

Dintshang

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SMU *Congratulates*

Prof. Peter Mbat

as he marks 1 year in office
as Vice Chancellor of the University.





Editorial

Note from the desk
of the Editor

We are pleased to present another edition of Dintshang, our students newspaper. This is a platform of students where their interesting and exciting stories are shared.

In this edition, we focus on the important issue of entrepreneurship. Under the leadership of the DVC for Teaching, Learning and Community Engagement Prof Eunice Seekoe, the university successfully launched the EDHE programme. This flagship programme seeks to ensure that the students of SMU are exposed to the world of entrepreneurship. The university is in partnership with key institutions in this field.

Still on entrepreneurship, in this edition we also pay tribute to Lerato Mphahlele who previously served as the SMU EDHE student representative. We introduce you to Gugu Dlamini who has taken over the levers of driving student entrepreneurship.

We also congratulate the SRC President Mr Thato Masekoa for his recent election to the National Executive Committee of SAUS. He briefly shares his ideas with us.

The Vice-Chancellor Prof Peter Mbatlali addressed the BMF student chapter about Transformation, get the details in the article.

Dintshang also brings you in touch with Thato Phasha, the Chair of the School of Science and Technology to get more information about a webinar that was recently held with students at the School. Read about substance abuse as well as the journey of Tik Tok star Carly on the use of social media.

Let me conclude by inviting students once more to come forward with interesting stories and make contact with the team. This is your newspaper and let's build it together.

Enjoy this copy of Dintshang.

Phaladi Seakgwe - Editor



SMU's Entrepreneurship in Higher Education Community of Practice (EDHE) - *a glimmer of hope*

- Maditsi Matlala

The days of some students completing their degrees, only to be faced with the reality of unemployment and the frustrations that come with it, are surely numbered. Thanks to SMU's Entrepreneurship in Higher Education Community of Practice (EDHE) graduate students finding it hard to get jobs, will be equipped with entrepreneurial skills in order to unleash their creativity to create jobs for themselves and for others.

This ground breaking initiative was recently launched by Prof Eunice Seekoe, deputy chairperson of the National Community of Practice for Entrepreneurial Universities, at the Fire and Ice Hotel, in Pretoria.

In her opening remarks, Prof Seekoe, said "Today marks the beginning of our journey to formalise the Community of Practice (COP) at SMU. The first 120 students of the SMU will be trained as entrepreneurs from tomorrow."

"The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Universities South Africa (USAf), with the support of the British Council, made a call to all the universities to position themselves in the global commercialisation of higher education institutions,".

"Since 2016, the EDHE developed a model to guide universities, in South Africa to respond to a call for transformation to become entrepreneurial. Universities are guided to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem through establishing communities of Practice. In order to achieve this goal, universities are expected to ensure closer engagement with industry, business, and communities to form a helix model of partnerships. And SMU identified the need to respond to this call", shed emphasized.



Tel: +27 (0) 12 521 5057/5059/5062
Address: PO Box 60 | Medunsa 0204

Editor
Phaladi Seakgwe

Designer
Dineo Motshegare

Editorial Coordinator
Tumelo Moila

Other Contributors

- Padi Matlala
- Bontle Vilakazi
- Lihle Mkhomazi
- Moloko Mochemi
- Mogau Ramaila
- Keatlegile Tlhapi
- Joseph Fatlane
- Daphney Mzimba
- Tshepiso Maimela
- Sandra Mathibela
- Northandazo Msimango
- Masego Ngwira
- Michel Mampa

Tel: +27 (0) 12 521 4496 / 4563
Fax: +27 (0) 12521 4418
E-mail: imprint@smu.ac.za | www.smu.ac.za

Sefako Makgatho Health Science University
Molotlegi Road | Ga-Rankuwa | Pretoria 0204

To advertise contact:

Editor: Phaladi Seakgwe
E-mail: phaladi.seakgwe@smu.ac.za /

Having set the stage, an impressive array of speakers, who are leading lights in their various fields, took to the stage, to speak, at Fire and Ice Hotel, and others joined virtually, via Microsoft teams. The most notable speakers who also spoke were Dr Gwen Ramokgopa, SMU's own alumna, in her own right but also the Chancellor of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). Ramokgopa spoke on the topic 'National Health Insurance (NHI): Implications and opportunities for entrepreneurs in the health sector.

Ms Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of Gauteng Province addressed the Role of Gauteng Finance and e-government in driving innovation, entrepreneurship, and youth development in Gauteng: opportunities and implications of the 4IR”.

Representing the EDHE at Universities South Africa (USAf) was Dr Nora Clarke, who delivered a virtual talk and spoke about the policy framework and objects of entrepreneurship in higher education.

Mr Saki Zamxaka, from the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller, spoke on the range, scope and criteria for financial and non-financial support programmes and packages.

Dr Irene Mohasoa, SMU's Director of Student Affairs, addressed Entrepreneurship: Enabler for promoting sustainable development amongst university students.

Ms Gugulethu Dhlamini, SMU EDHE Student representative, spoke about the Past lessons and future expectations in entrepreneurship programme for the student community. She said student expectation is to be empowered with skills that spark entrepreneurial spirit which will enable them to develop problem solving skills to address socio-economic challenges. She added that experience shows that most successful societies in the world are those that have high rate of entrepreneurship amongst its populations.

Mr Thato Masekoa, SMU SRC President spoke about the role of the SRC spear heading entrepreneurship development. He also pointed out the need to reinforce health sciences skills acquired by students with money management skills, to enable them to be well rounded health professionals.

Mr Kgatso Kobo, NYDA, on the topic, range scope, and criteria for financial and non-financial support prgrammes and packages by NYDA. He spoke about the need to empower students to see far ahead and be able to see the bigger picture and not be fixated on small petty and small stuff. He called upon the students to conduct their own proper market research, pricing and knowing their competitors. He said NYDA offer funding. But repayment on funding may not be repaid, but NYDA can offset it if and when the beneficiary makes success of the businesses and hires young people.





SMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Peter Mbatlana addressed students on Transformation of higher education

- Khutsang Lebyane

The Black Management Forum Student Chapter SMU Branch like held a Debate on Transformation in Universities and in particular SMU on June 16 2021 as part of the Youth Month activities.

In South Africa, transformation has a particular meaning related to the political transformation of society.

Transformation is the process of changing from one qualitative state to another. Transformation as a process of transmutation from one state to another can apply to an individual or an organization or the product or service supplied by the organization.

Within the context of higher education, transformation usually refers to the transformation of the student via learning or the transformation of the institution so that it is better able to provide transformative outcomes, that is, transformative learning or research.

SMU's predecessor university, Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) was established in 1976 to provide medical education to black students, who were restricted from attending most medical schools in South Africa by the Apartheid government, with a few exceptions at segregated non-white-only medical schools.

The name change from MEDUNSA to Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) was one of the causes of the riots in August 2014. From 2005 to 2015, the University was a campus of the University of Limpopo, but it was separated following a review of the merger.

SMU to this date has had several challenges which relate to transformation which encompasses the academic enterprise and infrastructure as some buildings were constructed during the apartheid era.

The debate hosted the SMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Peter Mbatlana and Mr Kgotso Maja, Former BMF Student Chapter National Chairperson, Weskoppies Hospital Board Member, PPF Tshwane Regional Secretary and Westcol TVET Council Member as an Anchor. The Provincial Secretary of Gauteng, Mr M. Hlungwani was our host in

discussion with student political structures which gave insightful comments especially on the slow pace of the transformation of SMU and how best it can be addressed.

The Vice-Chancellor gave a presentation on the transformation of higher education and in particular transformation of our SMU. The VC's presentation focused on the following pillars:

- Digital Transformation
- Infrastructure
- Teaching and Learning
- Research and Innovation
- Quality of Student Life
- Organizational Transformation
- Financial Sustainability

The Vice-Chancellor reiterated the importance of SMU adopting a new way of doing things which included the Review of the Executive and Senior Management structure to align it with best practices, and to increase operational efficiency as this would ensure SMU is transformed and better positioned to move forward in line with the new strategic plan.

Prof Mbatlana emphasized that the work of transforming SMU is enormous and must not be underestimated. "This transformation journey calls on all stakeholders: staff, students, labour, SRC, Management, Council to work with a common purpose. There is a sense of urgency to transform this great institution: Let us systematically, project by project, piece by piece, build and transform our SMU", he said.

The VC concluded by saying that SMU, as a unique health sciences dedicated university has immense potential to be a leading university both in the region and globally. "We must rise against any obstacles, real or imagined, to the realization of our dream of building a quality driven, financially sustainable University", said Prof Peter Mbatlana.

Khutsang Lebyane is BMFsc SMU Branch Secretary and Former BMFsc SMU Branch Deputy Chairperson.



Congratulations to SMU SRC President!

SMU SRC President Thato Masekoa was recently elected to the National Executive Committee of the South African Union of Students (SAUS). SMU publications editor Phaladi Seakgwe had an in-depth discussion with him to speak about this important development.

Phaladi Seakgwe: *You were recently elected into the National Executive Committee of the South African Union of Students (SAUS), how do you feel about that, you must be excited?*

Thato Masekoa: This is a huge achievement both at a personal level and more importantly for the SMU. My election to serve on the National Executive Committee of SAUS will help position the university on a national scale as it is still a fledging institution. I believe with this election; we are in a position to can impact the world outside of the perimeter fence of the university. Moreover, at a personal level I am excited to be at this level in so far as leadership and student activism are concerned.

PS: *Did you receive the nomination before conference, how was the whole process?*

TM: The nomination came from the floor during plenary and I must add that it was not an easy one at all. I mean SAUS represents all universities so for one to get nominated and elected is not an easy thing as you have to stand up against other equally competent peers. The lobbying and engagements that went into it was quite intense and I am happy that we succeeded. We had to look at common objectives to persuade others.

PS: *What does this election mean for you and also SMU students as their incumbent President?*

TM: It will mean that we now are part and parcel of the processes to make decisions and act on behalf of students on issues of national importance. The positioning of SMU is very critical for me, so it means as well that, the name SMU will constantly come up during discussions as there is this fellow from SMU in these meetings, SMU will continue to forms part of the daily conversations and its students will be taken seriously in the broader scheme of things.

PS: *Which areas do you think SAUS has to pay more attention to during your term of office as a collective?*

TM: To me the issue of historic debts, free, decolonized and quality higher education should receive more attention. We need to look at how best can we champion the transformation in higher education agenda at large. Unity of purpose is also sacrosanct on any issue we are trying to tackle. At the end it's about the masses of the student population who look up to us. Our proximity as a structure to the DHET and other bodies for instance should assist us to put critical issues on the table on behalf of these students, majority of whom are very poor and see education as one of the major vehicles to escape from the harsh economic realities faced by their families. We need to make sure that NSFAS processes are not a pain to students and should deal with this in a manner that restores their dignity.

PS: *The Covid-19 pandemic is still firmly with us, you know, with different variants. What do you think should be the approach of SAUS on Covid; certainly it has altered the way we conduct our daily affairs and students are also affected?*

TM: Covid-19 has indeed changed how things are done, we need to adapt and integrate methods of learning and make sure that no student is left behind. We are in the digital age, Covid-19, has fast-tracked our move towards the realization of the 4th industrial revolution and we need to move with speed and take everyone along with. So universities must adapt, transform and become centres of excellence, regardless of what they offer. We need to fight for some levels of equality here in terms of resources. However, we acknowledge that there are those institutions which are more privileged than the others due to their history. Students need to understand the digital world better and provide guidance and leadership on those issues. I also believe that we must be at the forefront of cushioning students against this deadly virus by spreading the right messages and ensuring that all institutions have the required PPEs to protect their students.

PS: *What are your general views about SAUS, considering its history for instance, would you say it has achieved its mandate?*

TM: I think SAUS has scored some considerable achievements in the past but we can do better. I listened to the political report tabled at conference and I picked up that indeed some significant strides were made in some areas such as issues of cash dispensation to students. However, we need to embark more on awareness creation for the structure and also appeal to society so that when we raise issues, it is understood where we come from. The activities of SAUS should include everyone.

The FeesMustFall activities in my view could have been properly coordinated by SAUS as the umbrella body. We must be in charge of driving the narrative and setting the Agenda for students across the board regardless of political affiliation or background. The poor are looking at us to fight for them and place the issues firmly on the table with the powers that be. SAUS must lead from the front. Lastly, I also believe we should pay more attention on issues of student entrepreneurship as SAUS.

PS: *What is your message to students across the country?*

TM: My message to students across the country is that if all of us can be in a position to identify the needs of students and constantly and sharply act on them, fight for them because it looks like everything is a struggle, we will then be able to drive the transformation Agenda and fundamental change. We are fully aware that change comes with a lot of discomfort. However, if students unite, we can be in a position to lead any revolution. We cannot rest until the issue of free, decolonized and quality higher education is achieved. It is not for us but for the coming generations.

Golden Key Society: SMU Chapter

- Dr Tebogo Tsebe



Picture of the Golden Key SMU Chapter taken during the Operational policy Workshop
Back (Left to right): Kamogelo Mukhari (Merchandise Director), Tebogo Mojapelo (Public Relations), Thendo Tshingowe (Treasurer), Jabulani Nkosi (Secretary General), Courtney Cooper (Membership Recruitment), Tshiamo Sechogo (Vice President), Moses Raseuku (Coordinator).
Front (Right to left): Prof Eunice Seekoe (DVC of Teaching, Learning and Community Engagement and Golden Key Primary Advisor) and Dr Tebogo Tsebe (Acting Director of CUTL and Golden Key Co-advisor).

Golden Progress: Watch the space

The Golden Key Society SMU Chapter has started the ball rolling. The Golden Key Executive team is guided by the Primary Advisor, Professor E. Seekoe, the Deputy Vice-chancellor (DVC) for Teaching, Learning and Community Engagement (TLCE). The DVC is supported by the Chapter's Co-advisors, Ms. A. Malope (Academic Coordinator) and Dr T. Tsebe (Acting Director: Centre for University Teaching and Learning). SMU has joined 400 other institutions of higher learning worldwide to have a Golden Key Society Chapter aimed at promoting academic excellence. The SMU Chapter is committed to honouring the University's excellence through academic achievements, grooming efficient leaders, and providing good community services.

The Chapter was introduced to the SMU student community on June 23, 2021, an online event where students had the opportunity to learn about the role of the Golden Key Society before the big day of the launch, which is fast approaching. In attendance at this introductory event was Prof Seekoe, who had an opportunity to encourage the students in the top 15 per cent in terms of academic achievement to join this excellent programme. Notably, in attendance, we were graced with the presence of **the Membership Manager of Golden Key Southern Africa, Ms Natasha Maharaj**, who came to pledge support and commitment to guide the SMU Chapter to success. The president of the Golden Key SMU Chapter and the Secretary of the Student Representative Council, Mr Thulane Ramasehla, was excited to welcome those in attendance. He also shared with the students the background behind the formation of the SMU Chapter. Amongst the guests was an undeniably noticeable figure, the SRC Postgraduate Chairperson, Mr Vhugala Mabirimisa, who was excited to take the stage to share his journey of academic excellence and Leadership with the audience.

Through the aid of the advisors, the Chapter secured a grant to sponsor 57 deserving students membership fees of R750 each to be lifetime Members of the Honorary Golden Key Society. The eligible students were invited to join the Chapter through the communication channels of the University and the various SMU Chapter social media platforms. There will also be a chance for three students to win full sponsored coupons for membership registration through social media competitions.

Students are encouraged to Join the Chapter before August 11 2021, so that they can be a part of the virtual new member recognition ceremony, which Golden Key Southern Africa will host for SMU on September 1, 2021. We have exciting events lined up in our calendar to inspire the youth for continuous learning and community services. The events are aimed at equipping students with the necessary knowledge to become the leaders we wish to have in our communities. The following are some of the activities students can expect. In addition, we encourage students to look out for the invite for, **Workshop for Study Skills, Time Management, Communication Skills & Public Speaking, a book discussion with prominent speakers on Leadership, Financial Management and mental health awareness**. These are just a few of the activities that we have planned for the rest of the year; we encourage our students to follow our social media handles for regular updates.



From left to right:
Marvel Hlungwani
and Luyanda Khumalo

Two SMU students selected to serve on the organizing committee of SAAHE speaks to Dintshang about their experience

- Phaladi Seakgwe

Two SMU students Marvel Hlungwani and Luyanda Khumalo were selected to serve on the committee of the South African Association of Health Educationalists (SAAHE). This is an association of health sciences educators from South African universities, NGOs and government as well as the private sectors. The focus of SAAHE is on improving the quality of teaching and learning in health sciences education so as to enhance the delivery of high quality, affordable and sustainable health care to South Africans in both the public and private sector.

The pair told Dintshang about their experience during the conference and more importantly, as part of the organizing team.

“It was my first SAAHE experience and as a member of the Student Task Force so the experience was very good. It was a very insightful and educational conference with different speakers from all over the country and one main speaker from the United States of America that spoke on issues around decolonization of higher education and how higher educators may need to find ways to adapt”, said Marvel Hlungwani.

On lessons learnt from the conference, Marvel adds that there was a lot to learn based on the quality of content presented by various speakers.

“One speaker presented their paper on “Conducting virtual focus group- and semi-structured interviews during lockdown 2020.” and indicated that the “Benefits of virtual interviews is that they are time convenient, cost effective and they are also able to include participants from areas geographically away from the researcher”, he concluded.

According to Luyanda Khumalo, the SAAHE STF was a new idea, so for him the thought of not knowing how it would turn out made it overwhelming at first, but as the conference progressed and roles became clearer and easier to complete the experience was one of excitement and accomplishment.

“It felt wonderful, especially because the organizing committee thought it'd be best to keep the STF based on how much of an important role we had played in the conference being a success, so in a way it was a vote of confidence on us. Furthermore, the primary lesson I got was that good results are almost guaranteed when there is good teamwork and organization”, added Luyanda.

The duo is elated that they will now also form part of the SAAHE 2022 Conference Organizing Committee for the Northern Region which SMU is part of and they believe the experience gained during the organizing for the 2021 conference will be helpful in planning for the 2022 conference.

Second year Physiotherapy student Carly Masala is an up and coming TikTok star

Dintshang Student Newspaper reporter Lihle Mkhomazi sat down with Soweto born star to talk about her journey.

1. How did it all start?

I started my tik-tok journey in 2019 when it was still called “musica.ly”. There was a time where I stopped using the app and I went back to using it in 2020 when I saw the opportunities that it was bringing for people. Little did I know that one day I would be one of those people?

2. Your TikTok video you shared on Instagram has over 3 million views. How was your reaction to that million milestone?

I really did not expect that hey since it did not really get that many views on the actual TikTok app. The more views I get, the happier I become because more views mean more exposure on the social media market.

3. Was it something you expected and what inspired you to make that video?

I did not expect it at all. I actually got the video idea from someone who posted it on TikTok and I just re-did what he or she did.

4. So, Carly, how do you find inspiration and ideas for your videos?

I get the inspiration from other creators on the app. Therefore, my videos are on acting, dancing, memes, and academic based. I just re-create what has already been created.

5. What three words can you use to describe the content you make?

Fun, creative and crazy.

6. With and increasing following and exposure, have any brands approached you?

Oh yes, they have. I recently worked with a company from China and some local too.

7. As a student, how do you juggle between school and content creation?

It sometimes gets hard to juggle between the two and there are days where I would get so busy that I will not have time to post a video. That sometimes messes with the views I get because the longer I take without posting, the fewer views I will get on a video the day I do post. However, school must come first so I just post when I can.

8. What are your plans, what can people look forward too, any career aspirations?

Well since I am still a second-year physio student, my plans are to firstly complete this degree and hopefully grow more on TikTok and continue to use that as my side hustle.

9. As a student, how would your advice fellow students regarding the role of social media?

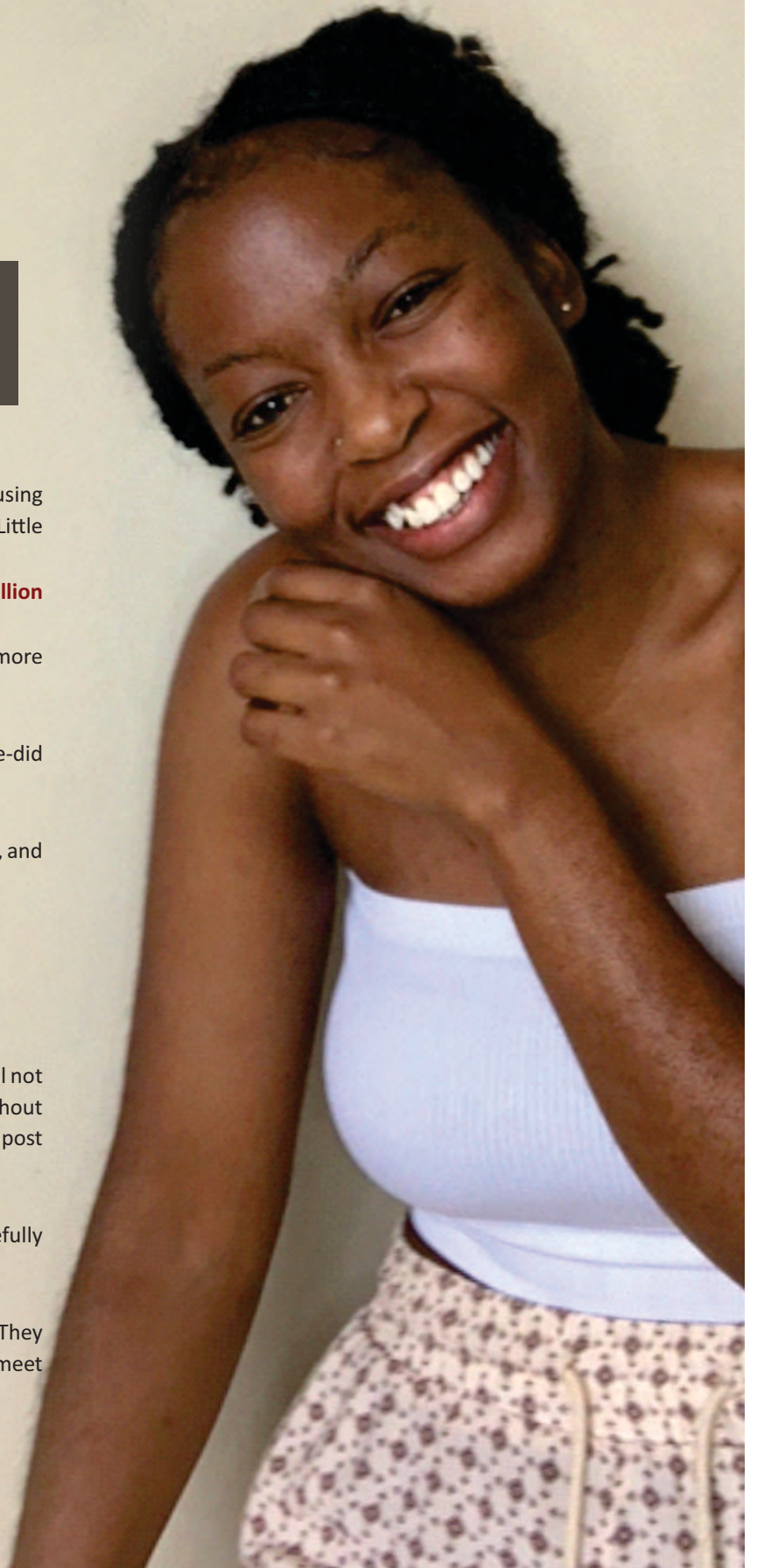
Social media really does bring big opportunities, especially for a student who really struggles financially. They can use social media platforms, such as tik tok to be noticed by big brands and can use that to try and meet their financial needs. It is not as easy and it does take time but all it requires is patience.

10. What do you hope to achieve?

My biggest hope is to get to at least 100k followers and hopefully a million likes before the end of this year.

11. We wish all the best, and where can we follow you?

car.ly_m on tiktok and car.ly_m on Instagram.



Opinion Piece:

Dealing with substance abuse amongst students should be a key area of Focus

- Marvel Hlungwani

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.

The coronavirus epidemic started from the Wuhan city of China and has subsequently spread across the globe, including South Africa which went into a hard lockdown in March 2020.

Despite the physical effects on the body, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting economic huddles with its

lockdown in South Africa have adversely affected many people's mental health and also doubled mental health challenges of many people.

There are people who rely on substances such as alcohol, dagga, cigarettes and others. So during the lockdown imposed by government, it became very difficult for many of the users of these substances as there were restrictions imposed on them. It is a fact that students also form part of the community that relies on some of these substances for this or that other reason. Many would say they use the substances as a coping mechanism when overwhelmed by studies or other challenges. So during this period, because of the absence of some of the “stuff” they normally use,



they suffered serious withdrawal symptoms and in certain instances, their academic performance also was affected.

There is a debate that sometimes the use of these substances lead to abuse.

Now; Substance abuse in layman's terms means excessive use of psychoactive drugs, such as alcohol, pain medications or illegal drugs. It can lead to physical, social or emotional harm. As a student myself, I am aware that there are students in the university who use these substances, especially alcohol and cannabis as like in other institutions. As one has observed, the use of these substances are usually for leisure purposes, some as coping mechanisms and some are merely just addicted to these substances.

The reasons for substance abuse as we attempt to indicate, may be many and each student will advance different reasons. One notes of cause that as students, we are from diverse backgrounds with different socioeconomic characteristics. Of these many reasons, peer pressure also appears to be amongst the major reasons why others choose to indulge, so is academic pressure.

Some of the effects of substance abuse that should be looked for and identified include: non fulfillment of major roles; repeated physically hazardous situations; legal problems, Social & interpersonal problems (divorce, physical/verbal abuse, violence, assaultive behavior, aggression, sexual); Repeated absenteeism and poor work or school performance; and Neglect of responsibilities & important duties.

Let's take our own setup at SMU for instance, you find that some students are always burdened with clinical

fieldwork for a considerable amount of time of the day and some of them have calls which happen at night. Most other students have lab-work and a congested timetable for writing assessments and submitting assignments. These matters are most of the time unbearable to students to a point where they fail to cope, some have dropped out, some academically excluded, so as a result, others may turn to using substances as coping mechanisms to survive this workload pressure.

Against this background for SMU, see below a scenario for pondering on adopted from Mrs RA Lesunyane Lecture Guidelines and Notes on Sub-stance Related Disorders to Occupational Therapy III Students (2020).

“Mr P likes to go out with his friends and drink alcohol like many university students. They have a good time, and everyone knows that Mr P is always up for a jolly good party. But a few of the people closest to him have started worrying that perhaps he has a drinking problem. Are they right? Is Mr P addicted? Or, is he just having a good time like any other young university student?”.

The unfortunate part of substance abuse is that it causes substance related disorders such as mood disorders and psychosis. Substance related disorders also have effects on occupational functioning where people including students are unable to fulfil their daily roles.

My view as an Occupational Therapy (OT) student is that the Occupational Therapy perspective is merely on the dire effects on the daily life of a student and some literaturebacked recommendations to deal with this.

Moving forward, I think the university needs to start identifying substance abuse cases in students in order to be able to deal with it and ensure they get the necessary assistance. Admitting that one has a problem with substances will be the first step towards receiving help.

Focus on change of behaviour and lifestyle by students will be integral in addressing some of the challenges. The university plays an important role here - the university needs to improve the sport facilities and other extracurricular activities in the university for students to constructively use their leisure time through swimming, dance clubs, karate and so forth.

Additionally, prevention programs and educational programs have been happening in our communities however the university needs to intensify its efforts in these programmes for our students in the university.

Support services for our students needs to be reinforced, academic support needs to be strengthened so our students can be able to cope in the university and not run to substances such as alcohol as coping mechanisms.

My other recommendation is that the university should consider hiring a mental health Occupational Therapy practitioner to help with the above issues and others. It would be beneficial for the university.

Written by Marvel Hlungwani, Occupational Therapy student, in his personal capacity .
Marvel Hlungwani is a Final Year Occupational Therapy Student, a student member of the OTASA Northern Gauteng Branch, Former OTASA Council member, Former Secretary General of OTASAS and Former SMU SRC member.

Up-close and personal with Talente Biyela



Talente Biyela is a well-known gender activist, who advances ideas and stand for them without fear or favour and a fourth year medical student at SMU. Having been around for some time, Dintshang caught up with Talente to look at a variety of issues.

Phaladi Seakgwe (PS): *When did you start with your studies at SMU and how did that decision come about?*

Talente Biyela: When I was in matric I had applied to a number of universities including Universities of Limpopo (Medunsa) campus, one had a privilege of being accepted in most universities that applications were sent to inclusive of the UL. The decision to come here like any other child amongst many reasons I suppose was because it was in a different province which would then open me up to new learning opportunities outside school.

PS: *Do you have any qualifications attained from SMU and which are those?*

Talente: I actually hold quite a number of qualifications including a BSc with majors in Mathematics and Chemistry, a BSc(Hons) Mathematics. One should add that we were only two in that class. Additionally, I also have a BSc (Hons) in Applied Mathematics and currently pursuing a 4th degree.



PS: *You are now in the fourth year of your medicine studies, how is it going and what made you choose to study medicine at SMU?*

Talente: We are in unprecedented times with the pandemic and the roll out of OTL and blended learning has been quite a challenge to navigate and get used to that space because ready or not as an institution that's where we find ourselves in. We have to make the most out of the unfortunate situation, otherwise the learning experience cannot be adequately equated to anything and more than anything else I'm grateful for the opportunity to further my studies but above all else to still be alive.

PS: *Having been around SMU for some time including its predecessor universities, what do you think is good about the institution, both from the academics and student life perspectives?*

Talente: Look, we are very fortunate to be taught by the great professors in the country and to a great extent in the world as well and I think that is invaluable.

Pertaining student life, I've seen better honestly in fact if anything I think we have dropped the ball and the bar is really low and that could be attributed to a number of things from leadership downright to the types of students we have.

PS: *What would you like to see being done differently, in other words, any areas that require more attention?*

Talente: The backbone of any university is their teaching and learning which then determines the type of graduates we will produce. A lot can still be done in terms of enhancing that aspect and subsequently putting us in a space where we are able to compete with the likes of Ivy leagues academically.

However, I think clinically we are doing well. I'd like to see a shift in terms of student affairs in general because that is what makes a well-rounded product of the university.

PS: *You are known to be a gender activist, what motivates you to keep on pushing and placing serious issues affecting the LGBTQI community into the space?*

Talente: Being in the minority means you are almost always put in a position where you have to fight for yourself, fend for yourself and advocate for yourself as no one is really interested in knowing if the LGBTIQ+ community is coping and have access to health care, whether, they are not bullied and discriminated against etc, so more often than not I've learned to amplify my voice in order to advocate for issues affecting the minority and to get to spaces where we were not wanted for the lack of a better word.

PS: *Are you perhaps a sports fanatic, what do you normally do during your spare time?*

Talente: I'm a sports fanatic actually if you take a look at my history at SMU and the contributions one has made to this university you'd realise how much of an extraordinary person I am. Amongst the many things, I am the founder of SMU ladies soccer team(UL), founder of Ubuntu games and at some point in my life also served as a sports chairperson in the SRC of a particular year. So yes I'm in to soccer and my clubs of choices are Kaizer Chiefs, Chelsea, Bayern Munich, Real Madrid, Juventus. I'm also into music so there's a number of things I get up to in my spare time.

PS: *After you finish your MBChB at SMU, where do you hope to go?*

Talente: Post MBChB, I still want to study further. Amongst other things, I want to do an MBA hopefully outside the country, also want to find myself in an influential position in terms of policy positions of the country and at one point in my life I would not mind retuning to SMU and be a Dean or DVC or even VC.



Gugu Dlamini is the new EDHE Student Representative

Gugulethu Dlamini has taken over the reins from Lerato Mphahlele as the new SMU EDHE student representative. She is currently a postgraduate student in the school of Science and Technology and is very much prepared to make a huge difference in this role that she occupies. Gugu spoke to SMU publications editor Phaladi Seakgwe about her vision in the role.

Phaladi Seakgwe: *Hi Gugu, congratulations, how has it been so far since you took over as the EDHE rep at SMU?*

Gugu Dlamini: Having been afforded the opportunity to work alongside Lerato Mphahlele in SEIH (Student Entrepreneurship and Innovation Hub) in the past few years has been such an amazing learning curve. Her passion is contagious and her efforts are commendable. I found it easy to sacrifice time and put in effort where it was needed not only because it was my role as an executive member but because my 'Why' move from being about me to being about student entrepreneurs and how I can help the next person. Even if it meant putting in a bit more work to carry out tasks. So taking up the baton and all the responsibilities that come with it was done with so much pleasure and eagerness to continue impacting student lives, I had already been exposed to the what is required of a EDHE representative by watching Lerato serve, so the transition was not as challenging but manageable. The amount of support the EDHE provides is very humbling, encouraging and reassuring that I'm not alone and that I have a group of other representatives from other universities that I can lean on when things get tough.

PS: *How do you plan to use this role to help SMU students?*

Gugu: I think access to information, mentorship and guidance as a student entrepreneur play a very important role in shaping and cultivating an entrepreneur. In the past year we focused on understanding the type of entrepreneurial culture students have created for themselves within the university, understanding the what drives them and what prepared them for the venture they are within, so the next step I plan to get into the finer details of being an entrepreneur. Have more student engagements where we look into driving student entrepreneurs into a space where our businesses can potentially be commercialized, where students are encouraged to think of businesses that go far beyond just this institution. We want to surround them with other student entrepreneurs that are already occupying influential spaces in different industries.

PS: *What are some of your priorities as you fulfill your responsibilities?*

Gugu: Keeping students conscientised about entrepreneurship while learning, and ensuring that entrepreneurship is not a far-fetched concept and that it is not something that requires you to complete your degree before one gets into it. We want students to look at it as something you start while learning and consciously add to as you grow in entrepreneurship, there is a proverb I live by that says 'The only way to eat an elephant is one bit at a time', that is definitely the approach that is needed in student entrepreneurship. I also will be prioritizing working closely with academics in the university, so that we have more start up businesses that speak to the socio-economic issues faced but our immediate community of Ga-rankuwa.

PS: *Where would you say SMU is in relation to issues of entrepreneurship?*

Gugu: I must say that as a university we are moving towards a very bright future when it comes to entrepreneurship. We have seen students sit up and ask question about how they can get involved and whether their ideas can be implemented and where can they start. This to me is exciting because one stream of income is proving to just not be enough, so if we can cultivate interest in entrepreneurship at this early stage it will in turn decrease the unemployment amongst youth and jobs will be created. It is also exciting to know that we will have an Incubator on campus that will drive all of this.

PS: *Are you receiving the necessary support from management and students?*

Gugu: The support from students has grown so much from when we started to now 3 years later. I have come to understand that many students have business Ideas but just don't know where to start, so ever since we have been making information available, having workshops and events, this has definitely encouraged more and more students to get involved and see how they can grow. We have been receiving a lot of support from the school of Science and Technology and it is so humbling to see more staff members avail themselves and support our initiatives and even encourage their students to participate. With a growing interest flooding through the university we are seeing many stakeholders on the university support entrepreneurial activities. The support from EDHE the support has also been amazing thus far.

PS: *Tell us a bit about yourself beyond the issues you are currently responsible for.*

Gugu: I am a postgraduate student in the school of Science and Technology and a hardworking student with a passion for serving. I am also a social entrepreneur; I own a company called 'Hlafunathi' where I sell popcorns that have embedded motivation scriptures in them. I host bonfires where the popcorn is a means to gather students and the embedded notes are to start or spark conversation. The whole aim is to get students to do things together, we can't do life in isolation. One is also passionate about bettering the quality of water and finding ways in which we can educate communities on the importance of using water wisely, so this is an area of great interest on my part and I want to make a contribution.

PS: *What is your message to SMU students?*

Gugu: I find this quote by Stuart Scott to be very profound, "Don't downgrade your dream to fit your reality. Upgrade your conviction to match your destiny". As student entrepreneurs we need to know that not every business idea will be supported, not every effort put in to developing your business will be applauded, but don't let that distract you from what you have set out to accomplish. Surround yourself with things and people that strengthen your conviction and expand the reason why you are pursuing entrepreneurship, remain teachable slow to speak and quick to listen.



Lerato Mphahlele speaks about time spent building students entrepreneurs

Lerato Mphahlele is now the erstwhile EDHE SMU representative. She served in this role with distinction and is credited for championing issues of student entrepreneurship. To bolster this assertion, Lerato got a special word of appreciation from Dr Nora Clarke who is now Director: EDHE at Universities South Africa during a special event to officially launch the EDHE programme for SMU. Lerato spoke to Dintshang about the entrepreneurship journey.

Phaladi Seakgwe: *Tell us about the role you played when you were at the helm of this important structure?*

Lerato Mphahlele: As the EDHE Studentpreneur CoP representative for SMU, my role was to take the National vision of EDHE on Student Entrepreneurship in Higher Education and be a student champion in ensuring that student entrepreneurship development and support at SMU is established for students.

In achieving my role as a student champion, in 2019 during the first EDHE Student Entrepreneurship Week (SEW), we launched SEIH_SMU which is a student run structure with a mandate of promoting, participating, supporting, and advocating for student entrepreneurship development and support establishment. Through chairing SEIH_SMU and working with passionate colleagues in the executive committee, our commitment to building an entrepreneurial ecosystem in SMU where students can get access to relevant entrepreneurial resources, networks, opportunities, support and see the growth in the development of businesses in the health and science sector through our academic knowledge. This has enabled us to lay the foundation for student entrepreneurship at SMU through the various activities we executed.

PS: *What would you say are some of the key milestones achieved during your tenure?*

Lerato: During my two years as the EDHE Studentpreneur rep and SEIH_SMU chairperson, part of our short-term goals were to establish relationships with various stakeholders in the university and promote student entrepreneurship; develop and host programs for student entrepreneurs; ensure the establishment of a center to support student entrepreneurs; and seeing student entrepreneurship being part of the university's deliveries. This has guided us in some of the key milestones we have achieved as SEIH_SMU amongst them has been our effort in securing R3 million in funding and a partnership with SEDA in the SMU Rapid Incubator currently under construction, hosting various programs for students like #InConversation with SMU Alumnus who are entrepreneurs, #MandelaDay with SMU entrepreneurs, and the 2nd EDHE SEW.

PS: *what is your advice to students generally on issues of entrepreneurship?*

Lerato: Entrepreneurship is all about identifying a problem or market gap and developing a solution that responds to the needs and social fabric of people/clients who are fundamentally your business.

Success is not immediate in entrepreneurship, most of your time will be spent researching, testing, failing, and getting rejected, but never give up! 'You will win. Not immediately, but definitely.'

PS: *What would you say to your successor, anything that she can expect in this role?*

As the new student champion, through your vision and leadership may you continue promoting, participating, supporting, and advocating for the growth of student entrepreneurship in the university.



Students in the School of Science and Technology recently organized a webinar on Course Insight to provide more information to fellows on what they are studying.

School Chairperson Thato Phasha spoke to Dintshang about this.

Phaladi Seakgwe: What was the main purpose of the Course Insight event you held recently?

Thato Phasha: The main purpose of the Course Insight programme was to inculcate all Science and Technology students about the course they are studying. There are few students under the School of Science and Technology who know what is Science and Technology and what it offers and need to be much more exposed to the field.

PS: Briefly tell us about the choice of presenters, why did you choose them?

TP: Heads of Departments and delegates from respective departments were chosen to present as they are highly skilled and have more information about the modules\departments that they are representing, which they had to share with students.

We chose the Guest Speaker Musawenkosi Msibi because he is an Alumni of SMU who studied BSc (Physics), Honours (Physics) and Honours (Medical Physics) in the university. He was one of the perfect people to motivate Science and Technology students about BSc and to enrich them about the Job opportunities out there. Musawenkosi was in a better position to guide and advise students about Bsc.

On the other hand, the other Speaker Dr Moema, Medunsa Almuni, SMU Alumni, is a senior lecturer in the School of Science and Technology who has a PHD in Biology. She walked through the hardships of being a BSc students and accomplished so much in the field of BSc. She was in a better position to encourage students not to quit on their dreams in the Science Field, because of the Stigma around Science and Technology.

PS: What topics did the speakers cover?

TP: Several topics were covered which included:

- Information about every module
- Postgraduate programs
- Postgraduate applications
- Job opportunities after studying BSc
- Bursaries in SMU

PS: Do you think the webinar achieved its purpose, what is your overall assessment?

TP: We believe that the Course Insight Event achieved its purpose. More and more students now have information on what they are studying. They know what Science and Technology is about and what it offers. They know what kind of Postgraduate programs they will embark on after completing their undergraduate degrees and they know where to seek help when facing challenges.

PS: Do you have an estimated figure of how many students attended and participated in the Course Insight event?

TP: About 270 students attended the Course Insight event.

PS: What other future programmes do you plan to have in the School of Science and Technology?

TP: There are many programs that we are planning for the School of Science and Technology, that will enrich and equip students under the school of Science and Technology and we will share them in due course. Students must watch the space for more.

PS: Any other information you wish to provide to relating to the school and your message to students?

Students who were unable to follow the events are encouraged to follow the below link so that they can catch up:
<https://eu-lti.bbcollab.com/recording/4008e282417a41979f80ba944076cbc4>.

Our message to fellow students is that “Once your mind-set changes, everything on the outside will change and along with it” ~Steve Maraboli .

It is our responsibility to make BSc Science and Technology fashionable and attractive for many to study.

Transition from High School to University

- Professor Vongani Ndlovu

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) is a dedicated health sciences university providing professional training and education in a range of fields through excellence in teaching, learning, innovative research and community engagement. During the 2021 academic year, SMU is continuing to train health and science professionals to realise its mission statement.

Dintshang Student Newspaper guest reporter Professor Vongani Ndlovu caught up with five first-time entering students from different schools to hear their views on the transition from high school to University.



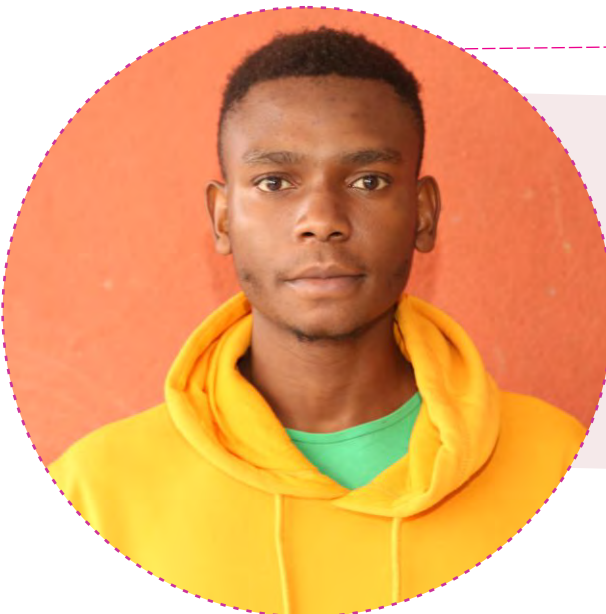
Aphiwe Zulu (18)
Bachelor of Pharmacy
Mhlwazini, KwaZulu-Natal

My transition from high school to varsity was not bad. It was adaptable, academically there is no much pressure compared to high school, as I was doing yearly subjects and now I am only doing a module, getting over it, also due to covid-19. Again being independent has been quite difficult because you have to set your time to know when to buy groceries. Making friends is difficult since I am shy about communicating with people. I enjoy my studies at SMU because this is where I have always wanted to be from when I was a child, being a pharmacist. Just this whole COVID-19 has been challenging since I am not used to online teaching and learning.

The transition from high school to varsity has been overwhelming, as I had to adapt to the new environment and learn new things. Moving far away from home has been a great experience and SMU has helped us a lot to adapt in a good way. I am enjoying my first year at SMU so far because I am doing the course I always wanted and I adapted to online teaching and learning.



Tsheamo Khoza (20)
Bachelor of Dental Therapy
Lydenburg, Mpumalanga



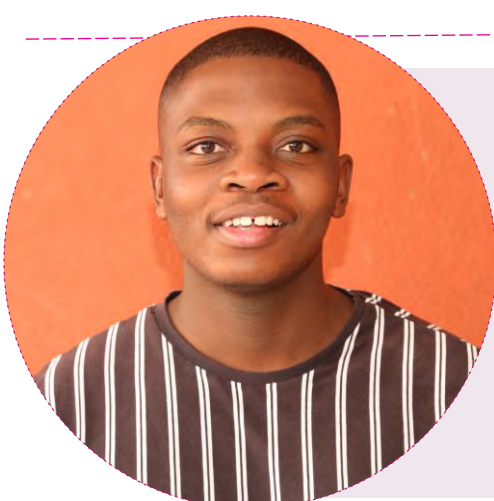
Selahle Thakgalo (19)
Bachelor of Science
Burgersfort, Limpopo

The transition from high school to varsity has not been easy, as I have to adapt to being independent, nonetheless, the varsity has been great and enjoyable. I am enjoying my time at SMU, the online teaching and learning have been great, and I am happy that I have adapted to e-learning.

The transition from high school to university has been stressful but an amazing experience. The workload is too much but doing what I always wanted to be is a wonderful experience. I am enjoying my first year at SMU so far because I am doing a course I have always wanted.



Nwabisa Mnisi (18)
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
Nelspruit, Mpumalanga



Takalo Sikunana (18)
Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy
Johannesburg, Gauteng

The transition from high school to varsity has been tricky; having to adjust from being top of my class and ahead of my teachers in high school to always catching up has been the major problem. The workload has also been a factor though coming to SMU has been exciting. The University population is a very small but close-knit family that has everyone in their best interest at heart.



Securing students from risk of exposure to COVID 19

- Maditsi Matlala

A donation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worth a whopping R100 000 from ABACON -SANLAM, will go a long way in ensuring that SMU medical students are protected from exposure to COVID19 when doing their clinical work.

Ms Anneke van Wyk and Ms Selmie Harris presented the donation recently from ABACON -SANLAM to the acting dean of the School of Medicine, Prof Risenga Chauke and SRC Secretary-General, Mr Thulane Ramasehla. Also present was the Acting Deputy Dean Prof Dini Mawela and Mr Kholwa Nkambule, SRC subcommittee member. “This donation, is the least we can do, to make sure that the students, in their clinical work, are protected from COVID 19,” said Ms Anneke van Wyk.

“Whilst welcoming this gesture from ABACON-SANLAM, I need to point out that our needs as a university are much greater. I would like to call upon you to open doors for us

which would lead us to corporate social responsibility budget of ABACON-SANLAM, or even point us in the right direction to access this budget,” said Mr David Sedumedi, the Director of Advancement, whose office was the prime mover behind the event. “It is my wish that this generous donation must not only be for the benefit of medical students, but it must also be made available to students in other four schools, because they are also exposed to risk of contracting COVID 19 during the course of their studies”, Prof Risenga Chauke, pointed out.

“This donation means a lot for us. It means that that there are businesses which wish to contribute to the growth of this six year old university. I am glad that you are wishing to invest in SMU's potential”, said Mr Thulane Ramasehla, the SRC Secretary General, accepting the donation.



SMU SRC held a student parliament recently.

The Student Parliament is aimed at ensuring accountability from the Student Representative Council (SRC) and strengthening the governance structure of the university. This initiative seeks to also certify the quality of leadership throughput from Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU). The Student Parliament is an independent structure that operates to have the SRC running in terms of service delivery as per its proposed policy. This machinery is well oiled and running.

Students were grateful to have the Vice-Chancellor during the session to speak.

The SRC also held a Constitutional review session at Shumba Lodge from 18 to 20 June 2021.



SMU successfully conferred qualifications during virtual ceremonies that took place from 09 - 11 June 2021

Due to the unusual challenges of Covid-19 Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University hosted the winter virtual graduation ceremonies over a three-day period to confer qualifications to those who met all the requirements of their respective fields.

A total number of 1340 graduates received their undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications from all the five schools of the university.

In conferring the qualifications SMU Vice Chancellor Professor Peter Mbaty in his capacity as acting Chancellor lauded health care workers and members of the scientific and business communities, global and continental multinational organizations including the World Health Organization, the African Union, governments and ordinary citizens for their contribution in the fight against Covid-19.

Professor Mbaty said the graduations Ceremonies took place at a time and space when everyone is required to roll up their sleeves and double their efforts as we have to coexist with the pandemic.

He thanked the senate of the University for taking the decision to proceed with the graduations.

“It gives me great pleasure nevertheless to confer the degrees of the University and award the diplomas and higher certificates to all those who have satisfied the requirements for their respective qualifications”, he said. Professor Mbaty further used the opportunity to encourage those who graduated to also pursue post graduate studies in any university including SMU.

The DVC: Teaching, Learning and Community Engagement Professor Eunice Seekoe acted as the Vice Chancellor during the virtual ceremonies. She said the exigencies of the moment occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic made it impossible for face to face meeting in one room. “Thanks to the technological age we live in, we are able to celebrate with you on your achievements virtually, and for this humanity should be grateful for the role of technology in advancing human civilization”, said Prof Seekoe. During the three day events, 12 doctoral degrees, 121 masters’ degrees, 188 honours degrees were awarded and the balance qualifications conferred where undergraduate degrees, diplomas and higher certificates.

Prof Seekoe further proudly asserted that the numbers on their own demonstrates that a fairly new university, SMU is gradually and confidently finding its space in our higher education system. “It is carving a territory for itself as a premier institution in the health sciences and science and technology fields. The university is better positioned to play its role in the broader national development project by producing graduates who are well equipped with knowledge, skills and attributes to succeed in their chosen careers and professions”, she concluded.

All the Deans from the five schools got an opportunity to congratulate those who received their qualifications.

Since its establishment in 2014 and having opened its doors to the first cohort of students in January 2015, SMU has so far conferred qualifications to over 5000 people. These ranged from Higher certificates, Diplomas, Advanced diplomas, Undergraduate Degrees, Honours, Masters and Doctoral Degrees.

The graduations ceremonies served as a highlight in the lives of both the university, its students, families and other key partners.



SMU has five Schools:

- School of Health Care Sciences
- School of Medicine
- School of Oral Health Sciences
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Science and Technology

