



## SMU Acting Deputy Director for Assets and Stores **Dr Tshifhiwa Mulaudzi** celebrates the attainment of his PhD

*Dr Tshifhiwa Mulaudzi hails from a rural village called Madombidzha in Limpopo, from very humble beginnings. He started school at Petamukanda Junior Primary School, and then went to Tshikwarani Primary school, before matriculating at Litshovhu High School. He believes that his upbringing in rural Limpopo greatly shaped his desire for leadership and academic excellence. A graduate of the University of Limpopo and its Business and Leadership School, Mulaudzi has attained his Doctoral degree (PhD) from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) recently. He is currently serving as the Acting Deputy Director responsible for Assets. Focus caught up with him to look at the journey he traversed until he obtained his PhD.*

### How does it feel like to achieve the highest National Qualification Framework (NQF) level?

I never had much interest in academics, and always just wanted to pass and progress to another level. However, I was inspired by teachers in Accounting. At grade 9 I was at no 1, in grade 12, I was selected by Thuthuka as the top student (Accounting) in the whole Senthumule Kutama Region in Limpopo. From there on, I went to the University of Limpopo and completed a BCom Accounting, BCom Honours and got involved in the mentoring programme.

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I was then appointed as a Tutor by the University of Limpopo and I must say this move really ignited my passion and propelled me into academia. The University subsequently appointed me a permanent lecturer in Accounting and it was during this time that the academic in me was really born. From a young age, one always had this burning desire to impart knowledge to others.

In 2015 I graduated with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the Turfloop Graduate School of Business and Leadership (TGSL) and was top of the class.

In 2014 May, I left academia to join the University of Limpopo Medunsa Campus so that one could gain corporate experience in Finance.

I am actually super excited and this achievement brings about a lot of emotions considering where it all started. I never imagined that I would be here, and am just overwhelmed by this milestone.

**Those who underwent this journey warn that it is not an easy one to go through. Please share your own experience.**

Indeed, many people will always say the journey is very demanding and I concur with that. It was very difficult for me, and it required a good balance in terms of social life and work, and you even lose some relationships along the way. It also called for a lot of sacrifice, I knocked off from work at 9pm every day. Not forgetting the high demands of my political responsibilities as the Chairperson of NEHAWU at SMU. My work responsibilities as Acting Deputy Director of Assets and Stores also kept me very busy. Saturdays and Sundays were always busy for me as well, as one had to come to work to ensure that nothing really suffered. At some point, I wanted to quit, however the end goal kept me going.

**What was the focus of your research?**

My niche area was a combination of Health and Finance. We looked at the sustainability of community pharmacies versus the big known and established pharmacies. While these big pharmacies have a variety of products and services, one cannot say the same about these community pharmacies. For instance, the big ones offer Covid-19 shots while the community ones do not. Big and established pharmacies spend huge sums of money on advertising their services and products while community ones do not.

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The study interrogated and examined sustainability of community pharmaceutical SMEs in Gauteng Province, SA. Community pharmaceutical SMEs are a significant sector within the economy in terms of GDP, employment and poverty



*Photos supplied by Paul Mukhwevho*



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alleviation. The purpose of the study was to develop a sustainability framework for community pharmaceutical SMEs using a mixed research design.

### **How long did it take to complete the PhD and what would you say was the challenging part about it?**

It took me four years to complete the PhD and I must say it could have been done much earlier if it was not for some delays one experienced along the way.

For me, the data collection part was the most difficult. Not everybody is interested to participate on what you are pursuing. Numerous studies have proved that the number of participants can be low compared to what you would have initially wanted. In some cases, the participants do not complete the entire questionnaire. Secondly, because this is more of a distance learning arrangement, access to supervisors is another challenge. The other part is that, one is expected to work according to what the supervisors direct and if you have more than one, it's a daunting task to please all of them. My work went through 3 markers, one in South Africa and two at international level. I found myself torn apart between three perspectives.

### **How does the study contribute to the body of knowledge in that field?**

When you embark on Research, especially at this level, you always have that thinking that you will come up with something new. The biggest contribution is that the study came up with a sustainability framework for the community pharmacies out of the data collected. One discovered challenges that could not be ignored. Medication is very expensive and this affect many of the pharmacies we looked at. It becomes better if you buy in bulk.

I also found out that banks do not really come through for individuals who are in this sector, they are always looking for some form of collateral. Additionally, one discovered that a lot of these community pharmacies do not have the resources to adequately market themselves.

I will soon publish a paper that looks at the framework to be used as a guide to the pharmacies in terms of how they can source funds, attract customers, buy medication in bulk etc. and I think this will go a long way in assisting businesses in the area of pharmacy.

### **What were the highlights of your PhD journey?**

The exciting part of this journey was to have a feel directly from the ground. This provided first-hand experience of what the community pharmacies go through. It was also thrilling to find people who wanted to make an input and give insight. As part of the data collection exercise, I came across a pharmacist

who took me through his own journey. His case was different to others as he had a background in the pharmacy business that he acquired at his family's pharmacy business. He now runs a sustainable business and serves some of the customers who were with his family business for years. I am grateful to those who came along and shared their experiences. It was amazing to see people making a contribution to the study.

### **What are your plans for the future, rejoining academia perhaps?**

My feeling is that once an academic is born within you, it becomes a permanent thing. The Vice-Chancellor Prof Peter Mbatlali always says that once you acquire knowledge, it must be used for the benefit of society. We have a responsibility to inspire other people to become researchers, so his words of counsel resonate with me and push me to want to do more. I am happy as well that Prof Mbatlali is willing to mentor others.

I am also inspired by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Limpopo Professor Mahlo Mokgalong. He motivated some of us a lot when he said that students must aspire to become future Vice-Chancellors of Universities and I can confirm that this is what one will become in future.

For now, I am focusing on acquiring all sorts of skills and experience to prepare for the future as a Vice-Chancellor of some Institution. One of the things I have already learnt is that you need to be on the ground in order to lead better tomorrow. We are learning from the best, our own Vice-Chancellor Prof Mbatlali is a good example of what we mean to be on the ground and we can see all the changes he is bringing to SMU.

### **What is your message to those who wish to pursue the PhD journey?**

My message is that it is possible. If I could do it as ordinary as I am, anyone can do it. If anyone wants to go through it, I say go for it, I was able to do so despite my hectic schedule as a family man, worker, leader of NEHAWU. We all have the same 24 hours in a day. Turn the ordinary 24 hours to be extra ordinary. I want to encourage all SMU staff members to pursue their studies in whatever field of interest to them.

### **Any other thing you wish to say to the readers?**

SMU should begin to invest in admin and support staff, currently, I believe that a lot of focus is on academic staff. We need to start giving recognition and reward to admin and support staff too so that they are motivated, how best can we develop and promote them? For instance, a lecturer after acquiring a PhD gets a different level while support staff do not enjoy the same benefits except congratulatory messages. Therefore, people are less motivated to study and this contributes to the culture of not studying.



# Who is Dr Lusani Rabelani Netshitomboni - The new Director of Communication and Marketing at SMU?

I was born at a village called Vondwe in the former Venda homeland. I am married, with two children – a son and a daughter. I am the first-born son in a family of six children. It was at this village that my first classroom was a Muvhula tree. When it rained, teaching and learning was severely affected as we had to join the Grade 2 class for cover. As a child, this experience did not seem to bother me. I, seemingly, did not have an understanding or appreciation of the abnormality of the situation. It was only when I grew older that I realised the abnormality of the situation, and the unfairness of it all. I am now in a position to appreciate the commitment of our teachers and the school leadership to persevere with teaching and learning under those difficult circumstances. The value of education was impressed upon us, sometimes in ways that I thought were cruel and unfair. The school was indeed an extension of the family. Over the years, it became evident that most of the learners of our generation went on to greater academic and business achievements, with greater impact in the community.

It was in this environment that throughout my childhood I was exposed to people who I would later get to know as my mentors. They were not my relatives or friends. These are

people I knew from a distance. They were my mentors, even though in some instances they did not even know about it. I looked up to them, and sometimes I would even tell myself that when I grow up, I would like to like to emulate them. I made reference to their dress sense, the manner in which they carry themselves, the way in which they speak, and of course, to achieve, academically, and career-wise, what, in my young eyes, they seemed to have achieved. In retrospect, these early childhood experiences have, amongst others, taught me the following values:

## VALUES:

- When people work together with a clarity of vision and a common purpose, this often leads to success
- Leadership is, about people, not a position
- Access to resources is not always the determining factor for success, but conviction and commitment to a cause
- Clear and constant communication is critical for success

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**You are not a newcomer to Communication and Marketing. Please take us through your employment history.**

I have worked as a Chief Planner (strategy and planning) at the University of South Africa. I also served as Acting Director: Communication, Marketing and Events, where I was responsible for all Institutional communication and marketing. I have previously worked as a Lecturer and Communications Manager, respectively, at Unisa. I have also worked at the Government Communications and Information System (GCIS) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).

**Amongst the qualifications you managed to attain is a PhD in Communication Management, please take us through your educational journey.**

I completed my Matric (Grade 12) at Tshivhase High School. This was followed by a BA degree and a Higher Diploma in Education acquired from the University of Cape Town, a BA (Honours) in Media and Cultural Studies from the University of Natal (Kwazulu-Natal), MA (Communication Science) from Unisa, and a PhD (Communication Management) from the University of Pretoria. I have completed several courses in, amongst others, strategic management, handling the media, policy development, strategy execution and corporate governance.

**What other leadership responsibilities have you taken before and currently?**

I currently serve as Deputy Chairperson of the Board of the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities in South Africa and Chairperson of the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Board. I have previously served as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Mukhanyo Theological College, Chairperson of the Willowridge High School Governing Body and as a Deputy Chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) at Lynwood Ridge Primary School, National Chairperson of the Casual Day fundraising project and the National Executive Committee member of the South African National Council for the Blind.

**As the Director, what is your approach for the Communication and Marketing department at SMU?**

**Our role:**

Building the university's brand and reputation through the provision of integrated communication and marketing support to teaching and learning, research and innovation and student support.

**About SMU**

The location, the historical significance and the fact that SMU is the only exclusively health science education provider on the continent, present a strong foundation on which SMU brand and reputation must be build.

I believe that the following driving principles are central to our success:

- People are the bottom line
- All staff members have a role to play in building the institution's brand and reputation
- Working with integrity
- Working with and through people (stakeholder management)
- Serving as the basis for leadership

**What are your views about higher education and how should SMU position itself in that environment?**

It is evident that the Higher Education sector is becoming increasingly competitive with regard to its potential to attract competent academics and excellent students. This will require effective positioning informed by quality products and support provided to staff and students. This will in turn result in both staff and students becoming SMU brand ambassadors (free marketing), thereby attracting sought after academics and students alike. I am confident that my experience and qualifications place me in a position where I can make a significant contribution in providing leadership in the institutional communication and marketing function.

# IMPORTANT DATES!



**Workshop applications close:  
25 Feb 2022**

**Workshop Notification:  
10 March 2022**

**Abstracts submissions close:  
21 March 2022**

**Abstract Notification:  
20 April 2022**

**Early bird closing date:  
27 May 2022**



SAAHE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE  
HEALING HIGHER EDUCATION  
27 - 30 June 2022





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## SAAHE 2022 CONFERENCE: 27-30 June 2022

### Invite message from Chairperson

Dear SAAHE 2022 participants

Dumelang Bagaetsho, Molweni Mawethu, Sanibonani Bakwethu, Warm Greetings, Goeiedag

It is an absolute honour to invite you all to the 2022 Conference of the Southern African Association of Health Educationalists. We envisioned that the theme of this conference, **Healing Higher Education**, remains extremely relevant not only two years of the most challenging pandemic, but also during a time in modern world history, where embracing quality relationships and a willingness to connect with others, matters more than ever before.

On behalf of the organising committee, SMU and our partners in the North (UP, Wits, NWU, UJ and UniVen), we welcome you to participate as academics, as students and as other stakeholders. We welcome you whether you are new to SAAHE or an old time regular. We welcome you from all institutions of higher learning in South Africa we welcome you from all countries in Africa to the conference in the South, and from other continents to the somewhat warmer winter days in Gauteng. We welcome you and look forward to your abstracts, contributions and engagements.

We hope that the theme of our conference will stimulate rigorous debate, new perspectives in how we see things and a deeper understanding of how we engage our students in their education and service to communities. But we also anticipate that the presentations and online engagements during the 2022 SAAHE conference will ultimately enable a deeper commitment and compassion for ourselves, our colleagues, institutions, and communities. The theme **Healing Higher Education** focuses on how we build and maintain relationships; *vhushaka /kamano mo tirong*, relationships of trust, respect and mutual empowerment, how we open our hearts and minds to difference, how we address the challenges related to structural imbalances in the education and health care systems, in our institutions and society, how we use our voice and how we demonstrate responsiveness, whether it be widening access, developing humility or advocating for improved practice and better services. Abstracts can be submitted under any one of five categories namely:

- Learning,
- Assessments,
- Skills & Simulation,
- Research and
- Collaboration.

This SAAHE 2022 conference theme hopes to inspire research, workshops and collaborations that will revitalise our practice, that will lead us to a vigorous humanity, that will energise and balance us in ourselves, others and in our communities. The organising committee welcomes your abstract that opens new dimensions for health professions education, which heals and impacts positively on an imperfect world ripe for solutions.

A re dirisaneng mmogo!

**Gerda Botha**  
Chairperson



# The School of Health Care Sciences increased the number of PhD holders in 2021



The SHCS prides itself in the number of academics obtaining higher qualifications. In 2021 alone, a number of staff obtained their Doctoral Degrees in different areas of study. They are: Dr Lily Motswasele-Sikwane, Dr Thembi Khoza, Dr Muziwakhe Tshabalala, Dr Sophy Moloko, Dr Mokgobola Thobakgale, Dr Anri Human, Dr Muhammad Dawood and Dr Moosa Tayob obtained their PhDs from different institutions in the country.

All these add to an already existing total of 37 academic staff with doctoral qualifications in the SHCS. The number excludes other PhD degrees of individuals not appointed by SMU.

The Dean of the School Prof Lekalakala-Mokgele said they have headed the call from the South African National Planning Commission in its National Development Plan Vision for 2030 which proposes that the number of PhD graduates per year, to increase to 5,000 by 2030. “We may not be there yet but we believe we have taken a step in the right direction. This uniquely positioned school with diverse programs allows for variety of research opportunities for academic staff”, she said.

According to the Dean, the SHCS has in the past few years produced the highest number of PhD degrees considering that in 2018 thirteen (13) candidates graduated in that single graduation ceremony. “Traditionally, the PhD has been a ticket for entry into the academy and today it is a requirement for a job in academia. (especially where there is a need to appoint at a senior lecturer position). The SHCS requires a greater number of appropriately qualified academics to supervise doctoral students. We are striving at making PhD a requirement for every single lecturer responsible for teaching professional students including postgraduates”, she said.

Prof Lekalakala further mentioned that the executive committee of the SHCS in its strategic plan committed to the development of academic staff to ensure that a properly qualified cadre of professional is built as well as having competent and committed teaching academics and researchers who are responsive to the social needs of the students, communities and the country.



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### The main aim is further to:

- Enhance academic staff training, improve staff qualifications and offer specialised academic support
- Develop young academics, to enable them to qualify for more senior positions

She concluded by saying that the board of school supports all academic staff eligible for sabbatical leave while Heads of Departments ensure that each staff utilize research days to a maximum to be able to complete their studies without compromising academic programs.



## SMU continues to build relations with **Diphetogo Secondary School**

**P**hysiotherapy Department visited Diphetogo Secondary School in Klipgat on the 3rd February 2022. The department was represented by Ms Ntombenkosi Sobantu, Ms Karabo Raphokwane, Ms Ishmeralda Mabena-Segoe and Mr Dennis Themba. Mr Andrew Leso who is a product of Diphetogo Secondary also formed part of the delegation. The department is headed by Prof Maleka who encouraged the visit to take place.

The aim of the visit was to engage the Principal on the support the school needed from the SMU Physiotherapy Department. The delegation met with the learners from Grade 11 & 12 and briefed them about what is expected for them to be able to qualify to be admitted at SMU. The learners showed great interest in learning about the courses that are offered at SMU.

Following discussions, an agreement was made that the Physiotherapy Department would render the following services to the students:

1. Career guidance
2. Health Screening
3. Health Education/Promotion
4. Physical activities/Exercises

It is not the first time that SMU visits the school, several departments in the University including the office of the DVC: Teaching, Learning and Community Engagement had interacted with the school before. The School principal told Focus earlier in January that the School had 93 students who wrote their matric. Out of the 93, 25 got Bachelor passes and 31 Diplomas with others obtaining higher certificate passes.

The school's science teacher has praised SMU for the role it played at the school for the past years adding that this has led to the improvement of the student's performance on Maths and Science.

The department sees the interactions with the school as an opportunity to start applying the principle of Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (IPECP). The Physiotherapy students will be working in collaboration with the Human Nutrition and Dietetics students. The School of Oral Health has also indicated that it will form part of the team that will be offering services and support to the school.

Other departments are called upon to join in this venture for the benefit of both SMU students and the learners at Diphetogo Secondary school.

# The Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics position itself as a Research Hub



**T**he Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics has skyrocketed its publications in the 2021 academic year, publishing a record of 219 research articles, since the inception of SMU and its' predecessors. The department has been struggling to publish research articles until the appointment of the current Head of Department (HoD) Dr Maggie Aphane, in 2019. In the same year, the department managed to publish only one research article and it went on to increase the number to 22 in 2020. Focus on SMU reporter held an exclusive interview with the Mathematics and Applied Mathematics HoD Dr Aphane to get insight on her turnaround strategy of positioning the department as the research leader in the institution.

## **What was your turnaround strategy to re-introduce research in your department?**

My welcoming note in 2019 by the Dean of School of Science and Technology Professor Lawrence Obi is the one that made me think and digest ways to get the department active in research. His mandate was very clear. How am I going to get at least ten papers published from the department? By then the department that consisted of four permanent staff members and part-time lectures had zero publications for the past years. The last paper was published in 2011. In 2019, I was able to publish only one paper. With the help of the research office, we were able to get the first post-doctoral candidate Dr Lateef Jolaoso in 2020 since the birth of this department. The appointment of Dr Lateef was not enough; I then had to get another way to increase publications in the department. Again, with the help of the research office, we were able to appoint research associates. The research seminars, the appointment of postdoctoral and research associates was the turnaround strategy to re-introduce research in the department.

## **How did your department manage to publish a record of 219 papers in the 2021 academic year?**

Contribution from staff members, postgraduate students, post-doctoral and research associates steered to this record of publications.

## **What is innovative about your research projects?**

Innovative research focuses on creating new ideas, analysing problems, diagnosing problems and identifying their causes in mathematical problems and their applications. Several research

projects are a range for mathematics and its application. Just to mention a few structures: Bipolar metric spaces, partial metric structures, Fuzzy quasi-metric structures, etc. A common recipe in all of them is how we try to apply these researches to solve real-life problems. They implement and observe modern, improved strategies, set research hypotheses and develop a methodology of the key research objectives.

## **What do you think are your most significant research accomplishments?**

To lead the department that was able to produce at least more than 200 publications in accredited International Scientific Institute (ISI) journal in a year since the birth of this university and also to be able to publish papers from the honours projects.

## **What are the big issues in your research area?**

The big issues are:

To present new developments in fixed point theory as well as in related topological methods.

To give significant applications in nonlinear analysis, computational theory, mathematical physics, mathematical economics and fluid dynamics.

Shortage of sufficient trained people to look into the issues.

Attract and recruit more postgraduate students.

## **The university is keen to serve the wider community and economy. Does your research have any potential in these areas?**

Of course, yes. Everything about our lives, community and economy revolve around the optimization process by minimizing risks and maximizing opportunities and advantages. Therefore, our research in convex optimization has the potential to solve any optimization problem that model real-life problems and challenges in our community and economy. Recently, the advent of data science has triggered the question of how to get cost-effective machine learning technology manufacturers in the government and private sectors. Our algorithms can be effectively applied to some of these problems arising in machine learning and artificial intelligence. Furthermore, there is another financial mathematics research group in our department. What they do

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is study financial models that deal with stocks, bonds and even cryptocurrency (bitcoins). Certainly, their findings will also be positive to our economy if implemented. The other group is on Mathematical Photonics. The study on making electronic global communications and carry out its performance enhancement such as email, skype, Facebook, Twitter, zoom communications faster and flawless. This can only be achieved by minimizing the pulse-to-pulse interactions as they travel through the optical fibres for trans-continental and trans-oceanic distances. The process to mitigate or eliminate the unwanted features such as collision-induced timing jitter of pulses, four-wave mixing, the evolution of ghost pulses and others such can only be achieved after a thorough comprehension of the technical know-how the mathematics, physical and technology aspects of fibre-optic transmission of pulses for long distances. They are aiming to address technological challenges such as call drop while communicating over the phone, cross-talk over the phone, noise produces during the communication period and bring several countries closer.

**How do you feel about translating your research into innovation or spinouts? Can you give an example of when you have been enterprising?**

The research is a daily achievement of novel results that are being implemented into reality daily when the rubber meets the road. I believe that every researcher aims to be innovative from theory to application. Recently, we have started a discussion in our research groups. Our idea is to have a working visit to industries in our university's host community to understand their industrial processes and problems. Afterwards, we can then see how to model these problems and solve for a feasible solution that will help the industries heighten their processes. This is still in pipeline because we have not concluded this confab.

**How would you convince a funding body that they should fund your research rather than one of the other hundreds of proposals they receive?**

The shortage of mathematicians is a crisis in our country. Without mathematics, there is no medical doctor, engineer, software designer, chemist, statistician, physicist, pilot, etc. Mathematics will remain a scare skill subject. Furthermore, the novelty of the proposal will speak for itself. In all our research groups, we try to conduct numerical experiments to demonstrate novel applications of new constructions (algorithms). For example, some of our algorithms have been used to restore distorted medical (radiographic) images and even signal processing in communication networks. Our research is just the future of Mathematics in Africa, as it addresses some of the core issues on the continent, i.e. issues related to Health, Agriculture, etc.

**In one sentence, what is the most important research question you want to address?**

Develop models that can provide answers to problems the entire world is facing, for example, climate changes, HIV, pandemics, etc.

**How would you deal with any conflict/disagreement within the research group?**

Maybe because of our field, conflicts always yield good results. First, the platform for conflict is where we get more interesting

results because mathematically, I will never say you are wrong until I have proven you wrong. We all know that in maths language we say, "For any problem, there is always a solution". Preferably, I will like to solve one problem in five different ways than to solve five problems one way. The disagreement most of the time harvest into more collaborations and papers. This is where the intellect function maximally. To deal with any conflict I apply that basic method, listen and collect evidence from all parties, before you statute.

**Are you keen to develop collaborations with other departments?**

Of course, collaboration with other departments is the key. Mathematics is known to be the "queen" of all sciences. The application of mathematics is in most areas such as chemistry, physics, computer science, engineering, health science, etc. Some of my papers are published in physics, engineering and computer journals.

**What opportunities for multi-disciplinary work does your research offer?**

Presently, our research is multi-disciplinary in nature because our numerical experiments mostly focus on applications in diverse areas such as medicine, communication networks, data science and artificial intelligence. We recently conceptualize an idea for projects on computational graph theory where we shall be applying topological indices to chemical graphs. This is will be collaborative research with chemistry.

**In what ways, other than research, teaching and learning, are you contributing to community engagement?**

Mathematical Career Talk and Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator (CfERI), is the platform I am using for community engagement. Mathematical Career Talk is the dais to expose our students to private industries. Speakers from different companies such as CSIR, Eskom, financial institutions, telecommunication industries and software industries are invited to share their knowledge. They show our students how they apply the mathematics knowledge to their daily work, their admission requirements, and the type of qualifications they engross from their industries. Furthermore, the types of software required in their daily routine and the links to get all applications.

CfERI is the platform to assists students who are interested in being future entrepreneurs. This includes the surrounding extrinsically motivated community volunteers. The centre aims to nurture them to enliven in all categories of business such as existing general business, existing social impact, existing tech business and innovative business idea. To encourage students to recognize their entrepreneurship permeates, they also get a prospect to participate in EDHE (Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education) intervarsity competition.

Furthermore, I am a university representative in the Centre of Excellence in Mathematical and Statistical Science (CoE-MASS). The MOU was signed in 2021. The centre offer opportunity to postgraduate students and staff members willing to pursue their studies. The centre organizes workshops, writing retreats and funding to those in essential. They also share seminars, conference information and new topics presented.



# Untamed Thoughts - Living in a Broken World

Medicine student and author, Muano Munyai wrote a book to highlight thoughts that exist in most of our subconscious minds and ideas of how to address such issues. With this book, she is giving out a voice to the tamed tongues and shy brains by spilling out untamed thoughts. As we are living in a broken world, where people seem blind to current matters, Muano's ability to be observant and keen in addressing such conditions of living, made her feel inspired to be the next voice that Africa hears. Focus on SMU had a Q & A session with her to get insight on the book.

## **Briefly, tell us about the book, Untamed Thoughts.**

'Untamed thoughts' is a collection of poems that intend to address matters of all age groups, from love and dating to major disturbances globally, i.e., GBV (including man abuse), rape, racism, violence, to depression and anxiety all around us.

## **What inspired you to write this book?**

My inspiration was and has always been my mother and my observation of life thus far. My mother is my inspiration due to her courage and boldness and the strength she possesses in how she deals with life challenges.

## **How does the book address the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) plight?**

In the book, I speak for both women and men. The right approach in dealing with GBV is addressing violence for both genders, which not most people do. GBV is not violence against women only, men too. Between the cover pages of the book, I give a voice to the male victims of abuse. By doing so I instill hope in their lives, so they know they are never alone. That way they do not shy out to speak. Women already have too many rights defending them, all I do is make sure that my poetry helps them remember their power and understand that we as Africa are always ready to help give a voice to their hurt and suffering.

## **What hope does the book give to the reader?**

My book gives hope of a better tomorrow through change that must begin within our mindsets. Hope given to the elderly alone is hope for the present, but hope given to all age groups is hope invested in a brighter tomorrow. Pure hope is given without dilution or cutting of corners 'short cuts', it is giving hope to the long distance we need to cover before being successful, and my book aims to give hope through undiluted truth/ untamed thoughts

## **Kindly share with us peers review feedback.**

"You are the voice we desire for our generation", are some of the words my peers have said to me. I believe it is so merely because my book is more relatable than most books I have read. It's about our modern daily living and current matter thus most if not all the feedbacks have been positive. The authenticity in the book makes it hard not to love it or require a part two of it even sooner.

## **How can our readers access the book?**

The book is available for order, via WhatsApp, contact details: 071 638 0390 and through Facebook and Instagram at 'Witty the Poet'. Deliveries are made through any mode of the courier you prefer and see fit and convenient enough for the customers. In addition, I have a YouTube channel (Witty the Poet), where people can visit to see some of my incredible art pieces poetry. To the readers, it takes one giant leap of faith to do it; success is not an illusion if you are willing to work for it. Don't take the shortest way out, you will not make it. One important lesson to remember is there is always someone who will seem better than you, do not poison your mind by trying to compare yourself to them, attract your own ability to like yourself.

# Envisioning SMU

## Anew and Building legacies

The Department of Student Affairs at SMU hosted the Student Representative Council (SRC) Induction Workshop to guide the University's operations to the recently elected SRC members. As a result, strategic support departments were invited to make presentations on their respective daily operations focusing on student-related services and strategic plans of the institution. Furthermore, the induction empowers the SRC members who are not familiar with the University operations to learn more about their existence, functions, powers and responsibilities that guide their daily operations.

Addressing the new SRC leadership during the induction, SMU Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Mbatlali outlined his plans of taking SMU to higher heights through its vision and the role of the SRC in its realization. "You as the new SRC have a responsibility of building SMU into a world class health sciences university by exercising care, wisdom and leadership in the execution of your tasks," said Prof Mbatlali.

Prof Mbatlali highlighted to the SRC members the strategic objectives and critical success factors, the role of the SRC in advancing a quality-driven financially sustainable SMU, major

funded infrastructure projects, securing the future of SMU, just to mention a few.

Reflecting on the SRC induction, SRC General Secretary, Daniel Masekwameng said, "The key purpose of an induction of the SRC is to get all fifteen members of the council knowledgeable of all guiding documents of the university. The success of this event is measured through a simple metric, which is 'is the SRC fully equipped for office to advance students' interests for this academic year?', and I can assure you it was successful".

Furthermore, he said their induction was coupled with team-building exercises that did massive justice to their working relations as colleagues in SRC. "We are now strategically and correctly positioned to lead the students and above everything else, we are fully knowledgeable of who we are as the university and what we stand for. Expect the most hygienic SRC that will defend the integrity of this institution," concludes Masekwameng.

Acting Director of Student Affairs Themba Khumalo said the workshop was interactive, where the SRC had been asking questions, working towards understanding the different structures and departments of the University.



Meet Owami Dlamini, an 18-year-old who was admitted at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University for the Bachelor of Diagnostic Radiography in the School of Medicine. She is from KwaZulu-Natal in a place called Mbazwane. She lives with both her parents and two siblings. She matriculated in 2021 at Inkosi Moses high school. Owami majored in Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Accounting and Life Sciences. She loves studying and helping people, which is what drove her to apply for a medicine degree at UKZN where she was not accepted. However, she did not get discouraged.

Owami chose Radiography as it was her final option. She says, 'I chose Radiography because I did not have another choice. Not all is lost because she hopes to build more interest in her career and plans to study Medicine in the future. With the COVID-19 pandemic still going on, she worries she might not do well this year because of online classes, but does not want it to let her down as she wants to work very hard so she bridges into Medicine.

## What are freshers saying about their career choices?



# CAMPUS HEALTH SERVICES

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- Blood pressure
- GBV and alcohol substance abuse information

# World Obesity Day

**04 March 2022**

🕒 10h00 - 15h00 | 📍 Library Lawn

**Speakers for the day:**  
Prof Koto and Dr Dejongh

## EXPLORING THE IMPLICIT MEANINGS OF ‘CULTURAL DIVERSITY’ IN HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION

WE AIM TO EDUCATE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ABLE TO COMPETENTLY NAVIGATE THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY WITHIN THEIR WORK AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND THEIR PATIENT POPULATION. BUT WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY MEAN WHEN WE SAY ‘CULTURAL DIVERSITY’?

After this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Recognize commonly used approaches to ‘cultural diversity’ in health professions education
- Understand the implicit meanings of cultural diversity within these approaches
- Critically reflect on implications, limitations and opportunities of using different approaches to cultural diversity in health professions education



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

JANNEKE FRAMBACH



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