we can foster a university community that values respect, inclusivity, and personal well-being. With the active involvement and support of our community, we have the power to drive transformative change that not only sets an example for other institutions but also contributes to the broader movement against GBV in South Africa.

In conclusion, I extend an open invitation to all members of the Fort Hare community to join me and the GBV Prevention unit on this critical journey. Together, we can forge a future where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

UFH Exec Contributes to International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) Conference

Ms Tania Holmes-Watts, University of Fort Hare's Executive Operations Manager in the Research, Partnerships and Innovation (RPI) portfolio represented the University at the 2023 INORMS conference that was held in Durban.

INORMS was formed in 2001 to bring together research management societies and associations from across the globe, with the aim of enabling interactions, sharing of good practice, and joint activities between the member societies, to the benefit of their individual memberships.

Forty (40) UFH RPI portfolio staff members are registered with the professional body.

This year, the bi-annual conference is being hosted by the Southern African Research Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) under the theme: "Towards a Utopia in Research and Innovation Management".

Ms Holmes-Watts is a research support professional with 15 years' work experience within the higher education sector. Her professional journey started at the National Research Foundation and thereafter at a public University of Technology, for over a decade.

She has made significant contributions to the research management profession through her writings, or via the management of grants and/or her participation both at regional, national and international levels. These include her participation within SARIMA, INORMS, South Africa-Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD), European Commission, HERS-SA, and Communities of Practice, among many others.

At the conference, Ms Holmes-Watts contributed to a poster exhibition that is based on her doctoral research conducted at Stellenbosch University and her immense practitioner experience in research management.

Her contribution centers around a research management intervention in response to a crisis in the higher education sector and is aimed at introducing the power dynamic, a model designed to improve research performance within the public university sector.

Contextualizing the problem, Ms Holmes-Watts and co-author, Mr Sidney Engelbrecht, Senior Research Compliance Specialist at Stellenbosch University, state that: "The public University sector in South Africa is mandated by government to produce and advance research to the benefit of society. However, in vast areas of this sector a continuous hail of allegations relating to maladministration, mismanagement and corruption, poor governance, leadership challenges, differentiated and poor research performance, in and among institutions, have become the order of the day."

The authors put emphasis on the mandatory role of research management professionals (RMPs) in offering solutions in response to challenges in their areas of influence.

"RMPs have a responsibility to provide practice-level solutions to ensure that the negative narrative around the SA university sector shifts."

Asked about the motivation behind the presentation topic, Ms Holmes-Watts credits UFH's new strategic plan Towards a Decade of Renewal, that commenced in 2022. "In its journey towards renewal, the University embarked on steering the institution to become research-focused. This would require a holistic approach and ensuring that we equip and develop ourselves and our staff to become future-fit and resilient," she said.



“In its journey towards renewal, the University embarked on steering the institution to become research-focused. This would require a holistic approach and ensuring that we equip and develop ourselves and our staff to become future-fit and resilient.”

Law Prof to Join USAF's Prestigious Higher Education Women in Leadership Programme



“It is my aspiration to be more than just an executive but to also develop and retain the new generation of women leaders in the academia.”

Prof Nomthandazo Ntlama-Makhanya, Public Law Professor and the Acting Deputy Dean of the University of Fort Hare's Faculty of Law is among the leading South African women scholars selected to join the Universities South Africa (USAF) 2023 Women in Leadership (WiL) programme.

The women in Higher Education Leadership Programme (HELM) for academic and administrative middle managers aims to promote gender equity in leadership and create a pipeline for senior management and executive positions in universities and address leadership issues focusing on the development and advancement of women professionals in the sector while addressing issues of transformation.

The goal of the programme is to equip women leaders to impact the leadership context in collaborative ways and to advance engaged, collective and shared strategic objectives within their respective institutions and across the higher education sector. The six-month programme comprises several leadership and management sessions based on a training needs analysis, coaching and mentoring and a study gathering conducted in conjunction with colleagues from the Universities of Bath.

For the Fort Hare community, Prof Ntlama-Makhanya's selection comes as no surprise as she has established herself as a prolific academic who has excelled in her research area on Constitutional Law with a broader focus on Human Rights and Customary Law.

A C-3 National Research Foundation (NRF) rated researcher from Qaga village outside Qonce (King William's Town), Prof Ntlama-Makhanya is a former Head of Research at the UFH Nelson R Mandela School of Law and also acted as Head and Chairholder of UNESCO 'Oliver Tambo' Chair of Human Rights at UFH.

She is the former Commissioner of the South African Judicial Services Commission (JSC) representing the Society of Law Teachers of Southern Africa and a member of the South African Electoral Court having acted as a Judge of the Divisions of the High Courts in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

In 2022, she was received into Full Professorship on the delivery of her inaugural lecture in October and two months later she was bestowed with the Vice-Chancellor's Research Award.

She is also a panel member of the Council on Higher Education National Doctoral Review Project.

Recently, Prof Ntlama-Makhanya was a guest panelist at the UNESCO Chairs Seminar and the Office of the High Commission on Human Rights Hernan Santa Cruz Dialogue themed: A solution in plain sight for a better world: a Human Rights Economy and delivered a paper titled: The universality of human rights on economic inequalities in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

Her academic achievements were recently highlighted during a radio interview hosted by Dr Amaleya Goneos-Malka on Channel Africa-DSTV 802 on Womanity-Women in Unity.

Commenting on her selection into the 2023 WiL programme, she said: “My appointment comes at an opportune moment that requires the sharpening of my already acquired attributes and skills in the advancement of my basic knowledge on leadership and administration that will have to translate into tangible results.”

Sharing her views on women leadership in the academic space, Prof Ntlama-Makhanya said: “Two decades after attaining democracy in South Africa, academia is still at the lowest level in pursuit of the vigorous empowerment of women and not just in leadership executive appointments.

“There are many factors that may be attributable to this. However, are fundamental changes that need to be taken by the academia and the global COVID-19 pandemic exposed the existing structural and substantive inequalities that deprived women of many opportunities that are available to them. This is not a call for womanhood or victimhood but for the academia to develop innovative and structural programmes that will advance a representative academic environment.”

“The WIL-HELM programme is still a tip of an iceberg and still far from achieving its main goals and objectives in ensuring equity and inclusion within the higher education sector.”

As a participant in this prestigious programme, Prof Ntlama-Makhanya hopes to gain deeper insight into an effective system that will ensure accountable and transparent leadership in a diverse academic environment. “It is my aspiration to be more than just an executive but to also develop and retain the new generation of women leaders in the academia.”

Research on Digital Finance in Rural Areas Goes International

Driven to bridge the disparities in financial inclusivity between rural and urban South Africa, Chuma Memela, a University of Fort Hare (UFH) Master of Commerce degree in Information Systems candidate and a Time-on-Task Junior Lecturer, has conducted research on how Financial Technology (FinTech) can bring about equal access.

He recently presented his paper titled: “Emerging Fintech Models in Mobile Payments for Digital Finance In Rural Areas,” at the IST-Africa International Conference held in Tshwane.

Hosted by the government of South Africa through the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and supported by the European Commission (EC) and African Union Commission (AUC), the conference was the eighteenth in an annual series of ministerial-level technology research conferences.

The week-long programme provides a platform in Africa to strengthen ICT-enabled Innovation, Science and Technology related policy dialogues between Africa and Europe. It brings together cross-disciplinary stakeholders from public, private, education and research, and societal sectors with end-user communities focused on ICT research and innovation.

According to Memela, the focus of his presentation is to examine the gaps in financial inclusivity between rural and urban areas of SA, considering the country’s history of segregation and its impact on creating a dual economy. “In light of this situation, the paper delves into the realm of FinTech and specifically explores mobile payment models as a means to enhance access to digital finance in rural regions of South Africa.”

“The objectives of the paper are to explore FinTech mobile payment models, contextualize them within the trajectory of expanding digital financial inclusion, and identify barriers hindering the adoption of FinTech in rural South Africa,” he underscores.

The findings indicate that FinTech holds promise for enhancing financial inclusivity in rural areas. Building upon these findings, the paper proposes a model for implementing FinTech mobile payments in rural South Africa. In conclusion, the presentation highlights the need for further research on FinTech’s impact on rural SA and emphasizes the importance of education and awareness to foster adoption.

“Overall, this presentation underscores the potential of FinTech mobile payments to drive financial inclusivity in rural SA and emphasizes the importance of collaboration between stakeholders to achieve this goal,” he said.

Memela holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree (Cum Laude) with majors in Economics and Information Systems. He also possesses a Bachelor of Commerce Honours degree in Information Systems for which he was awarded the top student award.

He is also a 2022/23 Fort Hare - Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Autumn School Advocacy Fellow.

His research interests are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal of “Global Development.”

“I am particularly interested in playing a role in lessening and ultimately eradicating the financial exclusion of African people, more so those in rural SA. Given that, my research niche is FinTech (the confluence of Finance and Technology), and I believe this is the vehicle that can aid in achieving this vision.”

He described his experience at the IST-Africa international conference as “truly enriching.”

“In addition to presenting my paper, I actively engaged in various plenary sessions and attended captivating presentations that provided me with invaluable knowledge. Moreover, I had the privilege of networking with a diverse range of academics and industry professionals who are involved in groundbreaking research and ambitious projects.”

“This enabled me to forge connections and establish new friendships with individuals from different African countries and other continents. Ultimately, the conference proved to be a resounding success, broadening my understanding of the vast realm of Information Systems and the expansive world of technology,” he said.

As an active citizen and young person, Memela’s hope for South Africa is that its citizens can leverage the technology and opportunities presented by the fourth industrial revolution to upskill people and address the three-headed plight of poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

WATCH | Memela gives an in-depth report on his research [\(134\) Chuma Memela - IST Africa 2023 - YouTube](#)



“Overall, this presentation underscores the potential of FinTech mobile payments to drive financial inclusivity in rural SA and emphasizes the importance of collaboration between stakeholders to achieve this goal.”



Fort Hare and Windesheim University Meet to Explore and Expand Research Collaborations

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu had the pleasure of welcoming a delegation from the Windesheim University of Applied Sciences on their visit to explore new research partnerships and expand on existing ones.

Windesheim is one of the Netherlands' top universities of applied sciences, with modern campuses in the cities of Zwolle and Almere. It is known for bringing people together to exchange knowledge, skills and expertise.

Last year a delegation from UFH comprised of staff and students from the Department of Social Work and Social Development under the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities visited Windesheim to participate in an International Week for Health Care and Social Work Faculties.

According to Prof Ulene Schiller the visit is a direct result of a collaboration that was forged between the two universities and a shared interest to expand on the partnership.

During their stay, the delegation visited the University's different faculties, centres and research sites, such as the SolarWatt Park.

In welcoming the guests, the VC wished them a fruitful stay and assured them that there were several meaningful research projects that the two universities could partner on.

Dr Hlulani Mabasa, UFH Director for International Affairs and Partnerships was also present to welcome the guests.

Speaking during their visit, Dr. Victorine de Graaf-Peters who is the Dean at the School of Life Science and Technology at Windesheim said they were looking forward to meeting with the University's different faculties in order to promote and drive research. "Our institution has the same faculties and we would like to form partnerships that will enable our students to collaborate on research and also to promote partnerships between Netherlands and Southern African countries to address issues such as energy transition and health and wellbeing."

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BACK ON COURSE

Mid-June, the University concluded the official handover of the Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC) for Excellence and announced the site will be ready within a year.

Originally conceived and designed in 2013, the appointment of the contractor and the construction of the building started in 2015. However, in 2017, construction activity came to a halt when the appointed contractor became insolvent. Only 40 - 45% of the structure was completed.

The completion of the building is now back on course following the appointment of a new contractor, Transtruct Building & Civil Construction that was appointed on 3 April 2023 by the University's Council. Construction work is scheduled to start on 3 July this year, the University officially handed over the site to the contractor yesterday.

The construction company's first port of call will be to examine the current structure to assess damages in order to undertake repairs before commencing with the construction work packages that were left uncompleted by the previous contractor due to insolvency.

Work packages for the new building will include casting concrete foundations for the basement parking, the ground floor, and the first floor; installation of the roof, MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing) works, insulation and waterproofing, and finishes and closures.

Located on the East London Campus and adjacent to the University's Faculty of Education building, the ECDC comprises a basement, ground floor and first floor that will house 56 offices, rooms and spaces, including lecture halls and demonstration rooms, and specialized rooms for audio and speech therapy and physio.

The ECDC will serve to train future educators in a learning laboratory-like environment. The purpose of the Centre and building is to extend the current academic focus on children in the informal schooling system, between the ages of 5 - 9 years, to infants and children aged four. The new facility will assist educators but also infants and young children in aspects of social and emotional learning, language and communication, and cognitive abilities.

Prof. Vusi Mncube, UFH Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Education said the Faculty has developed new courses and curricula aimed at upskilling early childhood development practitioners.

"In line with the University's academic renewal programme and in our efforts to reinvigorate the Faculty's offering to our stakeholders and communities, we have received a stamp of approval from the relevant statutory or voluntary professional bodies that have been established as a result of an Act of parliament to govern or regulate specific occupations. The next step now is to approach DHET to receive accreditation and approval. We will be ready to present these new programmes in 2025, and this will be a very exciting time for the province," he said.

Speaking at the site handover event, UFH Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu emphasized the importance of the University's commitment to early childhood development through brick-and-mortar project and the correlative programmes of teaching and learning as well as research to improve the livelihoods of children in the Eastern Cape.

"We are pleased the project is now underway after a construction hiatus of nearly six years. We are moving forward with this very important project," said Professor Buhlungu.

"We understand the deep frustration and disappointment of every stakeholder after a collective dream was interrupted. Now, we can say that the project of this centre is back on track, on firmer grounds and we are all committed to see the centre rise like a phoenix out of the ashes," he said.

"The University has demonstrated its commitment to developing a niche academic capacity that seeks to address the key challenges related to child development in South Africa," he said.

Professor Buhlungu said the University will work in close partnership with key stakeholders such as the Department of Basic Education, Health and Social Development, and community-based organisations involved in early childhood development.

He said the University will invite all stakeholders to the site once the halfway mark is reached later this year.



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TREASURED STAFF CENTRE RESTORED

The Staff Centre that was torched during a student protest in 2017 has been restored. Keys to the freshly revamped building on the Alice campus were handed over to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu on 21 June 2023.

The refurbished centre is one of several infrastructure projects the VC announced for this year. Construction on the multimillion-rand Early Childhood Development Centre for Excellence on the East London campus recommenced following the appointment of a new contractor and site handover.

Repairs to the Staff Centre commenced in January this year when the site was handed over to the contractors. Work packages included the complete removal of rubble and debris from the fire; redoing of finishes, plaster on walls and paving; soot left on some of the walls have been pressure cleaned; removal and replacement of some windows, refurbishment on doors and the replacement of laps and parts of the roof that was damaged by hailstorm recently.

The two-floor structure sits on an approximately 700 m2 footprint and comprises a Staff Café with a VIP dining area.

“This is an important building. It is the heartbeat of this campus. This is where staff converge and converse. We are excited that it has been restored.”

At the key handover ceremony, the VC, the Deputy VC for Research, Partnerships and Innovation, Dr Nthabi Taole-Mjimba, staff from Properties & Service, the VC’s Office, and Institutional Advancement got first glance of the newly refurbished building during a walkabout.

The VC echoed the sentiments of staff, saying: “This is an important building. It is the heartbeat of this campus. This is where staff converge and converse. We are excited that it has been restored.”



Youth Day Outreach to Vulnerable Residents of Ntselamanzi in Alice

“This gesture by the Fort Hare community demonstrated to us that there are still people who care about the most vulnerable people in society.”

On Youth Day – June 16, a group of University of Fort Hare students and staff visited two old age homes and a school for children living with disabilities in Ntselamanzi in Alice (Dikeni) bearing gifts and planted a variety of 6400 seeds at these sites.

The community outreach programme by the Student Affairs Division and the Student Representative Council (SRC) embodies a formal commitment between the institution and the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality to work together in uplifting the town of Alice and its residents.

The gifts included blankets, garden equipment, and kitchenware.

According to Sipiwo Ngcenge, coordinator at the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, the motivation behind the outreach to Nosondo Old Age Centre, Lavela Old Age Centre and Mzamomhle School for the Disabled was sparked by the continuous rise of food prices that is currently biting the nation.

“The majority of South Africans are struggling to make ends meet as the cost of food continues an upward trend. It dawned on us that this challenge must be much more severe on the most vulnerable members of society, such as the elderly and children living with disabilities.”

“We went into the community and identified the two centres and the school. Upon conducting a need assessment we realised the situation was dire, they were basically taking from nothing.”

Ngcenge said the decision to lend a hand was fully supported by the Dean of Students, Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo; the Residence Manager, Mr Mzi Lingela and the entire University community.

“The outreach was made possible by various committees, structures and individuals at the University who came together and selflessly contributed. The Dairy Farm supplied us with equipment such as tractors, the Nursery contributed 200 seedlings and the close to 400 blankets were donated by UFH staff and students.”

“We also received support from the local ward councillor who organized us personnel from Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) that worked passionately in assisting with planting the gardens.”

Also spotted at the outreach event was the Dean of Science and Agriculture, Prof Graeme Bradley.

Ms Kholiswa, founder of Nosondo Projects said the day will be remembered as one of the most special days for the centre. “The seeds that were planted will be beneficial during harvest season, the produce will go a long way in keeping hunger at bay. This gesture by the Fort Hare community demonstrated to us that there are still people who care about the most vulnerable people in society.”



Multi-Talented Music Student Steals the Show and Wins Ovation Award at National Arts Festival

Mava Gqeba, a final-year University of Fort Hare (UFH) Music student stole the show at the 2023 National Arts Festival (NAF) when he walked away with the Standard Bank Ovation Award for his one-man show titled, "Dear Tata: What Makes A man a man?"

According to the organisers of this Prominent Festival, the Standard Bank Ovation Awards are awarded to fringe performances that are well received by audiences, are well presented or produced, and have a good script or a standout cast among other things.

Mava who majors in jazz music is a gifted actor, singer, dancer, and songwriter. His cabaret tells the story of many young black men through dance, music, and poignant storytelling. His performance explores themes such as identity, self-worth, and sexual liberation, but most importantly it poses the question, "What does it mean to be a black man in South Africa in this day and age?"

He also presented the show at the Umtiza Arts Festival earlier this year.

Mava was among a group of talented students from Fort Hare who showcased their talent at the NAF. The artworks by thirty-one (31) first to final-year students from the Fine Arts Department were exhibited at the Albany Museum. The pieces that were showcased focus on distinct topics such as gender-based violence, culture, identity, and politics and range from paintings, ceramics, printmaking (woodcut), and drawings.

On the stage, the UFH Drama Society performed their play: "Don't Stare" - a family theatre piece that addresses stereotypes, prejudice, and judgments surrounding autism. The performance takes the audience through a collection of emotional and thrilling stories of parents, families and community members affected by the Stigma of Autism. The



play advocates for awareness, support, and empathy for people with special needs, as well as promoting human rights for neurodivergent people receiving humiliating stares, and hostility from the public because they behave and see the world in a different way.

Zintle Ne-ahtyah Mbuyazwe, who is also a final-year Music student majoring in jazz music, also graced the NAF stage and gave a performance titled: "EMandulo kwela Maqaba" which is a reimagining of ubuQaba through fashion and song. For this offering, the singer-songwriter and African jazz performer collaborated with renowned self-taught fashion designer and VATOH couture founder Ntsikelelo Ntleki.

Well Done to all the students and thank you for representing the University on this national and prestigious stage in the arts industry.

Fortune smiles on Fort Hare Karateka for Second Year Running

"To be honest, the unity in this hardworking team and the love and respect for the sport and for each other have been factors behind our success."

A smile in the face of adversity turned out to be Fort Hare's secret weapon as they went about their business of defending their overall title at the USSA Goju-Kai karate championships.

One can almost imagine head coach Thobela Ntsonkota standing at the back of the makeshift dojo in East London, nodding in approval as the simplest of plans came together for the second year running.

Fort Hare finished the two-day contest in East London with a total of 31 medals - 13 golds, eight silvers and 10 bronzes.

Nombuso Ndamane accounted for three of the golds, while Thabiso Ngwane (two golds and a silver) and Olwethy Varoyi (two golds and a bronze) also took home multiples of the most coveted medal.

The defending champions were well aware that they needed to soak up a fair amount of pressure at the nationals, which is why Ntsonkota emphasised beforehand that they should not be sidetracked by results.

"Because of being the defending champions, one of the things I kept telling the squad was to go out there and enjoy themselves," the senpai said.



"The focus was to do everything as best as we could and the outcome would then be the judge."

He told his charges that the expectation was not necessarily to win but rather for them to do their best while lapping up the moment - the theory being that that would bring out the best in them.

Ntsonkota said the team spirit and support of each other were also key in their success.

"To be honest, the unity in this hardworking team and the love and respect for the sport and for each other have been factors behind our success."

The title was another important one for the Eastern Cape university as it continues to build its reputation in the semi-contact style that was only introduced at the institution in 2017.

Since then, they have reaped the rewards of their hard work - most notably being recognised as the top-ranked university in the country.

"It is something we will continue to focus on going forward. This will serve as motivation to follow a path of constant improvement."

Tough challenges from the universities of Western Cape and North-West made life difficult at times but the Fort Hare karatekas managed to do what was required - naturally, with the obligatory smile.

Ntsonkota admitted to being quietly confident throughout the tournament of retaining the title after his students landed seven medals from their first seven fights.

"I knew from then on that their minds were in the right place and that we had a good chance."

What was most satisfying for the senpai was that the vast majority of his students had never competed in a tournament of any description.

"To fight their way to the top prize was very special."

Fort Hare Cricket Coach Spots Gap Between Bat and Ball

When cricket fanatic Jongile Kilani spotted a gap between bat and pad in the University of Fort Hare cricket environment, he had no hesitation aiming for it. That is the short version of how the former Border semi-professional player became head coach of the university's cricket club in 2012.

It's been a journey of discovery for the 29-year-old who grew up in Middelburg in the Eastern Cape before moving to Gqeberha as a young learner. It was while attending Vezubuhle Primary School in Motherwell that he was discovered by former Proteas bowler Mfuneko Ngam and he was subsequently drafted by the paceman's academy.

Here his leadership skills were recognised and he was appointed age-group coach at the academy in 2009.

After a few years in that role, Kilani received a CSA Academy bursary to study at the University of Fort Hare.

"What I discovered was that the university team functioned independently of the academy, so there was no structured coaching for them," he explained.

"I recognised that gap and decided to throw in my lot to assist them by transferring my coaching skills."

Players not part of the bursary scheme, he found, were in effect yorke. So, after each academy practice session, he would make his way to the university team to help them out.

His organisational skills were recognised by Thando Ngcete and Mongezi Nzukuma, two senior university team players, who encouraged him to consider becoming the team's coach.

Kilani was backed by then cricket officer Likhaya Matiwana, who

presented a proposal to the varsity centred around appointing him to help grow the sport. That was the start of his fulltime coaching career.

"I enjoy working and helping people reach their full potential. I believe in making an impact on someone's life because I feel that person will influence others to be better people."

While his primary goal is coaching, he understands the importance of a holistic approach to the development of players.

"My values revolve around being hardworking, self-belief, empowering others, accountability and a passion for the sport," he said.

Like bat and ball, there is a very important relationship between sport and academics, a message he regularly drums into his players.

"There are no guarantees in sport and it can all go wrong if you suffer serious injuries or things don't go quite according to plan. It is essential to have something to fall back on."

He has guided Fort Hare from the abyss of the USSA D section in 2012 to the A section in 2016/17. Last year, they were promoted to the Border premier league.

A women's cricket code has also been successfully introduced.

Despite more than half of the team being complete novices, they won the Border women's premier league under the guidance of coach Lukhanyo Hanabe and captain Sisipho Siswana.

As for the future, he wants to continue recruiting school-leavers to bolster playing resources and introduce fun inter-residence tournaments to attract more players.



Rowing star Mcetywa's bronze for the ages

It was a case of third time's a charm for Fort Hare rowing coach Lunga Mcetywa when he won his first medal for South Africa at the Africa Beach Sprints competition in Tunisia.

Barely a year after his first outing to the North African country for the same coastal rowing event, the 33-year-old stormed home with partner George du Plooy to take bronze in the men's doubles.

After failing to secure laurels at both the 2022 beach sprints and last year's Commonwealth Games in Namibia, he is understandably proud of his first medal for Team SA.

He also placed fifth in the mixed doubles at the beach sprints, a quality performance despite falling short of a top-three finish.

Mcetywa, still fatigued after returning home to East London this week, said he and Du Plooy had performed well in the time-trials to establish qualifying positions for the races.

"In the first one we were beaten by Tunisia but in the second we beat Libya. That allowed us to qualify for the B-finals, where we faced Algeria for the bronze medal. We then beat them."

While a podium meant a lot to him personally it was also pleasing to be able to repay the coaches and managers who had invested in them over the years, Mcetywa said.



Just as he had done in the men's doubles, he qualified third in the time-trial for the mixed race. Unfortunately, he and partner Ziyanda Gwamanda were unable to replicate his performance with Du Plooy.

Mcetywa was in Tunisia for two weeks, also participating in a training camp hosted by World Rowing.

Conditions were not ideal during the camp, with high tides an all too frequent occurrence, but fortunately these had subsided by the time the competition started.

Mcetywa added he had learnt a lot on the coaching side of things. The mentors of other competing nations, particularly Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, were happy to have a chat and were "very motivating".

"Especially in the men's doubles you would watch the top teams and see what they were doing differently.

"I believe we would have placed even higher if we had implemented these things earlier in the competition, something we did do in our last race. They were small things, but we managed to implement them effectively."

While he did not compete against him in an actual race, Mcetywa did face another Fort Hare rower and one of his charges, Alvin Rukuni, in the mixed doubles time-trial.

LLB student Rukuni, 24, made the news when he convinced Zimbabwe's sports federation to let him row for the country at this year's beach sprints.

His first time out in the competition yielded satisfactory results, finishing seventh in the mixed doubles and 12th overall in the men's singles race.

Mcetywa said his mentee would only go from strength to strength, having now had a taste of international competition.

"I think he had a good event. What was important was for him to go there and get the feel of it, what the atmosphere is like and understand the conditions.

"Experience counts for a lot. I remember with my first competition last year I completely messed up going around one of the three buoys in the water.

"I made a couple of mistakes, but going there for a second time I knew what I was supposed to do."



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