

# Newsflash!

Issued: 22 May 2024



## SMU Celebrates 10 Years of Academic Excellence



In a joyful mood, on the 17 May 2024, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) staff, students and stakeholders gathered at the Sports Complex to commemorate the University's 10th anniversary, underpinned by a decade of Academic Excellence. SMU celebrated key milestones and highlighted the impact it had on society since its inception. The institution's commitment to transforming health services through excellence and innovation was heralded as a beacon of hope. The timing of the celebrations is, indeed, opportune, as it happened on the eve of the 2024 graduation season.



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SEFAKO MAKGATHO  
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY





Established on the 16th of May 2014, following the de-merger of the Medunsa Campus from the University of Limpopo, SMU is one of the 26 public Universities in South Africa. It is a dedicated specialized Health Sciences University providing professional training and education in a range of fields through excellence in teaching, learning, innovative research and community engagement. It, currently, has an enrolment of approximately 7,000 students registered in its five Schools, namely, the School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy, School of Dentistry, School of Health Care Sciences, and the School of Science and Technology.

Congratulatory messages from dignitaries highlighted the University's impact on the higher education, health, science and technology landscapes.

The Director General of the Department of Higher Education, Dr Nkosinathi Sishi, speaking on behalf of Minister Prof Blade Nzimande, stated that the establishment of SMU was not only to maintain the institution's rich history but also to ensure that, "as part of the agenda of the democratic state we increase access for young black learners so that they don't have to wrestle with the same impediments of the previous generations". He further encouraged SMU to actively participate in efforts to address health challenges in the country, to increase investment in technology, to uphold the culture of clean governance, to commit to transformation, to address inequalities and a commitment to producing professionals who uphold the highest ethical standards.

Chairperson of the SMU Council Ms Maria Rambauli indicated that she is hopeful that the future is bright for SMU as she believes that the stakeholders will continue to





innovate, push boundaries, and lead by example. She said that the institution remains steadfast in its commitment to excellence, ensuring that every student who walks through its doors has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and achieve their dreams. She further implored the university to continue to be a force for good and positive change, advocating for justice, equality, and opportunities for all.

In his address, The Vice Chancellor of SMU Prof Peter Mbatia said that in the past ten years, SMU had to honour its heritage, where education and upliftment were paramount, while also creating a new 21st-century entity that stood on the shoulders of the giant, Medunsa. He further indicated that all stakeholders; including the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), National Department of Health (NDoH), Gauteng Department of Health and Wellness (GDoH), SMU Council, Executive Management, organised labour, and students, are focused and committed to working together to deliver on the University's core mandate of teaching, learning, clinical training, research, and innovation, underpinned by service excellence and robust performance culture. He further stated that SMU's position as South Africa's only health

sciences university opens up incredible possibilities for SMU to further expand its academic and clinical training offerings.

The anniversary celebrations were preceded by the Convocation fundraising and awards gala dinner. Excitedly, the SMU Convocation President Mr Japhta Phala said that he is amazed that SMU is turning 10 years old. He further indicated that when this university was established, he was here as the President of the SRC in 2014, technically making him the first SRC President of SMU. In his address, he shared that "The university hosted its first prestigious convocation fundraising and alumni awards gala dinner.

He further indicated that together with the alumni, "we were able to raise R2.2 million, and a lot of business people and friends of the university pledged their support. This money will assist students who are faced with financial challenges, further indicating that at the beginning of the year, there where our students were not able to register because they had historical debts with the university. This is the initiative to say to the university that as alumni and convocats, this is our help".







The Gala Dinner honoured distinguished alumni and raised funds for students in need. The evening featured an inspiring Alumni Awards Ceremony, recognizing outstanding alumni across various categories: Young Alumni Awards, Alumni Academic and Innovation Awards, Alumni Impact Awards, Alumni Exemplary Service Awards, Alumni Governance Leadership Awards, and Alumni Lifetime Achievement Awards.

## SMU CONVOCATION AND ALUMNI GALA DINNER AWARDS RECIPIENTS

### SMU Alumni Award of Leadership recipients

- Dr Magome Masike (Former NW MEC of Health and current CEO of HPCSA)
- Dr Phophi Ramathuba (Limpopo MEC of Health)
- Dr Stanley Moloabi (Principal Officer of GEMS)
- Dr Dan Mosia (Chief Commercial Officer, Current Chair of UNISA Council)
- Dr Mpho Phalatse (Former Joburg Mayor)
- Dr Bandile Masuku (Former Gauteng Health MEC)

### SMU Alumni Award of Academic Excellence

- Prof Zach Koto
- Prof Mashudu Tshifularo
- Prof Tshepo Gugushe
- Prof Pindile Mntla

### SMU Alumni Impact Award Recipients

- Dr Mmereka Patience Ntshani
- Dr Tumishang Makweya

### SMU Young Alumnus Award Recipients

- Mr. Thabo Sekwati (Bafana Bafana Team Physiotherapist)
- Dr Nthabiseng Maesela (Banyana Team Doctor)
- Dr Carl Tabane (Mamelodi Sundowns Team Physician)
- SMU Exemplary Alumni Award Recipients:
- Dr Thabo Twala
- Dr Tiny Mhinga
- Dr Solly Motlanthe