

## Holiday greetings from the office of the Acting Vice Chancellor



We have come to the end of the academic year 2019 and I am certain that many will agree that it has not been an easy year for SMU. The prolonged strike earlier threatened to derail our effort to conclude the year and affected operations of the University.

On behalf of the management of the University, I want to thank the entire SMU community for working together tirelessly to save the 2019 academic year. The recovery plans that were implemented by the leaders of the schools, their staff working together with students have given us great results. Our collective efforts have demonstrated that if we work together, nothing is insurmountable.

I am particularly pleased to see that many of our students from the various schools have now taken their oaths and are ready to serve our communities. To all of you I say, go out and represent SMU and make us proud.

To the remaining students who are still to complete their qualifications, I wish you well for the year 2020 and continue to work with us to build a better SMU.

To the staff, thank you for your commitment and I hope 2020 will be a great year for all of us as we work to transform our University on all aspects.

May you all have a very relaxed, peaceful recess and festive season with your loved ones and come back more energized in 2020. Please exercise some caution on the roads and travel safely.

Wishing you and your families a Merry Christmas. May the new year bring you and your loved ones much happiness, good health, lots of love and prosperity.

I thank you for your continued commitment to project SMU.

*Prof O Ayo - Yusuf*  
SMU Acting Vice Chancellor

### IN THIS EDITION

Holiday greetings from the office of the Acting Vice Chancellor  
Meet Dr Nomthandazo Dube – Proudly SMU First Black Female  
SMU Bid Farewell to Retirees  
Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele – a trail blazing dean

p1  
p2  
p3  
p4

Department of Public Health Inspires Kgoši Mampuru Correctional ...  
SMU Medical Specialist Receives International Award  
Mr. Ignatius Makgoka- Newly appointed ICT Director

p4  
p5  
p6

# Meet Dr Nomthandazo Dube – Proudly SMU First Black Female Neurosurgeon

By Phemelo Komane

The Department of Neurosurgery at SMU is proud to have produced Dr Nomthandazo Dube, first black female neurosurgeon since the establishment of the department. Dr Dube is a dedicated and inspiring medical specialist, who accidentally fell in love with the neurosurgery speciality. “I never planned to be a Neurosurgeon, it happened accidentally,” said Dr Dube.

Her journey to become a Neurosurgeon started when she was in her final year of studies. She was approached by one of the neurosurgeons working in private practice, she knew from university, telling her if she wants to make money she should come assist over the weekends and the rest is history. “Although it was not an easy road for me, all the struggles made me who I am today and always strive to be the best I can be. Looking back I remember being the only woman amongst men, the criticism I was subjected to, having people looking down on me, discouraging me to quit while I was still trying to be a Neurosurgeon, being told that this is not a career for women, in the process my mistakes during training were pin-pointed to shame me, while others particularly male colleagues were left off the hook with similar mistakes to mine,” recalls Dube.

The support she received from her family, friends, colleagues, more especially from her Head of Department, Prof Patrick Lekgwara made her strive against all odds. “I need to work hard, always be in theatre, study hard as this field requires hard work and dedication so that I can be the best. What gives me the satisfaction in my job is when the patient wakes up,” said Dr Dube.

“I knew when she started that she will finish her degree because she was a dedicated student and could stand the pressure,” said Prof Lekgwara. What gives Dr Dube the satisfaction in her job is when a patient wakes up.

She has started a small programme together with the department of health and the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital, which focuses on taking aspiring Neurosurgeons to theatre. “At least four times a year I either take grade 11, 12 learners or first year students to spend a week with us in the department, just to give them the feel of what a neurosurgeon does from day to day, and also assist in career guidance. I also do school visits to motivates students” she said.





# SMU Bid Farewell to Retirees

By Giyani Matamela

SMU bid farewell to ten retirees who spent a combined 208 years of service in the institution with diligence, respect and honour within their respective lines of duty. Ms. Ntlhakeng Toka (Medicos), Dr Pieter Ackermann (Anatomy), Ms. Mapula Matjeni (Student Residences), Ms. Jacobeth Malesela (Nursing Sciences), Mr. Msindiseni Ntombela (Security Services), Ms. Magda Koning (Enrolment Management), Dr. Rajen Padayachi (Institutional Planning), Ms. Thoko Moeketsi (Cleaning), Ms. Herculine Sekati (Enrolment Management), and Prof Wilhelmina Basson (Psychology) are retiring at the end of the year.

Ms Sekati, who served the University for 37 years said, “When I started working at the institution there were no job descriptions, work was just work, including answering phone calls, assisting with student registrations, filing documents, assisting with student accommodation, helping student secure bursaries and many other things. I like to share with readers that when you are given a job description, you need to go an extra mile in doing your job. Get to work early, be happy and help whenever you can because unity can take this institution forward”.

Ms. Mercia Makgati, SMU Senior HR Business Partner praised and glorified the retirees for their extra ordinary tireless efforts. “They have served the institution with determination, dedication and discipline in making SMU great. They have run the race with distinction and should continue to build on good work and having them within the SMU was a blessing accompanied with privilege. I wish them the best retirement years and good health,” said Ms Makgati.

SMU Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof Lekan Ayo-Yusuf's message was bold and direct but carried imperative meaning to the retirees. “I wish you all to use your rare talents, skills and good deeds to go and change the world the same way your stay within SMU changed and contributed to better make the institution the way it is today. I challenge you to help the future generations navigate the importance of life. I wish and thank you for the years of great service and happy retirement years,” concluded Prof Ayo-Yusuf.

# Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele – a trail blazing dean

By Maditsi Matlala



Prof Eucebious Lekalakala-Mokgele, fondly known as Prof Sebi, the newly appointed Dean of the School of Health Care Sciences is a trail blazer, in her own right. She distinguished herself as the first woman at the helm of a full School of Health Care Sciences (SHCS) in the five year history of the university.

Lekalakala-Mokgele is the only woman among the four men, in the deanery in charge of six departments with the following specialities: Nursing Science, Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech language pathology audiology, Human nutrition and Dietetics as well as Public Health.

She brings to the SHCS a wealth of experience in leadership she accumulated over the years during the time of the merger with University of Limpopo (UL) and lately during SMU epoch. This makes her the longest serving head of the SHCS. A nurse by training, she obtained a PhD from Free State University, the kind of a qualification which has equipped her with a solid background in nursing education. Her interest is in the area of Gerontology (Scientific study of old age, the process of ageing and specific problems of old people). She has published scientific papers on HIV//AIDS among the elderly which she regards as a neglected area of research.

“We have students from different socio-economic backgrounds who often find it hard to speak out to academic support staff in the various schools about their challenges. When they knock on my door requesting to speak to me, I set aside time to speak to them. That gives me peace of mind knowing that I helped young men and women”, said Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele.

She believes the SHCS is well positioned to support the National Health Insurance (NHI). The enthusiasm of staff and their hard work is helping to prepare the SHCS to train and unleash suitably qualified health care professionals who will enable the implementation of (NHI) which is aimed giving health care access to all South Africans.

Ensuring that staff and students are familiar with technology platforms such as Blackboard goes a long way to respond to the demands of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. Plans to use mobile technology to deliver lectures for students are underway to take learning experience to a higher level.

When her tenure as Dean ends after five years, she hopes she would have left a legacy of a transformed school at all staff levels. The number of PhD students produced in the school would also increase way beyond 12 who graduated in 2018. Academic staff, in the school with PhDs must increase to reach eighty percent mark. The school should become a school of choice for current and prospective students. Its community engagement footprint must also be triple fold.

# Department of Public Health Inspires Kgoši Mampuru Correctional Centre Inmates

By Maditsi Matlala

The Department of Public Health (DPH) fired the imaginations of the inmates of the Kgoši Mampuru Correctional Centre (KMCC) during the 2019 Worlds Aids Day Event. Organised by the Support Group of KMCC, the event gave inmates an opportunity to play a prominent role in the proceedings to foster a sense of self-worth.

Prof Kebogile Mokwena, who is in the Department of Public Health, and also the NRF Research Chair in substance abuse and population mental Health, along with Prof Sphiwe Madiba who is the HIV prevention specialist, presented health talks to a captive audience of inmates, officials and external stakeholders. In her presentation, Prof Mokwena gave an over view of the dangers of substance abuse, with an emphasis on Nyaope.

Mokwena, whose focus area was on prevention of use of

psychoactive substances, outlined the negative and destructive impacts of substances on mental, physical, social life and why they should not allow themselves to be used by drug dealers who enrich themselves by destroying the future of users. She pointed out that substances will continue to enslave the inmates even after they are released from custody. Moreover, these drugs subject users to a life of crime in and out of prison. She also showed slides of infected and gangrenous arms that result from using unsterile needles as they inject themselves with drugs. At the end of her talk, Mokwena led the audience in an "I am too smart to destroy my life through drugs" pledge.

"Prof Mokwena's presentation landed on fertile soil. The take home message for me is that drugs are bad news, as they affect users emotionally, physically and also affects their families. Those that ingest drugs via the so-called Bluetooth method, often end up getting their limbs amputated because of septic wounds that cannot heal. These are the lessons that I will be able to share with other inmates. Said Ms Irene Sande, a peer educator.

Prof Sphiwe Madiba, in her presentation, reminded the audience about the meaning and purpose of the World AIDS Day as well as the Red Ribbon. The focus of her presentation was aligned to the World AIDS Day Theme of "Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic" She spoke about the basics of HIV/AIDS, prevention and treatment. The emphasis of her talk was on stopping HIV together through testing regularly to know their status, staying negative by using the condoms, all the time, and taking treatment correctly.

"For me, I have learnt that the HIV/AIDS is spread when an infected person engages in unprotected sex with another. It is important to take the message of using protection to heart to avoid infecting an intimate partner with the virus," said Mr Innocent Khumalo, a peer educator who was also assigned the duty of explaining the purpose the World AIDS Day Event, to the audience.



## SMU Medical Specialist Receives International Award

By Phemelo Komane



Prof Lineo Matsela, a specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, was recently honoured with a trophy and certificate of appreciation for her extraordinary services for Human Race, during the Lords of Planet Conclave award ceremony, held in House of Lords, London, UK. The award came as a result of her research work that focuses on menopause within the black society. "The reason I chose to focus on menopause research is because I realised the positive impact it can bring to the women out there in terms of providing knowledge and enlighten the black society about the conditions that occur," she said.

There are hormone therapy treatments or precautions that can be taken during the stage of menopause to minimise the symptoms when given the treatment at the right time. "The symptoms become minimised if the medication is taken at the right time, so are the benefits such as reduced hot flushes, less mood swings, sleeping well, performing the quality of work, impact in their sexuality and also assist with building up your collagen. Staying healthy and your quality of life contributes to how your body reacts to menopause," explains Prof Matsela.

The perception of menopause is viewed as a physiological change in women and lifestyle stages. "Women who have children regards

menopause stage as the time to rest, give more attention to themselves, their families and those around them, while women who do not have children see it as a failure. In a cultural or tribal environment women perceive it as being pure and give them a positive reflection in the community," said Matsela.

Scientific research indicates that women start experiencing menopause between the ages of 45 and 55 years. However, there are cases where you would find women who are 40 years old and start to experience menopause at that age, which is referred to as a premature menopause.



## Mr. Ignatius Makgoka - Newly appointed ICT Director

*By Floyd Mmakou*

**M**r. Ignatius Makgoka joins SMU as the Director of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department, which plays a huge role in improving and modernizing educational systems and ways of learning. Under Mr. Makgoka's leadership, ICT department will enhance the quality of the university education in several ways, including overseeing all levels of ICT compliance, especially with regard to Information assurance, dissemination, security and stewardship. Additionally, his office will ensure Systems, Applications, Networks, Security, and Communications tools run efficiently towards supporting and enhancing teaching and training methods.

Makgoka brings wealth of experience in his newly acquired responsibilities, having previously worked in several entities within the education fraternity, and also obtained relevant qualifications that match his Directorship and ICT governance role. He has spotted a couple of operational challenges, which need his immediate attention. "The main challenge that I noticed is the lack of information about business processes; that need to be followed in the university, especially towards acquisition of ICT goods and services. My intervention will involve getting a common understanding by facilitating standardized processes," said Makgoka.

When asked if SMU is ready for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), his response was that, "The fourth industrial revolution is the current and developing environment in which disruptive

technologies and trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) are changing the way we live and doing our work. Therefore, we as an institution, through all line of businesses; we need to conduct a self-assessment, and match ourselves against the different 4IR performance levels. And challenge SMU to invest into technological interventions aimed at setting us up to become the real benchmark institution," elaborated Makgoka.

He calls out on the university to support the initiative of rebuilding the ICT infrastructure estate consisting of networks, servers, storage, cabling and Wi-Fi solutions. "We need a stable ICT infrastructure environment for everybody to enjoy the benefits that comes with ICT services and functions within SMU," he pleaded.

In conclusion, he assured SMU stakeholders that there are projects that are in the pipeline aiming towards automating SMU processes into solutions intending to make the technological life of SMU community better. For example, ICT and relevant line of businesses are investigating the possibility of designing and rolling out secured, accessible systems and tools for the purpose of student applications and registrations. "These tools will be developed to meet ICT standards and comply with the POPI act requirements," concluded Makgoka.