

SMU Cardiothoracic Surgeons adopt a New Surgical Technique



The Cardiothoracic surgeons at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) have adopted the recently described Yang procedure during double valve replacement on a 46-year-old female patient with rheumatic heart disease (RHD). The Yang procedure is named after Prof Bo Yang who first described a Y-incision rectangular patch aortic annular enlargement technique, and it is one of the posterior aortic annular enlargement techniques that is simpler and ensures three to five-valve size enlargement.

The SMU surgeons renamed the procedure after Prof Yang, with his consent, as the Yang procedure. Without prior publications from the African continent, the Yang procedure is believed to have been adopted first in Africa by the SMU Cardiothoracic team. “Well, I can say to the best of our knowledge, yes. We have done this one for the first time in

Africa. We have not seen any prior reports suggesting that the Yang procedure had been performed in Africa. We did it for the first time and it was a wonderful experience and also for Prof Yang to see our video and say to us we have done it very well, was wonderful,” recalls Dr Dambuza Nyamande, one of the cardiothoracic surgeons who performed the surgery.

“The Yang procedure gives us a new way of dealing with the problem of a small aortic annulus where surgeons need to implant a larger prosthetic aortic valve. So the Yang Procedure enlarges the patient's native aortic annulus, or simply the area where surgeons can implant the aortic mechanical or bioprosthetic valve. Therefore, the surgeons will be able to implant a larger prosthetic valve which will provide unobstructed blood flow to the patient even with maximal exercise,” said Dr Nyamande.

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The procedure was performed via median sternotomy, on Cardiopulmonary Bypass with aorto-bicaval cannulation and retrograde cold blood cardioplegia for myocardial preservation. The valve was excised, and the annulus admitted a size 21 mm valve size which was inadequate for this patient. After performing a Yang procedure a 27 mm Bioprosthetic valve was successfully implanted.

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“The patient is doing well, she recovered within the first five days after surgery with minimal blood loss. She subsequently underwent another major vascular surgery to bypass blocked limb arteries at the same institution by our Vascular Surgery team. She would not have managed to undergo such a procedure during the same admission if her heart had not recovered.”

Before the invention of the Yang Procedure, alternative ways of dealing with small native aortic annulus existed such as Nick's method. These previous methods are still commonly utilized where the Yang Procedure has not yet been adopted. However, the Yang Procedure provides a greater enlargement of the native aortic annulus compared to previous methods. This translates to a larger aortic prosthesis for patients undergoing the Yang Procedure and hopefully better lifestyle. Key facts about the RHD as outlined by the World Health Organisation entail being a commonly acquired heart disease

in people under age 25. It claims over 288 348 lives each year, the majority in low- or middle-income countries. The disease results from damage to heart valves caused by one or several episodes of rheumatic fever, an autoimmune inflammatory reaction to throat infection with group A streptococci (streptococcal pharyngitis or strep throat). It most commonly occurs in childhood and can lead to death or life-long disability. It can be prevented by preventing streptococcal infections, or treating them with antibiotics when they do occur.

Rheumatic fever mostly affects children and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries, especially where poverty is widespread and access to health services is limited. People who live in overcrowded and poor conditions are at greatest risk of developing the disease.

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The main strategies for prevention, control and elimination include: improving standards of living; expanding access to appropriate care; ensuring a consistent supply of quality-assured antibiotics for primary and secondary prevention; and planning, developing and implementing feasible programmes for prevention and control of rheumatic heart disease, supported by adequate monitoring and surveillance, as an integrated component of national health systems responses.





Prof Elzbieta Osuch – a leader in her field

Head of the Department for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU)/Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMAH) Prof. Elzbieta Osuch is a highly qualified and diligent clinical pharmacology expert with more than 30 years of experience. Her department produced four Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) graduates during the 2023 graduation ceremony, contributing to over half of all PhD graduates in the School of Medicine at SMU. Her credentials encompass comprehensive teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. She has achieved national and international recognition as a leader in her field. Notably, she has been instrumental in developing the Master of Medicine (MMed) - Clinical Pharmacology programme at SMU, aligned with Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) specifications for a Professional Masters National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 9 qualification. This programme, paralleled only by programmes at the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, and the University of Free State, signifies a pioneering step for speciality training in Gauteng. Focus on SMU reporter interviewed Prof Osuch to get insight on her research supervision and departmental throughput.

What keeps you producing such a high number of postgraduates?

My leadership approach is rooted in motivational tactics and

fostering a nurturing academic environment. The quality of my mentorship is corroborated by the testimonials from my Ph.D. students, who highlight my attributes of wisdom, technical prowess, problem-solving capabilities, and unwavering patience. My meticulous attention to detail inspires my students to delve deeper into their studies.

What are your expectations from your students/lecturers in balancing their research with teaching requirements or extracurricular activities?

I expect proactive engagement in academic duties, rigorous time management, and punctual submission of progress reports. I strongly encourage adherence to SMU's postgraduate supervision guidelines and advocate for research collaboration with institutions such as North-West University (NWU), University of The Witwatersrand (WITS), University of Pretoria (UP), and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).

Which jobs and careers do your graduates have after completing their postgraduate qualifications?

Pharmaceutical industries; Regulatory bodies, such as the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA); Government advisory positions in drug regulation, dispensing, and clinical trial; Academic positions in universities, colleges, and other educational institutions; Ethical oversight bodies.

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What support do you provide your graduates for finding their next position?

I provide extensive support, ranging from financial assistance to skill-building, including helping students apply for grants from agencies like the National Research Foundation (NRF), assisting in scientific publications, providing departmental funds for research, and allocating research assistants for laboratory support. I also encourage participation in writing courses, academic conferences, and collaborations with other research institutes.

How do you define a successful research term for your students?

Success is gauged by the completion of the research project within the stipulated timeframe.

Which research projects are you currently busy with?

I am actively involved in various areas of research, including cardiovascular research, arterial elasticity, traditional medicine, cancer studies, and clinical pharmacology.

What impact does Pharmacology research have on the society at large?

The relevance of Clinical Pharmacology was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our department played a vital

role in treatment guidelines, vaccination sites, and medication monitoring, among other things.

What challenges do you encounter as a research supervisor, and how do you address the challenges?

Balancing high-level managerial duties with rigorous academic research is indeed challenging. The procurement of laboratory equipment and financial constraints exacerbate these challenges.

What is your reason behind the selection of a particular research area?

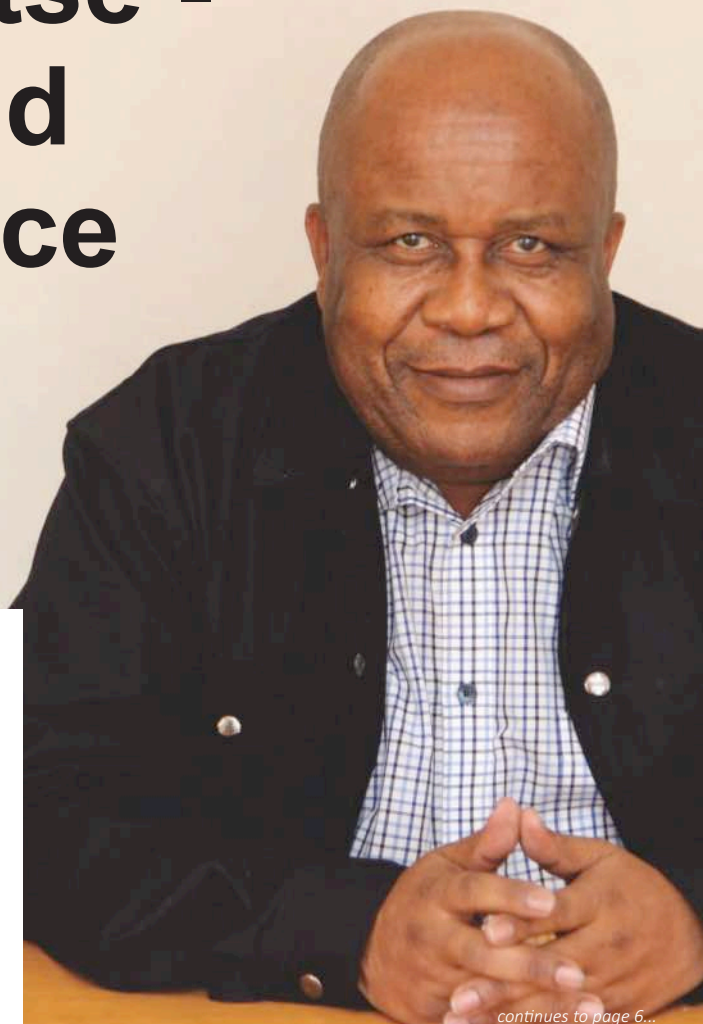
My primary interests lie in patient-centric research, particularly focusing on cardiovascular health and the development of novel medications from plant sources.

In conclusion, is there any information that you would like to share with our readers?

I am pleased to announce the 57th South African Society for Basic and Clinical Pharmacology Conference, scheduled for 15–18 September 2024. Themed "Pharmacology for post-pandemic Africa - Antifragility in Action," the conference aims to bring together experts from diverse backgrounds to share knowledge and best practices.

Prof Solly Seeletse - the brains behind Statistical Science Research Throughput

SMU Head of Department for Statistical Science Professor Solly Seeletse is the brains behind his department producing multitudes of postgraduate students. He has supervised more than 60 Honours, 50 Master of Science, and 10 Doctoral students and published more than 100 scientific articles. Prof Seeletse shares his insights through the below interview on his research supervision and output strategy.



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Kindly take us through your childhood until matric completion.

I grew up in a village, Legonyane, next to Jericho, now in the Madibeng district when during our days it was Odi district in Brits. I was hunting big birds and springbok and milked from goat to cow. I was a herd boy. I did my primary school education in the now Lethabong Primary School, which was Elandsfontein Primary when I was a learner there. From 1976, I was in the Makapanstad area (Hammanskraal), Kgomo-kgomo village, where I did junior secondary education for two years. In 1978, I relocated to Ngobi village (Warmbaths then) to do high school for three (3) years. For all my schooling, I was the youngest in my class and the smallest. But now in the department, I am the oldest – proudly. I played soccer well, as at Fort Hare in 1981, I represented the university in an intervarsity competition, scoring two goals. I also played for Rhodes BSM (Black Students Movement) in 1986. I also did some Karate (Shukokai_ briefly for two years) and limited boxing. It was not bad, but they were for self-defence because, in our time, we survived. After all, bigger boys were bullying big time. I went to Fort Hare at 17 years and four months. In brief, I got expelled twice, one at high school and the other at university, not for my sins but for representing students and as mass expulsion, respectively. I was not naughty, just a bit assertive. During our time assertiveness for a black person or child was called cheeky and stubborn.

Over the years, you have supervised multitudes of postgraduate students who eventually graduated. What keeps you producing such a high number of graduates?

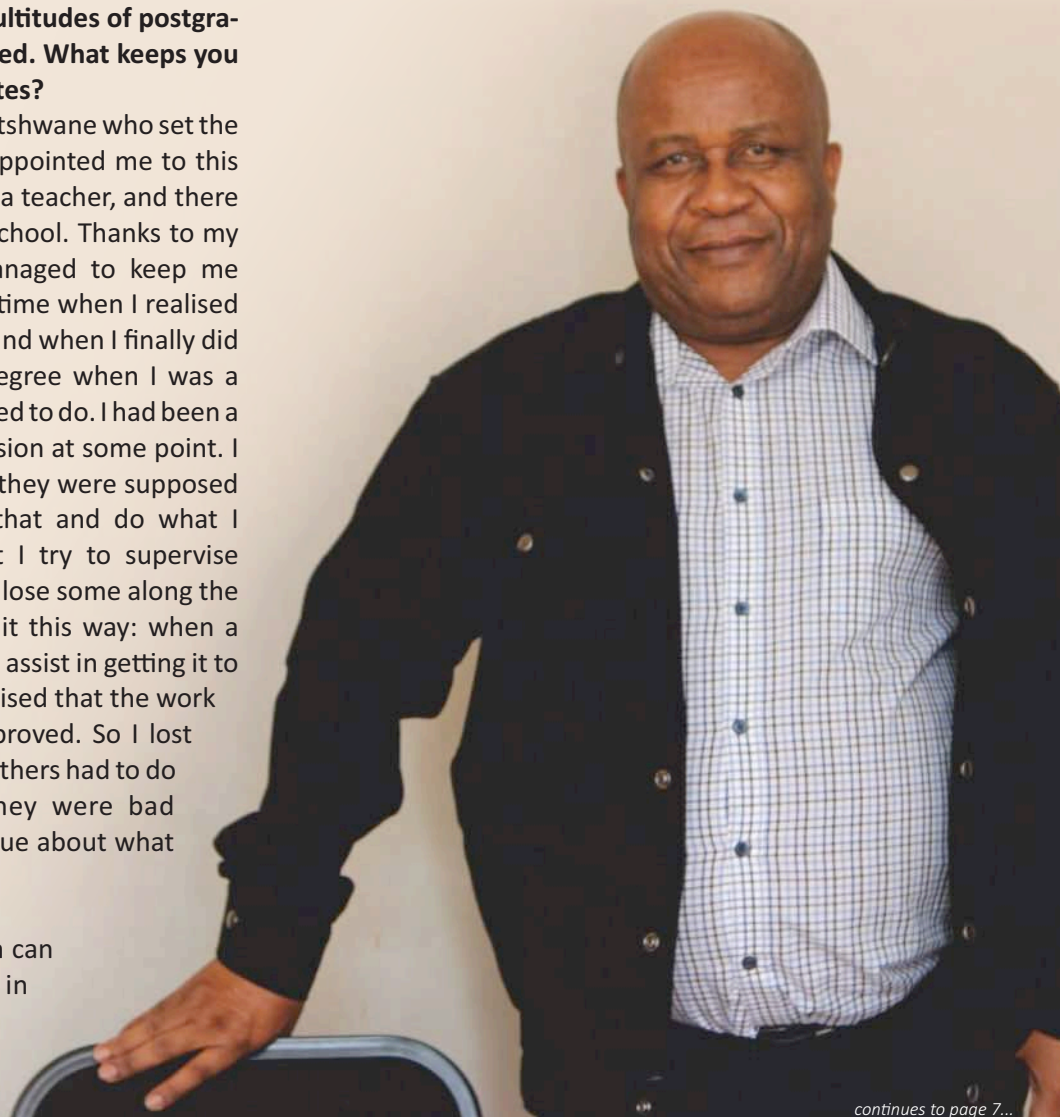
Thanks to my predecessor Dr Marcus Motshwane who set the platform, and Prof Bassy Marvey who appointed me to this post. Early on, I did not want to become a teacher, and there was a point when I did not even want school. Thanks to my mother's insistence, she somehow managed to keep me there. I am a professor. It started at the time when I realised that teachers did not necessarily teach, and when I finally did tutoring in the third year of the BSc degree when I was a student, I decided to do what I was required to do. I had been a victim of bad teaching and poor supervision at some point. I saw students being treated badly when they were supposed to supervise. I tried to deviate from that and do what I expected. However, not everyone that I try to supervise completes, for one reason or the other. I lose some along the way, and I tell you, I sometimes cause it this way: when a student does superficial research, I try to assist in getting it to better standards. Some students are advised that the work is adequate while I insist that it be improved. So I lost some when I said they should improve. Others had to do a year or two more, not because they were bad students. Our undergraduate gives no clue about what research entails.

Taking a student from A to Z of research can thus be a challenge. Good students in theory do not always translate into good researchers. Many module-excellent

students would wish to complete the research with mediocrity and that is where as a supervisor, you have to exert your skill and experience. Here you have to explain what research is, and what it is not, at times inviting conflict. Accusation of 'you are unreasonable' transpires at this stage. Cases are there where I had to face resistance but many students that I work with, have shown to be appreciative of my input. Few cases exist where this has not worked, and a student could not reach the last huddle. To me as a researcher, it is not worse than graduating a value-less graduate, but I do get hurt.

What are your expectations from your students/lecturers in balancing their research with teaching requirements or extracurricular activities?

My department is full of supportive colleagues, and luckily, as I expect them to make a good balance, many of them have over the years excelled. They have carried the department being understaffed, and to me, they have over-performed. We have managed to transform the BSc Honours from an after-hour to a day programme, increasing the written modules from four to eight. Everyone in the department is supervising the Honours project. The work that my students and lecturers do is massive, especially where some were either employed only as part-timers or on contracts. I am grateful for their efforts, and our great students who show passion in the subject of statistics. We also host a university biostatistician who adds so much value to the department's offering.



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After completing their postgraduate qualifications, what types of jobs and careers do your graduates have?

They are everywhere. They are in government institutions, such as Stats SA, Reserve Bank, education departments (planning division), and tourism departments. Others are in banks and several financial institutions, as we saw last two week's presentations where one of our own even came to this campus to present. There are consultants and managers of companies. Well, we work everywhere and a good statistician has a job somewhere, as was mentioned in last week's career expo that was for the maths/stats/comp science cluster in the school.

What support do you provide your graduates for finding their next position (academia, industry, government, non-traditional)?

Recently we went to CSIR with the final BSc students and the BSc Honours groups. We also had a career expose' for them. Moreover, now and then we post messages on internships and employment opportunities in Stats. Last year alone, in the second semester, we nearly lost the entire BSc Honours student cohort as most had secured full-time jobs, and compassionate and considerate lecturers in the department decided to be flexible on lecture offerings. They 'saved the day' by using after-hour slots and a blend with Blackboard collaborate to give lecturers. When our students find jobs, we ask them to send us information on jobs that they can find advertised in their companies, or where they can find them and this has worked wonders.

How do you determine your department's and expected?

We have not been so productive in the past year or two, since only a few colleagues in the department participated in research. As for producing postgraduates, we have been consistent though, and most of the graduating students publish their work. At the PhD level, it is a requirement to graduate so we will always have papers from there since they want to convert the title from Ms/Mr to Dr. This year we have returned gradually and we are on the rise, and we will produce a realistically good number from staff who wish to learn and do the work. Most of us are back.

How?

A successful term means the benefit from subject to life skills and work situations. The student teams are successful if they are productive by engaging in various research projects that can lead to final publications. The development or cloning of leaders is very important, as growth depends on the leadership of many forms. It should empower its academics as well while empowering the students who traverse the research journey. They should also be consistent, and sustainable. We have not managed that for the last two years, but we know why so we have corrected that. We will try not to be distracted again. To be successful, we need to do the work ourselves and learn.

Which research projects are you currently busy with?

We have decided to start on the work that was completed in

the past few years at either conferences or theses that were presented, as there is plenty to share from these as some were partially used in publications when there was much more to extract. So we are publishing from those theses, and also on some conference work with the necessary adaptations.

What impact do Statistical Science research have on the society at large?

The easiest application of statistics is to measure. Illustration of growth/progress or deterioration can be made with ease using stats. We have a biostatistician on campus who with his team, is making wonders with the university researchers through consulting services. The subject of statistics assists in measuring, which can be the measuring of progress or in estimation. We can also develop forecasts. My major field of expertise is Time Series Analysis, which is used for forecasting. We have also blended the courses of Statistics in line with the modern trends, by integrating artificial intelligence and machine learning, and we also assist in operations management. In this era, if statistics does not take that direction, which mathematical statistics was not fully doing, you miss the application side of statistics. Statistics is an applied mathematics, and it should be applied.

What challenges do you encounter as a supervisor, and how do you handle those challenges?

There are fewer problems now than in the past, as we have a colleague with experience and another younger one from our ranks who has been cloned from 'grow own timber' and has now fully matured to assist with anything. We now work as a team, and only in a few cases, there will be one supervisor. Co-supervision assists that one supervisor's problem can be offset by a strength from another member. However, problems we encounter are mainly when we start with a new student, who has to be taken through a journey from step A. We tackle challenges as a team, and we give our students responsibilities. We are hoping for support from the SMU Research Directorate.

Any information that you deem necessary for this interview is welcome.

Maybe I should share this one. The successful supervision of a postgrad student to graduation used to have an incentive, which I got up to the previous leadership of SMU. The reason is that some did not complete the minimum years of the course, as they got extensions. I will not rush record time for that incentive, as what is important is the best that can come out of that supervision. I delayed a submission because I was marked as an external examiner, and I get annoyed when I evaluate a rushed thesis to meet graduation. So in my supervision, I rather wait for a well-done study, with the final touch-ups also done well, instead of work not done to perfection. This has backfired and caused me incentive, but I would rather not get the incentive if the best does not come out of my student, as one day the system will open up to appreciate the best quality as compared to money making. I have also refused advice by the way, of some who suggested otherwise.

Three SMU scholars selected for the Nurturing of Emerging Scholars Programme

The Nurturing of Emerging Scholars Programme (NESP) is a Programme from the Department of Higher Education and Training, which aims to identify postgraduate students with demonstrated academic ability, who are interested in following a career in academia. Candidates must have an Honours degree with an average pass rate of 65%. The first 2 years are for the Masters degree, followed by a year of academic internship. "The NESP Scholars are in capable hands of their mentors and are trained to become fully-fledged academics. We are excited to host 3 NESP Scholars for the first time at SMU.

These Scholars represent the three various Schools within SMU and we look forward to having other schools participating in the programme", says the Coordinator for Research Capacity Development, Ms. Fulufhelo Mala-matsho.

According to the DHET, The NESP is positioned as a feeder programme for the nGAP and related programmes. The programme is managed in the Research and Innovation Directorate under the Leadership of Prof Mapaseka Seheri.



NESP SCHOLAR 1:

Ms. Khothatso Shernies Daisy Mosia (*Masters in Midwifery Nursing Science*)

Being a midwife is magnificent. According to the South African Nursing Council (Sanc 2014:1), a midwife is a registered professional nurse with the South African Nursing Council, who has advanced knowledge in midwifery. Midwives experience challenges daily that require their knowledge and skill to solve them. It is the responsibility of the midwife to provide holistic care for the mother during pregnancy, labour and postpartum using the knowledge and skills obtained during their training and ensuring that there is a decrease in maternal and neonatal morbidity.

Since the researcher is a midwife, she provides care for the mother and Neonate. "I realized that when caring for pregnant women the focus is on the maternal effort, preparedness to deliver and care for the neonate. Furthermore, the midwife is always alerted to detect abnormalities, and complications related to pregnancy, and labour and ensure the provision of ongoing health education", said Khothatso. However, the mental health of the mother is neglected from antenatal to postnatal hence the researcher decided to embark on a journey and conduct a study on the perceptions of midwives regarding the management of post-partum depression at selected midwife-led obstetric units of Tshwane district. The study aims to explore and describe the perception of midwives regarding the management of postpartum depression at selected MOUs in the Tshwane District. The study is conducted due to the need for the assessment and management of the mental health of the mothers. Since there is an increased rate of infanticide and maternal death (Al-Dor et al. 2020:276). Mental Health is a neglected topic within midwifery and neonatal nursing. The collaboration between the two supervisors who are already experts in their own disciplines opens the opportunity for the contribution of mental health to midwifery and neonatal nursing.

SUPERVISORS TO MS KHOTHATSO SHERNIES DAISY MOSIA



Mr. Kagiso Prince Tukisi (*Supervisor*)

is a midwifery specialist, academic and lecturer of midwifery and Neonatal Nursing to undergraduate and postgraduate students. Tukisi holds a diploma in nursing and midwifery, B Cur Ed et Admin, Master of Advanced Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing. He is currently a PhD candidate in maternal and child nursing at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. His research Focus is on practice regulations for midwifery and advanced midwifery.



Dr. Andile Mokoena de Beer (*Co-Supervisor*)

is a lecturer in Mental Health Nursing responsible for teaching undergraduate nursing students in their final year as well as postgraduate students. Mokoena de Beer holds a Bachelor of Nursing Science degree, an Advanced university diploma in Nursing Education and Health Service Management, a Master of Nursing and a PhD in Mental Health. Her niche is in mental health, particularly in personality disorders.

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NESP SCHOLAR 2:

Keamogetswe Sesoko (MSc in Virology)

“My research lies in the area of the gut microbiome, particularly the role of the gut microbiome in the immunogenicity of oral rotavirus vaccines and the susceptibility of infants to rotavirus infection. Mucus is a highly glycosylated layer made primarily of mucin that separates the epithelial cells and underlying host tissues from commensal microbiota and pathogens. It also acts as a decoy for enteric pathogens to prevent or delay attachment to host epithelial cells. Degradation or loss of the mucin exposes the mucosal epithelial cells to enteric pathogens including rotavirus”, says Keamogetswe. Several commensal bacteria degrade mucin for their energy and this could potentially promote rotavirus infection. Recently, the abundance of mucin-degrading bacteria was shown to be predictive of the susceptibility of individuals to rotavirus infection. “In this project, I am testing the hypothesis that harbouring elevated levels of mucin-degrading bacteria is a risk factor for rotavirus infection, including the live attenuated rotavirus strains contained in the rotavirus vaccine. I am conducting qPCR assays to determine the abundance of mucin-degrading bacteria and expression of genes coding for mucin degradation in infants who responded to oral rotavirus vaccine and those who did not”, added Kea.



SUPERVISOR FOR MS. KEAMOGETSWE SESOKO

Dr Cliff Magwira, received a doctorate degree in Cell and Molecular Biology from the University of Cape Town (South Africa). He completed his postdoctoral research training at the University of Witwatersrand (South Africa) and John Hopkins School of Medicine (USA) in biomedical tuberculosis research. Currently, is a researcher in the Diarrheal Pathogens Research Unit (DPRU), at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University. Leads a small team of researchers (MSc and PhD) investigating the role of gut microbiota in enteric viral infections. Specifically, the team is investigating the interaction between gut bacteria and enteric viruses, and its implication on infants' susceptibility to enteric viral infections and response to oral viral vaccines.

NESP SCHOLAR 3:

Mr Mukonazwothe Justice Luvhimbi

“I am currently enrolled into a master's program and the title of my research is “The role of a clinical pharmacist in the management of drug-related problems in a tertiary hospital in South Africa. The study aims to look at drug-related problems (DRPs) that occur in hospitalized patients. Drug-related problems are defined as any problem or event that arises in the drug therapy of the patient that can affect their health outcomes. These drug-related problems can occur during prescribing, dispensing and administration, examples include adverse drug reactions, drug-drug interactions, drug ineffectiveness, and untreated indications. My study will try and quantify the prevalence of these drug-related problems and also look at what role can a clinical pharmacist as a custodian of medicine plays in minimizing these DRPs in hospitalized patients”, explained Mukonazwothe.

The researcher has identified the gap that most of the reporting done is for adverse drug reactions which is one type of DRP and there is limited literature on the prevalence of other types of DRPs or studies that have looked at DRPs in hospitalized patients, especially in the South African context.



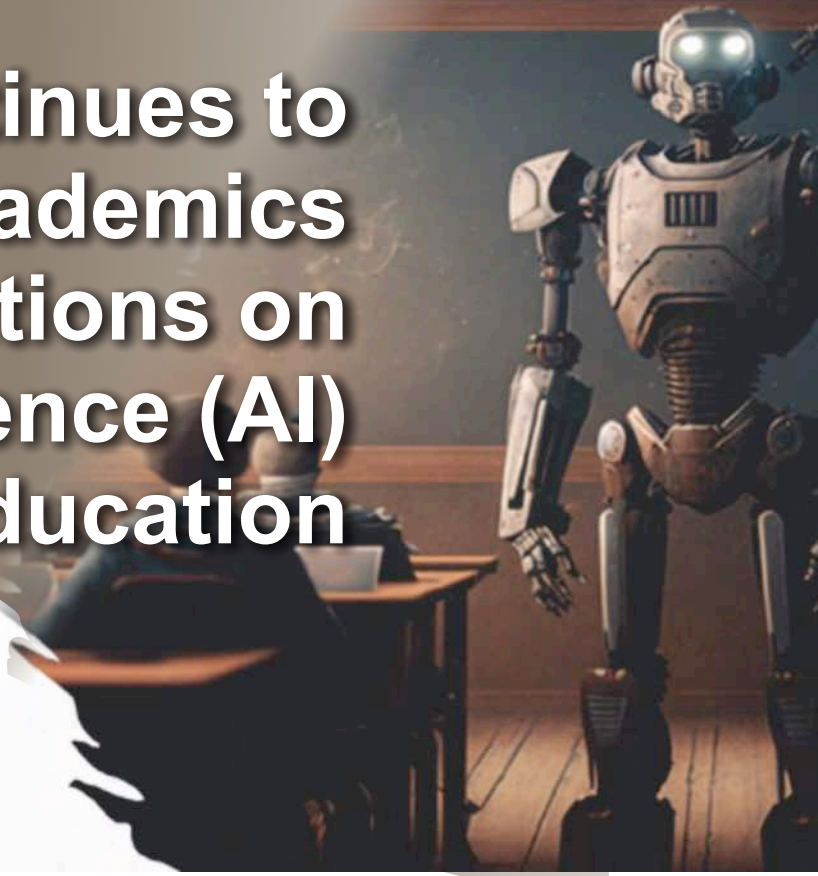
SUPERVISOR FOR MR. MUKONAZWOTHE JUSTICE LUVHIMBI

Prof Elmi Bronkhorst is the *Head of the Department of Clinical Pharmacy*. She has been part of the Department for the past 10 years, and two of those years as HOD. She has a keen interest in the practice of clinical pharmacy, especially critical care medicine, including the management of different disease conditions in the critical care setting. Furthermore, she is working in areas of antimicrobial stewardship as well as antiretroviral stewardship.



Compiled by **Fulufhelo Malamatsho**

SMU Continues to Engage its Academics in Conversations on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Higher Education



Continuing with the conversations on Artificial Intelligence (AI), SMU hosted a second AI in Higher Education (HE) webinar for the academics this past Friday, 29 September 2023. The webinar's guest speaker was Dr Olalekan Samuel Ogunleye of the University of Mpumalanga who is a researcher in Artificial Intelligence.

Dr Ogunleye's previous organisational associations include several financial, corporate and academic institutions in South Africa, Botswana, Nigeria, Swaziland and Uganda. To mention a few, he has served as the head of Mobile Development, Strategy and Business Innovations at Eyethenticate Computervision Lab, Johannesburg; the Head of Information Technology at the National Institute for Occupational Health; and Senior Mobile and Enterprise Application Developer at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). He was also the Academic Content Developer for Google Sub-Saharan Africa, covering Eight Countries (Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Cote D' Ivoire) in Africa.

Dr Ogunleye has 16 years of lecturing experience in institutions of higher education in South Africa, having successfully supervised more than 100 B. Tech, Masters and PhD students. His interest spans the fields of Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Mobile Government, E-Government, M-Commerce, E-Commerce, Enterprise Application Development, IT Governance and Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) implementation.



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At the second AI in HE webinar, Dr Ogunleye, the VC of SMU, Prof Peter Mbat, and the academics of SMU engaged on the discussion around Challenges of and Suggestions for Using AI in Health Science Education. The conversations of the webinar interrogated the primary fear and concern shared by institutions of higher education in relation to how AI is challenging the traditional status quo of higher education course design, teaching and learning and assessment. The discussion accepted that AI use in higher education is set to grow. The presentation of the webinar appreciated the challenges associated with the use of AI in Health Science Education, which include plagiarism, lack of originality, dependence on technology, reduced critical thinking, lack of human interaction, and ethical and privacy concerns. The major concern in responding to the rise of AI technology was identified as the tendency of the students to use AI (e.g. ChatGPT) to find answers and reach results without going through the learning process. The guest speaker further highlighted the opportunities of AI in Health Science Education, such as opportunities for personalised learning, intelligent tutoring systems; virtual assistants/tutors; writing assistance, language learning, research assistance; and increased use of online and distance learning.

Departing from this deliberation on challenges versus opportunities, the webinar acknowledged that AI had the potential to enhance and transform education. The guest speaker advised that AI should be seen as a tool to augment and support teaching efforts, and not as a replacement of the human element of teaching and learning. The speaker suggested that increased use of AI tools called for a change in the role of instructors to shift traditional lecturing to the use of more interactive and collaborative learning experiences. The presenter cautioned the academics that AI should be utilised for its positive impact without losing the learning process, which would be what higher education attempted to instil in students.

The academics were encouraged to consider instructional approaches that focused on the learning journey rather than the finding of answers. The discussion considered that rather than focusing on creation, learning needs to focus on applying knowledge; making new meanings of known knowledge; learning through engagement with AI (ChatGPT) outputs; and the development of the 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving. It was proposed that student learning should capitalise on questions of obsolescence, ethics and value and role of humanity:



*What sets students apart as humans?
When should AI be used, and when
should it not be used? What can
students do that AI cannot do?
How can students do their best to
ensure that their work and place in
this world is not replaced by AI? How
do we make sure that AI is used
ethically?*

The webinar resolved that we needed to embrace AI tools and integrate them in the curriculum (teaching and learning) and policies, rather than jumping to ban the tools. The University was advised to formulate concrete recommendations and guidelines for staff and students on the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, to guide how AI could be used to improve the learning processes, while maintaining students' own responsibility for learning and development of the intended knowledge and skills. Further, academics and students would need to be provided with digital literacy training on the potential and limitations as well as ethical use of AI for effective incorporation in teaching and learning.

SMU World Intellectual Property Day Commemoration



Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) through the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) in the Research and Innovation Department in collaboration with the National Property Management Office (NIPMO) commemorated World Intellectual Property Day, on 28 August 2023 under The theme “Women and IP: Accelerating innovation and creativity”.

SMU hosted the IP commemoration event to raise awareness of how Intellectual Property impacts daily life and to celebrate creativity, and the contribution made by creators and innovators to the development of economies and societies across the globe.

SMU Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Professor Thandi Matsha-Erasmus during her welcoming address indicated that the World Intellectual Property Day celebration is a very important day for SMU and probably for many other universities. She said that, normally the approach is that universities only train and teach people, do research and publish while also to investing in the communities. “There are two things, especially in research, we just count the numbers of publications that we have, but we never had the opportunity or the understanding of turning those publica-

tions into a product that we can sell. This is changing as universities are now required to make products to commercialize their research”, Professor Erasmus explained.

Ms Mantwa Tshabalala deputy director from NIPMO expressed that the IPR Act aims to govern IP that emanates from the university's Research and Development activities. She further explained that Innovation is defined as the multistage process whereby organizations transform products, processes or services to create value. She highlighted that, it has been widely accepted in the market that intellectual property and the associated rights are the critical aspects to innovation and economic growth and emphasized the importance of regulating IP.

Ms. Cwengile Dweba a patent candidate attorney at Sprint (Spoor) and Fisher Attorneys alluded that, Patents are territorial. In other words, a patent granted is enforceable in the jurisdiction where it was secured.

Dweba also emphasised that IP law aims to strike a balance between research and innovation while safeguarding the rights of the innovators, while also incentivising development once you have the rights. “So basically, you can either license these

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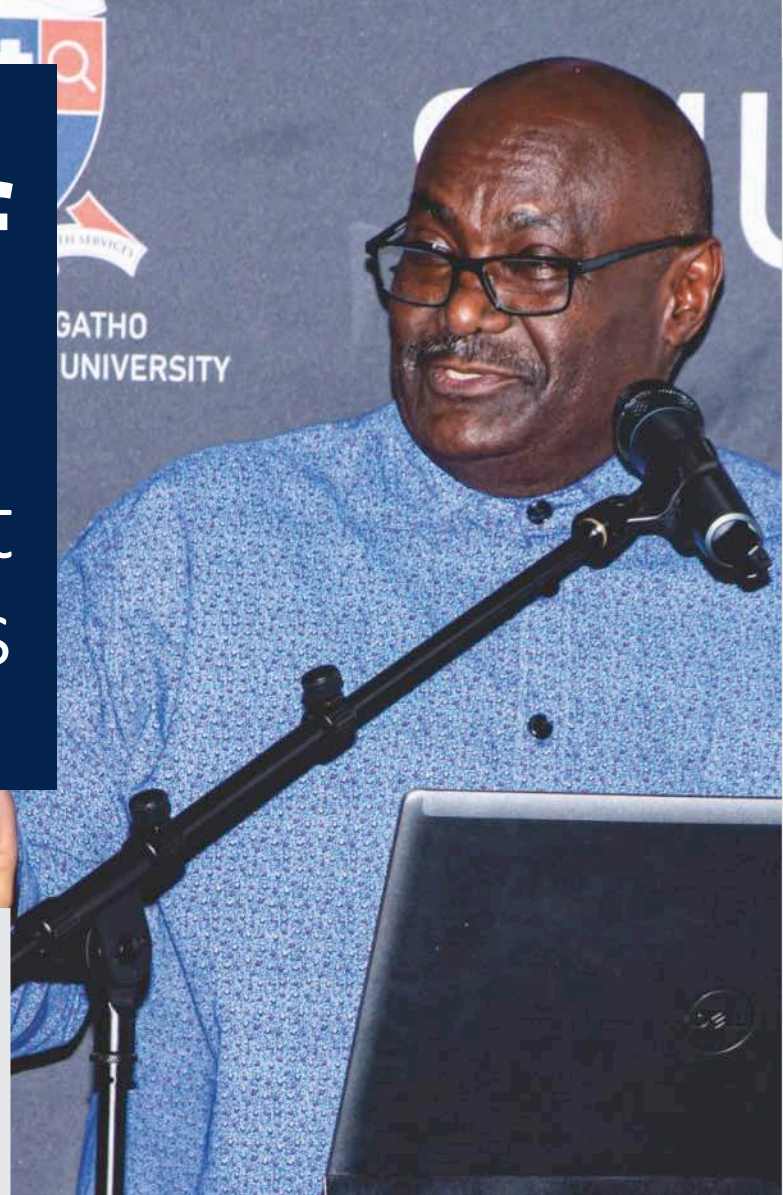
rights to third parties for whatever reason that you decide. If you can't carry on, or if you feel that you cannot fully exploit the commercial value you can license it”, Ms. Dweba advised.

A Senior Education Specialist from the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) Mr Mojalefa Khoza indicated that a trademark helps to build a unique brand and to protect the brand. It gives the right to exclude anybody else from using the straight map. He further emphasized that all these intellectual property types give you the owner and exclusive, they give people a monopoly if they are small businesses and they have a patent. “Once you have intellectual property, the first thing you need to do is to come to CIPC and register your intellectual property so that it can be protected. Our core components of CPIC includes the Registration division that we call corporate regulation and the Innovation creativity division responsible for registering patents, designs, trademark and copyright,” informed Khoza.

Portia Mavhungu, founder of PRD Logical Solutions expressed that having a Medical product is very hard in South Africa, especially if you are a black woman, because It is a very segregated market to go into, she had to convince the wheelchair market, which is predominantly white, and had to go into the market and try to convince them. “We have tried walking out of every single manufacturing plant and going back to the drawing board. Once you got outplayed into them, we went back to them and made them understand and listen while demonstrating how value will be added,” she added.



Meeting of the minds: SMU Management meets with donors



A key aspect in resource mobilization (advancement) relates to constant engagements with institutional donors. This involves regular meetings with them, updating them on how funds they have contributed are being utilized, current developments and future strategic plans. The University sees this as a critical layer of accountability and stewardship.

It is against this background that SMU, on the 14 September 2023, hosted a group of SMU donors in Pretoria. Led by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Peter Mbat, the engagement had the following key objectives:

- Provision of a platform on which donors could network with the University and amongst themselves,
- Updating donors on current infrastructure development projects, and the university's strategic direction, and;
- Nomination of two donor representatives to serve on the University Council.

The following companies were represented at the gala dinner:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Discovery | • Nedbank |
| • Standard Bank | • Sanlam |
| • Modern Community Foundation | • BBBEE Consulting experts |
| • Medical Protection Society | • Fundi Capital |
| • Royal Bafokeng Institute | • Dwarsrivier Chrome Mine |
| • Modern centric | • BCX |
| • Straumann Group | |

In his opening address, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbat, gave an overview of the current developments, including the revision of the strategic plan, highlighting the challenges and needs encountered by the university in pursuit of the provision of quality teaching, learning, research and innovation. He further highlighted the university's plans as outlined in the recently revised strategic plan, currently being considered by the university's Council.

Acknowledging that sound teaching and learning and research and innovation must be adequately supported by requisite infrastructure, Ms Yandisa Lengoasa, Director: Built Environment made a presentation in which she outlined the current infrastructure projects and the impact they are likely to have on the academic project, once completed.

As commonly understood, a critical aspect for the success of any institution relates to the strength of its governance. To this end, the University Registrar, Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele, made a brief presentation focusing on governance, outlining the role of the donors in pursuit of strong governance structure. He further encouraged the delegates to make themselves available to serve on SMU Council.

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SMU School of Oral Health Sciences, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Health Care Sciences collaborative Community Outreach at Umvelinqangi Youth Centre

The Schools of Oral Health Sciences, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Health Care Sciences visited the Umvelinqangi Safe Space & Youth Development Centre at Winterveldt on 30 August 2023, as part of their community engagement activity in collaboration with the Practice of Medicine (POME) and Inter-Professional Education Collaborative Practice (IPEPC).

Winterveldt is an under-privileged community, and the Umvelinqangi Youth Centre was identified as the relevant area to provide health talks and services as it plays various roles such as being a place of worship, safety, refuge, support, empowerment, happiness, and care for mothers and children, elderly citizens, a multitude of unemployed youth and adults, and immigrants. This multi-disciplinary outreach served to train SMU students on how to efficiently respond to the complicated healthcare needs of culturally diverse communities and learn to work collaboratively in the process.



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POME service learning Coordinator Debbie Barnard mentioned that it is expected that Higher Education institutions demonstrate social responsibility and commitment to the public's good by training students to serve a changing society with its diverse needs. In this case, Occupational Therapy second and third-year students, Human Nutrition and Dietetics second and fourth-year students, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology second-year students, Oral Hygiene second-year students, Dental Therapy second-year students, Pharmacy second-year students, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery second year students alongside their clinical facilitators and lectures engaged with the community at the centre.

Debbie further highlighted that this outreach is directly in line with the Curriculum and experiencing it answers to the need of combining theory and practice for the students. She said that the students had the opportunity to work with authentic patients in a real-time community setting that reflects the poor living conditions, hunger, poverty, and social pathology prevalent in the country. "Empowerment of the community with knowledge on how to improve their lifestyle, and expansion of physical and mental health within their abilities was one of the objectives. Screening of patients for underlying health problems was achieved, and evaluation of chronic patient self-management efforts combined with health education and appropriate referral took place" explained Debbie.



SMU Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Speech-Pathology and Audiology, and Physiotherapy joins Ga-Rankuwa Primary School Sports Day

The Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics in collaboration with the Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, and Physiotherapy Departments visited the Ga-Rankuwa Primary School on 13 September 2023 as part of the University's community engagement efforts.

Dr Cornelia Phetla from the Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics said the main aim was to collaborate with the departments within the School of Health Care Sciences and engage with the school. The activities on the day included different sporting codes, screening, and health talks for the learners. Human Nutrition and Dietetics third and fourth-year students educated the learners about the importance of nutrition and conducted nutritional assessments by measuring weight and height to determine their Body Mass Index (BMI). The Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology screened the learners to monitor how they speak, and use their voice and language to identify if they have any difficulties which if spotted, a referral to the relevant hospital could be made.

Occupational Therapy final-year students created sporting obstacle courses for the learners which included identifying colors, climbing, passing the ball, jumping, and running to monitor their eye and hand coordination, balance, muscle tone, and mobility to follow instructions. Through this exercise, the students were assessing the learners' skills and shortcomings that they might be experiencing while in the classroom. Physiotherapy third-year student Innocent Chauke said that he was teaching learners about their

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physical well-being, how to carry a school bag properly, do aerobics, warmups, and exercise. He also indicated that he did jumping, kicking, and simple stretching with the learners. “The learners should make sure that when they sit, they lean their back on the chair and should not just sit because when they lean forward, their backs might start to hurt. While stretching, they should not overuse their ankles or muscles because they might develop injuries and then muscle strain,” encouraged Innocent.

Ga-Rankuwa Primary School's Deputy Principal Maletsatsi Mogotsi expressed her excitement with the partnership that the school has had with SMU since the beginning of this year. “We have dieticians who come to visit the school every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Today, we have occupational therapists, speech-language pathology and audiology therapists, dieticians, and physicians. Our school is very fortunate to have the support of SMU and hope that speech and occupational therapists will join us because they only started today with their assessments”, said Mogotsi.



Meet

Dr. Rhirandzu Sharon Mhinga

Director of Library and Information Services

Dr Rhirandzu Sharon Mhinga was recently appointed as the Director of Library and Information Services (LIS) at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU). The appointment took effect from June 2023.



Dr. Mhinga holds a Ph.D. in Information Science and has vast experience in LIS having held similar positions at other universities and serving several committees within the LIS field. Before joining SMU, Dr. Mhinga was the Head of the library at the Tshwane University Technology, Polokwane Campus.

Tell us about your early years, where you grew up, schooling until tertiary education level.

My early years were spent in Nkowankowa, a township located outside of Tzaneen but I was not born there. Shortly before I started high school, our family relocated to Giyani where I went to Isaac Kheto Nxumayo Agricultural High School, where I also matriculated. I then proceeded to the

then-called University of the North, now known as the University of Limpopo.

After I obtained my Bachelor of Library and Information Science at the University of the North and working for a while, I felt the need to study further. I enrolled for an Honour's degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and thereafter, went to Stellenbosch University for my master's degree in information and Knowledge Management. I returned to UNISA later for my Doctoral degree in Information Science.

Take us through your professional journey.

The most interesting thing about my professional journey is that I got my first job before completing my undergraduate

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degree. This happened during my examinations period when I was called for an interview and got a librarian position at a College of Education. After working for a while at the college's library, I moved to Polokwane where I joined the Polokwane municipal libraries. There, I rose quickly through the ranks and was subsequently tasked with the responsibility to establish a community library in Seshego.

After a few years I joined the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) as Head of the library at the Polokwane campus. During my stay at TUT, I had an opportunity to briefly head the Soshanguve-South Campus Library and later return to Polokwane. I then accepted the position of Director: Library and Information Services at SMU from 01 June 2023.

It has been a few months since you joined SMU, how has it been like so far to you?

SMU's library is well-established, and I have my predecessors to thank for that because when I came here, I did not find a valueless entity.

I came into a library that is anchored on sound SMU policies and procedures that are guided by the LIS's Community of practice, CHELSA. The Committee for Higher Education Libraries in South Africa (CHELSA) has developed academic library standards and SMU functions based on its guidelines. When I came here the library was already a member of SANLiC which is the South African National Library and Information Consortium that assists member institutions to acquire better value-for-money digital collections.

The library is also a member of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) that aligns itself with international standards to represent the interests of the LIS sector in the country. SMU library is also a member of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Because of the various associations and partnerships, the library is anchored solidly on the ground to function well as an academic medical library. So far it has been great working here, and I am learning a lot.

What are the major challenges in your space that you are currently dealing with?

As you may be aware, the major challenge facing higher education in our country is limited resources. Because libraries function with the institutions they are embedded in, they are not spared from such challenges. The shortage of resources makes it difficult for libraries to maintain the necessary collections and provide services at the required level. Also, it becomes challenging to provide services that are on par with our counterparts nationally and internationally. In terms of development and staff upskilling, there is room for improvement.

SMU has embarked on a process to refurbish the library and ensure that it meets the needs and expectations of users.

How is the project going?

The project is well underway. The administrative issues concerning the refurbishment of the library have been resolved and the decanting process will begin any day from

now. We will be relocating the library to a temporary location in the open space front of the library.

Tell us about some of the key aspects of this project and how it will benefit the students.

Looking at the 2021-2025 strategic plan that talks about developing a library that is fit for purpose, the refurbishment project provides the library with an opportunity to respond to the needs of our clients.

The library clients are going to enjoy accessing and using a modern library after the refurbishment because they are going to have access to new redesigned spaces, which will be exciting according to their needs. We are looking at creating a library that fully incorporates digital technology. This is an exciting time for me to be here when we are refurbishing the library and evolving it to incorporate digital technology for our students, a language which I believe they understand better.

How long will it take to complete the refurbishment project?

According to the contractor, the project will take up to 6 months.

What is your vision for library and Information Services?

My vision has been sharpened by the fact that we are refurbishing the library. My vision is to have a fit-for-purpose State-of-the-art medical library. A medical library that evolves with technology and provides better services to the users. To do this, we must include all the technological functions of the library which are out there. After the refurbishment and inclusion of digital technologies that are available for information access, we are going to be a medical library that provides smart resources, smart services, smart spaces, and smart technology and ultimately our users and staff are going to be smart people.

Digitalization is the way to go in terms of library services. So where are we in terms of this?

We have just introduced a library mobile APP where students and staff can access library services and the information resources that we have, wherever they are on all our digital resources. We are not saying they are adequate but we are looking ahead to fully enhance our digital platforms and services. This means we are on a digital Transformation drive. The SMU library APP has not been launched yet, but it is available and is already in use. It will be launched on the 27 October 2023 during the Open Access week celebrations.

What is your message to the SMU community in particular library users?

As we embark on the refurbishment project, I would like to request SMU community to partner with us and be patient while the refurbishment is ongoing. The temporary library structure I mentioned earlier will be accessible for basic circulation and information services. Online information access through the mobile APP remains. We will make sure that we always communicate with the university's community so that they know where we are and who to contact for any information they may need.

The Office of the Vice-Chancellor

invites you to a

PUBLIC LECTURE:

TOPIC: *“Exploring the Ethics and Legalities of Artificial Reproductive Technology through an African Lens”*



SPEAKER:

PROF LETLHOKWA MPEDI
*Vice-Chancellor and Principal
University of Johannesburg*

12 OCT 2023

Time: 18h00 - 19h00

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/2mvyr35c>





Student Affairs Committee of Council undertakes a Walk About in Clinical Training Platforms

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), Student Affairs Committee of Council conducted a walkabout at Jubilee and Brits hospitals which serve Clinical Training Platforms for SMU students on Tuesday, 12 September 2023.

The primary objectives of the walkabout were amongst other things, to facilitate continuous engagements and strengthen the relationship between the clinical training platforms and the university, to facilitate best practices and to create learning opportunities, to check the clinical training sites, and student accommodation facilities and to look at maintenance issues.

The walkabout started at Jubilee Hospital, located in Hammanskraal, Pretoria in Gauteng Province. The hospital has a water shortage problem. As a result, SMU Students who are allocated to do their blocks at the Jubilee clinical training site find themselves having to buy bottled water and they explained that this has been happening since the cholera outbreak. The hospital has back up water tanks in place. Students also appealed for assistance in relation to stable Wi-Fi connectivity and other related services and the ICT department provided an explanation on some of the challenges faced and indicated that these are being resolved.

At Brits Hospital, which is located in the North-West province, SMU students have been allocated six flats as student accommodation for use by medicine students under the supervision of Dr. Mpinda. One of the challenges picked up at Brits was the lack of groundsmen and cleaning staff in the residences and students have to perform these tasks on their own. There is no shortage of water in this facility and back up tanks are also available in case of any emergency. With regard to connectivity challenges, ICT has committed to look into resolving the matter.





Dr Moreoagae Randa

is an academic titan within the Health and Education Sector

Dr Moreoagae Bertha Randa joined the former University of Limpopo Medunsa Campus as a clinical facilitator in 2011 and later became a lecturer at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) in 2013. She served as a Primary Emergency Care facilitator for the Health Care Sciences students from 2011 to 2018 and a facilitator of the Critical Care module for level 4 undergraduate students registered under the Bachelor of Nursing Degree (B Cur).

Dr Randa has been a lecturer and coordinator of General Nursing Science for level 2 undergraduate students registered for a Bachelor of Nursing Science and Art from 2018 to 2022 and for undergraduate students registered under the Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery in 2022. She is a Senior Lecturer in the department of Public Health, facilitator for the module Introduction to Health Systems Management (MPBB 191), a co-facilitator for Introduction to Health Policy (MPBF 191), Introduction to Research Methods in Public Health (MPBA 600), and Public Health Sector in South Africa (MPBE 601). Additionally, she supervises master's in public health (MPH) students and co-supervise PhD students.

Dr Randa acquired the Self-Initiated Research-Medical Research Council (SIR-MRC) 2022 award for a project titled "Impact of COVID-19 on the Services of people affected by sexual and gender-based violence." She also acquired the Global Challenge Research Fund 2018/2019 joint award with the University of Nottingham (UoN), a British Council Newton Travel Grant to establish collaboration and partnership with UoN in 2018, and an SMU Research Development Grant for completion of her PhD studies in 2015.

Dr Randa is a senior academic and researcher with over 30 years of working experience acquired across a wide range of demanding roles within the health and education sector. She is proficient in coordinating nursing education within the university and in curriculum development, student affairs administration, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) development, and ensuring compliance with legislative and agreed standards on nursing education and training through monitoring. She is also experienced in enabling cross-institutional collaboration and research, initiating activities that furthers research development, and promoting the generation of external income through research and innovation activities.

Dr Randa shared that the movement to Public Health was her aspiration for personal and professional growth. This move represents a new challenge and a chance to expand her skill set and knowledge which will ultimately groom her into a more well-rounded healthcare professional. What motivated her to join the Department of Public Health stems from her desire to have a more significant impact on healthcare systems and public health. "I have a vast interest in public health aspects that I find intriguing such as disease prevention, health promotion as well and healthcare equity. Working in the Department of Health will enhance Interdisciplinary Collaboration with experts in public health, epidemiology, health policy, and other related disciplines which I strongly believe will enrich my knowledge and skills. I am committed to continuing to contribute to both SMU and the Department's success," expressed Dr Randa.

Tabea Radise -

an Academic Coordinator in the Department of Public Health

Ms Tabea Radise has over 10 years of experience in an administrative capacity, providing academic support to various departments and other stakeholders throughout the higher education institutions she worked for. She has in-depth experience responding to students' enquiries pertaining to applications, registration, and curriculum. Amongst the other responsibilities, she advises and guides students on the university rules in connection with the progression of their studies. She graduated this year from UNISA with an LLB Degree. She spoke to Focus on her journey.

Tell us about your background, early years and schooling as well as your professional journey?

As the oldest of my siblings, my parents instilled in me the value of determination and hard work in achieving my goals. Excelling academically in primary school, I found myself at a crossroads after completing matric and worked in retail while I explored different career paths. Although I made mistakes, I learned from them and recognized the importance of self-improvement and education. To stay current with technology, I pursued a certificate in MS Office. My experience in student administration grew while working at UNISA's College of Economic and Management and College of Accounting Sciences for five years before moving on to Wits Business School.

What motivated you to further your studies?

I aspired to attain academic excellence, as no one in my family had accomplished this before. I was determined not to miss out on any opportunities that could benefit me, as they may not come around again. I believed that I had the power to take the necessary measures to improve my life and make a positive impact on my family. When the chance to study arose, and with the encouragement of my department, I was resolved to be organized and dedicated in pursuing my goal. I realized that change is a constant in life and that it's never too late to gain new knowledge. Therefore, I committed to completing my law degree, which I had started years ago. Furthering my education was a personal choice that I made for myself.



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Is the LLB degree your first qualification?

Prior to embarking on my LLB, I attained the Diploma in Public Relations and Business Communication from Damelin in 1994. Regrettably, employment prospects in that realm were scarce, prompting me to seek work in the retail sector as a means of acquiring practical skills.

What drove your interest in the field of law?

Choosing a degree in 1991 was no easy feat, especially considering the rigorous admissions process for universities. In order to pursue a Bachelor's degree, I knew I had to excel academically, and I did just that by achieving excellent grades in high school. Through self-reflection, I discovered my strengths, including a sharp attention to detail and impeccable time-management skills. As a demanding field, law requires efficient use of time, and my natural ability to read quickly and comprehend complex material further piqued my interest. I have always been a champion for justice and fairness, and I am eager to use my skills to represent those who lack knowledge of the law and legal processes. I am committed to upholding ethical standards in all aspects of my life, especially in law school where integrity is paramount. I understand the importance of studying diligently and gathering all perspectives when faced with a situation, which is a crucial skill in the legal profession. Above all, I view practicing law as a responsibility to serve as a voice for all stakeholders in the legal system, including clients, courts, opposing parties and counsel, the firm, and society at large.

How would you want to use your qualification going forward?

It will be quite a challenge for me to pursue becoming a candidate attorney while balancing a full-time job at SMU. Unfortunately, quitting my current job is not a realistic option for me, as it would mean starting from scratch. Despite this, obtaining this qualification has the potential to open up a wide array of opportunities for me, not just in the legal field, but in other areas as well. Additionally, I can utilize my knowledge of law in my day-to-day life and offer guidance to the students I work with regarding relevant rules and procedures. I firmly believe that true growth arises from facing challenges head-on rather than taking the easy way out.

What is your message to fellow colleagues at SMU?

Discipline, determination, focus and a willingness to learn will take you far. Having someone who always has your back is an invaluable asset. When you know that you have someone in your corner, you can take on the world with confidence and resilience. In 2021, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, Unisa implemented a single registration period, which resulted in a significant increase in my workload compared to previous semesters. I had to tackle 8 modules in a single examination session, making it an arduous task. Unfortunately, the situation became even more challenging as I was hospitalized a week before my exams were scheduled to start. However, my daughter's unwavering support and encouragement kept me motivated, and I didn't give up, even though I contemplated dropping some of the modules due to the enormous pressure I was under.



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CSIT Host Datathon Roadshow

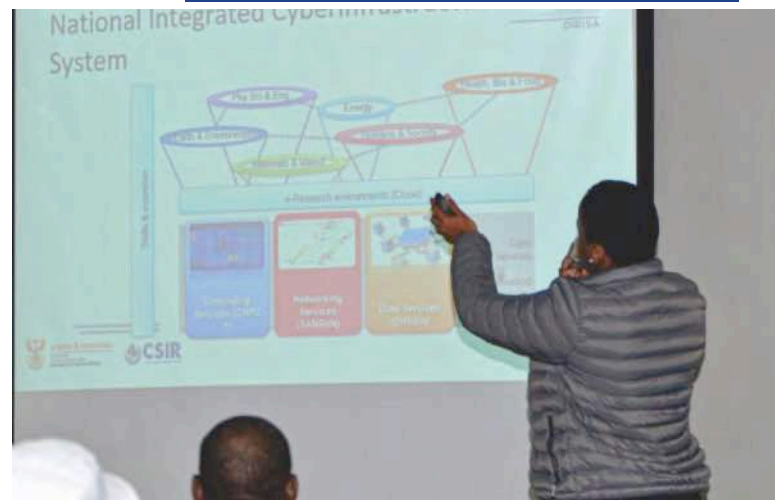
in Preparation for the National Competition

SMU Department of Computer Science and Information Technology (CSIT) under the School of Science and Technology recently hosted a Datathon Roadshow, which was facilitated by the Data Intensive Research Initiative of South Africa (DIRISA), from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The roadshow is part of the CSIR country-wide programme, which was run throughout all selected South African Universities.

Students Attending the Datathon Roadshow

The purpose of this roadshow was to raise awareness of skills development and recruit more talented, dedicated and interested students who want to pursue careers in the fields of Data Science, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning at SMU. CSIR representative Dr Nobubele Shozi who is the Manager facilitating the programme, shared the various human capital development (HCD) skills programmes that DIRISA is currently running. "DIRISA focuses their HCD efforts on undergraduate students through the DIRISA Student Datathon Challenge and towards postgraduate students with the coordination of the National E-Science Postgraduate Teaching and Training Platform (NEPTTP)," said Dr Shozi.

The engagements were to showcase the various research data management services that are available for researchers to use, including the South African data management planning tool that currently houses several research data management templates; DIRISA's implementation of the long-term archival solution for the preservation of research data of value for long periods; The data deposit and sharing tools that can be used to store and share active data; The data minting service that can be used to tag research data with persistent identifiers.



CSIT is the smallest department within the institution, hence they have the most potential career opportunities in the AI world. The students who pursue a career in Computer Science and Information Technology have a lot of potential to develop their skills in learning how machines can understand human languages, and then mine various types of datasets, from numerical, textual, and visual data to bring AI solutions to the world. "We play coding, that is who we are, just give us any type of data we can learn from it and propose or develop models that may solve challenges in the AI world," said Ms Mosima Masethe the Data Science Mentor.

She further said that CSIT wants to encourage its students to enjoy the fun of learning new technologies and be able to catch up with the cutting-edge technologies, such as data science and machine learning skills to form part of the AI solutions developers. "Our target as a department is to continue educating our students to participate in more hackathons, and datathons, which gives them opportunities to upgrade their skills as AI developers and compete nationally and internationally with their peers and showcase that there

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are potential future Data Scientists from our SMU,” she emphasised.

The CSIT intends to develop itself internally, double its enrolment stats every two years, and have more students pursue a career with it. Soon, they will collaborate internally within and beyond the School of Science and Technology on AI projects for both research and skills development, more especially on AI in healthcare. “The biggest challenge we are facing right now, is the availability of African datasets, for us to educate our African students in Africa to develop models that solve African challenges and further test those models to be suitable to African solutions. Not only that, but this can also accelerate our footprints in the patents contributions and reflects our African continent on the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) map,” Ms Masethe explained.

The plan for CSIT is to continue educating the students in the field of Data Science and AI as much as they can, to make sure they brand the institution further in this field of study. In November, six candidates who are SMU registered students were selected for an ongoing training in preparation to compete with their peers in the final Datathon 2023 competition.

In 2022, for the very first time in the history of the competition, four undergraduate students from SMU participated in

the DIRISA Student Datathon Challenge, against other nine South African Universities in the national competitions. Ms. Masethe ecstatically said, "Zolani Xulu (Team Leader), Faith Mokgolobotho, Temba Ramasehla and Mthokosizi Mtshweni, were the bravest students, with a passion for learning new things, and face the unknown challenges, and they were the first to put SMU in the national competitions and sought to acquire knowledge and compete with mature institutions in the finals. They had so much confidence and I believe that step will take them far in their career path. It was through a couple of sleepless nights for them to acquire such a marketable skill”.

Khanyisa won a full study bursary from Korbicom which was one of the DIRISA Dathathon sponsors during the 2022 competition, and an opportunity to get exposure at the company during recess, for her to acquire more knowledge and develop skills in this field. “I wholeheartedly recommend that students participate in the Datathon because it brings opportunities such as the Korbicom Education Trust Bursary for aspiring student seeking financial support, practical experience, and a clear path to a rewarding career. My personal experience has been transformative, and I am immensely grateful for the opportunities it has provided me. I believe that the datathon has the potential to empower countless other individuals to pursue their dreams and make a positive impact on society,” concluded Khanyisa.



SMU urges Women in business to come forward and take up available opportunities

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University through its Supply Chain Management (SCM) unit successfully hosted its Inaugural Gender-Responsiveness Procurement Symposium (GRPS) on 21 August 2023. GRPS was aimed at developing women-owned businesses and empowering women by providing them with information that will encourage them to do business with SMU and other institutions and to provide a platform where



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they could be able to engage with various stakeholders as part of engendering understanding of the procurement processes.

The SCM Department realized that there is very limited participation from women-owned entities within the procurement process and saw it necessary to host the symposium to inform women about the opportunities that are available within the university and beyond.

A variety of Guest speakers from various organizations were lined up and made empowering presentations to those who attended the symposium. These speakers included current SALGA Gauteng Provincial Director of Operations Ms Philisiwe Twala-Tau, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Programme Management Specialist Ms Ayanda Mvimbi and Seasoned Supply Chain Management executive Dr Ayanda Nteta, from Pula Consulting and Ms Lebogang Letsoalo, Global SCM Coach and CEO of Sinpoint. Also present at the symposium was Ms Meshal Moonsamy who is responsible for the universities within the Purchasing Consortium of the Higher Educational sector in Southern Africa (PURCO SA) together with Mr Tshepo Mampuru who is the Contract Manager at PURCO SA.

The Director for SCM at SMU Ms. Noxolo Tshutsha used her address to unpack SMU SCM processes and spoke about the opportunities available for women. The University has proper tools in place to ensure prudent management of resources. Tshutsha said that the Council-approved SCM Policy provides guidelines and directions that are aimed at ensuring that the university processes are fair, transparent, competitive, equitable and cost-effective. She further indicated that infrastructure projects are one of the major commodities that the university procures and take up a significant proportion of the university's budget. She emphasized that the university is encouraging all women-owned entities to participate in these projects including day-to-day procurement of repairs and maintenance, construction, and Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning services (HVAC) and all other maintenance-related services and not should limit themselves to responding to procurement of catering services.

“Although we have an “in-house” service provider that was appointed to render catering services, we have several events that are happening on campus, and we normally go out to the market to procure those services. There is a need for cleaning materials, our facilities are very big and we now and then procure cleaning materials and supplies, we also need waste management services that include the medical waste and the normal waste that you would find out in the market. SMU being the institution that specializes in healthcare sciences, procures several medical equipment and supplies and again you are all capable of participating in these opportunities. SMU also procures furniture, ICT equipment and consumables amongst others and we will soon be procuring the services of a contractor for the construction of an 800 beds student accommodation”, Ms Tshutsha shared with the audience.

In closing SMU Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Thandi Matsha - Erasmus thanked everyone for taking their precious time to attend the symposium and acknowledged some of the female staff members who are doing well academically as a part of commemorating Women's Month.

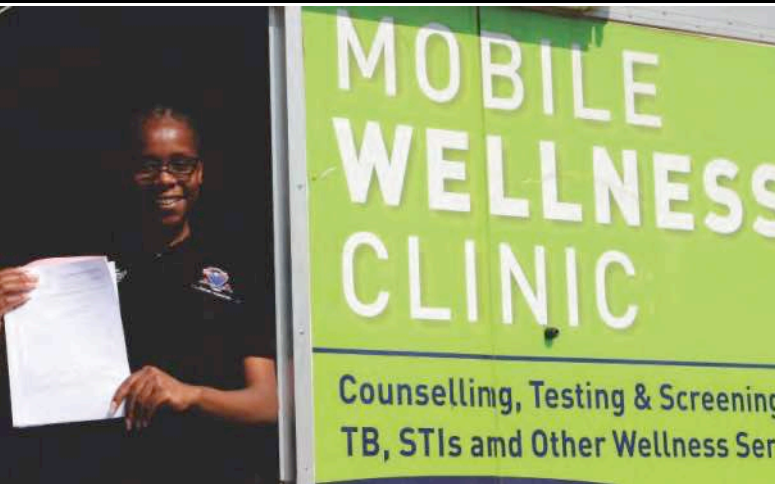


SMU Campus Health and Counselling Unit continues to offer necessary services to members of the SMU community



Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University's (SMU) Campus Health and Counselling Unit ran a 3-day Women's Health and Wellness campaign from 30 August to 1 September 2023 to provide health services and education to all SMU students.

Services that were rendered during the campaign included Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) testing, Tuberculosis (TB) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) screening, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), contraceptives, a substance abuse programme and psychosocial support for survivors of GBV. Students were empowered to make sound decisions on how to live a healthy and safe lifestyle. Part of the substance abuse programme was to educate students about sexual risk behaviors influenced by drugs, alcohol, and other substances. Students were urged to take charge of their health and be responsible.



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Campus Health Unit Health Promotor Ms Kelebogile Nonkwelo acknowledged organizations that contributed to the success of the campaign such as: MIET Africa which was responsible for providing students with self-test kits, HIV tests, PrEP, and Contraceptive injections, Childline which screened and assisted students who needed psychosocial support and the Community Oriented Substance Use Programme (COSUP) which educated students about the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse.

Ms Nonkwelo gave figures of those who came forward to participate in the campaign and mentioned that they were able to initiate 48 students on PrEP, identified 3 students who needed psychosocial support, 216 Students tested for HIV, 407 students visited the stalls for information, 70 students received Oral self-test kits and 27 received contraceptives.

“Youth days are too short, whatever health risks you are taking now will show results at a later stage. Prevention is cost-effective, it prevents hospitalization and premature death,” Nonkwelo emphasised.

Treasurer general of the Student Representative Council (SRC) Thato Pasha shared that this was a very good initiative because students get free testing, advisors, and an opportunity for them to know their status. She indicated that young people have this stigma of saying no to testing. “It is a good thing to test because there are many ways to get HIV and AIDS, not only by sexual intercourse. I think that it is important for one to know their status and not be ashamed of it. The sooner you know, the sooner you will take care of yourself and be exposed to treatment”, said the SRC TG. She concluded by saying she is happy that she got free testing and knows her status.



Physiotherapy Department celebrates World Physiotherapy Day

The Department of Physiotherapy joined the rest of the world in commemorating World Physiotherapy Day under the theme 'arthritis' on 8 September 2023.

This year's theme focused on the prevention and management of arthritis while promoting physiotherapists at the same time. Acting Dean for the School of Health Care Sciences Prof Douglas Maleka opened the commemorative event and explained what World Physiotherapy Day all is about. The day marks the unity and solidarity of the global physiotherapy community. It is an opportunity to recognize the work that physiotherapists do for their patients and the community at large.

To spice up the celebrations, the Department of Physiotherapy hosted a colour run and an aerobics session to celebrate with the rest of SMU's community. Not only were the exercises fun activities for the day but they also had important benefits such as: improving lung and

cardiovascular health, reducing the risk of chronic illnesses (heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer), increasing joint strength, stability, bone density and muscle mass, and stimulates better sleep, mood, and immunity for individuals. Physiotherapy Lecturer Ntombenkosi Sobantu indicated that the physio-therapy students took the initiative for fundraising on the day mainly for attending the Comrades Marathon as health providers for experiential learning. The department



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also educated the participants about the significance of physio-therapy which is defined as the treatment to restore, maintain, and make the most of a patient's mobility, function, and well-being. Physiotherapy helps through physical rehabilitation, injury prevention, health and fitness.

Bongeka Boyana from the Research and Innovation Directorate mentioned that World Physiotherapy Day activities added some fun and were refreshing. She indicated that most of the time they sit in the office working, which is why it was lovely to have an event that allowed people to exercise and be outdoors. "We participated in the colour run and aerobics. Fitness is important for our wellbeing, and I appreciate the initiative from the physiotherapy department as they shared insightful information about world physiotherapy day," expressed Bongeka



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SMU Official Launch of the Student Vegetable Garden



SMU officially launched a student vegetable garden that was hosted by Build Environment in collaboration with the Student Affairs Department and the Student Representative Council (SRC) on 8 September 2023.

The vegetable garden was launched to eradicate the issue of food insecurity and will allow students to have access to vegetables. The garden exists to create a space where students can build and strengthen relationships while contributing to each other's basic needs of food security. Director of Build Environment Yandisa Lengoasa explained that food insecurity is one of the many challenges experienced by less privileged students across institutions of higher learning in South Africa which is why the university is taking the initiative. "Launching this garden will also add a holistic learning component to our students," said Lengoasa.

Built Environment Horticulturist Mpho Mmako indicated that having a vegetable garden not only helps the environment in so many ways but will also help students cope with stress while engaging in gardening. "We want to lay a foundation for a better lifestyle through physical activity and create a platform for ongoing teaching around respecting the environment, taking pride in our institution and its surroundings", Mmako said.

Acting Head of Department: Student Housing, Mr Mohale Machete said, "this is a start as we will be having a green campus in the residences and therefore as a department, we support this initiative". SRC President Thato Maseko who participated in the planting of various vegetables emphasized

that the sole intention of this initiative is to realize that there are students who are struggling and do not have bursaries and they need food. "Our view is that we cannot continue to live in this land with students being hungry and not fed while they can get sick. If you do not eat, you get hungry, and if you are hungry, you fail because you cannot concentrate", said Maseko. He committed that students will come through and give support to the team of Gardening as the skills developed will be permanent and can be used in future.

Built Environment indicated that they would expand the garden in the future to support a larger part of the SMU Community and the expansion plans also include hosting regular training sessions for students' volunteers to sustain this initiative where students will be maintaining the garden daily with the support of the Gardening and Grounds team. Their task will therefore include weed removal, watering, and cleaning around the vegetable structure.



Fact Sheet - Drug Abuse



Almost 20% of South Africans – 1 out of every 5 adults, abuse mind-altering substances, with alcohol, pain-killers (codeine) and dagga.

Did you know that drug abuse is not only with illegal drugs but prescription drugs as well?

Substance abuse starts by:

- Using addictive drugs (illicit or prescribed) for recreational purposes or abusing prescription medication.
- Any drugs taken against what the pharmacist said can lead to side effects or even abuse.
- There are many factors that may make people vulnerable to substance abuse, including genetics, family background, mental and physical health issues, work stress, financial pressure, and relationship problems etc.
- These factors can make the person use substances as a coping mechanism, even though it is against their interest in the long term.
- The longer an addiction lasts, the more stress and strain it puts on the individual, showing as depression, anxiety and paranoia.

The following are physical, psychological and social signs and symptoms of someone with substance abuse:

- Weight loss, skin color change, skin outbreaks.
- Intense urges or cravings as the addiction develops.
- Withdrawal symptoms leading to suboptimal performance and physical craving.
- Isolation, depression, anxiety and paranoia.
- Unhealthy friendships with people who have similar habits.
- Financial difficulties due to large amounts of money being spent on drugs or alcohol.
- Neglecting responsibilities, such as work or personal obligations.
- Poor judgement, including risky behaviors such as stealing, lying, engaging in unsafe sex, selling drugs, or crimes that could land the person in jail.

NB: Seek professional help from the pharmacist or any other healthcare professional if you think you are at risk.

Develop healthy friendships and relationships by avoiding temptation and peer pressure to use substances. Remember the pharmacy staff is there for you and are willing to help you overcome.

Compiled by Dr Phumzile Skosana - Lecturer, SMU School of Pharmacy

SMU Sport Officer

Elected as USSA Football Vice Chairperson



SMU Sports Officer Busisiwe Sijora was recently elected to serve as the Vice Chairperson of the University Sports South Africa (USSA) Football Committee. She will serve a two-year term of office from 2023 until 2025. Her newly acquired responsibilities are diverse and crucial to the success of the USSA Football Committee. She will play a pivotal role in maintaining discipline, supporting the Chairperson, and collaborating with committee members to drive the development of USSA Football.

“I am entrusted as the head of the discipline in consultation with the Chairperson to ensure that members of the committee adhere to the expected standards of behaviour and carry out their duties effectively. “I am also tasked with providing adequate support and assistance to the Chairperson in carrying out his responsibilities. This role involves acting as a 'critical friend' and a sounding board for the Chairperson, offering valuable insights and advice to enhance their decision-making process,” enlightens Busisiwe.

Furthermore, her role involves working closely and collaboratively with all the members by fostering a spirit of teamwork and collaboration, including actively participating in discussions, contributing ideas, and encouraging open communication among committee members.

Her vision for the new role is to work collaboratively with the rest of the USSA Football NEC members in establishing a long-term strategy that promotes inclusivity, diversity, and excellence in all aspects of football. “I would like to prioritise the development of a robust programme that ensures the safety and well-being of athletes, coaches, and officials while also creating opportunities for growth and advancement. In addition, my other wish is to advocate the importance of academic excellence through sports and community engagement. Finally, I hope to foster a culture of transparency, accountability, and innovation within USSA Football that enables us to deliver on our mission and achieve the goals of our organisation, not forgetting to revive the spirit of "The Best of Campus Football,” Busisiwe explained.

While her new role is challenging, she believes that with the proper guidance and support from the team, member institutions and mentors, they will collectively reach their goals as a committee. She enjoys influencing changes and making contributions to the development of university sports. “I contested the position of USSA Football Vice Chairperson because football has always been my first love, and I have a deep passion for university sports. The other reason that made me go for this role is that, as women, we expect to run for the secretarial role,” she said.

She sees her election as a validation for her dedication and commitment to university sports, especially football, adding that her efforts and expertise in the field have been recognised by her colleagues. "I am entrusted with this leadership role, especially at the national level. This election presents a tremendous opportunity for me to contribute to the development and growth of university football in our country", Busisiwe further elucidated.

She believes her election serves as an inspiration to aspiring female athletes, coaches, and administrators as it sends a message that they can aspire to leadership positions and

achieve their goals, regardless of societal norms or expectations. In 2016, she had the privilege of serving in the USSA National Executive Committee (NEC) as a student, where she held the portfolio of Transformation and Development. This experience gave her invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities within university sports. "I believe that university sport is the core of South African sports, as most of our national assets come from USSA structures, and it is essential to nurture it with new ideas and approaches," concluded Busisiwe, who is also one of the Executive Members of the South African Handball Federation Committee.

Meet **Karate coach, Shihan Isaac Mashinini**



Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) has yet another reason to be proud, as its Karate coach, Shihan Isaac Mashinini, has been selected to be a referee in the upcoming 13th World Karate Championships that will take place in Japan on October 13 - 15, 2023. This is a great honor and an incredible achievement, not just for Mashinini but also for SMU.

The 13th World Karate Championships will be a worldwide event that will feature karate experts from different parts of the world. It is a platform where the best and most skilled karate athletes and officials will display their talent and expertise. As one of the selected officials, Mashinini will have the opportunity to interact with some of the most notable karate experts in the world.

Mashinini's selection is well deserved. He has been a well-known figure in the karate scene for many years, and his contribution to SMU's karate program has been immense. His unwavering commitment and dedication to the sport have resulted in many successful champions and accolades for SMU in several competitions.

We are thrilled to have such representation on the world stage, and we are confident that Mashinini will continue raising the SMU flag up high. Not only will he be showcasing his skills, but he will also be representing SMU, South Africa, and the entire African continent.

Shihan Isaac Mashinini will be leaving South Africa on October 10, 2023, several days before the competition starts since he is also one of the selected officials that must attend the conference that will take place on October 12, 2023. We wish him all the best as he prepares for this exciting event, and we are confident that he will make us proud.

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SMU Sport Shines

Across Different Sporting Codes

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) celebrated great achievements in sports recently as athletes representing different sporting codes clinched championships in various competitions. Sports codes such as bodybuilding, dance, karate, and football (women and development) left an indelible mark against their counterparts, making the university proud.

SMU celebrated great achievements in sports recently as athletes representing different sporting codes clinched championships in various competitions. Sports codes such as bodybuilding, dance, karate, and football (women and development) left an indelible mark against their counterparts, making the university proud.

Bodybuilding Stars Shine Bright

Three formidable bodybuilding athletes proudly represented Team Gauteng at the highly competitive SA Championships in Mpumalanga from 2-3 September. Among them, Taelo Maloka, a dedicated second-year BSc Dietetics student, stood tall by securing a remarkable 2nd place position in the Men's Physique under 178cm category. Mlondolzi Sibanda, a fourth-year MBChB student, also earned his stripes, clinching a well-deserved 2nd place in the U-23 category and an impressive 5th place in the U-70kg senior men category. Sipehele Shange, another 4th year Medicine student, showcased unwavering determination, finishing 7th in the U-23 men's U-70kg category. Their achievements emphasise the university's commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who excel academically and athletically.

Dance Sport: Champions of Artistry

Lesedi and Bokamoso mesmerised audiences at the World Artistic Dance Federation (WADF) All African Artistic Championships held in Seychelles from 2-3 September 2023. The dynamic duo demonstrated their prowess by being crowned champions in the youth section and securing an impressive second place in the junior category. Their performances indicate the dedication and artistry that SMU athletes bring to their chosen disciplines.

Karate Warriors Rise to the Challenge

SMU's karate club showcased their fighting spirit at the 6th Limpopo Annual Championships. With three fighters representing Team Gauteng, the results were impressive. Oratilwe Sethabela exhibited skill and determination, finishing 3rd in the girls under 60kg category and repeating the feat in the ladies U-55kg category. Tebogo Nare proved his mettle with a 2nd place finish in the men's U-70kg category, while Faith Khosa displayed tenacity, reaching the last 16 in the men's U-80kg category. Ntsako Sono added to the triumph with a 3rd place finish in the ladies' U-65kg category, and Junior Rambau's spirit earned him the coveted "best-spirited fighter" award. SMU's karate warriors continue to inspire with their resilience and fighting spirit.

Women's Football: A Dominant Victory

The women's football team displayed sheer dominance on the field, winning their league game against Ga-Rankuwa Shooting Stars with a resounding 3-0 scoreline. Their teamwork, skill, and determination are a testament to the unwavering spirit of SMU athletes.

Football Development: A Rising Force

SMU's football development team played against Juventus Football Club's development teams, showcasing the university's commitment to nurturing young talent. The results were a true reflection of their dedication and training. These impressive results highlight the potential and promise of SMU's football development programme:

- SMU U-11 won 3-0
- SMU U-13 won 6-0
- SMU U-15 won 3-0
- SMU U-17 won 4-1
- SMU U-19 fought valiantly but lost 2-1

SMU Sport continues celebrating its feats underpinned by discipline, determination, and dedication. These remarkable feats are a testament to SMU's commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who balance and excel in both their academic and athletic pursuits.



We are excited to share some thrilling updates and achievements from the SMU Sport and Recreation Department. Our student-athletes continue to shine in their respective sports, and we could not be prouder of their dedication and hard work. Here are some of the latest highlights:

Blue Bulls Call-Up

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Ntokozo Nkosi, a first-year student pursuing a degree in Occupational Therapy. Ntokozo has been selected to represent the Blue Bulls under 20 squad. The team competed in the SA Rugby under 20 Cup.

Ntokozo's achievements serve as an inspiration not only to her teammates but also to aspiring student-athletes and fellow students. Her success exemplifies the importance of a strong work ethic, perseverance, and maintaining a well-rounded approach to life. Ntokozo's ability to excel both on and off the field serves as a reminder that with dedication and determination, anything is possible. This tournament will undoubtedly provide her with a platform to display her skills and make a lasting impact. With her natural talent, tenacity, and the support of her team, Ntokozo is poised to leave an indelible mark at the competition.

USSA Supa Pool National Championships

Our Supa Pool Club recently participated in the highly competitive USSA Supa Pool National Championships held in East London from 21st to 24th September 2023. We are thrilled to announce that both our male and female teams showcased remarkable talent and determination. Our female team secured an impressive third-place finish, while our male team also claimed the third position.

From the precision shots to the strategic gameplay, you have showcased remarkable talent and sportsmanship that has left us in awe. Your teamwork and camaraderie have been nothing short of exceptional, and it is clear that you are a force to be reckoned with.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to our incredible coach and support staff who have played an instrumental role in shaping our team's success. Your guidance, expertise, and belief in our players have

been invaluable, and we are grateful for your unwavering support. Kudos to our talented student-athletes for their outstanding performance!

Newly Elected Leadership

We are delighted to share the news of the newly elected leadership. Molau Zacharia Ramolobe, a dedicated student currently pursuing a Bachelor of Oral Hygiene, has been elected as the General Secretary of USSA Supa Pool. We have full confidence in Zake's ability to excel in his new role. Additionally, Mr. Karabo Mokoka, one of our esteemed Sport Officers, has been elected as the Vice Chairperson of USSA Supa Pool. We extend our warmest congratulations to both Molau and Mr. Mokoka and we are confident that with their visionary mindset and remarkable organisational skills, they will excel in their new roles. As the USSA Supa Pool General Secretary, and Vice Chairperson they will undoubtedly shape the future of the sport, ensuring its growth and development on a national level.

Women's Football Triumph

Our women's football team displayed exceptional skill and teamwork in their recent GALFA Women's League encounter against Garankuwa Queens. The match, held on Sunday, 24 September 2023, ended in a resounding 5-1 victory for our team. Thabisile, one of our standout players, scored an impressive hat trick and was deservedly crowned Diski Queen of the Match by her teammates. Well done to our women's team for their remarkable performance!

We are incredibly proud of our students' achievements and the dedication they show in representing SMU in various sporting arenas. Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to support and celebrate the accomplishments of our talented student-athletes.

Email: sports@smu.ac.za | Tel: 012 521 4185/3858
#WeAreSMU | #smusport





BE ON THE LOOKOUT for vervet monkey on SMU Campus

WHAT IS A VERVET MONKEY?

The vervet monkey is classified as *Chlorocebus pygerythrus*. The vervet monkeys have also been considered as subspecies of a widespread. Vervet monkey is an Old-World monkey of the family Cercopithecidae native to Africa.

HABITATION FOR VERVET MONKEYS

They are a highly social groups and live in troops of up to 50 individuals. Vervet monkeys are found inhabiting a wide variety of open grassland, where they are dependent on water availability and trees for food and safety. They are also found in urban areas and farms where they often invade crops in cultivated fields. They adapt easily to many environments. They have a strong preference for fruit and flowers, but they

vary their diet according to seasonal food availability however in the dry regions where there is lack of food sources in the wild, they can become a huge pest and a nuisance as they seek for any available food sources.

Vervet monkeys use facial expressions (eye lid display) and body postures to communicate threats or aggressive behavior.

HOW DOES A VERVET MONKEYS LOOK LIKE?

The vervet monkeys are identified by their grizzly, silver-grey coat, black face, and long tails. The vervet monkey's face is black with white colouring around the eyes and on the eyelids. The face, hands and feet are hairless and black. Males have brightly coloured genitals with a blue scrotum and a red penis. Vervet monkeys have long arms and legs that are of approximately equal length.

WHAT COULD BE THE CAUSES OF THE INCREASED EXISTENCE OF VERVET MONKEYS ON CAMPUS.

- Poor waste management within campus
- Food provision/ need
- Feeding skim on monkeys

WHAT TO DO TO SCARE THE MONKEYS AWAY?

- Loud noises, such as banging pots, can scare monkeys away.
- Plastic snakes discourage monkeys but don't leave them in the same place for too long as they will realize that the snakes are not real.
- Water is an effective deterrent.

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DO'S AND DON'TS

with regards to monkeys' population

DO'S	DON'TS
Keep windows closed to prevent them from coming in, when leaving residence, office space.	Try avoiding eating in areas where monkeys are mostly found.
Clean dustbins by putting bleach inside and outside bins. This acts as a deterrent.	Avoid direct eye contact, monkeys consider this as a threatening and may attack in self-defense.
Make sure that bins are properly closed.	Do not feed monkeys – it can affect their breeding and eating patterns.
Waste management at the source: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storm water drain clearance. Waste collection from the source to the points on campus (Halls, Kitchens, and certain University accommodation). 	Do not tease or attempt to catch the monkeys.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THERE IS A MONKEY IN MY ROOM / OFFICE?

Keep some big sticks, a hose, or another water spraying device handy with you.

- Do not approach the monkey directly, do not stare at it, and do not try to corner it.
- Identify an exit and encourage the monkey to leave by hitting the ground with a stick. Never hit a monkey. A strong jet of water directed toward the monkey can also encourage it towards the exit.
- If there are juveniles in a group of monkeys be especially cautious. Lower your head, keep your distance, and move away.

CONTROL/PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Waste bins: emptying of dustbins at collection points, removal of rubbish, refuse and kitchen waste from such collection points.

Consider your body language.

Avoid smiling at monkeys or making any sort of gesture that shows or bares your teeth. To a monkey, a big toothy grin is a sign of threat and aggression. Don't yell at, sing to, tease, or heckle the monkeys. Avoid any postures that would seem aggressive to a fellow human being and keep your motions minimal. Being aggressive will only get you attacked.

Be careful when taking pictures.

Monkeys have been known to attack selfie-takers because they sometimes interpret their own reflection in the camera lens as a strange and potentially dangerous monkey.

Be aware of hostile signs.

Always pay close attention to a monkey's body language. There are some behaviors you should become familiar with. For example, a monkey is telling you it feels threatened and might behave in an aggressive manner if it blinks, makes an exaggerated yawn, or gives you a big smile. When a monkey

bares its teeth, it is almost always a sign of aggression. Show them your empty palms. Most acts of monkey aggression are a result of a monkey thinking you have food. If you do have food, throw it in their direction. If you don't, simply hold out your empty palms to show the monkey you have none.

RECOMMENDATION

Anyone around the SMU surrounding area should hide their purse and cellphones because monkeys have been known to raid them for food and treats. In conclusion, Vervet monkeys should not be fed. It's almost always a bad idea to have food in the vicinity of a monkey, as food is one of the most common reasons a monkey will attack. This applies to food you've kept hidden in a container, too. Monkeys have an amazing sense of smell and can even detect food that's still in its packaging. Plus, giving food to one monkey will likely attract others, which may interpret your refusal to feed them as a sign of aggression and be a reason for them to attack.

REFERENCES

Animal of the week (2014). Vervet Monkey. Viewed (06/09/2023). <https://www.sanbi.org/animal-of-the-week/vervet-monkey/>



Institutional

Values

Aligned to Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Accountability:

We are obliged to answer for the execution of our responsibilities. Accountability cannot be delegated, whereas responsibility can be delegated without abdicating accountability.

1.

Effective Leadership

We are results-driven and focus on achieving strategic objectives and positive outcomes.

2.

Efficiency

We pledge to be efficient stewards of the resources entrusted to our care for maximum benefit to the University.

3.

Excellence

Performance excellence in the core and operational functions of the university.

4.

Integrity

We act with integrity in accordance with the highest academic, professional, and ethical standards.

5.

Respect

We respect and honour the dignity of each person, embrace civil discourse, and foster a diverse, inclusive, and safe community.

6.

Student Centered

Promoting student-centeredness as the heart of the academic enterprise.

7.

Ubuntu

encompasses respect, dignity, value, acceptance, sharing, co-responsibility, humanness, social justice, fairness, personhood, morality, group solidarity, compassion, conciliation etc.

8.

The University is a values-driven institution. Our people adopt and live on values and shapes our culture lived by the alignment of the objectives of all stakeholders. Our institutional values guide our behaviors and actions every day.

