

# This Week @Fort Hare



University of Fort Hare  
*Together in Excellence*

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# Ushering in a Period of Renewal and Consolidation

## Introducing New Senior Leaders

### DEANS

In a bid to keep the ship steady as we journey through the Decade of Renewal, the university has appointed five highly-experienced individuals to crucial positions. On 25<sup>th</sup> May, Prof Renuka Vithal, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning announced the appointment of:

- **Professor Neil Roos** as the incoming **Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences** as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 and;
- **Professor Mzikazi Nduna's** appointed as **Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences** with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2022.

Prof Vithal thanked Professor Fhulu Nekhwevha for firmly steering the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences during his tenure as Acting Dean, which will conclude at the end of June. "Professor Nekhwevha's contribution and leadership have been greatly appreciated."

She also expressed her gratitude to Professor Leon van Niekerk who has agreed to stay on as Acting Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences until the end of the year.

### EXECUTIVES

A week later, the Vice-Chancellor Prof Sakhela Buhlungu announced the appointment of three new executives who will be joining the Management Executive Committee of the University of Fort Hare:

- **Dr Oscar van Heerden** as **Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Institutional Support** on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021
- **Dr Nthabiseng Taole-Mjimba** as **Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Partnerships and Innovation** on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 – a first for the University.
- **Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo** as **Dean: Student Affairs** on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021

The VC stated: "With this new set of appointments, we are

for the first time introducing a Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Partnership and Innovation. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the portfolio of Professor Renuka Vithal previously, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic Affairs would change to Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning. This important unbundling of the Academic Affairs portfolio will allow the University to focus strategically and operationally on its core activities of teaching and learning and research. In addition, the University Council has approved that the Dean: Student Affairs serve on the Management Executive Committee."

He expressed gratitude to Dr Nosisa Mayaba for taking on the challenging portfolio of Institutional Support in her capacity as Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor. "Her firm and strategic leadership has been greatly appreciated."

Professor Priscilla Monyai will continue to serve as Acting Dean: Student Affairs until the end of June. "I want to thank

her for her tenacity and steadfastness in managing this critical Division. The successful completion of online SRC elections during her tenure is a special accomplishment."

The VC further stated that, with the appointment of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Partnerships and Innovation on July 1<sup>st</sup>, Professor Munacinga Simatele, who is currently Acting Dean: Research, will become Acting Director: Research Management, and the Dean of Research position will be disestablished. He thanked Professor Simatele for her stellar contribution as Acting Dean: Research and to express our appreciation for agreeing to take on the position of Acting Director: Research Management from the beginning of July.

"With the three new executives joining us, we are looking forward to a period of renewal and consolidation. There is much work to be done and it is good to have a full executive team in place."



**Professor Neil Roos**  
DEAN: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



**Professor Mzikazi Nduna**  
DEAN: FACULTY OF HEALTH  
SCIENCES



**Dr Oscar van Heerden**  
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR:  
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT



**Dr Nthabiseng Taole-Mjimba**  
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: RESEARCH,  
PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATION



**Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo**  
DEAN: STUDENT AFFAIRS



>> Mr Njabulo Zuma



>> Prof Renuka Vithal



>> Prof Sakhela Buhlungu



>> Adv. Andile Mini



>> Mr Sipiwo Ngcenge

# Minister Nzimande unveils the Alice Student Village

Improved and dignified campus life experience is no longer a dream, but a reality for students of the University of Fort Hare.

On 31 May 2021, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr. Blade Nzimande officially unveiled phase 2 of the greenfield multi-million rand Alice Student Village - SA's largest student housing development.

Comprising 2050 beds, the development has enabled the university to be the first and only higher learning institution to accommodate 70% of its student population (6049 students) on campus.

The development is a culmination of a resilient partnership between UFH, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and the European Union (EU).

Phase 1, comprising 5 blocks and 610 beds was completed in 2016. DHET contributed R137 million,

while UFH contributed R18 million towards the initial phase of the project.

The completion of Phase2 which came at a cost of R419 million was made possible by a R122 million infrastructure funding provided by DHET, R278 million loan funding from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and the university's contribution of R19.6 million. The second phase comprises 12 blocks and 1440 beds.

During construction, the Infrastructure Investment Programme of South Africa (IIPSA), funded by the European Union, awarded a direct capital grant of R28 million to UFH, which the university could draw on to pay the interest portion on the DBSA loan.

The launch event began with a tour of the university's heritage sites and was followed by the formal programme held at the newly-built student centre.

Mr Njabulo Zuma UFH Registrar, welcomed the

esteemed guests which included senior officials from DHET, DBSA, the EU, UFH management and Council and former Administrator, Mr Nhlanganiso Dladla.

Sharing the purpose of the day, Prof Renuka Vithal – Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs applauded the role played by the different stakeholders, inside and outside of the university. She also implored students to treasure their new homes for generations to come. "No one dares to destroy a part of it," she said.

Delivering the keynote address, Minister Nzimande said the launch is a celebration of a fruitful collaboration between the funders and the university.

"Such a significant investment in historically black universities registers our commitment to disrupt and transform the long history of unequal spatial, institutional and social development which had marked the development of our higher education for over a century."



>> Honourable Minister Dr Blade Nzimande



>> Mrs Zodwa Mbele



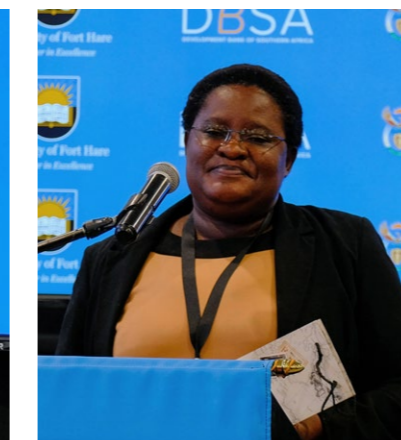
>> Mr Augustin Bondo Tshiani



>> Bishop Ivan Abrahams



>> Prince Zolile Burns-Ncamashe



>> Dr Nosisa Mayaba



>> Dr Siphokazi Koyana



>> Mr Lizo Phiti



>> Ribbon cutting, Dr Blade Nzimande and Bishop Ivan Abrahams

The Minister said UFH certainly occupies a distinctive and unique historical place, not only amongst its higher education peers but also in the memory of the struggle against colonialism and apartheid.

“UFH has an iconic place as the cradle of academic and intellectual training for generations of African professionals and leaders not only in South Africa, but across the African continent, many of whom became the architects of post-colonial reconstruction and development.”

“It is after all here (in Alice) where leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Oliver Tambo, ZK Matthews, Chris Hani, Ivy Florence Matsepe-Casaburri and pioneers such as the writer Can Themba and South Africa’s first black female doctor, Mary Malahlela-Xakana, honed their knowledge and skills before their pioneering roles in society. We owe it to these pioneers to ensure that Fort Hare is restored to its rightful place in the development of our democracy.”

The Minister gave assurance that government and his ministry were committed to revitalizing, stabilizing and transforming Fort Hare to become one of the leading universities in SA and in Africa. True to his word, Minister Nzimande made a commitment to assist the university to revamp the old Alice Library structure.

“We have heard your cry and we will work together for this university to get a new library in this Alice campus”, he said to a thunderous applause from the audience.

Bishop Ivan Abrahams, Chairperson of the UFH Council, said the new residence will certainly make a qualitative difference in the lives of our students. “UFH is committed to knowledge production and innovation which addresses the challenges of transforming our country and allowing our students to compete in the global economy. We are on a journey of renewal that will allow this university to reclaim its iconic space as a premier institution of higher learning.”

The VC, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu said the impact of the development was huge.

“This is the largest single development in the history of the university. Also, this is a large project in a town called Alice which is small and broken. For us, this is a vote of confidence in the town and this campus.”

**“Such a significant investment in historically black universities registers our commitment to disrupt and transform the long history of unequal spatial, institutional and social development which had marked the development of our higher education for over a century.”**

“The provision of accessible, decent, safe and academically conducive student accommodation at all our post-school education and training institutions is of great importance in order to provide quality teaching, learning, research and innovation spaces. It is even more important and historically significant with respect to the historically black universities.”



>> Unveiling of the Plaque. Bishop Ivan Abrahams, Mrs Zodwa Mbele, Prof Sakhela Buhlungu, Dr Blade Nzimande and Mr Augustin Bondo Tshiani

The VC said the new student village addresses critical student accommodation shortages in Alice. “The standard and the quality - we went one notch up. The village is designed to bring students together as communities and to live in dignity.”

“Students’ choice of a university is not only about reputation or international ratings. It is also about the quality of student residence’ life.”

He further stated that the completion of the student housing development is an important milestone for the university’s ‘Decade of Renewal’ master plan, which is setting the university on an ambitious trajectory of reinvention in the 21st century.

“Alice campus will become the campus of choice. If you want to see the Fort Hare of the future, look at this project. The idea of Fort Hare being a dysfunctional and badly run institution is gone.”

The DBSA was represented by Ms Zodwa Mbele, Group Executive – Transacting and the EU was represented by Mr Augustin Bondo Tshiani, Head – Economic Cooperation and Infrastructure. Both expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be investors in such an impactful project.

Speaking on behalf of the UFH Convocation, its President, Advocate Andile Mini praised the VC for

steering the ship towards the realization of a true Fort Hare dream and enabling the revamping of the university’s main campus – also a heritage site. He referred to UFH as a place that should discuss and find African solutions. He also revealed some parts of the broader Alumni and Convocation 10-point plan: to reconnect alumni to their alma mater in the SADC region, fundraising and restoring the prestige of the university.

Interim SRC President, Sipiwo Ngcenge also shared words of appreciation for the project on behalf of the student community.

As the programme came to a close, Prince Zolile Burns-Ncamashe, representing STAG Africa (Developers) handed over the keys to Dr Nosisa Mayaba, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Support, to signify completion of the project.

The programme ended with a heartfelt message of appreciation rendered by Dr Siphokazi Koyana, Deputy Chairperson of the UFH Council.

*By Aretha Linden and Mawande Mrashula*



>> Mr Nhlangiso Dladla, former administrator



>> Mrs Zodwa Mbele and the DBSA Team



>> Dr Ncedo Xhala, DHET



>> Mr Augustin Bondo Tshiani, EU



>> Dr Irma du Plessis, VC Office



# Prof Werner Nel leads research expedition in sub-Antarctica

“I was taken by the Island and the opportunity it can afford a young researcher and I have been very fortunate to have been involved in earth sciences research on Marion Island ever since, first as a student and then as a collaborator.”



>> Prof W Nel sampling Marion Island 2021 Photo D Hedding

Prof Werner Nel, Physical Geography Professor and C-rated Rated Researcher at the University of Fort Hare recently returned from sub-Antarctica where he led a team of researchers who are investigating the interactions between landscape and climate in the region.

The research project titled: **Landscape and climate interactions in the sub-Antarctic** is an ongoing project that started in 2015 and a continuation of earth sciences projects that have been running on Marion Island since 1996. Prof Nel joined the project in 1999 as a field assistant. He is currently its Chief Scientist.

The team recently published a paper that reviews the history of earth sciences research on Marion Island: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03736245.2020.1786445>.

This latest project, which will run until 2023, is a multi-national project with collaborators from the University of South Africa, University of Free State, University of Johannesburg, the British Antarctic Survey and the Scottish Universities Environment Research Centre.

It is funded by the National Research Foundation through the South African National Antarctic Programme (SANAP).

After a heavy fieldwork schedule, Prof Nel and his team sailed back to South Africa in mid-May.

In the latest edition of *ThisWeek@FortHare*, Prof Nel gives readers a glimpse into his 21-year-old research project, the recent research expedition and his adventurous experience on the field.

## Please tell us more about your recent research expedition in sub-Antarctica?

In the Southern Hemisphere, the sub-Antarctic islands provide the only terrestrial record of Quaternary glaciations and climate within thousands of kilometres of ocean.

The current project will investigate the interactions between landscape and climate in the sub-Antarctic through obtaining the ages of the basaltic lava (through Uranium-series dating) to place it within a geological chronology that constrains landscape development and glaciation on Marion Island.

We will also define Marion Island's glacial history within more accurate temporal and spatial scales by using cosmogenic <sup>36</sup>Cl surface exposure dating to explain how deglaciation has facilitated landscape development and affected the colonisation and dispersal of biota.

Furthermore, we want to quantify changes in the Southern Hemisphere Westerly Wind regime during the last major reorganization of the climate system (Termination 1: 18,000–11,000 years ago) to assist in determining how changes in the strength and position of the Southern Hemisphere Westerly Wind belt have impacted on the ability of the Southern Ocean to modulate CO<sub>2</sub>. This will be done through analysis of novel dust and sea salt aerosol proxies in peat deposits on Marion Island and Gough Island. Lastly, we will also determine how aspects of the contemporary landscape (aeolian landforms) interact with the current dominant westerly wind patterns to predict future landform change.

## Why does this study matter?

Sub-Antarctic islands are extremely sensitive to climatic change and landscapes of these islands can be considered proxies of past global climate shifts and identifiers of current climate change. The only terrestrial record of Quaternary glaciations in the Southern Ocean reside within the landscapes of these small islands and provide a window to understand climate and ocean regimes of the past. It is becoming more evident that research that focuses on the geochronology and glacial history of these islands as individual record keepers will have global significance. We have recently published a piece in *The Conversation* about the importance of this and it can be seen here: <https://theconversation.com/marion-islands-last-ice-age-happened-earlier-than-we-thought-why-it-matters-140106>

The capacity of the Southern Ocean to absorb anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> is limited by an observed increase in the strength of the Southern Hemisphere Westerly Wind (SHW), which modulates both the upwelling and outgassing of CO<sub>2</sub>. This means that the ocean may no longer function as such an efficient net sink of CO<sub>2</sub>, driving up atmospheric greenhouse gases and accelerating rates

of global warming. The migration of the westerly wind belt is also associated with changes in Southern Ocean circulation and sea surface temperatures and moisture delivery. Our research will reconstruct past changes in the strength and position of the SHW to assess the range of natural variability and evaluate how the SHW have modulated the CO<sub>2</sub> sink in the past and influenced moisture delivery and hence the timing of glaciation in the sub-Antarctic which is now a major priority for global palaeoclimate science.

Furthermore, the observed increase in the current strength of the (SHW) and recent climatic amelioration in the sub-Antarctic may exacerbate contemporary wind-driven processes in the sub-Antarctic with a clear impact on ecosystem functioning.

## Why did you want to do this study?

I had the opportunity to overwinter on Marion Island in 1999 (as a field assistant) when I was an Honours student at the University of Pretoria. My main motivation for taking on the job was centred purely on the opportunity for adventure.

The science for me at that time was secondary - typical student behaviour I would say. I completed my Honours and Masters fieldwork during my 13 months overwintering stint on the island and the time I spent on the island doing field research was life-changing.

I was taken by the Island and the opportunity it can afford a young researcher and I have been very fortunate to have been involved in earth sciences research on Marion Island ever since, first as a student and then as a collaborator. Our work on Marion Island defined my research career ever since I set foot on the island up to the point now where I am the Principal Investigator of the project.



>> L-R Prof D Hedding, Dr E Rudolph, Prof W Nel and Mr Zenande Kabase 2021

### How does this study relate to your other work?

Even though my research in the sub-Antarctic is my main research focus currently, I am principally involved in two other international research projects/collaborations. I am one of the main collaborators (with Prof Paul Sumner, University of Pretoria) on a research project based in the Mascarenes Islands of Mauritius and Ile le Rond (Round Island).

The research is in conjunction with the University of Mauritius, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation the Mauritius Oceanographic Institute (MOI) and the Mauritius National Parks and Conservation Services (NPCS). The project originally started as an investigation into the erosivity of high intensity rainfall on Mauritius. However, it has evolved into a multi-faceted project investigating erosivity (wind and rain) as well as soil conservation and coastal risk assessment principally on Mauritius but also on the offshore islets like Round Island.

Then I am also currently involved in a collaboration with colleagues from Nanjing University in China. This project is part of a collaboration funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China and the NRF through the Research Cooperation Programme in Geosciences. Our part of the project is to investigate the effects of weathering and human activities on heavy metal pollution in China's Pearl River Basin. The works are all related in that even though the environments are different the geomorphic processes we investigate (like erosivity and weathering) are very similar.



>> Fieldwork in Santa Rosa Valley Marion Island 2021 Photo D Hedding

### Lastly, please share with us your experiences whilst doing fieldwork?

Well I have been involved in this research for 21 years so there have been many adventures and experiences over time. The most recent research expedition was my 14<sup>th</sup> expedition to Marion Island (I also spent a summer in the Antarctic in 2010/2011) so there are many stories of adventures and misadventures to tell.

It is a very harsh environment to work in. It is very cold, windy and wet and all our fieldwork expeditions always turn out to be mini-adventures with some sort of challenge that needs to be overcome. It is difficult to explain to someone who has not been there how difficult it is to work in this environment. You have to walk long distances and be prepared to spend a substantial amount of time outdoors in a very harsh environment.

However, for me, the best experience is taking a student to the island for the first time and see how they develop into a hardened islander who is not afraid of anything. All our current students have overwintered or are overwintering on the island. Abu Nguna (who is currently busy with his PhD) overwintered in 2015/2016 and again in 2018/2019 as part of his MSc. Sbu Sinuka also a current PhD student overwintered for his MSc in 2017/2018 and Zenande Kabase who is busy with his Masters project is currently on the island until May 2022.

To be able to afford these students the same opportunities I enjoyed as a student (being involved in research in the sub-Antarctic) is the best experience for me and the main reason why we do what we do.

## Dr Motsamai Molefe recognized as a Y2 NRF rated researcher

Dr Motsamai Molefe's groundbreaking research on African ethics, applied ethics, social and political philosophy has earned him a Y2 rating recognition by the National Research Foundation (NRF).

Dr Molefe is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Leadership Ethics in Africa (CLEA). His Y2 rating was conferred this year, 2021.

According to the NRF, the rating of individuals is based primarily on the quality and impact of their research outputs over the past eight years, taking into consideration the evaluation made by local and international peers. The entity identifies researchers who count among the leaders in their fields of expertise and gives recognition to those who constantly produce high quality research outputs.

"I am humbled by this achievement. It is a kind of achievement that motivates me to work harder and aim to achieve more in the future," he said.

Dr Molefe's research largely focuses on African analytic philosophy. His areas of specialisation are African and Western ethics, Applied ethics (bioethics and environmental ethics), and Social and political philosophy. His work is extensively centered on the following moral-political concepts: Human dignity; Needs; Personhood and Ubuntu.

"The primary aim of my research revolves around the nature of the good (morality) as it applies to our individual and collective lives. On the one hand, I am asking: what is a good life? And, on the other, I am asking what constitutes a good society? My research is entirely normative and theoretical – I do what might rightly be described as normative moral and political philosophy," said Dr Molefe.

Prior to his rating, Dr Molefe has published three monographs:

- *'An African Philosophy of Personhood, Morality and Politics'* (2019, Palgrave Macmillan);
- *'African Personhood and Applied Ethics'*, (2020, NISC (PTY.Ltd)) and;
- *'An African Ethics of Personhood and Bioethics: A Reflection on Abortion and Euthanasia'* (2020, Palgrave Macmillan).



>> Dr Motsamai Molefe

**"The primary aim of my research revolves around the nature of the good (morality) as it applies to our individual and collective lives."**

As an NRF rated researcher he was appointed as the leading editor of the anthology *'Towards an African Philosophy of Needs'*, (2021, Palgrave Macmillan) and has a forthcoming monograph titled: *'Partiality and Impartiality in African Philosophy'* (2021, Lexington books).

"I have a contract with Springer for a manuscript: *'African Philosophy and Human Dignity: A Very Short Introduction'*. I am also working on two important anthologies one focusing on the work of Thad Metz and another focusing on the concept of Human dignity in African Philosophy.

According to him, some of his biggest achievements as a researcher includes being selected as fellow of the prestigious African Humanities Programme (2018, 2019) and his fellowship with the Ubuntu Dialogues hosted by Stellenbosch University and Michigan University (2021).

He is currently serving as an advisory board member of the Global Philosophy of Religion programme (2020 – 2023).

By Aretha Linden

# UFH LEADS R2.25M NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT ON CYBER-INFRASTRUCTURE

The University of Fort Hare's Faculty of Management and Commerce is at the helm of a groundbreaking study into the utilisation and accessibility of cyber-infrastructure within historically disadvantaged institutions (HDI's).

The research project is spearheaded by Professor Willie Chinyamurindi, Head of the Business Management Department at UFH. It is funded by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to the tune of R2.25 million over a three-year period. The project is in partnership with the University of Limpopo, University of Venda, University of Western Cape, University of Zululand and Walter Sisulu University.

On 19 and 20 May the Faculty hosted a workshop on the East London Campus to officially launch the joint venture. In attendance were academics from the partnering institution, two UFH PhD candidates and four Masters candidates whose research will be funded by the project. The academics shared a wealth of information with the candidates, including advice on scholarly writing and how to avoid plagiarism.

Prof Chinyamurindi said the project will look into data environments that support the management, storage, acquisition and visualisation of information.

"The study is a response to the CSIR's call to look into the field of human-computer interaction and to enhance that interaction. Through this project, we intend to find ways to advance the use of technology to improve society. The study will



>> Project partners and funded students

**"This project is the gateway to start engagements on cyber technology. We are honoured to be part of the initiative."**

investigate issues of access and the historical legacies that we have in our present-day challenges – that is where the HDI discussion has taken centre stage. Our priority is around enhancing aspects related national dynamic capabilities."

According to Prof Chinyamurindi, the benefits of the study go beyond the collaborating institutions and the funded students. "Not only is this a great opportunity for our students and our higher education institutions, but it is also an opportunity to invite other sectors, such as the business forum to work with us on this project."

Faculty Dean Dr Ntombovuyo Wayi said the project has placed HDI's at the forefront of cyber tech research. "This project is the gateway to start engagements on

cyber technology. We are honoured to be part of the initiative."

Speaking on behalf of the funder, Dr Happy Marumo Sithole who is the Centre Manager for the National Integrated Cyber-Infrastructure Initiative (NICIS) said the council had received several applications for funding and only four were selected.

"The fact that this proposal was selected indicates that there something special about it, it is visionary. We are excited about this project. It will lead us to a position where we can influence policy to transform HDI's into Future Enabled Institutions (FEI's)," said Dr Sithole.

*By Aretha Linden*

# PLAN TO TRANSFORM PARTS OF EAST LONDON INTO A UNIVERSITY TOWN GETS MOVING



>> L-R Adv Pumla Mncwango, Dr Percy Mahlati, Mr Bulumko Nelani and BCM Mayor Xola Pakati

It's Official!! The plan to transform parts of the East London CBD, Quigney and Southernwood areas into a thriving university town has been set in motion.

On 27 May, Fort Hare Solutions and the Buffalo City Metro Development Agency (BCMDA) signed an MOU to show their commitment to achieving this mutual developmental goal. The MOU was signed by Dr Percy Mahlati, Executive Director at Fort Hare Solutions and Mr Bulumko Nelana, CEO at BCMDA.

*ThisWeek@FortHare* will keep you updated on the developments of this exciting project.



# NURSING SCIENCE ACADEMICS TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF DIABETES ON MATERNAL AND INFANT MORBIDITIES AND MORTALITIES



>> Dr Nonceba Vellem



>> Prof Daniel Ter Goon



>> Mrs Ntombana M Rala



>> Mrs Zukiswa T Dasheka

Four UFH academics attached to the Nursing Science Department have received a R500 000 annual grant from the SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC) to conduct a study that aims to reduce maternal and infant morbidities and mortalities due to incidences of pre-diabetes and gestational diabetes.

The academics are:

- Dr Nonceba Vellem: Principal investigator
- Prof Daniel Ter Goon: Co-principal investigator
- Mrs Ntombana M Rala: Co-investigator
- Mrs Zukiswa T Dasheka: Co-investigator

The project will run over three years and is titled: **Supportive Triad Interpersonal Relationships Intervention Programme (STIRIP) during the perinatal period for maternal and child health positive outcomes.**

According to Mrs Dasheka, the study will be conducted through the use of Modified Diabetic Risk Score and lifestyle behaviour modification intervention strategies and identification of incidences of litigations and disrespect, Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect (DAAN). They will also look at factors associated with supportive relationships for maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months of children. The study will be conducted in the Eastern Cape.

“A multi-method approach will be used. The participants are nurses, pregnant women and companions/community. This project will also involve postgraduate students both at PhD and master’s level.”

## Objectives of the study:

- To identify incidences of pre-diabetes and gestational diabetes using Modified Diabetic Risk Score and intervene using lifestyle behaviour modification; identify the incidences of litigations and DAAN; and contributing factors to non-maintenance of exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months during perinatal period.
- To explore the best available evidence on the views, experiences, and behaviours of midwives, birthing women and companions/community regarding context-specific intervention strategies to promote supportive interpersonal relationships between them
- To elucidate the effects of the STIRIP on the incidences of prediabetes and gestational diabetes; litigations, DAAN, and exclusive breastfeeding during perinatal period.
- To explore and describe experiences of the midwives, women and companions regarding the use of STIRIP during the perinatal period.

Project findings will be presented to the community via radio stations, published in peer-reviewed accredited journals and presented at conferences.

By Aretha Linden

# ECAVC Partners With InstaToll Africa To Host Music Workshop

In a bid to widen the doors of opportunities for its students, the UFH Music Department in conjunction with the Eastern Cape Audio Visual Centre (ECAVC) and InstaToll Africa, hosted an information sharing workshop on 22 May at the Miriam Makeba Centre for Performing Arts.

The ECAVC is an entity that was established through a partnership between the university and the Eastern Cape Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture. The main focus of the centre is to develop Eastern Cape artists in the areas of audio and visual by supporting unsigned artists and recording their music under the ECAVC record label.

Currently, the centre is on a quest to identify 40 talented artists from 8 Districts, to record and produce a single for them. InstaToll Africa (Pty) Ltd has come in as the funding partner.

**Ms Sduduzo Myeni**, ECAVC Artistic Coordinator said this was the first workshop before going to districts.

Altogether, 50 students who were selected by their respective lecturers according to the different genres and interests, attended the workshop. The attendees were clad in African attires in celebration of Africa Day (25 May).

During the session, various speakers were brought in to share their expertise, such as:

- Mr Sakhele Mzalazala from CD Baby Africa spoke about the importance of downloading music into digital platforms.
- Mr Zizipho Macanda from Macebo Media shared his knowledge on music making for film music scoring.
- Mr Thomas Sondlo from SaMasamba Music equipped the students with advice about brand management and artist management.
- Sivuyile Mncinci from BTPA talked about technical aspects in festivals settings.
- Ms Myeni and Mr Gary Ndlovu, UFH Music Lecturer, also imparted industry knowledge.

Mr Sazi Gcaba, third-year Music student and two-times international Opera music competition winner said the workshop was well presented. “I learnt a lot and I think as a music student it is important for us to be informed about such opportunities in the music industry. This workshop has taught me that it is important to explore the music world and other opportunities it provides.”



>> Ms Sduduzo Myeni



>> UFH Music Students



>> Panelists



>> Music Students on Africa Day Theme

# FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT SWITCHES TO INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODOLOGIES TO COUNTER COVID-19 CHALLENGES

**“The challenge is always to stay on schedule and being mindful of the nominal hours for each set of modules.”**

Determined to keep teaching and learning going under the Covid-19 regulations, UFH Fine Arts lecturers had to adapt swiftly and implement minor and major changes in the manner they prepare and deliver lectures.

Although the department has moved all of its taught modules online, a practical and safe method had to be developed for studio work.

Head of department and senior lecturer, Dr Siphe Potelwa together with curriculum developer and lecturer Mr Thando Mama shared some of the department’s “new norms”.

According to them, teaching and learning under Covid-19 can be challenging at times, however, with great assistance from colleagues and the cooperation by their students, they are able to navigate the challenges presented by the pandemic.

## Changes imposed by Covid-19

“Some of the minor changes include how we approach our preparations for lectures. You have to balance taught modules online against contact practical work in the studio. Major changes and adaptations entailed moving all taught modules to the online learning space as well as identifying unintended consequences of online teaching. The synergy and alignment of curricula on the online platform and traditional practices in creative arts continue proving to be a challenge. However, the challenges also provide us with new opportunities to revisit the content and manner of providing creative arts training”, they said.



>> Dr Siphe Potelwa



>> Mr Thando Mama

## Studio Work

In a bid to ensure practical work is conducted in a safe and conducive environment, the department has divided its classes into smaller groups to adhere to social distancing. This means longer teaching and learning hours and extra classes when necessary.

During studio work lecturers take turns to do demonstrations, tutoring, supervisions and critiques. “This is not an easy task as the variation of numbers can mean that you have to do the same routine two or three times on the same day or by skipping days in a rotational manner. The challenge is always to stay on schedule and being mindful of the nominal hours for each set of modules.”

Despite these changes, academics in the Fine Arts department are committed to keeping students’ creativity alive by keeping them motivated and inspired by their own work and the work of others. They also encourage students to always believe hard work and commitment lead to a continuous state of productivity.

“This time also requires for self-reflection and to have a positive outlook, and to work on what one’s future might be in the creative arts space in South Africa and abroad,” they stated.

*By Aretha Linden*



# UFH WEBINAR COMMEMORATES INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA



>> Prof Zethu Matebeni



>> Mr Sibusiso Kheswa



>> Dr Bellita Banda



>> Mx Wenzile Khumalo

**“This intervention will head a conversation on how the state can intervene in terms of ensuring that we have an environment that is much more inclusive and appreciates diversity.”**

On 17 May, Prof Zethu Matebeni hosted a webinar in commemoration of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

The day marks 31 years since the World Health Organisation took a firm stand to remove homosexuality as form of a disease, thus opening a gateway to equal rights and inclusion. By 2016, 132 countries have observed the day.

Titled: *Transgender Identity and the State: Lessons for Higher Education Institution*, the webinar opened a discussion around the challenges, such as hate crimes and discrimination that the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI+) community are faced with.

Prof Matebeni who recently joined the university is the first recipient of the NRF SARCHI Chair in Sexualities, Genders and Queer Studies. She said the webinar was a first of many conversations to come.

“Over the past few months a lot of LGBTQI+ people have been experiencing what we call a backlash, were some of them were violently murdered. This is not the first time -the backlash is not new -it has been going on for a long time.

“This intervention will head a conversation on how the state can intervene in terms of ensuring that we

have an environment that is much more inclusive and appreciates diversity.”

Speakers included:

**Mr Sibusiso Kheswa:** activist and campaign coordinator at Iranti, a media advocacy organisation defending the human rights of transgender, intersex and lesbian persons in Africa.

**Dr Bellita Banda:** Post-Doc fellow at UNESCO “Oliver Tambo” Chair of Human Rights.

**Mx Wenzile Khumalo:** UFH transgender student activist.

According to Mr Kheswa, 10 LGBTQI people have been murdered in the past two months. “They were murdered for no any other reason that is known, except that they were known to be LGBTQI members.”

“As the sector we have approached the Minister of Justice and demanded immediate actions on the Hate Crimes Bill so that the perpetrators can be stopped from killing people with impunity.”

Mr Kheswa spoke at length about gender identity and legal gender recognition. He also spoke about the call for Home Affairs to make ID changes to include LGBTQI members.

Dr Bellita’s presentation titled: *A movement that reflects us all: Towards Promotion of Human Rights of LGBTQI University Students*, brought to fore the challenges faced by university students who identify themselves as LGBTQI members.

“Despite the umbrella terms commonly used of equal treatment, non-discrimination and protection of fundamental rights, moral stigma and societal marginalization as well as cosmetic policies at institutional level, there was still a gap between having rights and enjoying those rights,” she stated.

Mx Khumalo spoke about the limitations that people who identify as queer are faced with in their daily lives, in higher learning institutions and the academic space. “It starts with filling out an application form, the only gender options that are available are only male and female, no provision is made for a person who is transgender. It’s time for that to change- we need policies that accommodate all gender identities.”

Presentations were followed by a question and answer session.

*By Aretha Linden*

# UFH PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT PRESENTS RESPONSE ON NHI BILL TO PARLIAMENTARY PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH



>> Lucille Hendricks

On Wednesday, 2 June Psychology lecturer, Lucille Hendricks presented the submission presented before the parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health in the National Assembly.

## The UFH Submission in a nutshell: by Lucille Hendricks:

The NHI Bill promotes universal health coverage for all South African citizens as essential. However, there are concerns regarding the bill in its current form which require urgent change in order to make high-quality universal health coverage a reality. Issues regarding access to healthcare affect every citizen in the republic. Specific concerns regarding the fund that the bill proposes establishing and the implications for access to mental healthcare, in particular, was highlighted in our departmental submission as not having received enough attention in the bill's benefits.

As a department focusing on Counselling Psychology with a strong community psychology ethos, we train students to work within communities where contextual issues are the focus and where psychological understanding and community context is given preference. We further aim to redress the inequalities of the past by servicing vulnerable groups who historically would not have had access to psychological services, with our focus primarily on preventative strategies.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, hospitals and clinics were dealing with overwhelming numbers of trauma and illness cases, many of which could have been prevented and dealt with at an early stage through preventative psychosocial interventions. During the pandemic these numbers have increased exponentially, highlighting the need and desire for community-based mental health services.

Mental health professionals should be available and accessible by all citizens as specialist services to which physicians and other primary healthcare providers can refer. This accessibility to these specialists is however, not expressly addressed in the NHI Benefits.

In 2012 government launched the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill and invited public comments. In 2019, the University of Fort Hare's Department of Psychology filed a submission which highlighted issues of mental health.

It is our opinion that general mental health should be more effectively integrated into the NHI Bill and that assurance to equitable access to health services for all people be prioritized. We recommend that mental health experts such as Counselling Psychologists be appointed in the advisory structures of the NHI such as the Benefits Advisory Committee and Health Diagnostic related groups. Furthermore, we recommend that the area of preventative work receives appropriate funding and support within the fund benefits (the ramifications of these psychological stressors and events have a negative impact on families, communities and greater society).

In our submission we also indicated that we could not support any limitations on population coverage as proposed in the Bill, as it violates human rights to basic health care. Universal health care should be available to all who in need, regardless of their status within the country.

We note that there are no national mental health programs developed and implemented in our local contexts, as appose to the other priority health programmes such as HIV, and TB dots, for example, and this requires immediate attention.

Furthermore, Mental Health needs to be explicitly mentioned in the Bill as there is a tendency to focus primarily on physical health resulting in the disregard of mental wellbeing in the development of healthcare plans.

In a society where trauma, suicide, violence, depression, sexual abuse, substance abuse, unemployed and poverty has become a norm, it is imperative that one recognizes the value and contribution of preventative psychosocial and psychological work. The NHI Bill needs to appropriately budget for mental health services under primary health care. Historically, when budget cuts are introduced, mental health programs are the first to be considered, indicating the lack of investment in mental wellbeing for South African citizens and this needs to change and be addressed in the Bill.

As a department, and as mental health professionals, we fully support the overall purpose of the Bill to "achieve sustainable and affordable universal access to quality health care services" (S2).

## Report submitted and presented on behalf of the Department of Psychology Staff (2021)

To view the presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UonZl6iSwol>

# UFH ALUMNUS MAKES IT BIG AS AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIST AT AGROSCOPE, SWITZERLAND

**"I grew up in a small village in Butterworth. I had been farming with my family in a small farm setting at home since I was 15 years old and always wanted to pursue a career in agriculture"**

Growing up in a rural Ndabakazi village in Butterworth, 32-year-old UFH alumnus Dr Ziphe Zantsi, never imagined that he would one day become an international researcher.

Destiny, on the other hand, had bigger plans in store for Dr Zantsi who is now an agricultural economist at the government of Switzerland's Federal Research Institute for the Agri-food sector.

He shared his inspirational story with *Food For Mzansi Digital News*.

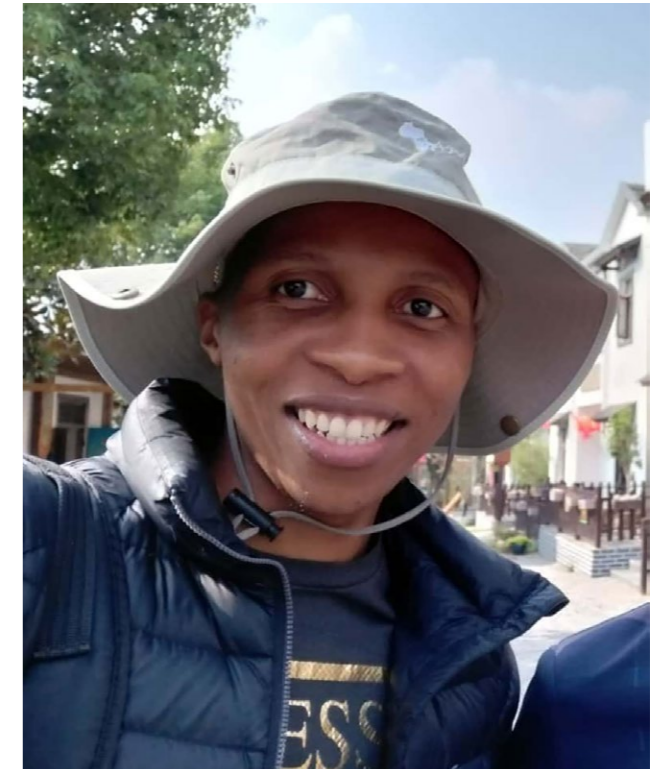
"I grew up in a small village in Butterworth. I had been farming with my family in a small farm setting at home since I was 15 years old and always wanted to pursue a career in agriculture, but I never thought I would go beyond my bachelor's degree.

"My plan was always to graduate and find a job in the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and buy livestock," he recalled during the interview.

In 2008, Dr Zantsi enrolled for a BSc in Agricultural Economics and Livestock production at the University of Fort Hare, and on completion enrolled for his Honours at the university. Earlier this year, he graduated with a PhD from Stellenbosch University.

He is now an agricultural economist with a Swiss institute, Agroscope. The Swiss Confederation's centre of excellence for agricultural research is affiliated with the Federal Office for Agriculture, which in turn is subordinate to the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research in Switzerland.

It makes an important contribution to a sustainable agriculture and food sector as well as to an intact



>> Dr Siphe Zantsi

environment, thereby contributing to an improved quality of life. Its aims are a competitive and multifunctional agricultural sector, high-quality food for a healthy diet, and an intact environment.

Dr Zantsi started working with the centre in 2017 while doing his PhD thesis, and two years later he officially joined the centre as a staff member.

According to *Food For Mzansi*, Zantsi's PhD developed a new method-agent based modelling to find better solutions for implementing land reform. Through his research, he identified five main reasons why land distribution in South Africa has failed in the past. These included inadequate support services to new entrants into farming, poor beneficiary selection, handing over of commercial farms for new entrants to manage, lack of farming skills, and the lack of government support to provide farmers with freehold titles.

Original Source: <https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/siphe-zantsi-rural-boy-international-agri-success/>



## UFH ALUMNA, NOLITHA FAKUDE APPOINTED FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT OF 131-YEAR OLD MINERALS COUNCIL SA

Ms Nolitha Fakude, one of UFH's esteemed alumni, has been appointed as the president of Minerals Council South Africa – the first woman to lead the 131-year old organisation.

She was elected during the council's annual general meeting held virtually on 26 May. Prior to her election, Ms Fakude served as the vice president of the council and also chairperson of the Minerals Council Women in Mining Leadership Forum.

Born in Cenyu, a small village in the Eastern Cape, Ms Fakude graduated with a BA(Hons) degree from the University of Fort Hare in 1989. After graduating from UFH she went on to complete the Harvard Business School Senior Executive Development Programme.

Over the past 30 years, she has worked her way up from a Graduate Trainee at Woolworths to

becoming one of the country's most influential business women. Currently, she is the Chairperson of Anglo American's Management Board – the largest mining company in South Africa.

Among other senior roles, she has previously served as Managing Director and later President of the Black Management Forum as well as Executive Director at Sasol for many years. She also sits on numerous boards, including the JSE Limited.

In 2019, Ms Fakude shared her life experiences in the corporate industry in a memoir titled, *Boardroom Dancing*. The book takes the reader through the journey of a shopkeeper's daughter who has occupied very senior positions in the boardrooms of some major blue-chip companies.



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## INTRODUCING THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE EASTERN CAPE ALUMNI CHAPTER



**Mr Mosuli Cwele**  
CHAIRPERSON



**Dr Siphe Potelwa**  
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON



**Ms Xatyiswa Kamanga**  
SECRETARY



**Ms Nobulali Tokwe**  
ADDITIONAL MEMBER



**Mr Asanda Pakade**  
ADDITIONAL MEMBER



**Dr Nompumelelo Mawisa**  
ADDITIONAL MEMBER



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# *ThisWeek@FortHare*

your fortnightly newsletter

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*Submission deadline 5pm Tuesdays*