



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Institutional Advancement

This Week @FORT HARE

Vol 2, issue 24



// National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre, Alice Campus

13 November 2020

ALICE STUDENT VILLAGE ROOF WETTING CEREMONY

“The 2020 to 2030 decade has been dubbed a decade of renewal for the university entirely and students should feel they are part of it. This student residence is a vote of confidence in the main (Alice) campus. We are putting our roots down in Alice, we anchor it”

Construction of the biggest student residence in South African history, Student Village on the Alice campus of the University of Fort Hare is nearing completion. To mark this significant milestone, the university, together with the project developers, hosted a roof wetting ceremony on 5 November.

The ceremony was held to acknowledge work done at the newly built student centre which is part of the bigger project worth R400m. This student housing development is a lead project in the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) Student Housing Infrastructure Programme (SHIP), which aims to significantly improve the number of beds and quality of student housing on both rural and urban campuses country-wide.

The project is being developed by student accommodation group, STAG African. Once completed, it will boast 2047 student beds, an addition to the 4800 beds that the university currently provides to students. The newly-built student centre will house a number of different outlets including a cinema.

Despite delays caused by the Covid-19 lockdown, the project is well on track and expected to be completed by the end of this year and fully functional by the beginning of next year (2021).

Gracing this momentous event was Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu, MEC members, contributing SMMEs from the local community and members of the business community in Alice. Also in attendance was the Senior Princess Nomarharhabe Sandile, daughter to the recently departed Queen of Amharharhabe, Noloyiso Sandile.

Speaking during the ceremony, Prof Buhlungu said the project is the biggest development to be undertaken in Alice to date. "It has created jobs for locals and created economic participation to sub-contractors in the region. Most importantly, it has created spaces of dignity."

"The 2020 to 2030 decade has been dubbed a decade of renewal for the university entirely and students should feel they are part of it. This student residence is a vote of confidence in the main (Alice) campus. We are putting our roots down in Alice, we anchor it," said the VC.

Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe who spoke on behalf of the developers took the opportunity to praise the university and the project it has undertaken. "In this place lies great people who have departed. But when they look at the University today, it is with great sense of happiness that their vision has come to fruition".

He urged the VC to ensure that during his tenure, Alice town is developed into a university town. "We would like to see Alice being developed into a university town akin to Stellenbosch and Grahamstown (Makhanda). It should be a university town that will draw the distinction and keep the posture of world-class structures. We are proud of you (VC) for bringing back Fort Hare to Alice, where it belongs," he concluded.

By Mawande Mrashula



Professor Alfred Maroyi

NRF C-Rated Researcher

Professor Alfred Maroyi is a senior lecturer in the Department of Botany within the Faculty of Science and Agriculture.

Prof Maroyi is a botanical expert who has spent over 20 years studying and documenting the diversity of plants and their use in rural and urban communities. His research focuses on the relationship between plants and people. Prof Maroyi strongly believes that the documentation of important plant species can be used as a vehicle for preserving plant resources and the cultural heritage of local communities. He also believes that acquiring and sharing of botanical knowledge is important in understanding the values and use of plant resources.

This Week@FortHare asked the usual questions.



// Professor Alfred Maroyi

Who is Prof Maroyi?

I obtained my primary and high school education in Zimbabwe. After high school I enrolled at the University of Zimbabwe where I obtained a BSc Honours in Biological Sciences, majoring in Botany and Ecology as well as a Master of Philosophy in Botany. My PhD was obtained from the Biodiversity School at the Wageningen University, Netherlands.

My first academic appointment was in 2000, as a Lecturer in the Department of Biological Sciences at Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) in Zimbabwe. Since then, I have been teaching botanical courses at university level, at BUSE, University of Limpopo, University of Namibia and since 2013, at the University of Fort Hare.

I am also a Visiting Professor at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Italy for a PhD programme in Ecogastronomy, Education and Society.

<https://www.unisg.it/corsi-iscrizioni/corso-dottorato-ecogastronomia-formazione-societa/>

In the broader academic community:

- I was appointed as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine* in 2012, in recognition of my ethnobotanical expertise. This is a Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) accredited journal with 2.264 impact factor. Participating in the Journal's scholarly activities has been a key step in my career progression as an academic and research scientist. I am highly interested in this field and gladly share information and promote the Journal in my network, especially in tropical Africa. The Journal provides a platform for exchanging sound knowledge and practices within ethnobiology/ ethnoecology/ ethnomedicine among scientists and other stakeholders, and fosters these multidisciplinary fields in developing countries via an open access policy.
- I am also a Guest Editor of a special issue called the *Medicinal plants for managing HIV/AIDS in Africa: From ethnobotany to reverse pharmacology in Frontiers in Pharmacology*, an open access Journal with 3.86 impact factor.

Please tell us about your past and current research work/projects.

PUBLICATIONS

Since 2007 I have been making contributions to book chapters of Plant Resources of Tropical Africa (PROTA) that are published in English and French. These handbooks are illustrated encyclopaedia of utility plant species found in Tropical Africa. They focus on plant species taxonomy, how they are used, managed and conserved.

PROTA aims to disseminate this information in low-cost handbooks (published by CTA and Backhuys Publishers in The Netherlands). Furthermore, the handbooks are used as textbooks and reading material in the teaching of plant resource use at some colleges and universities.

Between 2007 and 2013, I participated in the writing of the following six PROTA books on useful plants in Tropical Africa:

- *Vegetable oils*, published in 2007
- *Timbers 1*, published in 2008
- *Medicinal Plants 1*, published in 2008
- *Fibres*, published in 2012
- *Timbers 2*, published in 2012
- *Medicinal Plants 2*, published in 2013.

I also contributed detailed accounts of 20 plant species focusing on species' taxonomy, their description, distribution, utilization and their conservation needs.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

- I was part of a team of researchers that worked on the *Long Term monitoring of the Socio-economic, Agricultural and Environmental Impact of Ntabelanga and Laleni Dams, Eastern Cape Province* (2014-2017). This is a project funded by the Water Research Commission. As a botanist, I assessed the status of riparian vegetation and initiated long-term impact assessment of Ntabelanga and Laleni dams on riparian vegetation and other organisms within the Tsitsa River catchment area in the Eastern Cape. Permanent plots were established and evaluated regularly. Assessment of riparian zones and other ecosystems focused on changes in plant species diversity, composition, cover, functional types, degree of disturbances, etc.
- I am a co-investigator on a collaborative research project funded by the NRF focusing on "*Toxicity screening of commonly used African herbal medicines*". This research looks at evaluating phytochemical and pharmacological properties of commonly used medicinal plants in South Africa.

- I am also doing research on management of wild plants, human ecology and bio-cultural diversity. Preliminary results show that plant resources provide low-cost building materials, fuel, food supplements, herbal medicines, crafts or are used as sources of income. Based on this research, I am of the opinion that no single livelihood strategy is sufficient to support a household. Despite the immense importance and potential of these plant resources, their values are not taken into account in land-use planning.

What do you think are your most significant research accomplishments?

- The Royal Horticultural Society Journal reported in 2013 that "cultivated plants" are deemed important enough to be included in the United Nations' Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is therefore, for these reasons that I continue to do research on cultivated, naturalized and invasive plant species.
- My publication on cultivated/naturalized exotic plants in Zimbabwe "Maroyi A. 2006. *A Preliminary Checklist of Naturalized and Introduced Plants in Zimbabwe*. *Kirkia* 18: 177-247" is key and important to the flora of Zimbabwe and widely cited by researchers working on Zimbabwean flora. This catalogue of exotic plants in Zimbabwe is a critical starting point in trying to understand and initiate the management of biological invasions. It serves as a foundation for future research on plant invasions in the country. A better understanding of their establishment, spread, social and economic impacts and distributional changes over time, is vital for making informed decisions on new introductions and managing existing exotic species.
- Over the last 20 years, I have created a database and mapping application that provides geospatial information for non-native plant species. The data is primarily intended to support the identification of problem species and infestations, thus promoting early detection and rapid response. Additionally, the data can be used in a variety of research and modelling activities. This information is important since exotic species have become increasingly significant management problems in parks and reserves, and frequently complicate restoration projects. Research has also revealed that exotic species are an integral part of the plant resources used by many ethnic groups, and now recognized as an important component of indigenous pharmacopoeia in several countries.

continued on following page...

RECORD SETTING AND DISCOVERIES

Taxonomical research conducted in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe that I was involved in, led to the discovery of new records of plant species:

- Maroyi A. 2013. *Colchicaceae: A range extension and the first record of *Gloriosa sessiliflora* from Angola*. Bothalia and Conservation African Biodiversity 43: 67-69.
- Maroyi A. & van der Maesen LJG. 2014. *A new name for *Gloriosa grandiflora* (Colchicaceae) from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa)*. Phytotaxa 183: 119.
- Maroyi A. 2016. *Cylindropuntia fulgida* (Engelm.) F.M. Knuth var. *fulgida* (Cactaceae) is naturalized and spreading in Zimbabwe. Bradleya 34: 24-27.
- Maroyi A. *A second species of *Cylindropuntia* (Engelm.) F.M. Knuth (Cactaceae), *C. imbricata* (Haw.) F.M. Knuth, naturalised in Zimbabwe (under review)*.

These newly recorded species in Angola, DRC and Zimbabwe increase our understanding of plant diversity in Southern Africa and underline the need for continued botanical inventories.

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

I communicate my research to others in their field of work through scientific journals, books, workshops, conferences and training programmes. I also use collaborations with others involved in similar research to communicate and share my work.

What has been the greatest impact of your work?

THE RESULTS OF MY RESEARCH

- It can be applied to areas where society needs sound and robust answers to environmental problems, impact of harvesting wild plants (e.g. over-exploitation of useful plants), sustainable agriculture and food security.
- In 2000, I drafted recovery plans and guidelines for *Warburgia salutaris* (Pepperbark tree), an over-exploited plant species in Southern Africa. I am coordinating a re-introduction programme of *Warburgia salutaris* into home gardens using funding from the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) in the UK.
- I am working with local communities and other stakeholders including Traditional Healers to build capacity for the conservation of this species within home gardens. It is hoped that increasing the supply of sustainably cultivated *Warburgia salutaris* will

enable the re-introduction of the species back into the wild. For re-introduction programmes involving over-exploited species to be successful, there is need to provide a balance between benefits to communities and the long-term conservation of the species. Not only must the benefits be received and valued by the local, but the linkage between the benefits and sustainable management of over-exploited species must be clear.

MAJOR LESSONS THAT CAN BE DRAWN FROM THIS RESEARCH INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Some useful plants required for community livelihoods are in decline due to man's actions. The major threats to species populations are over-exploitation and destruction of their habitats due to agriculture and extension of human settlements.
- Local communities have a moral obligation to ensure long-term existence of useful plants like *Warburgia salutaris* used as herbal medicines
- Plant conservation is directly linked to people's values and behaviour, and
- Although many harvested plant species' populations are resilient and have a long history of human use, they can be pushed beyond recovery through over-exploitation.
- Therefore, the re-introduction programme of *Warburgia salutaris* should be fully understood, accepted and supported by local communities, herbalists, plant gatherers and vendors, if both *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation are to continue providing refuge for the pepperbark tree and long-term benefits to the local people.

What advice would you give to Young Researchers out there?

- Young researchers need to note that scientific research should be systematically planned before performing specific research activities.
- Other critical stages of any research work include data collection, interpretation and evaluation of collected data. These essential steps provide the framework required by a researcher to organize and conduct his/her studies.



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

2020 CONVOCATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given, in terms of the Amended Statute of the University of Fort Hare 2020, s60(2), that the **Annual General Meeting of the Convocation of the University of Fort Hare will be held as follows:**

Date: Tuesday, 15 December 2020

Time: 17:30 for 18:00

Venue: Virtual (Zoom/Teams) (TBA)

Agenda and related documents available on

<https://www.ufh.ac.za/convocation/convexagenda2020>

UFH CONVOCATION

The Convocation of the University of Fort Hare is a statutory body which consists of all persons who have obtained a degree or a diploma from the University (alumni), the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor(s), the Executive Director(s), the Registrar, the Deans, the academic employees on the staff establishment of the University, professors emeriti, and such other persons as Council may determine

CALL TO ALL ALUMNI

Members of the UFH Alumni are hereby invited to update their records on the official roll of the Convocation. The official roll of the Convocation is conclusive evidence of membership of the Convocation, and only persons whose names appear on the roll are entitled to vote as members of the Convocation.

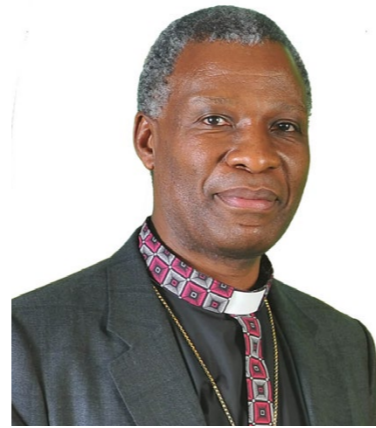
To register/ update contact details: send an email to: NMakohliso@ufh.ac.za or alumni@ufh.ac.za by **20 November 2020**.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UFH CONVOCATION:

The UFH Statute requires the convocation to elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary, as well as three (3) additional members from amongst its ranks to serve on the Executive Committee of the Convocation. The President of Convocation also serves as a member of the University Council.

Bona-fide members of Convocation are hereby requested to nominate fellow members in good standing to fill the abovementioned positions. Each nomination must be supported by at least 10 seconders to be eligible. Nominations must be sent to ConvexNominations@ufh.ac.za before **30 November 2020**. The electronic voting procedures will, in due course, be communicated to registered Convocation members.

DR LULU GWAGWA SPEAKS AT 3RD ARCHBISHOP MAKGOBA ANNUAL LECTURE



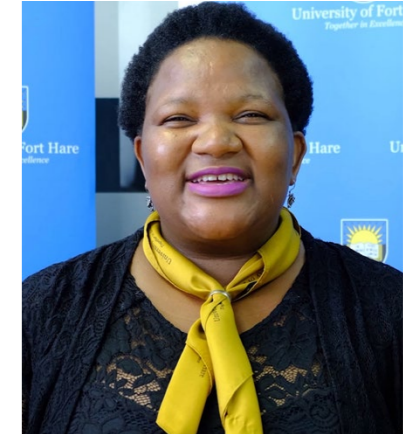
// Archbishop Thabo Makgoba



// Dr Lulu Gwagwa



// Prof Sakhela Buhlungu



// Dr Ntombovuyo Wayi

On 6 November, the Faculty of Management and Commerce hosted its 3rd Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Lecture. Owing to Covid-19 regulations, the event was held virtually – a first for this auspicious event.

Themed: *Leadership in Local Economic Development*, the lecture is a collaboration between the University of Fort Hare and the Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Foundation.

Since inception in 2018, the event has attracted highly influential guest speakers who are key role players in the economic development sector. Ms Thokozile Xasa, then Minister of Sport and Recreation spoke at the inaugural lecture and Mr Tembinkosi Bonakele, Commissioner at the SA Competition Commission was the guest speaker at last year's event.

This year was no exception, as the guest speaker was none other than Dr Lulu Gwagwa – South African's first black Town Planner and UFH alumna.

Dr Gwagwa describes herself as a "multifaceted woman, an accomplished development planner, academic, business leader, executive coach and philanthropist."

She is the CEO of Lereko Investment, and one of the principals of the Lereko Metier Capital Growth Fund. She holds a BA from UFH, a Masters in Town and Regional Planning from the University of Natal, an MSc (cum laude) obtained from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She also holds an MPhil from St Augustine College SA and a PhD from the University College London. She is the chairperson of Zutari, and a non-executive director on the boards of Massmart and Afrox.

The session was facilitated by the Dean of Management and Commerce, Dr Ntombovuyo Wayi. Participants included Archbishop Makgoba, his wife Lungi, Bishops from around the country, the UFH community and members of the public.

Delivering the welcoming remarks, Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu, said the university was honoured to have Dr Gwagwa as the keynote speaker.

"It is a great pleasure that we have gathered again to talk about this topic. This is the third year since we started this series and every year has been a resounding success. Once again, I am confident that with the speaker today, we will have another highly enriching discussion and debate on local economic development."

"I would like to thank the Archbishop for choosing us as one of the sites for this lecture. It is an honour, because as a university we are not only interested in matters of local development for study or research purposes, we are also an agent of local development ourselves," said Prof Buhlungu.

The VC's address was followed by the Archbishop who shared a brief background about the foundation and the partnership formed with SA universities that paved way for the Public Lectures.

"The trust was formed eight years ago with three broad objectives: to educate, provide food security and to promote general development."

The Public Lectures are held at six SA universities:

- UFH
- University of Limpopo,
- Rhodes University,
- University of Western Cape
- University of Mpumalanga
- And for the first time this year, Walter Sisulu University.

"The aim is to get South Africans talking and to create solutions to our problems, rather than complain all the time. All of us are gifted, all of us are leaders and all of us can bring solutions to the intractable problems faced by this country and the world."

In her keynote address Dr Gwagwa spoke about the role played by UFH in shaping her career and also the role the institution played in shaping the political and economic landscape of the African continent.

"I am greatly honoured to speak at my alma mater on this platform. When I first entered the gates of UFH in February 1976 I was an impressionable and very naïve 17-year-old. It was a dream come true for me. This institution definitely opened my eyes and my mind."

"You cannot talk about the liberation of Africa, without speaking about UFH. I am not just talking about Seretse Khama, Nelson Mandela and Phyllis Ntantala. I also talking about religious leaders, like Archbishop

Desmond Tutu and Prof Barney Pityana, Business leaders such as Prof Wiseman Nkuhlu and Wendy Luhabe. I am also talking about academics such Prof Loyiso Nongxa and Prof Thoko Mayekiso. All of them are UFH products that have, and continue to make a big mark in this country, in Africa and globally."

She also paid a moving tribute to Archbishop Makgoba, quoting from his journey as reflected in his book: *Faith and Courage: Praying with Mandela*

"Your story mirrors the history of many black people in South Africa. You came from humble beginnings and managed to walk all the way to the Bishops court."

Dr Gwagwa said reading Makgoba's story left her with several questions including:

"whether society fully grasps the avalanche of violence that black people endured in this country or are we simply plastering a seeping wound here? Is it possible to really think about the future of South Africa as a nation, if we are not paying enough attention to such deep internalised trauma?", she challenged the audience.

She thanked the Archbishop for "pricking our conscience and putting this great institution back into central debates of the ordinary people of this continent."

by Aretha Linden

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE RECORDING OF THE SESSION](#)



UFH ECONOMICS STUDENTS REACH SEMI-FINALS IN THE 2020 BUDGET SPEECH COMPETITION

INTRODUCING THE FORT HARE/ UNIVERSITY OF ALCALÁ EXCHANGE PROGRAMME



// Dr Hlulani Mabasa

Once a year for next the three years, selected UFH postgraduate students will travel to Spain where they will spend a semester furthering their studies at the University of Alcalá (UAH).

This is a benefit which accrues from the Erasmus+ KA107 partnership mobility agreement funded by the European Union in the context of Erasmus Mundus, to facilitate incoming and outgoing exchange programmes for staff and students.

Providing further details about the partnership, Dr Hlulani Mabasa, Director: International Affairs, said the partnership is supported by the Spanish Erasmus+ National Agency, with UAH as the host.

"The project is coordinated by the UAH, within the framework of the European Programme Erasmus+ Key Action KA107 of 'International Credit Mobility'. It is a project of mobility for undergraduate, master and doctorate students, as well as academic and administrative staff, between the UAH and UFH."

Background

According to Dr Mabasa, talks of the partnership started five years ago as an idea to collaborate between academic staff of the two universities. "Upon my arrival at UFH, it became my vision to develop these individual and informal working relations into a university-wide partnership that brings financial resources into the institution. Given the wide and broad nature of this international credit mobility partnership agreement, we decided that it is going to be managed and located in the International Affairs Office," he explained.

The agreement was signed by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu, in October 2020. This sealed the official pact between the two universities to collaborate on various learning, teaching and training areas which are beneficial to both students and staff.

Duration and Benefits

Dr Mabasa said the partnership serves to contribute towards giving UFH staff and students an international experience in the following ways:

- Once a year for the next three (3) years, postgraduate students of the university will travel to UAH for a duration of five (5) months to spend a semester furthering their studies in line with this partnership agreement. During this period, UFH will also host two students each year to spend a semester at the relevant Faculty or Department.
- In addition, the university will also send two Academic or Administrative staff to UAH for a week in either for training or to participate in teaching. "This will contribute towards benchmarking and capacity building for our workforce." UFH will also receive two staff members in a similar arrangement.

The grant covers for return flight tickets, health insurance, accommodation and living allowances.

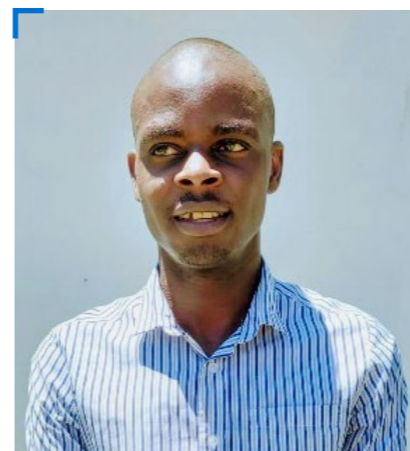
About UAH

- It was founded in 1499.
- One of the few universities in the world declared a "World Heritage Site" by UNESCO.
- It is also included in the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) ranking "100 under 50" with a rating of five stars.
- UAH is regarded as one of the prestigious and big Universities in Europe in terms of student numbers, number of international students, excellent research output, and diverse, quality and impactful programmes.

Dr Mabasa said: "UAH shares many similarities with our university, hence this wonderful partnership which will undoubtedly contribute towards upskilling, professionalization and internationalization of staff and students from the two great universities."

UFH is proud to partner with UAH on this prestigious exchange programme.

by Aretha Linden



// Mr Dicend Chiseko

The Economics Department within the Faculty of Management and Commerce has proven, once again, to be a force to be reckoned with. This after three students from the department made it to the semi-finals of the 2020 Nedbank & Old Mutual Budget Speech Competition.

According to Professor Forget Kapingura, Economics Associate Professor and Postgrad Coordinator, this is an opportunity to claim a consecutive victory in this prestigious competition. Last year, Mr Bekithemba Qeque a 2nd-year Economics Masters student at the time, became the overall winner of the 2019 competition in the postgraduate category. He walked away with a first prize of R150 000.

The trio are among 40 students from SA universities who, after a rigorous adjudication process, made the cut into this round of the competition.

They are:

- **Mr Dicend Chiseko**
4th year Agricultural Economics
- **Mr Luyanda Matomane**
Honours in Economics
- **Mr Shiven Moodley**
2nd year Masters in Economics



// Mr Luyanda Matomane

Currently in its 48th year, the competition focuses on recognising and highlighting the depth of talent, intellect and insight which exists in Economics and Finance students registered at SA universities. It challenges contenders to write an essay that speaks to the country's economic and financial landscape. Students are grouped into undergraduate and postgraduate categories. The semi-finals comprise the top 20 in each category, thereafter 10 are chosen for the finals and ultimately the top three in each category.

Mr Chiseko falls under the undergrad category while Mr Matomane and Mr Moodley are postgrad contenders.

In the Undergraduate category, the essay question was: "Would the Implementation of Land Expropriation Without Compensation Unlock Greater Economic Growth or Damage it Further in South Africa? Illustrate your answer by using international experience."

Postgraduates were challenged to make A Case for or Against a Change in the Mandate and Ownership of the South African Reserve Bank.



// Mr Shiven Moodley

Said Prof Forget Kapingura who also mentors the UFH contestants, "Being selected for such a prestigious competition is testament that our students are able to compete with others from other universities and emerge as winners."

"This is an intense competition that speaks to the relevance of what we teach to the current problems facing the country".

Asked about the probability of claiming a consecutive win, Prof Kapingura confidently said the probability was definitely high. "We have had representations in this competition since 2006. So I believe our students can win it again!"

The top 10 will be announced next month. The final selection of the top three winners in each category will take place next year at a gala that follows the Annual Budget Speech delivered by the Minister of Finance.

by Aretha Linden

NOVEMBER IS DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH:

There is no shame in living with diabetes



A personal account by Duane Boucher

As a person living with Type 2 Diabetes, I want to raise awareness about my condition amongst colleagues and students at the University of Fort Hare. By sharing the information in this article about diabetes, I hope you will either get yourself tested for diabetes if you suspect you may be at risk, or offer support to your family, partner and friends who have the disease. There is no shame in living diabetes.

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) estimates that roughly 12.8% of South Africa's adult population or 4,581,200 adults are living with diabetes. The number of diabetes cases has doubled from a previous 5.4% of the adult population in 2017. In South Africa, diabetes deaths are second only to Tuberculosis. But by 2040, diabetes is expected to be the leading cause of death in the country. Improving awareness on diabetes is essential to avoid future medical complications for individuals, and the anticipated financial health burden on the state.

November has been identified as Diabetes Awareness Month and **14 November 2020 is International Diabetes Day**. The IDF uses a blue circle to represent diabetes and challenges everyone who has diabetes or knows someone with diabetes **to wear blue** on Saturday, 14 November, to show their awareness.

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a non-communicable disease that occurs when you have too much sugar (glucose) in your body. The glucose is produced from the food you eat and enters your bloodstream. Your body needs glucose for energy but cannot use it if it stays in your blood. An organ in your body called the pancreas makes insulin to help the glucose get into your cells to give you energy. Insulin is the "key" that opens the door to a cell in your body so that it can receive the glucose. If your pancreas cannot produce insulin, then you are diagnosed as a person with Type 1 diabetes. If your pancreas can produce insulin but is not doing so correctly, then you are diagnosed as a person with Type 2 diabetes.

How would I know if I have diabetes?

The IDF estimates that 1 in 11 adults globally are living with diabetes and many more individuals are undiagnosed, as they do not undergo regular health checks. Not knowing that you are living with diabetes can lead to unnecessary damage to your body's organs and nervous system, as they rely on the blood flowing through your body to function correctly.

Uncontrolled diabetes leads to the following significant complications:

- **Neuropathy** – your nerves become damaged from poor blood circulation, which can result

in numbness and eventual amputations of your feet.

- **Blindness** – your eyes are made up of an intricate network of tiny blood vessels, and excess glucose in your blood will damage these delicate nerves in your eyes.
- **Kidney (Renal) failure** – if you have excess glucose in your blood it will result in damage to the nerves in the kidney, your body's filtration organ, which will lead to the need for regular dialysis treatments to filter your blood and body of toxins. My mother was a Type 2 diabetic for 18 years and endured weekly dialysis sessions for four years until she passed away in ICU in October 2007.
- **Heart attacks** – your heart, the body's pumping station for your blood is under strain from pumping the "heavy" glucose blood through your body, which results in high blood pressure (hypertension) and high cholesterol.

People newly diagnosed with diabetes often think they are going to die. This happens mostly when they are made aware of the complications of the disease, but a person with diabetes can live a long life. For example, my grandmother, who managed her diabetes well, died in her sleep just shy of 91 in January 2020, after being diagnosed with diabetes in her late 60s.

So how do you even know that you are at risk

of diabetes? There are four simple questions you could ask yourself as a starting point. If you answer "yes" to two or more of these questions, then you should get yourself tested for diabetes:

- Does anyone in your family suffer from diabetes?
- Are you over the age of 40 years?
- Are you overweight?
- Do you exercise regularly?

Being younger than 40 years does not mean that you may not have diabetes. Type 1 Diabetes diagnosis occurs from birth, as a teenager, or young adult. Increasingly high instances of Type 2 Diabetes are also occurring in young adults due to poor eating habits or a high carb diet, lack of exercise, and being overweight.

Knowing that you are at risk of maybe getting diabetes, known as Pre-Diabetes, is essential as it is your body sending out a call for help that your intervention is necessary. At present, there is no cure for diabetes and you will have diabetes for the remainder of your life. There is no miracle cure posted on a lamppost somewhere. Still, Type 2 Diabetes can be reversed or put into "remission" with medication and by following a healthier lifestyle. However, every day will be a day in vigilance for the rest of one's life.

WARNING SIGNS THAT YOU MAY BE SUFFERING FROM DIABETES COULD INCLUDE:

- A constant feeling of being thirsty;
- A constant feeling of fatigue or lack of energy;
- A decline in your eyesight or blurred vision;
- Losing weight even when you are eating;
- Genital itching and impotence;
- A constant need to urinate; and,
- Injuries (cuts, sores) to your body or bruises that don't heal.

However, the only way to confirm that you have diabetes is to get yourself tested. Three types of tests exist to check and monitor your diabetes risk. These are usually administered in this order:

1. A simple **blood prick test** using a handheld blood glucose tester, which you can administer yourself, at a local pharmacy, at a clinic, or your doctor. A constant reading >8 mml could be a sign of pre-Diabetes, and further tests may be necessary to confirm a diagnosis.

2. To confirm if you have diabetes, you will have a **glucose fasting test**, which will be administered at a testing lab or a clinic. You will have blood drawn, get asked to drink a glucose drink, and have your blood checked two hours later to see if your pancreas extracted the glucose from your blood. Your doctor will advise you of the results from the test.
3. If you are diagnosed with diabetes, then your doctor will monitor your diabetes management by doing an **HbA1c test**, which will tell your doctor how much glucose has been in your blood over the past three months. The test is only done at a minimum every three months, as your red blood cells in your body get replaced every two to three months.

What do I need to do if I'm diabetic?

Once diagnosed, your doctor will start you on a course of medication to ensure that you have enough insulin in your body to open the "door" to your cells for the glucose in your blood. For people with type 1 diabetes, this will involve insulin injections. For Type 2 diabetics, it will involve oral medications, but can also include insulin injections if the pancreas is badly compromised.

To manage your diabetes, you will need to:

- **Monitor your blood sugar levels daily.** Do regular blood prick tests using a handheld blood glucose tester. These can be purchased from a local pharmacy, or available at some government clinics. Your doctor or diabetes educator (nurse) will advise you of an acceptable range for the readings.
- **Take your medication.** If you are taking Metformin, then you will need to take additional supplements (magnesium and Vitamin B12) to counteract some of the effects of the medication.
- **Follow a healthy diet.** It would help if you found a diet that works for you to reduce your glucose readings and weight as needed. You can source a diet plan from a dietician, a clinic, or you can follow a popular low carb eating plan such as the Banting Green List. The goal of a healthy diet is to reduce the

amount of glucose entering your body, which as you recall comes from food. Managing your food intake as a diabetic person will be a lifelong challenge.

- **Exercise daily.** A diabetic person needs to complete at least 30 minutes of cardio-related exercise a day, as this improves the blood flow and distributes your medication through your body. Your fitness level determines the exercise you undertake. Just going for a daily walk can be very beneficial.

Merely taking your medication and not changing your diet and undertaking some form of exercise will not help to manage your disease. It will result in increased doses of medication and complications later.

Finding support as a diabetic

A person with diabetes will not find support for their disease until they acknowledge and own the implications of the disease. I was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes on the 23rd of March 2020.

Being afraid to tell your family, partner and friends that you have diabetes and living in denial will only hasten you towards the complications mentioned above. Taking your medication, monitoring your disease with daily blood pricks, changing your eating habits and lifestyle will initially be a challenge. Still, it will get easier as you learn more and more about your diabetes. In this respect, joining a physical, online or WhatsApp support group can be a valuable learning resource. The diabetic community is very supportive of one another in helping to learn to manage the disease.

The information for this article is sourced from the websites of the [International Diabetes Federation](#); [Diabetes South Africa](#); [Diabetes Education Society of South Africa](#); [Health e-News](#); and my own lived experience of the disease, as well as the impact of the disease on my late mother, father and late maternal grandmother.

by Duane Boucher

DR MAYABA OBTAINS AN MBA DEGREE

Dr Nosisa Mayaba, Director of Planning and Quality Assurance and recently, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Institutional Support (DVC-IS), has recently added a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) degree to her list of qualifications.

She is a plant physiologist by profession with a PhD in Botany from the University of Natal (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal). On 24th October 2020 her other big dream came to fruition when she graduated with an MBA degree from the Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA). The graduation ceremony was held virtually due to Covid-19 limitations.



// Dr Nosisa Mayaba

Dr Mayaba said she has always had a particular interest in business management despite her career choice. The title of her MBA dissertation was: *The role of leadership and governance on the quality of teaching and learning in a historically disadvantaged university in the Eastern Cape province.*

"Both my parents operated businesses. Back then I had my reasons for not pursuing a degree in business management. However the business bug somehow caught up with me when I was doing my PhD," she said. At the time, she enrolled for a Diploma in Business Management and later upgraded to an MBA to enhance her business skills and financial acumen.

"As a researcher and scientist, I always felt that leadership does not really understand the challenges of researchers and scientists when they formulate their strategies. I am a visionary and therefore like to plan ahead. I am also detail oriented so it was a logical move for me to steer towards strategy.

Her interest in business studies was further fuelled by a personal quest to be the best that she can be.

"My background to date has been focused around preparing myself to become the best I can be and becoming a person that others can rely on. I also strive to make a significant contribution wherever I find myself, be it personally, socially and professionally," she said.

Her current portfolio as the Acting DVC-IS is the perfect opportunity to draw from her training as a business administrator. "This qualification could not have come at a more appropriate time. In this role I oversee and provide strategic leadership and operations management to the Human Resources, Information and Communication Technology, and Properties and Services portfolios."

"This position will provide an opportunity to put into practice and hone my skills as an administrator", she said.

PROF CHINYAMURINDI APPOINTED AS SAYAS CO-CHAIRPERSON

Congratulations to Prof Willie Chinyamurindi on his appointment as the co-chairperson of the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS).

Chinyamurindi, a full professor in the Department of Business Management was appointed as a SAYAS executive member in September last year. His latest role was announced earlier this week when the Academy introduced its new executive committee for 2021.

SAYAS is regarded as the voice of young scientists in South Africa. Founded in 2011, the academy aims to the national strategic priority of strengthening the skills and human resource base of the country with a focus on the next generation of scientists. It plays a key role in seeking solutions to global challenges facing society by providing a platform for young scientists to influence policy decisions and contribute towards the development of scientific capacity in the country.

The University of Fort Hare believes Prof Chinyamurindi is equal to the task of steering SAYAS to achieve its mandate.



// Prof Willie Chinyamurindi



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ThisWeek@FortHare your weekly newsletter

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor-in-Chief: Tandi Mapukata

Writers: Aretha Linden, Mawande Mrashula & Asaduma Baloyi

Graphic Design & Layout: Alida Mundell

Photography & Videography: Tim Wilson

Creative Specialist: Tim Wilson

Marketing Advisor: Khotso Moabi

Social Media Specialist: Velani Mbiza Gola

FOR COMMENTS, IDEAS AND STORY LEADS:

Tandi Mapukata | tmapukata@ufh.ac.za

Aretha Linden | alinden@ufh.ac.za

Submission deadline 5pm Tuesdays