SEFAKO MAKGATHO
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

FOCUS on SMU

NEWSLETTER / **Volume 2 / 1st Edition** | *January 2018*

Vice-Chancellor Chris de Beer Welcomes First Year Students

SMU & National Upcoming Events

February 2018

23 VC's Research and Teaching Excellence Awards Ceremony

March 2018

21 Human Rights Day
30 Good Friday

Sincere gratitude to new students and their parents for choosing the SMU. My appeal to you is to optimally use this opportunity afforded to you, as it may be a once-off opportunity only. By virtue of your selection you have joined a small number of people gaining access to higher education.

It has become exceedingly important to forcefully articulate the contexts defining the SMU as a newly established institution, and to influence opinions and perspectives about it. SMU refuses to be defined in terms of the status of other institutions, be they former or current. The SMU also vehemently opposes the notion to apply historical contexts, limitations and perceptions to describe its role, the quality of its enterprise, and the boundaries of its dreams and aspirations.

Established on 16 May 2014, SMU is one of three newly established universities in South Africa. It was established as a comprehensive health sciences university, and is the only university in South Africa with an exclusive focus on health sciences education.

The aforementioned responsibility and challenge define the vision of the SMU to be the benchmark institution providing holistic health sciences education that meets the health needs of the individual, the family, the community and the population.

The SMU's mission is to deliver quality interdisciplinary health sciences research and education, an innovative and technology enriched educational approach resulting in evidence based methods for curriculum development and transformation, and the empowerment of students and staff to provide effective transformational leadership.

The SMU Community, and in particular our new students, are therefore called upon to join forces with a view to articulating and embracing SMU's own vision, mission, strategic objectives and priorities, and to respond with vigour, passion and loyalty to the mandate of the institution.

Key to our success in the above regard is the development of a transformative institutional culture. The SMU institutional culture

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must, for instance, have no tolerance for any form of racism, regardless of the individuals or groups involved, or the institutional structures or programmes harbouring such, or any other form of discrimination made illegal by the South African Constitution. It shall vehemently oppose and speak out against any form of violence, especially gender based violence; corruption; intimidation; abuse of position and authority; and the exploitation of the vulnerable in our SMU society, especially our students.

The SMU community shall commit to voice its opposition against systematic and deliberate erosion of the value of ethical principles and its application in society. It shall insist on accountability, regardless of the individuals or groups involved, and shall never be guilty of silence as an answer to injustice.

Announcements will be made soon regarding the Transformation Plan of the institution, with specific reference also to an institutional ombudsperson and the eradication of racism.

Suffice to say, that the transformation framework of the SMU shall permeate the entire organisation, and that its approach shall be marked by inclusive and iterative processes.

Key to our strategy for the next three to four years, in addition to the matters raised above, will be:

- A quality and focused academic enterprise, aligned with the comprehensive nature of the University, responsive to national imperatives and appreciative of the unique challenges associated with health science education and the related resource provision, characterised by cutting-edge and customised delivery models;
- The provision and maintenance of appropriate facilities and infrastructure. This will be done with specific emphasis on the urgent need to address the maintenance backlog with regard to existing facilities, to provide adequate on-campus student accommodation meeting the prescribed norms and standards as published by the DHET, build critically needed academic and administrative support facilities, including a multi-functional student centre, to provide adequate and cutting-edge ICT infrastructure, to optimise the use of existing facilities and infrastructure in accordance with institutional strategic imperatives and priorities. The ultimate aim would be the establishment of an environmentally friendly campus precinct, integrated with the broader Ga-Rankuwa infrastructure and business development plan, characterised by a safe, multi-service and technology intensive neighbourhood, enhancing the quality of student life and facilitating diverse learning, living and employment opportunities.
- The delivery of knowledgeable, competitive, well-rounded and sought after alumni emulating the graduate attributes as determined by the Senate, with due observance of the competency framework for science graduates in general and health professionals in particular, inclusive of appropriate cross-field outcomes;
- Achieving the growth targets of the institution as determined by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in accordance with its planning parameters by means of an expanded Programme Qualification Mix (PQM), the optimal use of current capacities and facilities, and the provision of appropriate new academic infrastructure;
- A life changing experience for students characterised by the elements typifying a homely environment, where they are exposed to cutting-edge, relevant and competitive learning opportunities resulting in a life-long love for and loyalty toward the SMU, and the conclusion of ever lasting friendships;
- A student support, development and services strategy underpinned by a cutting-edge student services model, the provision of quality student centred facilities, a transformed and value driven student life and a legitimate and customised student governance dispensation at all levels;
- New and dynamic dimensions added to the institutional culture resulting from the institutional manifestation of student governance and leadership recognised for its commitment to the successful future of the SMU;
- The ability of the University to maintain constructive relations with the student body and its constituent parts by means of open, transparent and diverse communication channels;
- The ability to provide adequate, quality and cutting-edge student academic administrative systems, student support programmes and campus services, student governance models, student life and development programmes, and student centred training and recreational facilities; and
- The fundamental revision and change of the business model of the University regarding application, admission, registration and residence placement, as the current approach and practices seriously hamper the competitive position of the institution and pose a real reputational risk.

We welcome you all and wish you a unique SMU experience.

Prof Chris de Beer, Vice-Chancellor

SMU Welcomes FutureHealth Professionals

By Tumelo Moila

SMU envisages to be the benchmark institution providing holistic health sciences education that meets the health needs of the South African population at large. During the 2018 academic year, SMU will continue to train the health and science professionals with the aim of realising its vision. SMU welcomed a cohort of approximately 1400 undergraduate First-Time entering students during the fourth annual Orientation Programme (OP).

Mr Themba Khumalo, Director of Student Affairs

The OP thoroughly prepares students for academic success and assists in their transition from high school to university. After attending the OP, students are ready to cope with varsity life. They were introduced to staff members and important resources that are critical to their personal and academic success at SMU; acquaint themselves with the vision, mission, motto and values of SMU; Attend departmental orientations that include academic presentations about their respective programmes, assessment tests, questionnaires, computer training, campus tour; and introduced to social clubs/societies that offer extra-mural activities.

SMU undergraduate academic programmes include several bachelor degrees that are critical in augmenting the institution's mission statement of producing cadres of health professionals with the transformative leadership capacity to identify, analyse and address the health needs of the population at large.

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our new students and their parents for choosing the SMU. By virtue of your selection you have joined a small number of people gaining access to higher education. As we could not provide access to thousands of qualifying students, you carry a special responsibility to succeed and to leave the system as soon as possible to make way for those knocking on the doors of higher learning," said Professor Chris de Beer, Vice-Chancellor.

Human Nutrition & Dietetics Reward Academic Excellence

By Tumelo Moila

In keeping with SMU's efforts of promoting knowledge for quality health services, the Human Nutrition and Dietetics Department rewarded top students for their academic excellence and extraordinary contributions to the profession. The department offers training of competent Dietitians through academic excellence in community engagement, research, teaching and learning.

Third year student, Ms Lubnaa Dawood (21) from Laudium was the overall second year best student in 2017. She obtained ten distinctions out of eleven subjects registered for the academic year. "People don't realise what Dietetics is all about. It is a profession that applies the science of food and nutrition for the purpose of promoting health and development of client/patient. I am very excited about the awards and it shows that my hard work pays off," said Ms Dawood.

The awards ceremony always provides an opportunity for one of the alumni to address the gathering in welcoming the first-time entering students and providing a bit of motivation for all the students as a collective. This year, the guest speaker was Mr Kabelo Monama, who is a qualified Dietitian and SMU graduate. He addressed the students on how the qualification equipped him to meet the demands of the workplace.

The event co-ordinator and lecturer, Mr Reno Gordon was full of praise for his students as he alluded that the awards motivate them to strive for academic excellence. He said, "The great thing about the awards is that every year there are students who do not get prizes but they always tell us as lecturers that they will work hard to get a prize the following year, and most of them do".

Top Achiever: Ms Lorraine Mabitsela receiving one of her multiple awards from Professor Frederick Veldman, HoD: Human Nutrition & Dietetics.

Bachelor of Sciences in Dietetics (BSc Diet) Prize-Giving Ceremony 2018

Trophies for best overall academic performances

Certificate for overall best academic performance across all subjects in the first year of BSc Diet 2017	**Matenche Monene**
Certificate for overall best academic performance across all subjects in the second year of BSc Diet 2017	**Lubnaa Dawood**
Certificate for overall best academic performance across all subjects in the third year of BSc Diet 2017	**Lorraine Mabitsela**

Meet Mr Muthala - The Social Worker

By Lekgetho More

For some time, students here at SMU have been facing social issues independently, however that has all come to an end because SMU now has Mr Shadrack Muthala as the students' social worker.

Mr Mashudu Muthala is very determined to understand human behaviour, so much so that he became a multiple graduate attaining a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Social work and a Master's degree in Public Management. His remarkable experience is also something that can never go unnoticed as it stretches up to seventeen years. Previously he was the sub-district head at Thulamela Municipality in social work services for seven years.

As a professional, Muthala outlined a few challenges that are widely faced by the world, one of them being the HIV/AIDS epidemic. “Although HIV is no longer treated as a pandemic but more of a virus one can live for long with. It is still necessary to continue to educate and inform people about it so that we can at least have an HIV free generation in the future,” he says.

Muthala's course of action in terms of delivering services to students for the year of 2018 include being more pro-active and less reactive. Involving other internal stakeholders such as both the clinical and the educational psychologists will assist in targeting issues within the parameters of young minded students. “If all parties come together and conduct physical roadshows that aim to engage and encourage students to come forward with problems they face, we will be able to prevent rather than cure those problems” he said.

Although SMU is fairly new, he alluded that as a social worker that he chose to come to SMU to ensure growth not only for the institution but for his own personal growth as well. “Being part of something small and watch it grow also promotes professional growth,” says Muthala.

His purpose here is to support the vision and mission of the university, at the end of the day SMU needs healthy minded students in order to produce quality health professionals.

Ms Nosipho Khumalo - A Self-Empowerment Activist

By Refiloe Ndhlovu

Nosipho Khumalo (19) from Germiston, whose life is blossoming in a speed of sound, is a second year student at SMU with hopes of becoming a Neurosurgeon. Young as she is, she has climbed mountains and achieved milestones, she is currently an executive writer for both Lads love online magazine and Plug city hype online magazine.

The National Secretary of University Sport South Africa (USSA) table tennis remarked that she is grateful to be an SMU student as the University has opened doors for her, “I became National Secretary for USSA because I attended the games in Kimberly”. Sports passion has always been there for Nosipho, she also plays football for Germiston sports club where she was awarded as the team's best striker. She is also running a crash course, “The main aim of this course is to solve employment issues and make the education system better”. During exam season, she offers free lessons to high school learners.

“I am running for young influential lady in South Africa and will be interviewed by ETV's Sunrise programme and Destiny magazine in 2018”.

“Women empowerment is a big thing to me because I have been shunned too for being a woman in past experiences of my life. I really would like to empower women to believe in themselves and not set borders because they are women. I have realized that it's not always men but women who put other women down and it is one thing I would like to change and get women to support each other”.

Asked how she is able to do all these, she said, “Start now”. She also mentioned that she has worked with many women who have empowered her and made her see herself in a different view. “Anything that has to do with self-empowerment, I know I am an expert in it”, she says.

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