



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

UFH NEWS

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**“The University of Fort Hare
is indeed a national asset”**
– President Cyril Ramaphosa



Preserving History: UFH and ANC sign MOU

It's official. The University of Fort Hare (UFH) is the sole and permanent custodian of the African National Congress' digitised archival materials.

This commitment which was initially made 30 years ago was cemented on the 30th of October 2022, when the President of South Africa and the African National Congress (ANC), His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa and UFH Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu signed an addendum to the initial memorandum of understanding (MOU) that was signed between the two institutions.

The initial partnership was forged on the 26th of October in 1992 when late President Nelson Mandela convinced the ANC National Executive Committee that there was no better home than the University of Fort Hare to preserve the movement's rich history.

The original agreement was signed by Tata Mandela and the then UFH Vice-Chancellor Mr Sibusiso Bengu, entrusting the University to take care and preserve certain documents and archival materials relating to the affairs and history of the liberation movement.

The addendum signed by President Ramaphosa and Prof Buhlungu makes provision for what did not exist at the time of the initial agreement which is the digital depositing of archival material.

The preservation of the archival material spearheaded by the UFH National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (Nahecs) includes activities of digitising the archival material and developing a website to enable members of the public to access the material for purpose of academic research or general information.

The renewal of this commitment comes at a time when both the ANC and UFH are venturing on their separate journeys toward renewal.

Speaking at the historic event held at the De Beers Art Gallery on the Alice campus, the President reaffirmed the University's standing of being a Great African University and being a pivotal vehicle in the liberation of the continent and the production of great leaders.

"Our forebears dreamt of a free nation. They dreamt of us being people who will be able to govern ourselves based on the will of our people. A dream that was later captured in the Freedom Chapter. To achieve these dreams, our forebears required proper vehicles to attain these dreams."

"The first vehicle was the formation of the ANC in 1912. The second vehicle was the establishment of the University of Fort Hare in 1916. This University is part of the history of the ANC, it became the intellectual home of the oppressed that fed the ANC with much-needed intellectual leaders. What we are doing here, cannot be separated from that history.

"The University of Fort Hare is indeed a national asset, more than that, it is indeed a heritage site," said the President.

Prof Buhlungu said the partnership between the two institutions carries great importance.

"The ANC and UFH are historical institutions that are part of the tapestry of liberation, part of the tapestry of bringing about hope to people's lives, especially black people. It is essential that now, many years later, we are meeting here with the ANC to cement this partnership."

"When the ANC decided to approach an institution back in 1992, there were so many universities in the country and they chose this one. They came to UFH because many leaders of the liberation movement came from here at a time they could not access other institutions. It made sense that they chose this University."

Among the ANC collection persevered at Nahecs are artifacts from the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) - an educational institution established by exiled ANC members in 1978 at Mazimbu in Tanzania; Chris Hani's boots; Govan Mbeki's guitar and volumes of documents and letters.





Fort Hare ranked amongst world's top universities for 2023 by Times Higher Education

“We are excited by this achievement, and it marks an important moment in the first year of our renewal programme” - VC

The University of Fort Hare made its debut on the prestigious *Times Higher Education (THE)* global ranking - one of the world's most respected university ranking bodies.

The *THE* World University Rankings published its annual report of the world's top universities for 2023 in October, listing 15 South African institutions among them.

This year, only two Eastern Cape universities appeared on the *THE* World University Rankings - the University of Fort Hare and Rhodes University.

See: [These are the 15 best universities in South Africa](#)

Since its inception in 2004, the *THE* has been assessing university performance to understand the success of higher education institutions around the world, providing trusted performance data on universities for academics, government and industry.

The *THE* World University Rankings is the only global performance table that judges research-intensive universities across all of their core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook, and 13 carefully calibrated performance indicators are used.

The performance indicators are grouped into five areas: teaching (the learning environment); research (volume, income and reputation); citations (research influence); international outlook (staff, students and research); and industry income (knowledge transfer).

“We are excited by this achievement, and it marks an important moment in the first year of our renewal programme,” said Professor Sakhela Buhlungu, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Fort Hare.

The Vice-Chancellor said the University's strategic plan was well on track and that the University was reclaiming ground. “Applications to UFH for the 2023 academic year also increased at an unprecedented rate”.

Earlier this year, UFH outranked several Eastern Cape universities based on the Scimago Institutions (SI) Rankings which rank various international academic and research-related institutions in terms of research, innovation and societal impact to finally produce a composite score.

In the overall ranking for South African higher education institutions - which considers research, societal impact and innovation - UFH was clustered in the second quartile. The University appeared in the 12th position, followed by Nelson Mandela University in the 15th position and Walter Sisulu University in the 19th position out of the 23 South African higher education institutions ranked. Rhodes University was ranked in the 11th position and secured first place out of all the Eastern Cape universities.



NDP PUBLIC LECTURE: UFH students call on government to put young people at the centre of SA's development plan

“For a long time, the youth have been ignored when it comes to the development of the country. It is time for our views to be heard and be included in the plans to move this nation forward,”

- Liso Ndiki, UFH student

“For a long time, the youth have been ignored when it comes to the development of the country. It is time for our views to be heard and be included in the plans to move this nation forward,” - this according to Liso Ndiki, a second-year UFH Bachelor of Commerce student.

Ndiki's view was echoed by several UFH students who attended the National Development Plan (NDP) 10th Anniversary Public Lecture held at the University's Alice Campus on the 23rd of September.

Launched on the 15th of August in 2022, the government's NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. According to the plan: “South Africa can realize these goals by drawing on the energies of its people growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnership throughout society.”

UFH was chosen by the National Planning Commission (NPC) to host the lecture to mark the significant milestone.

The lecture themed: **How do we invoke and implement the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 to ensure a new socio-economic heritage for South Africa?** was delivered by Ambassador Nozipho Mxakato-Diseko.

The event was attended by the Deputy Chairperson of the NPC, Professor Tinyiko Maluleke and seven commissioners. Also in attendance was the UFH senior management, led by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu, students and members of the community.

Prof Buhlungu said: “If you want to talk about development, Alice and the Eastern Cape is the place to locate such discussions. We are very delighted to be the co-host of this important lecture and we hope we can continue doing this, in other ways in the future.”

Prof Maluleke said the selection of UFH as a co-host was deliberate. “Where else can we go to talk about the long-term vision of the country than Fort Hare?”

The lecture presented an opportunity to reflect on the challenges related to the implementation of the plan, report on the progress made and chart the way forward.

According to Ambassador Mxakato-Diseko, the plan is solid, however, the challenge is with the implementation.

“Somehow, we did not do the necessary work to ensure people own it and understand it and use the plan to hold government accountable. Also to use it to get involved in the decision-making processes of government.”

“I think what will assist us to make progress, is to take the NDP back to the people,” said the Ambassador.

President of the Student Representative Council (SRC), Snowi Hawker said “we are pleased that the lecture was held at the University as it enlightened the students and the community of Alice about the NDP”. He continued to say “Currently the plan lacks exposure, as such many people are not aware of it. With this lecture being held here, we hope people will be better informed.”





CHE week-long campus visit for routine Institutional Audit concludes successfully

In our mission to continue providing quality education and conduct innovative research that contributes to the advancement of knowledge, the University hosted a panel from the Council of Higher Education (CHE) as part of the Council's sector-wide series of institutional audits.

The panel members arrived on campus on the 17th of October and concluded their session on the 21st of October.

According to the CHE, institutional audits constitute one of the mechanisms through which the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) carries out its responsibilities for quality assurance. The assessment focuses on an institution's policies, systems, procedures, strategies and resources for quality management of the core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement, including the relevant academic support services.

"The CHE's primary focus is quality assurance in higher education in South Africa. All universities are currently being audited by the Council as part of their routine oversight role linked to their core mandate," explained the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu.

Part of the preparation for the visit included the compilation of an institutional self-evaluation report (SER) on the institution's quality assurance system, policies, protocols, and practices.

"The background against which the SER was developed, is the approval by the University of Fort Hare Council of a new Strategic Plan, entitled 'Towards a Decade of Renewal, 2022-2026' on THE 25th of November 2021, and a steep recovery over the last eighteen months that has seen governance systems restored and rejuvenated following a period during which the University was under Council administration."

"The preparation of the SER has allowed the University to reflect on the policies, structures and processes it has in place to assure quality in important ways. The insights derived from this self-reflexive exercise will serve us well as we move forward."

The visit started with a meet-and-greet session at the Hogsback Hotel on the 16th of October before the formal sessions that involved face-to-face interviews, virtual interactions and site visits on all three campuses (Alice, East London and Alice) commenced.

On Day 1 the first session was with the VC and the University's Management Executive Committee on matters related to governance and leadership. This was followed by sessions with the Extended Management Team members, Faculty Deans and a campus tour of facilities on the Alice campus.

Day 2 started with a site visit to the picturesque Fort Hare Dairy Farm ahead of interviews with staff from Quality Assurance, Compliance and Risk Management, Heads of Departments, Deputy Deans, staff from the Research, Partnership and Innovation Office and Academic staff who are members of Senate.

Day 3 commenced with discussions with the council members (internal and external) followed by representatives from organized labour.

On days 4 and 5, engagements were held virtually with students, academic staff, researchers, staff who work in infrastructure and facilities, student support and academic support staff.

According to the VC, the CHE panel provided initial feedback to the Extended Management Team at the end of their visit, outlining both what the University is doing well as well as areas for improvement.

"This tallied very well with our own self-evaluation, and we await the panel's final report, which we should receive early next year."

"One comment from the panel, which struck me as very important, was that the panel noted, across all tiers of the University, a very deep commitment to seeing the University succeed. It is that commitment from our staff, our students and our Council that will unite us as we continue building this truly singular institution," said the VC.





Convocation empowers Final-Year Students for Life After Graduation

“The University has a greater role to play in ensuring that we prepare our graduates for the challenges ahead, hence these kinds of initiatives are necessary”

Concerned by the high rate of unemployed graduates in South Africa, the UFH Convocation held a student engagement session to empower final-year students for the journey after graduation.

The first-of-its-kind workshop was held on the 26th of September at the Alice Campus’ Green Auditorium. The engagement was organized by the University’s Institutional Advancement Department through its Alumni Affairs Office.

The brunt to find employment is heavily felt by young graduates. According to Stats SA, Youth in South Africa continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market with an unemployment rate higher than the national average. According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the first quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate was 63,9% for those aged 15-24 and 42,1% for those aged 25-34 years

Convocation President, Adv Andile Mini said the statistics were worrisome.

“The University has a greater role to play in ensuring that we prepare our graduates for the challenges ahead, hence these kinds of initiatives are necessary,” said Adv Mini.

Influential speakers were lined up for the session, such as the MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Zolile Williams; Ms Nomso Kana who is a Nuclear Scientist, Mr Trevor Ramncwana who is the Deputy Director for Public Employment at the Department of Employment and Labour and Psychologist & Career Counsellor, Dr James Munnik.

The first session was on communication and interview skills presented by Ms Vuyiseka Mboxela who is the spokesperson to the Eastern Cape’s MEC of Education and a member of the UFH Convocation. She stressed the importance of understanding effective communication and elements that prevent effective communication. Ms Mboxela also gave tips on how to project yourself during job interviews and how to communicate effectively in the workplace.

“You only get one opportunity to do an interview for a specific job. Make the first impression count,” she said.

Mr Actor Katurura who is the Executive Operations Manager in the University’s Registrar’s Office presented a session on Teamwork. Mr Katurura, an experienced Legal Academic by profession and an esteemed alumnus spoke highly of the significance of the power of teamwork, working in and for a team and developing team spirit.

In support of his presentation, Mr Katurura shared a few powerful stories including that of Ben Carson, an

American retired Neurosurgeon who led a team of surgeons in the first known separation of conjoined twins joined at the back of the head.

“Teams are very integral in how we live as human beings. A lot of what we do is so complex that one person might not give the whole solution,” said Actor.

Ms Kana shared with the students some of the practical things needed to leapfrog into the labour market. This includes creative thinking, problem solving and innovation and

“Your hunger will determine your future. So if you are slack you will not make it. New money comes through

creativity, you need to generate new ideas,” she advised the students.

Prof Jabulani Kheswa, Deputy Head of the UFH Psychology Department reminded the students that: “People with a positive mindset have a greater chance of succeeding and are capable to use their success to empower others.”

The Dean of Students Affairs, Mr Lufuno Tshikudo thanked the Convocation members and the organizers for the great initiative.



Another insightful Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Annual Lecture - Delivered by Mr Luvuyo Mosana

“It is critical for leaders in local development to understand their why. To be elected in a position of responsibility, among other things, the first is to establish your purpose.”

The Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Annual Lecture once more lived up to its objective of creating a platform for insight and meaningful dialogue on local economic development.

In its fifth year running, themed: **Leadership in Local Economic Development**, the lecture is a joint venture between the University of Fort Hare and the Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Development Trust.

The session was held in August at the ABC Hall on the East London campus, the first in-person session since post Covid-19 regulations. The event was also live-streamed to a virtual audience.

Joining virtually, the Arch gave background to the purpose of the lectures which are also held at six other universities. “The aim is to get Africans talking and to create solutions for African problems,” he said. The Arch’s son Nyakallo Makgoba attended the live event on behalf of his father.

Since its inception in 2018, the lectures have been honoured by highly influential speakers who are key role players in the economic development sector. They include Ms Thokozile Xasa, the then Minister of Sport

and Recreation; Mr Thembinkosi Bonakele former SA Competition Commissioner; Dr Lulu Gwagwa, SA’s first black Town Planner; and Dr Batandwa Siswana who is a public finance specialist.

This year was no exception, the keynote speaker was Mr Luvuyo Mosana, the Chief Executive Officer at the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC), a public entity organization whose vision is to see a prosperous and productive Eastern Cape where all people realize their potential.

As the CEO, Mr Mosana is responsible for facilitating policy strategy and technical dialogue with stakeholders on socio-economic development issues, designing and facilitating the implementation of strategies and interventions aimed at growing the economy, creating jobs, and combating socio-economic disparities.

He also designs and packages strategic development and or infrastructure projects for resources leveraging from government, SOEs and the private sector. He also leads consultants and contractors to ensure timely and efficient program implementation.



Mr Mosana holds a Masters degree in Politics and Political Economy from Nelson Mandela University, a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree from the University of Fort Hare. He has also completed trainings in Strategic Planning & Management at the University of the Witwatersrand, Public Service Management, and Public Budgeting & Fiscal Management in Sweden and Organizational Development at the New School For Social Research University in New York.

Speaking from his rich knowledge and experience in development planning and executive management Mr Mosana gave a passionate and profound address on the state of leadership in local economic development.

He spoke about some of the crisis that impedes local economic development such as the current Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine which has impacted the cost of living.

Mr Mosana also reminded the audience and participants of a saying that states; “From all crises, there is a silver lining.”

He also spoke passionately about the importance of leaders knowing their purpose. “It is critical for leaders in local development to understand their why. To be elected in a position of responsibility, among other things, the first is to establish your purpose.”

The key address was followed by an equally insightful and robust question-and-answer session.

Click here to watch the recording of the session: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1-u2ubnw7Y>





Excellence Personified: Celebrating Our Women In Research

To wrap up Women's Month (August), The Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Partnership and Innovation, Dr Nthabi Taole-Mjimba hosted an event to celebrate and recognize our prolific female academics.

The virtual session also aimed to inspire the next generation of women to pursue their research journeys.

Dr Taole-Mjimba said it was most fitting to close Women's Month with an event that recognizes and celebrates the University's female researchers who continue to portray excellence in their academic careers.

"The female scholars at this University continue to make us proud, both in the national and international arenas. Most recently, our Dean of Health Sciences Prof Mzikazi Nduna was named among the Mail & Guardian Power of Women 2022 award recipients," said the DVC.

The speakers included Prof Himla Soodyall, Executive Officer at the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) who delivered the key address. Prof Soodyall congratulated UFH women for their sterling work.

"The awards and recognitions that you have attained are not only in recognition of the University but these achievements are part and parcel of the pipeline that produces the next generation of scholars that will benefit our society at large."

She also encouraged the researchers to be passionate about the work they do. "In order to become a great scientist you need to be passionate about what you want to do and identify what you need to do to make a difference in the world," she said.

The voices of the University's female scholars were well represented by three female academics who recently delivered their professorial lectures, signifying their promotion to Full Professorship. They are Prof Atim O.A.B. Aderibigbe; Prof Munacinga Simatele and Prof Susan Smith. Dr. Yeshona Sukai our youngest National Research Foundation (NRF) rated researcher, was also among the speakers.

In their presentation, the four UFH researchers shared their remarkable and inspiring stories of being a woman in academia. This includes overcoming and juggling challenges such as being a mother, wife and an academic – simultaneously.

"My advice to those who want to have an academic career and also have a family is to be courageous, don't ever look down on yourself, put in place a good support system and lastly, take good care of yourself," said Prof Aderibigbe.

Prof Simatele said: "I have learned from being a woman that I can multitask without having to kill myself. I am at the point where I am learning as I go that a work life balance is important and possible."

Prof Smit recalled and joked about how she became a ma (Mother) and obtained her MA (Masters) at the same time.

Dr Sukai shared the inspiring journey that led her to become the University's youngest NRF-rated Researcher.

The profound and inspiring conversation was chaired by Dr Connie Bitso, Director of UFH Libraries.

Four Inaugural Professorial Lectures and they are all Women

This year, the University hosted four Inaugural Professorial Lectures - an event that signifies an Academic's official promotion to Full Professor - and they are all women.



Prof Blessing Aderibigbe from the Chemistry Department. She delivered the 26th Professorial Lecture and titled her address: *Hybridization, A Sustainable Synthetic Approach for the Development of Potent Therapeutics*.

View the recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkfdwjnWwSU>

Prof Munacinga Simatele, Economics Professor from the Faculty of Management and Commerce delivered the 27th Lecture, titled: *Accelerating financial Inclusion: The Promise of Digital Finance*.

View the recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3feW6rwQ9Y>

The 28th Lecture was delivered by **Prof Susan Smit**, Afrikaans Literature Professor from the Afrikaans Department, titled: *Can poetry save the earth? Language and Literature in the time of posthumanism*.

View the recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7uccsHq2qM>

The 29th and final Inaugural Professorial Lecture was delivered by **Prof Nomthandazo Ntlama-Makhanya**, Public Law Professor at the Faculty of Law. Titled: *The interdependence of the Rule of Law and the independence of the judiciary in the protection of human right*.

View the recording here: <https://youtu.be/1THigvPUaQY>



UFH WOMEN PROMOTE SISTERHOOD CULTURE

The women of UFH came out in numbers to attend the University's first-of-its-kind Women's Indaba held in September at the Alice campus' Sports Complex. The event themed, "Celebrating Women" was championed by the Student Affairs Division.

According to the Student Counselling Unit Manager, Ms Thobeka Msengana, the purpose of the event was to gather women in one place to share their experiences, create a common voice and introduce a new culture of sisterhood - on and off campus.

"The programme was designed by women for women and served to inspire women to become the best version of themselves," said Ms Msengana

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu applauded the initiative, saying such discussions bring positive change. "We need to have more of these

engagements, it encourages positive change." The event came on the back of a Men's Talk held on the 29th of July which focused on encouraging a positive change in men.

During the event, the VC also took the opportunity to applaud female students who are excelling in their academic studies.

Motivational speaker, Ms Nwabisa Hexana who is a Lawyer by profession and alumni spoke on women's rights and emphasized the importance of why women should know and use their rights. "For you to use your rights, you also need to start knowing your worth as a woman. You need to know yourself and what resonates with your values. If you do not have confidence in yourself, you will likely allow anyone to take advantage of you. Find your voice and be firm. As women we are game changers, we have wisdom,

courage and it is up to us to use what God has given us."

Social Media Influencer, Ikhona Gogo, who is a Social Worker by profession and an activist for women popularly known for her @KeepMovingDadewethu videos, spoke about the wellness of women. "You need to prioritize yourself and take care of your health and your mental wellbeing. Carry yourself with dignity and do not compromise who you are," she stressed.

Ms Ngawethu ka Siphwiwo, National Director at Miss Commonwealth South Africa echoed the same sentiments shared by the speakers on women empowerment.

The Manager in the VC's office, Ms Zuki Mabambo reminded the all-female audience that they were powerful, more than they imagined. "Women were

born to be multifaceted and are very creative beings. We were created to build, nurture and lead. We have the power within ourselves and we need to use that power."





UFH celebrates its latest graduates during in-person spring graduation ceremony

On the 7th of October, the University of Fort Hare celebrated its latest cohort of graduates during an in-person Spring Graduation ceremony.

Held at the Sports Complex on the Alice Campus, there were two sessions, a morning session and an afternoon session.

The morning session saw the conferment of degrees to graduands from the Faculty of Education, Science and Agriculture and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

In the afternoon, graduands from the Faculty of Law, Management and Commerce and the Faculty of Health Sciences walked the stage to collect their degrees.

The qualifications awarded range from Undergraduate Certificates Diplomas and Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Honours Degrees, Masters Degrees and PhDs.

As per tradition, the sessions were officiated by the Chancellor, Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza SC and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu.

The youngest PhD graduand from this season is 28-year-old Ms Monique Banks. She was conferred a Doctoral Degree in Languages and Literature. The title of her thesis: *The Many Faces of Beauty and the Beast: A Feminist and New Historical Approach*, examined a number of "Beauty and the Beasts" tales shared across cultures and centuries. Her study focused on the female writers of Beauty and the Beast tales and presented an in-depth analysis of their literature.

Our oldest PhD graduand is 69-year-old Mr Patrick Maduna who was awarded a Doctor of Nursing. For his doctoral study, Mr Maduna investigated the implementation of clinical governance by the Mpumalanga Department of Health.

Congratulations to all our graduands!

Graduate bags degree and lands a job in Hungary

When Onelisa Mgoqi walked across the UFH 2022 Spring Graduation stage to collect her Bachelor of Commerce in General Accounting degree she had already secured a job at an accounting firm in Hungary, Europe.

It's been a bittersweet journey of 11 years for the 29-year-old graduate who hails from Tsomo, who changed universities and struggled to cope with the loss of her biggest supporter — her father, to whom she dedicated her qualification.

"His death changed my life in a way that I had never imagined. The day he died a part of me died with him. I was drowning in deep dysfunction while putting on a brave face, this also affected my studies. Graduating today means a lot to me and I dedicate this moment to him," she said. Onelisa's father passed away in 2014.

She initially studied for a Bachelor of Accounting Sciences at another South African university, however, due to being overwhelmed by grief over her father's death she could not complete the degree in the prescribed time. As such, she was academically excluded.

"Although my mind was not in a good state, giving up was not an option. I am happy to have finally achieved this accomplishment."

She then applied to UFH and registered in 2016.

During her time at UFH, she served as a member of the 2017/2018 SRC and was also a recipient of the Prestigious Fort Hare Autumn School programme. "These have been the greatest highlights of my time at the University of Fort Hare," she said

The opportunity to start a career in Hungary came through a conversation she had with a friend.

"A friend of mine who I used to study with at the previous university I was enrolled at, had moved to Hungary after graduating. We were having a conversation about my next move after graduating."



"Although my mind was not in a good state, giving up was not an option. I am happy to have finally achieved this accomplishment."

Onelisa will be jetting off to Hungary in two months' time to start her career.

"The job is equivalent to articles here in SA because I am straight from university. But it is a permanent post and my contract will be renewed annually subject to me renewing my yearly visa," she explained.

"This is my time to shine. This is the proudest moment of my life," she proclaimed.

Former vendor becomes family's first graduate, at age 40

A few years ago, Nomandithini Metu was selling cooked food at a taxi rank, today the 40-year-old from Nxamkwana Village outside Mdantsane graduated with a Bachelor of Nursing during the UFH 2022 Spring Graduation.

Metu, a divorcee and single parent to three children aged between 7 and 18 years, says her journey to graduation was not easy but a rewarding one.

Born last of six children, Metu and her siblings were raised by unemployed parents until 1990 when her father passed away, leaving her mother to raise them.

"My parents were not educated and none of my siblings completed high school. Despite this, I looked up to other family members who were working as professionals and I always aspired to be like them."

"I completed my primary schooling and went to high school where I was identified as one of the top learners. I obtained my matric in 2001 which I passed with an exemption."

Pressed by the situation at home, Metu decided to park her dream of studying further and go look for a job to provide for her family.

"I started working as a cashier at a local tavern in order to put on the table. Whilst at it, the urge to study further never went away and I decided to revisit that dream."

Metu first applied to Lovedale College where she completed a qualification Marketing Management in 2008, then went on to work at a local food retailer as a cashier and front-end controller.

"A few years later, I got a call from a relative who presented me with an opportunity to sell food out of a shipping container at the Highway taxi rank in Mdantsane."

"There I sold friend liver and braaied chicken wings. I also sold clothes where I got a commission from the sales."

While pushing her business, she once again decided to give education another go. "This time I applied to Buffalo City College for a qualification in electrical engineering. Unfortunately, because I was not passionate about the programme, I did not complete the course."

Giving it her final go, she applied to the University of Fort Hare and was accepted and commenced with her studies toward a Bachelor of Nursing in 2017.

"Growing up I wanted to be a Doctor to help people who are sick. Being a nurse is the closest to being a Doctor because I can still help people who are ill."

While waiting for funding in her first year, Metu continued with her business to sustain her during the first semester of her studies. She also encountered other challenges such as financial struggles and medical problems. "There were times that I wanted to just give up but then I remembered why I started this journey - which was in search of a better life for me and my family."

Currently Metu is doing her community service at Cloete Joubert Hospital in Barkley East.

"I did this to improve the lives of my family members, to build my mother a house and also to prove to myself and others that anything and everything is possible when you keep pushing."

TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

Young graduate proves that disability is not an inability

Sibongiseni Siyamcela Gonya proved that being disabled is not an inability when she walked the graduation stage to collect her BCom in General Accounting degree during the 2022 Spring Graduation Ceremony.

The 23-year-old from Engcobo in the Eastern Cape was born with several limb and spinal deformities.

She passed matric in 2017 and enrolled at the UFH in 2018, beginning her journey toward obtaining a university qualification.

"I enjoyed this journey. Being at UFH allowed me to meet many incredible people, some of whom I have made amazing friends. Also, I am grateful to have had inspiring and supportive Lecturers who have all played a part in making my journey at UFH a memorable one."

Sibongiseni said the University's Disability Unit (DU) contributed immensely to her academic success by providing adequate support to enable her to navigate this chapter of her life.

"The DU played a major role in making my life on campus, as a student with a disability, easier. One of the exciting things that I enjoyed participating in, and will truly miss, was the DU's annual Disability Awareness Week. The Unit has been helpful and supportive throughout my journey at UFH."

Like many other students, Sibongiseni says she also had her fair share of challenges that she encountered.

"The initial challenge that I faced was the transition from high school to university and navigating a new environment, it was not easy and I really struggled. This negatively affected my mental health which unsurprisingly affected my academics. My affected academics also further declined the state of my mental health—a vicious cycle to be trapped in. But I pushed through."



"I am grateful to have had inspiring and supportive Lecturers who have all played a part in making my journey at UFH a memorable one."

"While trying to find a system that works for my mental health, doing my final year, the Covid-19 pandemic hit South Africa and we went straight to lockdown. Factors surrounding that situation, such as the uncertainty that it caused, further affected my mental health."

As a result of the challenges, it took her four years to complete the three-year degree.

"What pulled me through these challenges was determination, resilience, seeking for help for my mental health issues, and the support that I had from my support system."

"It has been a journey filled with lessons, growth, challenges, and special moments. The journey to that graduation stage has not been an easy one but it has definitely been worthwhile," she said.



"I did this to improve the lives of my family members, to build my mother a house and also to prove to myself and others that anything and everything is possible when you keep pushing."

Cradock's revered reverend Mbali who survived polio at birth is now an Academic Doctor

Among the graduates that were capped during the 2022 Spring Graduation, is Reverend Nkosinati Mbali from Cradock.

The highly admired Rev, who is living with a disability after surviving polio at birth – a disabling and life-threatening disease caused by the poliovirus - graduated with a Doctor in Theology.

Dr Mbali shared his life story with us.

Background and upbringing

"I grew up in Lingelihle township, which had a political history in South Africa. I am living with a disability because of polio since birth, which affected my back and left leg. Polio was a historic major pandemic, and many children did not survive because of a lack of medical expertise in the past.

I am the firstborn of four children from my late mother, a former nurse who was expelled from a nursing college because she fell pregnant with me. The expulsion was motivated by apartheid laws that a single person cannot fall pregnant during nursing training.

Her situation worsened when my father could not accept my disability and disappeared. My late mother carried two disappointments, expulsion from her work and the disappearance of my father, but my grandmother played a very pivotal role and insisted that I go to school. She believed that God had a purpose for me.

My family has faced challenges but created my world. They supported me through my personal needs and did not give up on me, as bitter trials often turned out to be blessings. They introduced empowerment as the main tool amidst harsh circumstances."

Primary and High school life

"Being accepted at a normal school was a challenge as I was discriminated against during my enrolment. The teachers I was exposed to could not accept my disability. Their attitude and behaviour were very traumatic.

The school management did not accept me as a physically disabled learner because of the myth that a disabled child was bad luck to society. No one was willing to see bad luck daily, hence, I became a victim of being called *isifobo* and *isilima*. My objective was to see my goal achieved, so I persevered.

Travelling a very long distance from home to school excluded learners such as myself because the system had no programs such as Scholar Transport and School Nutrition. I had to wake up early and leave home because I did not want to be embarrassed in front of other learners. I had to travel almost 4km a day from home to school using assertive devices and shoes.

The disadvantage of walking a long distance had the painful consequence of tiredness after school hours. High School life was also tough since the school was not an accessible place. It did not accommodate me at all.

My school experience left me with scars. Thank God I managed to convince myself that one day, things will be better.

This period of my life reminds me of what Pele once said: "Success is not an accident, it is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do."

Tertiary Education Journey

"My academic journey started in 1996 when I enrolled for a Diploma in Theology and obtained it in 1998. Sadly, my mother died in a car accident on graduation day. The death of my mother disturbed me, and I struggled to cope for almost two years. I then furthered my Theological studies and completed a Bachelor of Theology from the South African Theological Seminar.

In 2018 I completed a Master of Theology from Baptist Theological College and published one article from the study.

I enrolled with the University of Fort Hare in 2019 for a Doctoral Degree in Theology. The study investigated the marginalization and exclusion of women from church governance structures in the Cradock region of the Baptist Church of Southern Africa.



It identified barriers and stereotypes and proposed solutions for the inclusion of women. The study adopted a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the attitudes and behaviours involved while drawing from the richness of responses from sampled congregants.

The study's most compelling findings were that there was acceptance of gender inequality within church structures, rampant patriarchy influenced by local culture, misrepresentation of the scripture to justify the exclusion of women and institutionalized power imbalance.

An overarching recommendation is that a Gender Action Plan (GAP) be implemented to transform the church, thus creating deliberate and accelerated development programmes for inclusion of women in church governance and leadership structures.

While studying for my PhD, I published three articles in accredited peer-reviewed journals."

Career

"I have served as an HIV/AIDS Coordinator at Inxuba Yethemba Municipality, then moved to the Department of Education as an Administrative Officer responsible for the Integrated Management System. After seven years with the Department of Education, I received a promotional post at the Department of Sport as Assistant Manager from 2016 to date.

This reflects what my grandmother used to say: "*Yimfundo yodwa eyakuvulela iminyango ebomini*" which means only education will open doors for you in life.

Survival Strategy

Self-acceptance has been a key for me. I have never accommodated the word 'shame' in my life rather than being an ambassador to the society of inclusiveness in my church and society. I thank God for giving me this opportunity to explore and become an agent of change.

Fort Hare Foundation Golf Days Raise Over R1 Million

Since its inception last year, the Fort Hare Foundation's East London and Gauteng Annual Fundraising Golf Days have raised just over R1 million.

The event is one of several activities in the resource mobilization strategy in support of the University's Decade of Renewal. Each year the Foundation focuses on specific priorities that seek to enhance the profile of the University and raise funds to support these priorities such as the refurbishment of university infrastructure and bursaries for missing-middle students.

The event starts with golfers swinging their clubs on the course and ends with a glitz and glamorous black-tie gala evening where beautiful artworks produced by our Fine Arts students and historic UFH items are auctioned to the highest bidder.

While the core objective is fundraising, the event also presents an opportunity to build sustainable partnerships with businesses and other critical stakeholders.

The 2nd annual event in East London on the 30th of September attracted 68 golfers and partnerships were forged with 10 businesses and stakeholders.

Thank you to all our partners and sponsors.

Rebuilding, Restoring and Renewal of Nokholeji'





New Dean for Faculty of Management & Commerce: WELCOME ON BOARD

Professor Richard Shambare is the new Dean of the Faculty of Management and Commerce with effect from 1st January 2023.



Professor Shambare is currently the Deputy Dean: Teaching & Learning in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of the Western Cape. His duties in this role include supporting academic literacies and the extended curriculum programme, implementing innovative teaching methods suited for 4IR as well as identifying opportunities to improve the overall student experience. In addition, he is responsible for facilitating partnerships, as well as community and professional engagements that promote learning, teaching, and student success.

Professor Shambare holds a D Tech in Business Administration from Tshwane University of Technology. He has held visiting professorships at the University of Kigali, Rwanda, the University of Mannheim, Germany, the University of Vienna, Austria, and Saxion University, the Netherlands. He has published more than 100 research publications in the form of accredited and peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and conference proceedings. In addition, Professor Shambare has successfully graduated more than 50 postgraduate students (13 doctorates; 33 masters; 5 honours) at UWC, TUT, UNIVEN, UNISA, Milpark, and Universite Libre de Bruxelles.

He holds professional memberships with the South African Association of Public Administration and Management, the Southern African Institute of Management Scientists and the International Academy of African Business and Development. He maintains an active involvement in large-scale projects funded by BRICS, the Chamber of Commerce, DHET and the Ministry of Education: Kingdom of Lesotho, among others. Professor Shambare also developed

an instructional mobile app called the Postgraduate Thesis Supervisor, available on Google Play Store, to enhance both the practice of blended learning in research methodology and e-supervision of dissertations and theses.

“We are looking forward to Professor Shambare joining us at the start of next year. We are confident that he will play a pivotal role in advancing high-quality and innovative teaching and learning in the Faculty of Management and Commerce, building the research profile of the Faculty, improving the quality of the student and staff experience, and strengthening good governance,” said the VC, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu.



Law Clinic and Black Lawyers Association strengthen relations

Last year, the University of Fort Hare through its Faculty of Law signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Black Lawyers Association (BLA) to help bolster its efforts in training final-year students in trial advocacy, case analysis and how to lead evidence. The training is provided by facilitators from the BLA- Legal Education Centre which comprise Judges, Advocates and Attorneys.

Furthering this solid foundation, members of the BLA descended on the East London Campus recently to donate books to the UFH Legal Aid Clinic. The books are an expansion of the knowledge wealth the Clinic is mining to assist its processes and achieve its mandate to broaden the base for access to justice for disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. In practical terms, the books are used as reference material such as statutes and other legislative prescripts that are used by Legal Professionals.

The Director of the Legal Aid Clinic, Mr Siyabulela Pango - an avid former Acting Magistrate, said: “This donation forms part of our building blocks to becoming a fully-fledged Legal Aid Education Clinic

that is rated amongst the best in the country.”

Accompanied by his National Executive entourage, the President of the BLA, Advocate Bayethe Maswazi emphasized that: “This donation is not just for its namesake but a bid to continue with our transformation endeavours in the Legal Profession. Being a former Law Student and a graduate of a previously disadvantaged university, I know the struggle of having limited reference material and resources required to prepare one to be a modern-day Legal Practitioner.”

Adv Maswazi was accompanied by Mr A Pakade, Adv M Mhlanti, Ms N Sotenjwa and Adv L Mnctosho-Boya.

The Law Faculty is well known for producing legal eagles such as Nelson Mandela which the Law school is named after, Oliver Tambo, Robert Sobukwe and many more. Through the advent of its Decade of Renewal project, the university is making headway toward its vision of being a distinctive African University and continues to produce graduates who become leaders in their respective professions.

ECONOMICS BUILDING RISES FROM THE ASHES

The UFH Economics Building that was gutted by fire less than two years ago has been refurbished.

The key to the newly revamped building was handed over to the University's Properties & Services Department in September.

Located on the eastern side of the Alice campus, the building went up in flames in February last year, destroying the top floor.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu who was on-site at the time of the incident, it took security officers, maintenance personnel and other staff members about two hours to put out the blaze.



Fortunately, no one was injured during the incident.

The refurbishment work commenced in January this year and included the installation of safety features that complies with health and safety standards. This includes balustrade, ventilation, air conditioning and fire detection installation.

The two-floor building comprises 21 offices, three lecture venues, a computer lab, a server and a strong room.

The fire erupted at a time when the University Management was in the middle of engaging the Health and Safety Department on tightening safety measures on campus buildings.



Dr Hendricks awarded prestigious British Fellowship

Dr Eleanor Alvira Hendricks, a Senior Lecturer from our Social Work Department under the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities recently welcomed her newly acquired status as a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA).

The Fellowship is an international recognition of a commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education and demonstrates that a Fellow's practice is aligned with the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

The Academy is a charity and professional membership scheme promoting excellence in higher education that advocates for evidence-based teaching methods.

Her recognition comes as no surprise to the University community, instead, it is an affirmation of her Excellence that was long recognized by the University.

Dr Hendricks is the recipient of the Vice-Chancellor's 2021 Excellence awardee under the Emerging Researcher category.

Her two main research interests are health risks associated with adolescent pregnancy and combatting school violence. She has published 17 journal articles in DHET accredited journals and her research has been distributed to secondary schools across the Western Cape in 2019 and 2020. This was in collaboration with colleagues from other universities locally and abroad, as well as the South African Military Base in Tshwane.

According to her, becoming a Senior Fellow of the HEA is a significant milestone in the professionalization of the University's teachings. "This recognition helps build Faculty capacity around the improvement and further development of teaching practices."

"The attainment of this Fellowship is still surreal it has not quite sunk in yet. Though, in the future should I move to the UK I will be eligible to work at any Higher Education Institute on a senior level, and move upwards from there," she said.

Asked about the highlights of her academic career, Dr Hendricks recalled three. Firstly, her involvement in a project by Oxford University where she was co-opted to write for their special issue in the Oxford Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality in Education.



"It feels enchanting to know that I am doing work that is recognized internationally and could lead to such a prestigious certification"

Secondly, her election as a board member of the Institute of Economic Development and Social Researches (Iksad) in Turkey.

Lastly, receiving the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Award.

Currently, Dr Hendricks is collaborating with a colleague from the University of Dundee in Scotland on a Social Work Education work project. She also has two research projects on social media mobilisation and online education from the Faculty of Education.

Commenting on her newly acquired status, Dr Hendricks said this acknowledgment was her greatest achievement thus far. "It feels enchanting to know that I am doing work that is recognized internationally and could lead to such a prestigious certification," she concluded.



Siseko joins prestigious Harvard Fellowship Programme

Siseko Kumalo, one of our youngest academics is currently in Cambridge, Massachusetts where he has earned his space as a Harvard South Africa Fellow.

The fellowship programme was established in 1979 by Harvard University President Derek Bok with the objective of addressing the needs of South Africans denied access to advanced education by the apartheid system.

Today, the programme continues to serve as an intellectual resource for South African scholars, with the goal of providing a transformational experience at Harvard University during the fellowship year.

The 27-year-old says his selection for this programme was an incredibly affirming moment for him.

“Being selected as a Fellow demonstrated that the work I have been developing for the past couple of years is worthy of recognition, at an international level.”

Siseko joined UFH in October last year as Philosophy Lecturer. He recently submitted his PhD thesis which interrogates belonging and national identity in South Africa.

In 2020, at age 25, he was listed among the Mail & Guardian Top 200 Young South Africans in the category of Education.

He holds a Master of Arts (Cum Laude) in Political Philosophy from the University of Pretoria’s Department of Political Sciences. He received his formative training from Rhodes University where he read in Political and International Studies, Anthropology, and Philosophy.

His research and teaching interests centre around themes of education decolonisation in the South African academy.

Siseko served as the founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Decolonising Disciplines* and has presented his research at world-leading institutions. He has spoken at Duke University’s (USA) Centre for International and Global Studies and further lectured at Karolinska Institutet (Sweden), under their masters in Global Health, teaching on the subject of decolonising Global Health.

He has edited *Decolonisation as Democratisation: Global Insights into the South African Experience* (HSRC Press), co-edited *Decolonising Curricula and Pedagogy in Higher Education* (Routledge, UK), along with *University on the Border: Crisis of Authority and Precarity* (SUN Media Press).

He serves on the Editorial Collective of *Stilet*, the *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* Association as well as the Literary Association of South Africa’s Executive Committee. He is a Mandela Rhodes Scholar (2017).

At Harvard, Siseko says he will be pursuing research on the Black Archive wherein he locates the thinking of William Wellington Gqoba (a local intellectual who was writing in the late 19th century in

the Eastern Cape) with the thinking of Ali Mazrui (the Kenyan-born scholar/political theorist).

“As Gqoba gave us the epic poem *Ingxoxo Enkulu Ngemfundo* in 1888, which I also used in my PhD, Mazrui wrote *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa* in 1978 (which was published 90 years later). The two scholars consider similar themes and topics in their considerations/writings, even as they were writing in two different languages, nearly a century apart, on different parts on the continent.”

“My interest in locating them in conversation seeks to inquire into the critique of the social institution that is education. This is a pursuit of challenging the nonsensical claim that suggests that we do not know what is intended by the demand of decolonisation. In simple terms, my work at Harvard seeks to challenge the constant dismissal of Indigenous ways of thinking/writing and being. This work forms the basis of the developments I am developing in the Black Archive,” he explained.

Siseko says to have this honour of being selected while at Fort Hare has also been incredibly affirming, for the purposes of demonstrating how UFH is still the home to globally relevant scholars and scholarship.

“Thinking about our history and the kinds of intellectuals who have taught at Fort Hare, it affirms me to know that I join this history of intellectuals - the likes of ZK Matthews as one of the prominent figures. I also think it important for the students to see scholars who are occupying space in the world’s leading institutions.”

UFH scholar visits Namibia for Joint Mobile Veld Fire Detection Prototype Testing



“We are happy to note a high accuracy rate of 90% for our mobile veld fire detection prototype across all regions we visited in Namibia.”

Prof Amon Taruvinga, an Associate Professor at UFH’s Department of Agricultural Economics, recently returned from Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) where he participated in a series of field trips to test the accuracy of a mobile veld fire detection prototype – a joint research project between the two institutions.

The prototype uses satellite data obtained from the Advanced Fire Information System (AFIS) to detect and monitor fires in the study sites in Namibia and South Africa.

The research project is jointly led by Prof Taruvinga and Dr E Chikohora from NUST.

According to Taruvinga, during the 12-day visit, the prototype was tested in different regions of Namibia and recorded a high accuracy.

“We are happy to note a high accuracy rate of 90% for our mobile veld fire detection prototype across all regions we visited in Namibia. This gives us the confidence to consider replication phases across seasons and in other African countries in the future if we manage to get further funding,” he said.

According to the researchers of this project, while there are apparent efforts toward managing veld fires, it comes as a concern that in Southern Africa, the role of local communities in fire control has weakened and veld fires have grown to be a major threat.

The researchers further stated that the current systems and technologies to share veld fire information have several challenges. These include; being unable to detect burning fires in real-time especially in the forests, poor to almost missing veld fire local alerting systems, and malfunctioning local veld firefighting communities.

The Professor’s visit to Namibia coincided with the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA) 59th Conference hosted in Namibia. One of two of his postgraduate students (Ms S Jonga) who accompanied him on the visit presented two papers at the conference.

“It was interesting to note that the UFH Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension had 10 out of 62 papers accepted for presentation at the AEASA 59th Conference which translates to 16% of the total papers. The postgraduate students were exposed to presenting conference papers at an international level and had an opportunity to network with other students, researchers and industry players from Africa.”

“I also managed to connect with various researchers and industry players for potential future collaborations,” said Prof Taruvinga.

STRIVING FOR INCLUSIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY ON CAMPUS

One of the core values of the University of Fort Hare (UFH) is to be an institution with integrity that promotes inclusivity and equity.

In a bid to ensure the University lives up to this value, the UFH Disability Unit (DU) has, since its inception seven years ago, been working around the clock to remove any barriers and create an enabling environment for differently-abled students.

This includes the procurement of top-of-the-range assistive devices for all three campuses (Alice, East London and Bisho).

On the 15th of August, the Unit launched its Disability Awareness Week where several activities were lined-up. The objective of the week is to shine the spotlight on the strides made in pursuit of inclusivity and accessibility and what still needs to be done.

According to Mr Sam Musschenbroek DU Coordinator and executive committee member of the Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA) - an advocacy and rights-based non-profit organisation representing disability services in Higher and Further Education Institutions in South Africa - the University has made great strides.

"I have witnessed growth in many facets of the Unit. This includes the attainment of the assistive devices valued at R500 000 that were donated to us by BP South Africa through the assistance of the Fort Hare Foundation and Institutional Advancement."

"Our biggest achievement is the unwavering support we offer to differently-abled students. The

support includes assisting with registration, funding applications and finding suitable accommodation. We also, through the Student Counselling Unit (SCU), ensure they get emotional support," said Sam.

The devices installed and stored at the Libraries on all three campuses consist of the following:

1. Computer labs with specialized software
2. Large keyboards (Yellow and white)
3. Large Screen Monitors
4. Tabletop brail printer
5. Duxbury Software for brail printer
6. Perkins hand braille
7. Orbit Brail readers
8. Hand recorder/readers
9. Topaz readers
10. Orbit magnifier/cameras
11. Snow 7: magnifier/text to audio
12. Pearl for Open book and WYNN software

Software acquired includes zoom text fusion; zoom text magnifier/reader; talking typing teacher; jaw screen reading and Wynn Reader/ Wizard Literacy Software which transforms text into understandable information.

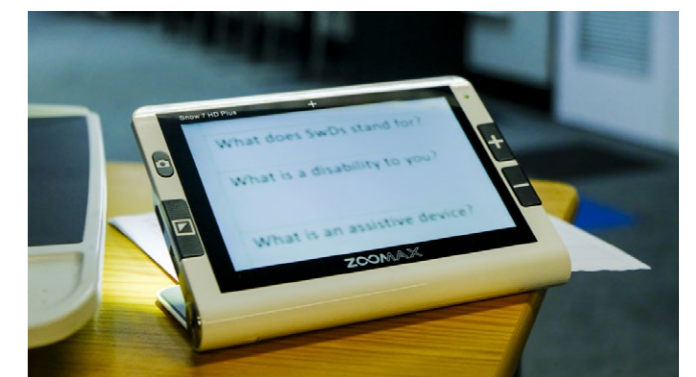
"These devices, both hard and software, have a significant impact on the success of students who are visually impaired, hard of hearing and also those who have learning disabilities. These devices have the capacity to read, record, write, enlarge and translate. Differently-abled students access the labs through the assistance and monitoring of staff from the Libraries, ICT and the DU who have been trained on the use of the devices," said Sam.

The activities for the week include erecting information stations where vital information will be disseminated and daily radio interviews on Forte FM to raise awareness. The Unit has also posed a challenge to the University community to visit the stations and spend some time in the shoes of a differently-abled person by using a wheelchair to move around campus.

"We have made great strides, such as the finalization of the Disability Policy that will be submitted to the Management Executive Committee. There is also great effort, using the recent audit that was conducted on all buildings, to ensure all spaces are accessible to all," said Sam.



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Queer in education – “stop seeing straight and try to be inclusive”

As part of its relentless efforts to promote an inclusive University community that embraces diversity, the SARChI Chair in Sexualities, Genders and Queer Studies led by Prof. zethu Matebeni together with the Faculty of Education under the guidance of their Dean, Prof Vusumzi Mncube hosted a joint seminar and invited a leading scholar and activist, Prof. Dennis Francis from Stellenbosch University, as the guest speaker.

Prof. Francis whose talk was titled: *Bodies, Affect and Schooling* was an extract from their recently published book *Queer Activism in South African Education: Disrupting Cis(hetero)normativity in Schools*. *Queer Activism in South African Education* offers vital and critical contribution to debates on gender, sexuality and schools in South Africa.

SARChI Chair, Prof. Zethu Matebeni said the purpose of the seminar was to drive discussions around learning and unlearning, getting different perspectives and shifting mindset about the queer community and queer scholarship.

Prof Matebeni further added “We have been running several research projects on campus that seek to promote the inclusion, diversity and visibility of queer students on campus. The seminar forms part of those projects. The aim is to keep the awareness going, challenge ourselves and to get out of the comfort zone. As Prof Francis notes, we do not only need to see everything as straight, a view that has been normalised through heteronormative curriculum, but we can aim to be inclusive.”

The projects at UFH include the Queer Ambassadors which hosted the university’s first-ever Pride March in 2021, The Afrika Reading Club (ARC), an interdisciplinary



“Today we learned, unlearned and relearned and I hope after this seminar, we will be the torch bearers in embracing, accepting and encouraging each other to challenge exclusionary practices levelled against queer students.”

reading group and Words That Heal.

Speaking at the seminar, Dr. Bellita Banda who is a researcher at the SARChI Chair said: “This is the beginning of us interrupting homophobic abuse of the queer community. Today we learned, unlearned and relearned and I hope after this seminar, we will be the torch bearers in embracing, accepting and encouraging each other to challenge exclusionary practices levelled against queer students.”

Joining the seminar were final-year students namely: Asiphe Sotheni; Busisiwe Khatshaza; and Thuliswa Ncokazi, from the Faculty of Education who had just completed their teaching experience. The future Educators spoke about their lived experiences during the teaching practices and highlighted the challenges that queer learners

in schools encounter in the classroom and in their communities. They also shared some ideas and strategies on how to bring positive change.

Prof. Francis read a few abstracts from their book and they gave an insightful presentation that looked at how learners belonging to the queer community are subject to abuse, discrimination, lack sense of belonging and how they live in fear. Prof. Francis also highlighted how teachers that are meant to play the role of “in loco parentis” were in fact the perpetrators of promoting homophobic and transphobic behavior in teaching and learning spaces. The seminar thus invited participants, educators and the public at large to change their behavior and be able to see and challenge the dominant Cis(hetero) normativity within the education system and beyond.

Curriculum renewal talks get underway for Bachelor of Agricultural Extension programme

In a bid to further enhance the graduateness of our students, the University’s Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension has started a process of reviewing the Bachelor of Agricultural Extension programme to align it with current trends in the labour market.

To fast-track the process, the Department recently held a curriculum renewal workshop facilitated by Dr Antonia Makina, an Education Consultant in the Directorate: Curriculum Development and Transformation at the University of South Africa.

The session brought together specialists and stakeholders who assisted with the drafting and mapping of the proposed new or updated Agricultural Extension programme that seeks to talk to new opportunities in the profession.

The stakeholders included the *Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, the Agriculture Research Council, agricultural colleges, a programme review specialist and academics from the University’s Agronomy, Livestock and Pastures Departments.*

The HOD, Mr Sifiso Mdletshe said the reason for the curriculum redesign is mainly driven by the intention to enhance the employability of the students who graduate from the programme.

“We want to align our programme offering to what the employers are looking for. We also want to introduce work-integrated learning to ensure that our graduates are ready for the job market, as such, we are proposing that the degree



be offered for four years as to the three years.”

Mr Mdletshe said the process aims to improve further the quality of education and the training offered by programme. “Currently, the qualification is an NQF Level 7, we strive to make and implement the necessary improvement to get it accredited as an NQF Level 8 qualification,” said Mr Mdletshe.

Dr Makina said re-circulation is very important because it ensures that the qualifications offered are fit for purpose. “The curriculum needs to be relevant to what is happening in the country, economically and socially. Also, we need to be geared towards curriculum transformation which is a core requirement from the Council of Higher Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training.”

Dr Folla Yusuf who is a Senior Agricultural Extension Lecturer

said the extension programme has always been of high quality however, current and emerging societal issues necessitated a review. “When we look at the current and emerging issues in society, and then look at the University which is repositioning itself to be a distinctive African University, advancing excellence and innovation teaching and learning, requires us to move with current issues.”

“Our curriculum needs to speak to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and transformation to ensure that when our graduates enter the labour market, they meet the demand.”

According to Mdletshe, the process will now be escalated to the University’s Senior Management and Senate for further deliberations and advancement.



HOT OFF THE PRESS: Communication Honours Students Launch Campus Newspaper

The first edition of the *FortExpress*, a campus newspaper produced by the University of Fort Hare Communication Honours students came hot off the printer in October, and it was a hit.

The Department of Institutional Advancement (IA) had a chat with **Dr Kevin Onyenankeya (KO)**, Communication HOD to find out more about this great initiative.

IA: What is the motivation behind this initiative?

KO: This initiative is part of our plan to produce students with 21st-century journalism skills. We want to move away from the emphasis on theory to provide students with hands-on training. From the feedback from our former students, we recognise that the lack of practical knowledge constitutes a substantial disadvantage for our graduates in the job market. So *FortExpress* will help fill this gap in the print journalism aspect.

The next big plan is a complete technological reconfiguration of the department with a multimedia studio/lab. This will help us better deliver the practical components of our broadcast and digital journalism modules. Since its inception, the department has never had an audio-visual studio critical for hands-on training.

So, in line with the University's renewal plan and the impending fourth industrial revolution, we are looking to construct a multimedia studio/lab to address the skillsets of broadcasting and narrowcasting aspects.

A multipurpose studio/lab is not only central to providing students with the



experiential knowledge, professional training, and technical skills to function on multiple media platforms but also enables digitally driven teaching and learning, giving students ample chances to practice what they learn in classrooms.

IA: Tell us about the inspiration behind the name of the publication?

KO: Well, we wanted something unique - something that would reflect news and the UFH brand. So, after brainstorming with the students, we settled for *FortExpress*. The Fort denotes UFH and Express stands for prompt news. In other words, *FortExpress* is the University of Fort Hare campus newspaper that provides you with fast, accurate, valuable and entertaining stories.

IA: Who were all involved, and what were their roles in this production?

KO: The entire honours class was involved in the production of the newspaper. We had the traditional news beat and desk heads. Students were assigned to different news beats - crime, politics, entertainment, sports, etc. The students chose the editor and desk heads from among themselves.

IA: Kindly describe the content and layout of the final product?

KO: The newspaper's content is as you will find in any traditional newspaper. We had hard and soft news - a potpourri of entertainment, politics, interviews, opinion, and sports. We had a surfeit of stories, but an 8-page newspaper can only take much.

A staff member, Mr Siyabulela Jabavu, handled the layout and production of the newspaper.

We planned to have an A-3 format newspaper using newsprint paper but couldn't afford the printing cost and settled for an A-4 bond-paper print. Besides, we were pressed for time.

Initially, we aimed to distribute the publication during the Spring Graduation, however, the ceremony ended when the newspaper arrived on the Alice campus.

However, the entire 200 copies that were printed sold out the same day. We are doing a reprint to cover Bisho and East London campuses and orders from students and other stakeholders.

IA: What is the frequency of the publication, and when can we expect the next edition?

KO: For now, we are looking to have an edition each semester. So, the next edition will be in the first quarter of 2023. Remember, students produce the newspaper and they have academic activities to attend to, as such, will produce with the academic calendar in mind.

We are working to migrate online. This way we can publish without time constraints. We will still have our traditional print editions during the fall to be printed on the days of Spring Graduation.

Going forward, we hope to work closely with the Department of Institutional Advancement to leverage your expertise and vantage position to produce consistent graduation stories in online and print formats.

IA: What would say were some of the challenges and highlights during the pre and post-production of the publication?

KO: Producing the first edition was not a walk in the park. We faced several challenges.

For one, the students have never been involved in this scale of work. The closest they have come to newspaper production was compiling a news portfolio for their journalism modules.

So going out there to gather real-time stories and conduct interviews was tough. But the students pulled it off.

Another challenge was sourcing adverts. No newspaper can survive without some form of advertising revenue. To enable students to have a fill of the real world of the newspaper business, they were asked to solicit and bring in adverts.

Unfortunately, they couldn't secure any adverts, but the experience represents a learning curve in the newspaper production value chain. To be fair to the students, they had limited time to work with and were marketing an unknown product to very sceptical clients.

IA: What would you say the responses and perceptions are from your readers?

KO: We are delighted by the warm reception from the university community. We have also received calls and emails from past students and other stakeholders congratulating us on the outing - it has been great.

I am particularly delighted for the team that participated in this production. They were willing, corporative, and extremely committed and demonstrated uncommon focus. They have laid a good foundation, and I hope the incoming editorial team will stand on their shoulders to improve and take the newspaper to the next level.

We thank the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu who took time out of his busy schedule to grant us an interview - there can be no better encouragement than that.



Paintings inspired by township realities steal the show at Fine Arts Students Exhibition

“Growing up in Mdantsane, I witnessed different realities that people are subjected to. My paintings seek to draw attention to those realities”

Having sold eight of his paintings, Mr Lunga Mabongo is currently the top seller at the UFH Fine Arts Final-Year Students’ Art Exhibition. The Fine Arts Honours student’s paintings are inspired by the realities of the people from his home township of Mdantsane in the Eastern Cape.

“Growing up in Mdantsane, I witnessed different realities that people are subjected to. My paintings seek to draw attention to those realities,” he said.

In his work, the multi-disciplined creative expresses the themes of “childhood abandonment.” The price of his paintings ranges from R12 000.

The annual exhibition which opened for the month of October is aimed at giving final-year students the opportunity to showcase their work to the public who are welcome to buy the pieces. The exhibition is also used as part of an assessment for their academic studies.

This year, 26 final years showcased their work.

Also on display was Sisipho Jack’s ceramic work themed: “The role of spirituality on an orphan” which basically relates to her and how she grew up and the changes she went through with her spiritual calling.

Sinovuyo Makhubalo’s printmaking media production which explores the use of the body for cultural and visual identification is also on show.

At the opening evening, Vice-Chancellor Professor Sakhela Buhlungu applauded the students for producing fine pieces.

Dr Siphe Potelwa, Fine Arts HOD, said his hopes for UFH Fine Arts graduates is to secure opportunities as well as to create opportunities that will sustain their careers.

Bcom Law Student, Lebhongo Ralana elected Treasurer of Southern African Universities Debate Union



Our students continue to cement themselves in prominent spaces, nationally and internationally. Most recently, Lebhongo Ralana, a third-year Bcom Law student and chairperson of the UFH Debate Society was elected Treasurer of the Southern African Universities Debate Union for the year 2023.

The Union is the host of the prestigious South African National University Debating Championship (SANUDC) - the largest annual non-sporting event held for students from higher learning institutions in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

The event brings together the brightest student debaters from various universities in the region who compete in robust and intellectual engagements to find solutions for current societal problems that persist in the region and in the world.

Lebhongo was elected during this year’s Championship held at Wits University last month (August) where he represented UFH, alongside his team members, Bontle Badashe, Somila Toto and Khanyisile Samente. The UFH team was placed seventh out of 68 teams.

Lebhongo who is a passionate debator started debating whilst in high school. He played a pivotal role in reigniting the University’s East London Campus Debate Society.

“Being part of the debate community has changed my life, it has enabled me to think outside the box and it has exposed me to different views. Furthermore, it has drastically improved my critical thinking skills which have been essential in my daily life. I love the challenge of being taught broad bodies of complex information and exercising creativity,” he said.

Commenting on his election as Treasurer, Lebhongo said: “This opportunity means a lot to me, it will allow me to represent my fellow talented UFH Society speakers on an international stage. Also, I am hoping my new position will present more opportunities for every debater at this institution and allow the society to grow even greater.”

“I feel honoured to have been chosen amongst multiple individuals from the SADC region,” he said in excitement.

Bcom economics student ventures into fresh produce supplying business

“Growing up, I admired watching my late grandfather tend to the vegetable garden on our homestead. I knew from a young age that in order to eat, we needed to work the soil.”

Tulani Qwasha, a third-year Bachelor of Commerce in Economics student was not willing to wait until after graduation to start living his dream of being a successful businessman. As such, the 22-year-old from Nqamakhwe has ventured into the business of supplying fresh produce to local food retailers.

When he found a gap in the market, he seized the opportunity and started his business called, Buxton Farm Fresh.

It all started last year when he revisited his childhood dream of becoming a vegetable farmer – a dream he says was inspired by his late grandfather.

“Growing up, I admired watching my late grandfather tend to the vegetable garden on our homestead. I knew from a young age that in order to eat, we needed to work the soil.”

“Last year I went back home and revived my late grandfather’s garden and planted some vegetable seedlings. After harvesting and selling my first crop to locals, I did some research and spoke to fruit and vegetable sellers and found that there was a business opportunity to supply and deliver produce from local farmers and fresh produce markets to the retailer.”

Tulani who is also a member of the UFH Enactus says in his quest to become a successful businessman, he has participated in business management training programmes, this includes a programme funded by the National Youth Development Agency.

He also looks up to current successful businessmen for inspiration, such as Patrice Motsepe the founder and chairman of African Rainbow Minerals who became a billionaire in 2008 and Keith Ngesi, former Buffalo City Metro spokesperson who started his own radio station- Keith Ngesi Radio.

“They [Motsepe and Ngesi] are my role models and from them, I have learned that if you have an idea, don’t wait, if you have the opportunity - implement it,” he said.

So passionate is he about crop farming, Tulani has found spaces within his student residence to do soil experiments for growing lettuce and spinach.

“My intention is to grow my own produce to supply to retailers and in order to achieve this I need capital to acquire the tools and resources such as an irrigation system, hence my current business venture.”

For now, he has found lettuce to be the most lucrative. “Lettuce is always in demand. If you look at restaurants, this vegetable is used for consumption and to decorate food,” he explained.

Advising aspiring entrepreneurs, Tulani: “Do things in desperation mode and be deliberate about what you want and then go for it.”



Beautiful décor and furniture made of recycled tyres takes UFH studentpreneur to EDHE National Competition

Category 4: Existing Business – General

Only one winner was selected in each category to represent the province in the national round in November and Benathi was one of them.

The other winners are Ms Siphosethu Mgwili, Founder of Azani Medivice from Walter Sisulu University, Ms Kelly Damons, Founder of Robia from Nelson Mandela University and Ms Nicole Louw, Founder of Naturally Nirvana from Nelson Mandela University.

The 25-year-old from Mount Frere (Kwa-Bhaca) in Eastern Cape said his inspiration for eco-entrepreneurship stems from two things, a passion for recycling and a determination to create a second income stream after graduating.

“When I looked at the high number of unemployed graduates I realised that I needed a plan B in case I struggle to secure employment after graduating. Even if I do find a job, I have learnt from my role models, Vusi Thembekwayo (motivational speaker) and Sbusiso ‘DJ Sbu’ Leope (serial entrepreneur) that having a side hustle as an alternative income stream is financial prudence.”

He established the company in 2018 and officially registered it in June 2020. He runs the business with his management team which comprises Mr Mthandazo Dyantyi (CFO) Silindukuza Ngqasa (Lawyer) Ntsika Mfamana (Manager) and Mpumezi Makiyela (Supervisor) and employs four to five casual workers.

Commenting on his selection for the national round, Benathi said: “With this victory, I came to understand that anything you can visualize in your mind, you can actually see with your own eyes. It is also quite difficult to give up on your dreams when you are devoted to the vision.”

“We promise the UFH community and the Eastern Cape as a whole, that the provincial team will not be there just to add numbers but to give it our all.”

Mr Dzulani Munzhelele, UFH Student Developer extended his gratitude to USAf for entrusting UFH to host the regional round of the competition. “It was well executed and a huge success, thanks to all the participants who made valuable contributions.”

Munzhelele also took the opportunity to congratulate Benathi for ensuring UFH features in the team that will represent the province.

The national round will be held in Johannesburg on the 17th and 18th of November 2022.



Human Movement Science Honours student appointed as referee of Professional Football League

Yanelisa Phakathi has been appointed as a referee in the professional Hollywood football league. The 24-year-old from Bizana is currently doing her honours degree in Human Movement Studies at the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Interestingly, growing up she did not play any active sports and only developed an interest in Frisbee after joining UFH. Thanks to the HMS department that introduced her to a box smart short course in rugby, she chose refereeing, "I thought to myself that the only thing that I'm more familiar with is soccer since my friends used to play soccer as well and I grew up watching it on television so I decided to go for football refereeing instead of rugby", said Yanelisa.

She started refereeing in October 2021 and holds a level 4 refereeing certificate which currently puts her in the national panel doing both Hollywood and Sasol Super leagues.

The young ref describe officiating as challenging, especially "for us as women but it is very exciting at the same time. We do not see many woman referees while we are capable."

Like any ambitious young referee, Yanelisa wants to see herself officiating in the Premier Soccer League and be a FIFA referee one day and follow in the footsteps of

the likes of Akhona Makalima, one of the leading football officials in the continent.

She urged other fellow young ladies who are passionate to go for it. "There are plenty opportunities in the sports industry and few women referees in the country. It requires a lot of training and fitness tests at the start of every league."



Hero's welcome for foursome on their return from World Student Boxing Games in Turkey



The ever-determined little dynamite, Dila who was on her second trip to Turkey in less than ten months, demonstrated confidence before the trip, declaring: "They do not know us, but when we come back home the world will be talking about us and the University of Fort Hare."

At 57 kg, a soft-spoken but hard-hitting bronze medallist, Ncomani said: "Yes, the competition was tough but the stage did not scare me. I was well conditioned and I had prepared for this for a long time".

For the guys, it was a learning curve as they returned home with the spirit of winning and pride for representing the UFH and the country. They also got to experience the world stage.

Commenting on the joyous welcome home celebration, the team shared the sentiment that it was an unexpected surprise "It was exciting because we felt that boxing finally got the recognition it deserves. The warm welcome also proved to us that there are people watching and supporting us. It was truly amazing," said the foursome.

Four University of Fort Hare students who represented South Africa during the World Student Boxing Games held in Turkey in September were given a hero's welcome when they returned to campus.

Sibonile Njungwini, Likho Ngcai, Vuyolwethu Dila and Likhona Ncomani were part of the University Sports South Africa (USSA) team that participated in the games. The two ladies, Dila and Ncomani brought home two bronze medals of the total three the South African

team bagged during the games.

A red carpet was rolled at the main gates of the Alice Campus as students across various sporting codes took some time to welcome them home and celebrate their medals.

The UFH Head of Sports, Mr. Loyiso Lange said: "It is through efforts like these that we are able to reach our destiny. The kind of unity sportsmen and women demonstrate on and off the field will always help us to perform to the best of our ability."



Rowing Club Paddle their oars at Historic SA University Boat Race

The UFH Rowing Club was among eight South African Universities that took part in this year's annual RMB Universities' Boat Race that was held this past weekend.

The regatta which started in the 1970s is held on the Kowie River in Port Alfred. The races took place between the 14th and the 17th September.

Both UFH male and female divisions participate with our female team winning both their races and our male team winning their second race.

For the first time in the history of the race, women raced the same length as men which is 6km, as opposed to previous years where they were given a shorter distance of 4km down the choppy tidal river.

The race differs from the traditional 2,000m Olympic-

style racing as crews navigate their eight-man boats around a variety of 90° corners while trying to avoid the numerous sandbanks in the Kowie.

President of the UFH club, Deilzielyn van der Westhuizen said she had no doubt that her team would yield great results in the competition.

"Rowing is not an easy sport, one has to be mentally fit as it takes a lot for you to push, especially for 6 kilometers"

"Our team really did well, considering that it is a novice team and don't have much experience in rowing. For them to achieve such results is a proud moment for me and I am sure, with more practice, we can only improve and do better," said Deilzielyn.



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