

# From the VC's Desk

Highlights | Thought Leadership

Issued: 05 April 2022



## SMU Vice-Chancellor appeals to business and stakeholders to partner with the University



At the conclusion of a recent launch of the business and stakeholder gala dinner, the Vice-Chancellor of Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University Professor Peter Mbatia has reached out to stakeholders in government, public and private sector to partner with the University in various projects to ensure that SMU continues to play a meaningful role as the only dedicated health sciences university in the region.

In welcoming all the guests, the Chairperson of the University Council Ms Maria Rambauli said, the purpose of the occasion was for the Vice-Chancellor to share with business and stakeholders the journey of where SMU is going and to make the right contacts. The Council Chairperson called upon all executives, students and staff to be proud of what the university is doing. "I am passionate about this university as its product", she said. She reminded everyone that at the end of it all, it is about the children from different backgrounds who come to SMU in search of that gold that is their Degree which will enrich their lives forever.

The Vice-Chancellor used his presentation to take the attendees through the status of various infrastructure projects on campus including the 2,000 bed student accommodation project, the 800 bed student accommodation project, the bulk water project, campus perimeter wall, installation of high mast lights, CCTV cameras and a

[www.smu.ac.za](http://www.smu.ac.za) | #WeAreSMU



**SEFAKO MAKGATHO**  
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

**REMAIN  
MASKED!**  
Covid-19 is real!





drone to complement the campus security efforts, renovation of various sporting facilities, building of pharmacy labs, maximization of library space and modernization of the facility, forklift upgrade of the campus ICT infrastructure, upgrades and maintenance of student residences, and tarring of the campus ring road, among many other currently ongoing projects.

He appealed to business and other stakeholders to come on board to partner with SMU as it moves ahead to realize its vision as guided by the Strategic Plan 2021-2025. Prof Mbatlana said the future projects that business can partner with the University on include; funding the envisaged centre for pandemics, upgrading SMU animal house facility, upgrading SMU tissue culture laboratory, funding SMU Bio-Safety Level 3 lab, commercialization of SMU land amongst others. Mbatlana also indicated that the University would wish to seek partners in alternative green energy solutions.

The Vice-Chancellor also gave a video presentation of how a future SMU will look like in terms of cutting edge infrastructure from administrative buildings, student accommodation, recreational facilities and other amenities that will

improve the lives of both staff and students. He appealed to stakeholders to join SMU and contribute to the bigger picture of knowledge creation and research. He also said the University is making significant strides in the areas of research both locally and abroad. He cited the Sinovac/Numolux vaccine trial for children that is being conducted at the SMU Mecru Centre which was launched in 2021 as a good example of the research work being done at SMU.

Representatives from the business community such as Sanlam, Standard Bank and NSFAS offered messages of support and committed to partner with the University. These partners mentioned that they will also support this year's edition of the SMU Golf Day to be held in November.

Speaking on behalf of the Alumni, Chairperson Dr Sol Motlanthe said Alumni is the backbone of any university and that stakeholders should come on board to assist SMU. He mentioned that the university is currently underfunded and will do with help from other parties. Commenting after the presentation by the VC and the 3D video about how the future SMU will look like, Dr Motlanthe thanked the Vice-Chancellor for sharing his vision and steering the University in the right





direction and emphasized that he wanted to enter those beautiful buildings in his lifetime.

Dr Phillip Makume, who is also an Alumnus of the University gave a brief presentation of the Golf Day as a method of raising funds for the University. He said since inception of the idea, three Golf Days have been held. Dr Makume enticed the business community and other stakeholders to come onboard and be part of this fundraising initiative. He revealed that over R180 000 was raised during the 2021 edition of the Golf Day. The proceeds will help needy students.

President of SMU Convocation Mr Linda Rojie said SMU is a unique University and called on everyone to work together towards the attainment of its dreams. "Our detractors said it was impossible to stand alone, we did it. SMU is becoming a University we dreamt of", emphasized Rojie. He further said

SMU Alumni are doing good work for the country including serving at the Military 1 hospital where they treat statesmen. Rojie concluded that despite some of the challenges, there is a good SMU story to tell and that he was proud to be part of SMU.

Giving concluding remarks and a vote of thanks, the Deputy Chairperson of Council Ms Mmanare Mamabolo said the event was the first of its kind. She called upon business and the stakeholders to be part of the journey and emphasized that collaboration is very key. She also thanked the Chair of Council for her leadership. Turning to the Vice-Chancellor she said, "VC we are seeing the changes as Council and we appreciate you". Ms Mamabolo mentioned that SMU has achieved accolades in particular for students and in areas of research. She thanked all students for choosing SMU.





