



University of Fort Hare
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Institutional Advancement



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// UFH 2020 Council Inauguration

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NEW COUNCIL HERALDS AN ERA OF REVITALISATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

by Tandi Mapukata

"It's official. The University of Fort Hare is no longer under administration!", read Professor Sakhela Buhlungu's post on Twitter earlier today.

As Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Buhlungu has steered the university through 18 months of trying times. A sense of relief for being a normal university again is palpable across the university and its stakeholder groupings. This is because the appointment of a new Council - the highest decision-making structure at the University of Fort Hare - is a significant milestone for the 104-year old institution. It marks the end of a protracted governance crisis which led to the dissolution of the previous council on 29 April 2019 and placement of the university under administration.

Professor Loyiso Nongxa became the first Administrator and served a 12-month term which ended in April 2020. The second Administrator was Mr Nhlanganiso Dladla whose six-month term ended a few days ago. In addition to the administration process, a team of independent assessors was appointed to conduct an indepth investigation into the affairs of the university. The Assessors report was gazetted in December 2019 and set the tone for a clear turnaround plan for the university.

Highlights of the Administration Process

An important yet unusual feature of the UFH administration phase is that only Council operations were replaced while Management functions were left intact. Although challenging, the Administration process has enabled the university to meet all of the ministerial directives, namely:

- A review of the Institutional Statute
- Compilation of Institutional Rules
- Constitution of a new Council, and
- Development of Council Committee Charters.

Council Inauguration

Guided by the revised Statute, a 22-member Council was inducted on 24-26 November 2020, culminating in the appointment of the Executive Committee of the university Council (EXCO). Membership comprises 14 external appointees and eight(8)members constituted from internal university structures.

Council Leadership

Selecting Council members was a daunting task as several nominations of capable men and women were received from across the length and breadth of South Africa.

The new council will be chaired by Bishop Ivan Manuel Abrahams, General Secretary of the World Methodist Council. Bishop Abrahams is the fourth person and first South African to serve in this capacity and the first General Secretary of the World Methodist Council outside the USA and the UK. Dr Siphokazi Koyana - an entrepreneur who owns and manages a socio-economic development-focused research consultancy, will serve as his deputy.

Mr Thembekile Kimi Makwetu

An incident which has cast a bit of a shadow over the council constitution process was the death of the outgoing Auditor General, Mr Thembekile Kimi Makwetu who was also due to be inducted as a member of the UFH Council. The university community mourns the loss of a great son of the soil.

Messages of Support

Congratulating the new Council, University Chancellor, Adv Dumisa Ntsebeza SC said, "May each and every one of you leave an indelible mark and construct a legacy for the University of Fort Hare because this is our mother university".

Incoming Council Chairperson Bishop Abrahams thanked fellow members for the vote of confidence shown in him.

"Today we are the new story of the University of Fort Hare. This is an opportunity to recalibrate our moral compasses and connect with the institution. We must not forget that we stand on the shoulders of giants who passed through the doors of this iconic institution. We dare not let them down. May all of us believe we can fly into a future that is pregnant with possibilities", he said.

Professor Buhlungu conveyed words of appreciation to Prof Nongxa and Mr Dladla, who, during their terms as Administrators provided strategic support to Management.

"We've been waiting for this moment - to operate as a normal university with a Council that provides oversight. This is our priority need. We are very optimistic about the future. The period, 2020-2030 has been earmarked as a Decade of Renewal at Fort Hare" said the VC.

I am confident that UFH staff and students welcome the new council and are committed to doing their best to help steer Fort Hare back to its days of glory as the uppermost African institution of higher learning, which gave birth to world renowned leaders as well as fine scholars and prolific academics.



//Left to right: Bishop Ivan Manuel Abrahams, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu, Dr Siphokazi Koyana

Membership breakdown is as follows:

EXTERNAL APPOINTEES

1. Bishop Ivan Manuel Abrahams : Chairperson
2. Dr Siphokazi Koyana : Deputy Chairperson
3. Mr Tembinkosi Bonakele : EXCO Member
4. Mrs Kuselwa Marala : EXCO Member
5. Ms Judy Favish : EXCO Member
6. Mr Mahlubandile Qwase : EXCO Member
7. Dr Jongi Joseph Klaas
8. Councillor Mxolisi Koyo
9. Mrs Matholo Maureen Mphatsoe
10. Mr Songezo Nayo
11. Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza
12. Mr Mazwi Ben Tunyiswa
13. Convocation President (Vacant)
14. Vacant - member still to be appointed on the basis of proven expertise/ experience



// Prof Loyiso Nongxa

INTERNAL APPOINTEES

1. Professor Sakhela Buhlungu : Vice-Chancellor (EXCO Member)
2. Professor Vusumuzi Mncube : Senate Representative (EXCO Member)
3. Professor Renuka Vithal : Deputy Vice-Chancellor - Academic Affairs
3. Professor Munacinga Simatele : Senate Representative
4. Professor Sonwabile Mnwana : Academics Representative
5. Mr Dumisani Pepe : Non-Academics Representative
6. SRC President
7. SRC Secretary General



// Mr Nhlanganiso Dladla

UFH COUNCIL PROFILES: EXCO MEMBERS



1. Bishop Ivan Manuel Abrahams - Chairperson

Bishop Ivan M. Abrahams has a global platform as he is currently the General Secretary of the World Methodist Council (2011 – current).

He is the fourth person and first South African to serve as General Secretary of the World Methodist Council. The World Methodist Council is made up of Methodist, Wesleyan, and related Uniting and United Churches representing over 82 million members in 138 countries. He became the first General Secretary from outside the United States & the UK. He has been involved with the World Methodist Council since 1986, serving as Chair of

its Social and International Affairs Committee. From 2003-2012, Bishop Abrahams served as Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa—one of the largest Christian denominations in Southern Africa. During his tenure he provided prophetic leadership and direction. His capstone achievement was the formation and successful completion of the multimillion rand legacy project, the Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary.

Bishop Abrahams is well-versed in casting vision, providing spiritual and strategic leadership, developing policies and procedures in line with values, goals and the mission of the church to achieve its vision. A renowned ecumenist and advocate for social justice, Bishop Abrahams is active in various fora including the All Africa Conference of Churches and the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

His theology has been influenced by the experiences encountered while ministering in the Cape Flats (Western Cape, South Africa). Most of his ministry has been shaped on the anvil of the struggle against the notorious apartheid regime.

He has a BTh (Rhodes); BA Hons (UCT); CSS (Berkeley, US); an MTh (UKZN) – Summa Cum Laude (*Towards a Theology of Labour: A Theo-historical Enquire of the Interface between the English speaking Churches and Labour (1985-1995)*)



2. Dr Siphokazi Koyana – Deputy Chairperson

Dr Siphokazi Koyana is an entrepreneur who owns and manages a socio-economic development focused research consultancy (Siyazithanda Projects, registered 2002), which has been commissioned by SETAs, government, and corporates to measure the impact of various transformation initiatives. She has been in strategic leadership positions as a non-executive director on the boards of Sasol Inzalo Public Funding Ltd, Transnet Foundation, Phembani Group, and the Shanduka Group. She is an IoDSA certified Chartered Director of companies. She has excellent project and fund management skills, gained while managing the Thuthuka

Programme at the National Research Foundation. Here, she obtained not only a vast understanding of research activities over a wide range of knowledge areas--from the Sciences to the Humanities - but also a strong understanding of people

management and business processes. She has a good understanding of the higher education landscape as a former member of staff at Rhodes, Pretoria, and Wits universities, as well as at the Philadelphia Community College, USA.



3. Mr Tembinkosi Bonakele

Mr Tembinkosi Bonakele is currently the Commissioner and CEO of the Competition Commission, appointed in 2013. He has been with the Competition Commission since 2004 and has worked in almost all its core divisions, including working as the Deputy Commissioner prior to his appointment as Commissioner. He is a lawyer by training with an MBA qualification. He is an accomplished manager who has propelled the Competition Commission into one of the best performing public institutions in South Africa. Mr Bonakele is a recipient of the Black Management Forum's Black Excellence Award for Outstanding

Leadership. He has had exposure to many businesses and has worked closely with institutions such as the PIC on some mergers. He has expertise and experience in public policy and competition law and has provided training to boards including the PIC Board on competition matters.

He is a member of the 2020 Cohort of the Atlantic Fellows for Racial Equity (AFRE); a decade-long investment of The Atlantic Philanthropies designed to identify and advance solutions to anti-black racism in the United States and South Africa by supporting a diverse group of leaders committed to combatting prejudice and overcoming legacies of slavery, Jim Crow and apartheid.

He is passionate about contributing to inclusive growth and development of the SA economy and has strong views about the role of both public and private sectors. He is also interested in empowering the youth to play a central role in the economy.

Mr Bonakele is a teaching fellow at the University College of London Faculty of Laws as well as a PhD Candidate at the University College of London Faculty of Laws.



4. Mrs Kuselwa Marala

Mrs Kuselwa Marala is an experienced Education specialist. She has served as the Acting Registrar Academic Administration as well as Deputy Registrar Academic Administration, at the Cape Peninsular University of Technikon (CPUT). She has held several positions including among others being a Director: Quality Management and Assurance and Director: Curriculum Development at the University of Fort Hare (UFH).

She has in-depth knowledge of the higher education quality assurance environment specializing in the development of quality management systems, policies and structures, analysis and implementation of national quality assurance policies. Further, she has played a critical role in driving HEQC institutional audit

and programme evaluation preparations. She holds a Post Graduate Diploma, M Ed in Cognition (Cum Laude), B. Ed (post degree qualification as well as a B Admin (Personnel Management). She has presented in various fora and undertaken research in the Education sector.



5. Ms Judy Favish

Ms Judy Favish obtained her BA in Psychology and Legal Theory & Institutions and her Honours in Applied linguistics from Wits, an MA in Adult Continuing Education from Warwick University (UK) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Policy, Leadership and Management in Higher Education from UWC. She has over extensive experience in education policy work, and strategic and institutional planning. Her places of employment include directing Institutional planning and Transformation at Cape Technikon, Policy and Planning, Reconstruction Development Policy and Planning and Strategic Planning for the Gauteng Department of Education;

Policy analyst for CEPD and participation in several education and training policy processes and projects for COSATU. As the Director of Institutional Planning at the University of Cape Town, Judy was responsible for the coordination of institutional planning and monitoring, the provision of institutional information and research, academic planning, and quality assurance – including processes related to the institutional audit, institutional research and social responsiveness.

Expertise:

Social justice and education for empowerment; adult basic education; education in South Africa.



6. Mr. Mahlubandile D. Qwase

Mr Mahlubandile Qwase has immense experience in executive roles ranging from serving as Acting Head of Department: Public Works, Eastern Cape Province to being a Member of Parliament. As a Public servant, he was an Acting HOD: EC Dept of Health, Deputy Director General (DDG) in the Office of the Director-General as well as the DDG: Provincial Executive Support Services.

His executive managerial experience was strengthened during his tenure as Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education and Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Education. Key among his achievements is attaining an Unqualified Audit Status and also the improvement through reduction of matters of emphasis. He has also provided leadership in the development of the service delivery model that anchors the department as the infrastructure delivery platform of choice. He is currently a DDG in the Office of the Premier since 2011.

Mr Qwase holds a Bachelor of Science (University of Transkei); BPhil Maritime Studies (University of Stellenbosch) and is currently pursuing an MPhil Maritime Studies degree.

UFH COUNCIL PROFILES: EXTERNAL MEMBERS



7. Mr Songezo Lubabalo Nayo:

Mr Songezo Nayo is an astute businessman who is currently a Fuel Retail Entrepreneur and the Board Chairman of Access Holding (Pty) Ltd since 2009. He has a keen interest in sports management and has held several leadership positions namely being the Venue Manager for Cape Town and

Athlone Stadiums for the 2014 African Nations Championship. In 2013, he was the Special Advisor to LOC CEO and Chairman of the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium (Pool, Q-final and 3rd place venue). Further, in 2010 for the FIFA World Cup Organizing Committee, Mr. Nayo was appointed Venue Manager, Soccer City: 2009-2010.

As a strategic management specialist, Mr Nayo played a pivotal role during the bid for the international commercial rights to the British & Irish Lions for their 2009 tour to South Africa, and managed the South African leg of the sponsorship programme.

He holds a BSc, majoring in Physiology and Biochemistry from the University of Western Cape as well as an MBA from the University of Cape Town (2004).



8. Mr Mxolisi Koyo

Councillor Mxolisi Koyo is an activist in the development of communities, with a keen interest in rural areas as well as improving rural livelihoods. He is a task master who is results driven and pride himself in being hands-on and ever leading from the front.

Being an agriculturalist by profession it has always been his passion to work with rural communities. The Chris Hani District Developmental Agenda bears testimony to his initiatives. His leadership placed the Chris Hani District Municipality on the map regionally, nationally and internationally during his tenure as Executive Mayor from 2011 to 2016.

He is currently the Speaker of the Council of the Chris Hani District Municipality. He holds a Masters Degree (Public Administration), B. Agriculture, Diploma in Agricultural Extension and Rural Development and another Diploma in Agriculture. Most of his qualifications were obtained from the University of Fort Hare.

He is a teaching fellow at the University College of London Faculty of Laws as well as a PhD Candidate, University College of London Faculty of Laws.



9. Mr Mazwi Ben Tunyiswa

Mr Mazwi Tunyiswa is the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Restructuring Officer at Intertoll Africa (Pty) Ltd, a toll road management company that he acquired with his consortium in 2019 from Group5 business rescue process. He is responsible for overall management of the

company and its turnaround. He has been able to stabilize the business and it's on its way to a positive turnaround.

He began his career at the University of Fort Hare where progressed from Laboratory Assistant, to Physics Lecturer and Acting Head of the Physics Department and member of the University Senate. Due to an increased interest in Business and Management, he switched careers and in 2002 enrolled for an MBA degree as a full time student.

He then joined the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa (IDC) where he started off as a Business Analyst and progressed through the ranks to Senior Account Manager, Regional Manager Eastern Cape Province and later as Head of the Metals, Transport and Machinery Strategic Business Unit (Metals SBU) at the IDC head office. He improved the performance of the SBU to be one of the best performing units. Because of his excellent performance and dedication, during the IDC restructuring in 2014, he was offered headship of the largest portfolio and strategic business unit – the Basic Metals and Mining SBU that had an exposure of about R20 billion.

He is the Chairperson of the Fort Hare Foundation.

Mr Tunyiswa has a BSc (Physics and Applied Mathematics), a BSc (Hons) in Physics from the University of Fort Hare and a Masters in Engineering (M.Eng) from Tohoku University. He also obtain Masters in Business Administration (MBA from the Graduate School of Business at the University OF Cape Town.



10. Dr Jongi Klaas

Dr Jongi Klaas started off as a Lecturer at Rhodes University. He has worked as a South African expert at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in New York, with a particular focus on Global Counter Terrorism and

Nuclear Proliferation. Recently, before returning to South Africa he served as a senior expert focusing on Socio-Economic, Political and Security Dynamics in Africa at the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

He has always been an avid supporter of the University of Fort Hare and from August 2018 he has served as the Chairperson of the Gauteng Province UFH Alumni Chapter.

His core skills are Ethnographic Qualitative Research with extensive fieldwork experience; Management and coordination of national and international events; Negotiation and Analytical Skills in a multilateral environment, excellent public speaking and presentation skills.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Pedagogics/BPEd from the University of Fort Hare, he studied for an MEd as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Oklahoma, USA. Thereafter he obtained a Mandela Magdalene Scholarship to study for an MPhil and PhD at the University of Cambridge, UK. Dr Klaas is a qualified Sociologist.

11. Mrs Matholo Maureen Mphatsoe

Ms Matholo Mphatsoe has been exposed to the South African education sector in diverse capacities which relate to various aspects and different segments within the education sector.



Whilst working for Shanduka, she produced the first annual report of the Adopt-a-School Foundation and played a role in managing stakeholders of the adopted schools.

As Managing Director of Emeritus Training Academy she was extensively involved in ICT related Teacher Training and liaised with the Services and Education SETA, submitted all reports to SACE (SA Council of Educators) for educators to be credited with relevant CPD (Continuous Professional Development) points.

She drove collaboration with the University of Limpopo to launch a white spaces project that was aimed at utilising available bandwidth to connect schools and the university in Makweng. She worked with the Dean of Education at the University of Free State on a teacher development initiative aimed at utilising technology to create connectivity for university lectures on a Maths and Science project.

She has over 20 years' experience working in corporate affairs environments. Her skills and competencies include a mature outlook, effective interpersonal skills and communication skills. She is a team player who is results driven. She won the Teamwork and Integrity value awards at Shanduka Group and

in the following year, the Chairman's award for her contribution to building the brand.

12. Professor Lungisile Ntsebeza

Prof Lungisile Ntsebeza has a PhD in Sociology from Rhodes University and is a full Professor of Sociology and African Students. He is the holder of the AC Jordan Chair in



African Studies at the University of Cape Town. He is also the holder of the National Research Foundation (NRF) Research Chair in Land Reform and Democracy in South Africa. Prof Ntsebeza has conducted extensive published research on the land question in South African around themes such as land rights, democratisation, rural local government, traditional authorities and land, and agrarian

movements. His book, *Democracy Compromised: Chiefs and the Politics of Land in South Africa* was published by Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden in 2005 and the HSRC Press in 2006.

Prof. Ntsebeza has also co-edited two books:

The Land Question in South Africa: the Challenge of Transformation and Redistribution, HSRC Press, 2007, with Ruth Hall.

Rural Resistance in South Africa: The Mpondo Revolts after fifty years, with Thembela Kepe, Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, 2011 and UCT Press, 2012.

His current research interests, apart from land and agrarians questions, include an investigation of African Studies at the University of Cape Town and a related project on the political and intellectual history of the late Archie Mafeje. His achievements include serving as the Inaugural President of the African Studies Association of Africa (2013-2017). He also delivered the 2018 Audrey Richards Distinguished Public Lecture in African Studies at Cambridge University, 8 May 2018. The Lecture was on the impact of Cambridge University on the intellectual development of Archie Mafeje, who did his PhD at Cambridge between 1964 and 1968. On 25 January 2017 he was invited by the University of Copenhagen, Denmark to speak on 'The Politics of Transformation in Higher Education.

UFH e-LEARNING PROGRAMME SCOOPS 2nd PLACE AT INTERNATIONAL LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AWARDS CEREMONY



The Faculty of Management and Commerce is the proud winner of a Silver Award in the category of *Best International Digital Transformation of a Training Programme in Response to Covid-19*. Developed by **Mr Daylan Staude, a Senior Lecturer in Accounting Taxation**.

The accolade was bestowed upon the University of Fort Hare by the Learning Technologies Awards during a virtual awards gala dinner held on 18 November 2020.

The UK based body seeks to showcase some of the most recognisable, memorable, and life-changing e-learning methods used by organisations worldwide. The awards are internationally recognised and are open to organisations of all sizes that offer outstanding learning technologies.



// Mr Daylan Staude

This year, organisers received over 350 entrants from 34 countries. With 26 categories, the entrants were independently judged against the highest and most rigorous standards which included a Zoom interview and a question and answer session. At the end of the judging session the top three winners were selected in each category - Gold for first place, Silver in second and Bronze for third place.

In the Best International digital transformation of training Programme in response to Covid-19 category, the UFH was nominated alongside organisations such as the British Council, The Open University of Hong King and Xprtise and Erasmus MC.

The winners in this category are as follows:

- Gold - Hasso Plattner Institute for Digital Engineering GmbH
- Silver - University of Fort Hare
- Bronze - Xprtise and Erasmus MC

Congratulating Mr Staude and the UFH, the judges wrote:

"We were blown away with what one person can achieve with so little budget and resources. Overcoming significant challenges including low internet coverage, lack of ICT equipment and poor digital literacy Daylan designed an inspiring programme using an imaginative, well-designed data-friendly blend of videos, WhatsApp and downloadable content to keep his accounting students connected, motivated and achieving their targets purely via their mobile phones. A replicable model and inspiring story."

Inspiration behind e-learning programme
When President Cyril Ramaphosa

announced the Covid-19 lockdown on 26 March 2020, Mr Staude instantly thought about the effect this would have on the UFH 111 Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting (PGDA) students. In order to be admitted as Chartered Accountants, PGDA candidates have to sit for SAICA exams that are normally written in January. Due to Covid-19, the exams have since moved to April.

He shifted gears to adapt to what would later be known as the "new norm".

"Instead of waiting for things to go back to normal, I worked even harder to prepare for what was uncertain at the time", explained Staude.

Whilst developing the online learning programme, Staude first sought to find solutions to the challenges encountered by students.

"Our students in this programme are from diverse backgrounds and areas across South Africa, with the majority coming from outlying areas where there is none or poor internet coverage. During the design of appropriate e-learning initiatives, a number of constraints needed to be overcome."

Constraints:

- Non-conducive study environments and
- Lack of ICT equipment, slow network coverage and lack of data.

Solutions:

- All files were made downloadable. This allowed students to visit an area where there was network coverage to download the files needed for the week. All online material was made available in PDF format, and all video material was uploaded in MP4 format.

- Communication and student interaction was improved through a WhatsApp group. "The primary purpose of the WhatsApp group was to provide students with instant notification of content that had been uploaded on Blackboard, allowing students to consult and ask questions, and provide students with regular motivation," he explained.

The online learning method consists of:

- Instructions folders on Blackboard,
- Quizzes to assess the student knowledge and understanding
- Small and downloadable videos
- Class tutorials
- Question and Answer sessions via WhatsApp or email

"The aim is to do e-learning by sticking to the basics and using the resources that are available to me and most importantly, the students."

After developing this method, Mr Staude shared it with Prof Vuyisile Nkonki, the Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre.

"He was impressed and encouraged me to submit an entry for this award. With the assistance from Institutional Advancement, I was able to package and formalize my portfolio and submitted the entry."

"When I developed this method, I never anticipated to win an award. My aim was to find a workable solution to keep my students engaged with their studies. I would like to thank them (students) for embracing the programme, because without their participation, it becomes pointless," said Staude proudly.

by Aretha Linden

Internally, there's been an outpouring of congratulatory messages:

"Congratulations and well done to Mr Staude! the Dept and Faculty"

- **Professor Renuka Vithal, DVC - Academic Affairs**



"I congratulate you on your efforts and salute you for flying the UFH flag high in London. Your good teaching practices are worth institutional elevation and emulation by all academics. The TLC is humbled by the acknowledgement of the supporting role it played in your success. Congratulations, Mr Daylan Staude."

- **Prof Vuyisile Nkonki, Director - Teaching and Learning Centre**

"We are proud of his achievement"

- **Ms Wendy Terblanche, HoD and Senior Lecturer - Nkuhlu Dept of Accounting**



"I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on this great achievement and thank the colleagues and the institution at large for providing an enabling environment. Thank you Daylan for showing the world that there are great things happening at the University of Fort Hare, this award is a big deal"

- **Dr Ntombovuyo Wayi, Dean - Faculty of Management and Commerce**

"Definitely proud that ThisWeek@FortHare broke the story internally in the 16th edition, and that IA assisted Daylan with packaging the winning entry for submission to the competition. We trust the newsletter continues to demonstrate to the community that Fort Hare's got talent and that the platform is open for every employee to showcase innovative works"

- **Ms Tandi Mapukata, Editor ThisWeek@FortHare and Director - Institutional Advancement**



Prof Uchechukwu Nwodo NRF Y2-Rated Professor

Uchechukwu Nwodo is a Professor of Microbiology in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, Alice campus. He has served as a visiting researcher at Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany and as a visiting Professor at Edo State Polytechnic, Nigeria.

Prof Nwodo holds a Bachelor of Science combined Honours Degree (Microbiology and Biochemistry), a Master of Science in Medical Virology, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Microbiology. He also holds various certificates in Bioinformatics, Bioentrepreneurship and Biotechnology.

As a young emerging researcher, he has received several prestigious awards in recognition of his research excellence. The awards include:

- The Federation for European Microbiological Society (FEMS) Young Affiliate Award, Leipzig, Germany (2013).
- Biovision/The World Academy of Science (TWAS), Alexandria, Egypt (2013) and
- Biovision/TWAS Lyon France (2014)

He is also a recipient of the UFH Faculty of Science and Agriculture emerging researcher award.

He has authored and published over 90 journal articles in accredited journals and over 270 nucleotide sequences deposited in the NCBI GenBank. He has graduated several postgraduate students at Masters and Doctoral degree levels.

Prof Nwodo has active research and student training collaborations with the University of Ottawa, Canada, University of Cairo, Egypt, University of Tunis, Tunisia, Kyonggi University, South Korea and the University of Tromsø, Norway, among others. He recently established collaborations with Federal University of Paraiba, Brazil and ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, New Delhi, India for a joint BRICS multilateral project. Other recent collaborations include the Albion College, USA and Bangor University, UK.

As usual, *ThisWeek@FortHare* asked some questions to learn a bit more about Prof Nwodo's research projects.



// Prof Uchechukwu Nwodo

Please tell us about your research focus, including past and current projects.

My research focus is on the exploitation of microbial resources for waste valorization through the bioconversion of waste lignocellulosic biomass to high-value products, the ecology of pathogenic determinants in environmental microbes and the exploration for biomolecules of economic importance.

Within the ambit of advanced interests, I developed some bio-flocculants prototype for a green and cleaner water treatment approach. My numerous publications on bio-flocculants in peer-reviewed, high impact factor journals indicate global leadership in this area of research.

I collaborated with prominent researchers on a bioflocculant study. I co-authored a bilateral funded research proposal, focusing on bioflocculants, under the South Africa - Norway Research Cooperation on Climate Change, the Environment and Clean Energy (SANCOOP).

I have continuously exploited the terrestrial and aquatic microbes for novel products and processes. Laccases with high potency and predilection for industrial dye decolorization are some of the discoveries of my research.

The isolation of novel ligninase with potential application in the formulation of body care products for the removal of dark spots on the skin are other accomplishments of my research, and that was funded under the South Africa - Tunisia Science and Technology Collaboration.

Another exciting groundwork has been the microbial conversion of keratinous waste biomass into functional feeds. The functional feed research is currently ongoing and funded by the Department of Science and Innovation and the Technology Innovation Agency. The study is multi-institutional funded research with Rhodes University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal jointly collaborating with the University of Fort Hare, and I serve as the Principal Investigator.

List of funded projects completed within the last five years

- Optimization of bio-diesel production from oleaginous bacteria utilizing municipal sludge biomass.
- Development of laccase [hybrid and amalgam] biosensor and immobilized system for the detection and removal of phenolic contaminants in water.
- Cross-Sectional analysis of emerging choleraenic *Vibrio cholera* (Non O1 and Non O139) and *Vibrio cholerae* O1 and O139 in Municipal and Surface Waters of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

- Exploration of actinobacteria diversity from the woodlands and extreme environments of South Africa and Egypt for high activity laccases production.
- Development Novel anti-infective lead compounds from endophytic actinobacterial species.
- Exploration for novel xylanases and ligninases produced by actinobacterial species for biomass valorization.
- Surface charge modification of Bioflocculants produced by marine Actinobacteria species for enhanced coal quality improvement through the removal of ash and heavy metals.

List of ongoing funded projects (2019 – 2021)

- Kinetically enhanced methane production by some novel Actinobacteria species on keratinous waste materials.
- Application of surface charge modified Bioflocculants for the removal of ash and heavy metals in coal quality improvement.
- Bioethanol production by acid and temperature tolerant *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* utilizing lignocellulosic waste biomass.
- Development of laccases cocktails for detection and removal of phenolic contaminants in water.
- Exploitation and valorization of microbial enzymes for agro-waste bio-processing and product application in husbandry and pulp industry (Enzyme and Microbial Technology consortia - UFH, UKZN & RU)

Leadership and Membership

- Subgroup leader in the Applied and Environmental Microbiology Research Group (AEMREG), as well as leader of the Biocatalysis Research Focus Area with bias in environmental biotechnology, bioactive compounds from natural sources and the ecology of pathogenic determinants in prokaryotes and the environment.
- The National Research Foundation (NRF), and the South African Medical Research Council reviewer for various grant instruments.
- Former member of the Science Advisory Team that led deliberations on the second phase of bilateral collaboration between South Africa and Tunisia in 2017.
- I also served on the Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica (CONICYT), Chile and TWAS-UNESCO as a grant proposal reviewer.
- Member of the Council for the South African Society for Microbiology (SASM) since 2016.
- I also belong to the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), the Society for Applied Microbiology (SfAM) and the Federation for European Microbiological Society (FEMS).

What do you think are your most significant research accomplishments?

I have derived and continue to derive satisfaction from my research. Many of the research outcomes have shown good potential advancing through different stages of the innovation value chain.

Two lead anti-infective compounds isolated from the microbial biodiversity of the Eastern Cape were judged novel after comparison with known active compounds. The unique compounds have the potential for feeding into the pharma sector.

Another significant accomplishment of my research has been the prototypes developed on bio-flocculants and the continuous improvements on the prototypes for higher efficiency. The valorization of keratinous waste biomass for functional feed application and advances on the development of a laccase biosensor are among the most current achievements.

These accomplishments led to the establishment of research collaborations with institutions in Norway, Egypt, Tunisia, Germany, Canada and the USA for student training. These collaborations are active and more has been established within the BRICS region.

How do you ensure your research is well communicated, digested and acted on?

I strive to have my research findings published in high-ranked journals (Department of Higher Education and Training accredited and peer-reviewed), and that is evidenced by the modest citation of my work as would be seen on platforms including google scholar and Scopus.

I regularly communicate research findings with colleagues in scientific conferences, symposia and workshops. I also share research findings with stakeholders through report meetings.

Lastly, research outcomes with the potential industrial application are showcased to relevant stakeholders and through this approach, the Technology Innovation Agency and ESKOM have supported my research.

What has been the greatest impact of your work?

- The multi-pronged dimension of the impact of my research activities is evidenced in human capacity development, novel products for the bio-economy, knowledge creation and community engagement. As a result, I have trained students at masters and doctoral levels, and many have progressed in their respective endeavours.
- I have delivered several keynote lectures at different international fora, and jointly organized international conference and workshops on the strength of bilateral funded projects executed jointly with collaborators.
- The high number of citations of my publications in scientific journals are indirect indications of the impact of the knowledge created within the scientific community, and that has led to numerous collaboration requests from colleagues from the industrial, research and academic sectors in society (national and international).
- The Department of Science and Innovation and the Technology Innovation Agency funded, and continue to support my research with the intent of moving from prototype to commercial phase. That is another impact of the blue-sky research that fed into the innovation value chain.

What advice would you give to Young Researchers out there?

Research allows me the freedom to think creatively, breathe and interact with great minds whilst attempting to address problems! Often, with research, I toy around with my fancies, and the outcomes are almost, always, exciting.

Numerous possibilities sprout from questions arising from the progression of my research. There is a school of thought that says advanced hard work and long hours are a necessity for accomplishments. However, my humble submission would be "passion and purpose" in research.

Therefore, I encourage young and emerging researchers to find their passion first, the purpose will tag along naturally and the outcomes will invariably manifest as accomplishments and satisfaction.

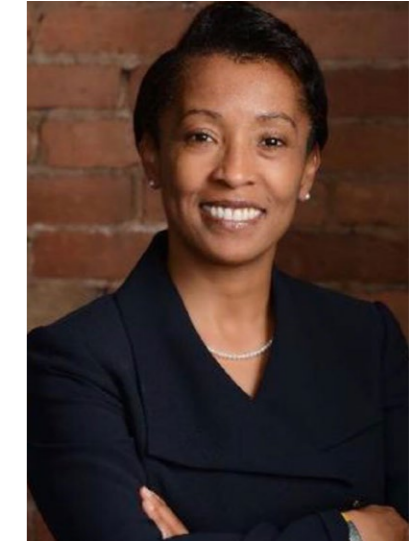
GMRDC HOSTS A RESEARCH CONFERENCE: UNLOCKING COVID-19 FOR SUSTAINABLE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT



// Prof Munacinga Simatele



// Prof Sharlene Swartz



// Dr Rhonda Vanshay Sharpe

This week, 23-26 November, the University of Fort Hare's Govan Mbeki Research Development Centre held a virtual research conference dubbed "Week of Excellence"

Themed: *Unlocking Covid-19 for Sustainable Reconstruction and Development*, the conference which was streamed on Microsoft Teams provided an international platform for researchers and policy makers to contribute to this debate by presenting papers and participating in roundtable discussions.

The conference was officially launched by Professor Renuka Vithal, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic Affairs. Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu, delivered the opening remarks.

Welcoming the participants, Prof Munacinga Simatele who is the Acting Dean of Research, said the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the world and the country in multiple ways.

"The hard lockdown and dramatic measures to contain it resulted in unprecedented and devastating social and economic implications. The epidemic offers an opportunity to reconsider how to approach systemic development problems such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, and access to key services like health and education."

According to Prof Simatele, the pandemic raises the following important questions about sustainable reconstruction and development:

1. How can a crisis such as COVID-19 be turned into an opportunity to unlock new ways of analysing, researching, formulating, and effectively implementing new social and economic policy?
2. How can these responses be implemented sustainably in a manner that builds resilience and to be better prepared for similar disasters in future?
3. How can different disciplinary approaches crossing traditional boundaries equip us to ask questions in fresh and innovative ways?

Day 1 :

Opening and welcoming addresses were followed by presentations delivered by representatives of instrumental research bodies such as the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI), National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD). Prof Gary Minkley – UFH History Professor and SARChI Chair in Social Change delivered the closing remarks for day one.

Day 2:

Kicked-off with a presentation by the National Institute for Humanities and Social Science's (NIHSS) Grants' Manager, Dr Ayanda Zondi and NIHSS' Academic Director for Scholarships, Dr Nthabiseng Motsemme. Ms Virginia Molose from the Water Research Commission weighed-in on the topic on behalf of the Commission.

Other speakers on the day included:

- Mr Simon Lotz who is the Director: Established Researchers for the Grants Management and Systems Administrators. He spoke about the overall research funding application process.
- Prof Willie Chinyamurindi, UFH Business Management Professor shared his presentation titled: *IReI Imagining Research in a post Covid-19 world*.
- Ms Stella Ndhrazi - Funding Manager at the National Heritage Council shared the council's perspective on the "Public heritage funding towards development and transformation agenda in SA"

Day 3 and Day 4:

Were dedicated to actual paper presentations and discussions by Academics and Postgraduates.

- Prof Sharlene Swartz - Research Director at the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa and adjunct Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Cape Town, delivered the keynote address.
- Dr Rhonda Vanshay Sharpe, founder and president of the Women's Institute for Science, Equity and Race, delivered the keynote address on the final day.

According Prof Simatele, selected papers presented at the conference will be submitted for publication in journals accredited by Department of Higher Education and Training.

17th
DEC
2020



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Summer 2020 Graduation

VIRTUAL

COUNTDOWN TO THE 2020 SUMMER GRADUATION BEGINS!

The countdown to the University of Fort Hare's first-ever Virtual Summer Graduation has begun.

Owing to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the university has once again opted to put together a virtual graduation to celebrate this significant milestone. Similar to the Autumn Virtual Graduation, the ceremony will be flighted on YouTube and will be shared on the university's social media pages and website on 17 December.

Under normal circumstances, UFH graduations are held in May (Autumn) and September also known as the Spring Graduation. The ceremonies are usually held in East London and Alice, respectively.

The graduands who will "walk" the virtual stage are students, who under normal circumstances, would have graduated

during the Spring Graduation season in September.

So far, close to 600 students have been identified to be eligible to graduate during the ceremony.

The breakdown is as follows:

- 461 Undergraduates
- Honours (total figure pending confirmation)
- 77 Masters and
- 15 PhDs

The numbers may still increase pending conclusion of internal processes.



2020 VIRTUAL

Summer Graduation

HIGHLIGHTS

ZINTLE NTSONGWANA - YOUNGEST PhD GRADUATE

29 year old Zintle Ntsongwana will be honoured as the youngest doctoral student during the UFH Virtual Summer Graduation scheduled to take place on 17 December 2020 where she will graduate with a PhD in Social Work.

The title of her thesis is: **Mitigating the effects of family violence on children: Assessing the effectiveness of social work interventions at Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, Eastern Cape.**

Ntsongwana has always excelled academically. It thus comes as no surprise that she has completed her doctoral studies at such a young age.

She was born in Mqwangqweni location, Ngqeleni, in Eastern Cape Province. In 2011 she secured funding from the Department of Social Development to pursue a Bachelor of Social Work Degree which she obtained in record time. Due to her excellent results, she proceeded to enrol for a Master's degree and graduated in 2017. The first year of her MA studies was funded by the Ada and Bertie Levenstein bursary and the final year was funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF).

In the same year (2017) she registered for a PhD which was funded through a National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) scholarship.

Ms Ntsongwana is a registered Social Worker with the South African Council for Social Service Professions. She also holds a certificate in Civic Leadership through Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). She has presented papers at national and international

conferences and has published three articles in accredited journals. So far, she has written four papers and two of them have been accepted for publication. She has also co-authored a book chapter that has been accepted for publication.

Inspiration behind the topic

Ntsongwana says her research aims to empower victims and advocates for accountability and rehabilitation of perpetrators. According to her, the Department of Social Development is playing a major role to curb and eradicate family violence by providing programmes and other initiatives. However, she feels that nothing much has been done to evaluate the impact that such services have on the well-being of children as victims.

"It is so sad that most of the time children tend to be direct and indirect victims of such violence. Moreover, I believe that violence is not just a crime but rather a pandemic that needs to be prevented and cured. It is a disease because it starts in the mind before one can actually perpetrate it. Therefore, it needs a holistic approach that will include both victims and perpetrators of the violence."

Towards the end of her thesis, Ms Ntsongwana recommends a model that will assist in eradicating family violence. "The model offers a multi-sectoral intervention, which is about working cooperatively and jointly towards a shared goal - to eradicate family violence and improve the effectiveness of interventions that social workers use in helping victims of family violence to cope with its effects."

Ntsongwana says she hopes her qualification will grant her the opportunity to participate in policy making in order to apply her research findings. She hopes to influence policy decisions that speak to the people on the ground.

by Aretha Linden



// Zintle Ntsongwana



// Tandokazi Tando Mtshayeni

Tandokazi Tando Mtshayeni – PA to DVC-IS Graduates cum laude

Tandokazi Mtshayeni, the PA to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Institutional Support, is set to graduate her Honours Degree in Industrial Psychology *cum laude*. She is part of the group that will be honoured during the virtual Summer Graduation scheduled to take place on 17 December 2020.

Ms Mtshayeni has been providing administrative support to the DVC-IS support for the past five years. Hungry for personal growth and determined to improve her contribution to the institution, she enrolled for her honours degree in 2019. "As an employee I know the challenges that we face. With this qualification, I want to improve my performance and contribution to the

organisation and to enhance the support I give to my colleagues."

Juggling full-time employment and studies was trying at times, says Mtshayeni.

"What kept me going was a promise I made to myself, that I will not fail and will finish what I have started. I did this with the support of my family, friends and colleagues. I am also grateful to my boss at the time for her constant support and motivation."

by Aretha Linden



// Dr Tendai Chimucheka

UFH: The value of a business plan extends far beyond raising funds for an enterprise

Source: Published by the Universities of South Africa on 19 November, 2020. [Click here to view original article](#)

“A business plan gives you the opportunity to sell the business to yourself as an entrepreneur, and is a way of convincing yourself that the business idea you are pursuing actually works. Once written, you can then really see it, critique it and analyse it to assess if it’s really worth sacrificing resources for”

Very few people are willing to draw up their own business plans. Usually, it is something entrepreneurs do only when they want to access finance from a bank or from investors. But, as Dr Tendai Chimucheka of the University of Fort Hare explained at the Student Entrepreneurial Week (#SEW2020) recently, a business plan can serve many other purposes.

Dr Chimucheka, who is a Senior Lecturer in Business Management, presented a video titled **“The Need for a Business Plan”** as the University of Fort Hare’s input to the recent #SEW2020. The event is an initiative of the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) programme, which represents a partnership between the Department of Higher Education and Training and Universities South Africa (USAf), that encourages students to consider entrepreneurship as a career option.

#SEW2020 was hosted online from November 2 to 4.

What is a business plan?

Dr Chimucheka said he favoured two definitions of a business plan:

- a written document or roadmap of where a business venture is headed to, what it needs to do to get there, and what it will look like on arrival; and
- an entrepreneur’s roadmap to success.

Some might argue, he said, that if you are uncertain about where you are heading, any road could take you there, so why plan. But in that case, when you do achieve success, you will also not know where you went right, or where you went wrong. This just shows that entrepreneurs need to draw up business plans.

Why business plans are important to studentpreneurs

Students who are planning to start their own businesses and those whose businesses are already operating, should write a business plan so that they can evaluate along the way to see if they are still on track.

“How are you planning to exploit the opportunities that you have identified?” asked Dr Chimucheka. He suggested putting your ideas on paper so that you can refer to them, explain them, and even direct other people to your plan. He said preparing a business plan is not a complicated process. It is something that an entrepreneur can do for themselves. It is not something to be afraid of, he added, also stating that there are many templates one can use.

Why a business plan can be helpful

The Senior Lecturer said it is important for entrepreneurs to understand what they do in their business. He noted that some cannot even answer a simple question on what their business is about. He emphasized the importance of writing down the description of one’s business. “A business plan gives you the opportunity to sell the business to yourself as an entrepreneur, and is a way of convincing yourself that the business idea you are pursuing actually works. Once written, you can then really see it, critique it and analyse it to assess if it’s really worth sacrificing resources for”, he said.

“You don’t only need to convince yourself; you need to convince banks, that is, if you apply for a loan to fund the business. Many people have been turned away from banks because the latter were not convinced that the business plans presented to them spoke to the actual business to be funded”, said Dr Chimucheka.

He said a business plan was a valuable tool if an entrepreneur aspired to work with other businesses. “They need to know about your venture, and a business plan can show them what, and how you operate.” He added that an entrepreneur might need a business plan when they are looking to secure large contracts from other companies. “They may request information about your business and how it operates, information that should be in a business plan.”

On yet another value of a business plan, Dr Chimucheka said every entrepreneur wants to attract employees with potential to add value to their company. He said people “do not join your business because they want to assist you; they do not join because they know you. They are more concerned about their job security and may therefore need to evaluate the business plan for themselves,” said Dr Chimucheka.

Although this latter point is more suitable for a long-established business than one just starting out, Dr Chimucheka said sharing information about one’s business can help motivate and focus their management team. “So if you put everything on paper, it becomes easy not only for you, but also for your employees. And once things are easily understood by your stakeholders, both internally and externally, things will also work to your advantage as an entrepreneur,” he said.

The dos and don’ts of hiring a consultant to draw up your business plan

Dr Chimucheka urged entrepreneurs to prepare their own business plans. “If you do ask for assistance from consultants, then make sure you provide the input, and that this important document does not include the consultant’s professional information only.

“A business plan should speak to, and reflect your business. It must not speak to what consultants think should be in the business,” he said. And while he is not opposed to consultants, he believes entrepreneurs need to guide them, and work alongside them. Otherwise there is a risk that consultants might insert whatever they think is appropriate. And banks can still reject a business plan written by a consultant.

Business plans cannot solve everything in your company

He admitted that business plans, though important, cannot predict the future. Neither do they guarantee funding. However, he added, “One thing for sure is that without a business plan, banks will not grant you credit. The same with investors, they will not put money into your business if you do not have a business plan.”

Don’t cheat in your business plan

He mentioned that some people use business plans to make it look as if their businesses are working when in fact they are not. “There is no need to cheat, there’s no need to lie because it is a document you are preparing to convince and motivate yourself, your internal stakeholders and also your external stakeholders. So if you try to lie to yourself, things may not work as you expect,” Dr Chimucheka cautioned.

The wisdom that Dr Chimucheka shared, on behalf of the University of Fort Hare, is just one example of broad thought leadership drawn from 20 universities and four technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges that took part in the virtual #SEW2020. The Student Entrepreneurship Week is an annual event of the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) programme, a partnership between the Department of Higher Education and Training and Universities South Africa.

Written by Gillian Anstey, an independent writer commissioned by Universities South Africa.



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ThisWeek@FortHare your weekly newsletter

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