



Student Newspaper • Volume 3 / 2nd Edition | October 2023

Dintshang



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HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

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**SMU First SRC
Women's Convention**

Students Excellence Awards



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VISION:

Transforming health services
through excellence and innovation.

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University awards students for excellence



Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University hosted its inaugural Student Affairs Excellence Awards last night, 19 October 2023 at the University's sports complex. In his opening remarks to outline the purpose of the event, SMU Registrar Dr Jeffrey Mabelebele explained that this was an important milestone for the university as the occasion was about celebrating one of the core values of SMU which is EXCELLENCE. "The purpose for tonight is really to honour, celebrate and award the excellent contributions by our students in the respective areas of student life which have been significant in shaping student life at SMU", he said. Mabelebele added that the awards are one of the many initiatives Smu is rolling out as it continues the journey towards building and shaping the university to what it should be as contemplated in its vision and strategy.

SMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Peter Mbatlana pointed out that the awards initiative is rooted in the university's commitment to encourage and embed a culture of excellence in the daily lives of both students and staff. "This initiative is directed by our institutional values which are fundamental principles that guide our behaviours and actions every day. The significance of the Student Excellence Awards is therefore to recognize outstanding leadership and achievements", said the VC.

“I wish to congratulate all the award recipients- both as individuals and collectively as teams who have excelled in their respective areas. It is a great pleasure to recognize your dedication and commitment and to thank you for your outstanding work. The success of the student life is enabled and flourishes on the back of excellent quality support services. Central to excellence is leadership and followership that imbues the values of the University in providing quality service essential to sustaining and driving a student-centred campus”, Mbatlana added.

The awards were a culmination of a vigorous process of selection and focused on the areas of sports and recreation, student housing as well as student leadership.







MSc Student wins SAIP Research Award



Congratulations:
Supervisor
Dr. Thembinkosi Malevu (left)
congratulates his student
Tebogo Selema (right)
for winning the award for the
best oral presentation during
the annual SAIP conference.

SMU's Master of Science (MSc) in Physics first-year student Tebogo Selema was recently announced as the recipient of the best oral presentation, during the annual South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) conference held at the University of Zululand, KwaZulu-Natal. Tebogo walked away with a certificate and prize money for his efforts. Dintshang Student newspaper Writer interviewed Tebogo and his supervisor Dr Thembinkosi Malevu to get insight on the award and research project.

How do you feel about winning the award during the annual South African Institute of Physics Conference?

Tebogo Selema (TS): Honestly, winning the award at the South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) conference feels incredible and overwhelming. SAIP is a massive platform in the physics community, and being part of it was an amazing experience. When they called my name on stage, I couldn't believe it. I knew everyone was fantastic, and I felt proud to confidently present my work, even though the competition was tough and intimidating. So, when they announced my name as the recipient of the award for the best oral presentation, I wanted to shout with excitement inside, but I held back and accepted the prize. This is my second award – last year (2022), I also received an award at the 8th annual collaborative symposium held at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University). It was a unique achievement since I was the only Honours student presenting alongside Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) candidates.

What is your research topic that won you the award? Could you explain it briefly?

TS: The research I presented is titled "Effects of annealing time on structural, morphology, and optical properties of Zinc Oxide nanoparticles prepared via Sol-gel method". This study focused on using Zinc Oxide for solar cells, specifically as an electron transport layer (ETL). Although Zinc Oxide has great properties like a high exciton energy and temperature resistance, it has limitations like poor solar light consumption due to a wide bandgap and rapid recombination of charge carriers. We looked into a process called "Annealing" to modify Zinc Oxide's properties, making it more workable and efficient. Annealing can narrow the band gap, allowing the material to capture more solar energy for solar cell use. In our study, we focused on annealing time while keeping the temperature constant, which is a different approach from the usual annealing methods.

How will your research benefit the public?

TS: This research has the potential to make affordable and accessible solar panels a reality. Currently, many people can't afford solar panels, so we aim to create cost-effective and efficient solar cells. This could help address the global energy crisis and provide a sustainable energy solution for more people.

How will winning this award affect your career path?

TS: Winning this award at the South African Institute of Physics Conference will have a profound impact on my career trajectory, particularly as I strive for a path focused on academia and research. This recognition serves as a significant validation of my dedication and efforts in the field of physics, bolstering my confidence and reaffirming my commitment to pursuing a research-oriented career.

The award enhances my academic credentials and reputation within the physics community. It provides a tangible demonstration of my capabilities as a researcher and presenter, making my profile stand out to prospective academic institutions, research organizations, and collaborators.

What are the objectives of the conference?

TS: The conference has a few main goals: Promoting the study and research of physics and encouraging practical applications, creating a platform for physicists to share knowledge through publications and conferences, and maintaining high professional standards and ethics among physicists.

How many institutions participated? Can you name a few?

TS: Almost all South African universities were part of this conference. In addition to the universities, delegates from other organizations such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), iThemba Laboratories for Accelerator-Based Science (iThemba Labs), Nuclear Energy Corporation of SA (NECSA), National Research Foundation (NRF), and South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO) also attended.

Can you tell us about your research supervisor?

TS: My research supervisor Dr Thembinkosi Malevu is truly exceptional. I'm grateful to have him guiding me – I couldn't have asked for a better mentor. He saw my potential and nurtured it, equipping me with the knowledge and skills I needed. He taught me everything about being a researcher and always made time for me despite his busy schedule. His work ethic is impressive, and I've benefited immensely. Interestingly, he has also received these awards during his postgraduate studies. I also want to mention Dr Dieketseng Tsotetsi from the University of South Africa (UNISA), my co-supervisor, who played a significant role in the success of this research. Both of them ignited my passion for research, and I'm forever thankful.

How does it feel to supervise an award-winning postgraduate student?

Dr. Thembinkosi Malevu (DTM): I am delighted to share my thoughts on the recent success of our graduate students at the SAIP conference. The Best Oral Presenter award is a testament to the exceptional dedication and hard work put forth by our students and the collaborative environment fostered at the Department of Physics under the School of Science and Technology (SST). It is a tremendous honour and

source of pride to have supervised a postgraduate student who has been recognized with the Best Oral Presenter award at the SAIP conference. This achievement reflects the commitment of both our students and the academic community in the department to pushing the boundaries of knowledge and contributing meaningfully to their respective fields.

What do you think led to your student winning the award?

DTM: The award can be attributed to a combination of factors. First and foremost, our student's dedication to rigorous research and the pursuit of excellence played a pivotal role. Their ability to articulate complex concepts with clarity and engage the audience effectively is a testament to their communication skills. Furthermore, the supportive and collaborative research environment at SMU, along with the guidance and mentorship provided by our School, undoubtedly contributed to their success.

What is unique about the research that won the award?

DTM: The research that garnered this prestigious award stands out due to its innovative approach and valuable contributions to the field. Its uniqueness lies in the creative perspective our students brought to the research question, as well as the depth of analysis and originality of the findings. The award-winning research reflects the spirit of inquiry and exploration that we encourage and cultivate in the research group.

In conclusion, what can you say to our readers?

DTM: It is important to emphasize that this achievement is a collective one, reflecting the dedication of our students and the quality of education and research facilities provided by Dr Dieketseng Tsotetsi, a co-supervisor from the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am forever grateful for her significant contribution, which ensured the success of this study. The award serves as a poignant reminder of our commitment to nurturing talent, fostering innovation, and advancing knowledge for the betterment of society at large.

As we celebrate this remarkable accomplishment, we also extend our recognition to the ongoing efforts of all our students who consistently strive for excellence. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share our insights on this remarkable achievement. We eagerly anticipate witnessing further accomplishments and contributions from our students as they continue to excel in their academic and research pursuits.

SMU SRC organized the first-ever Women's Convention to encourage female students to take up leadership and business opportunities



Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), Student Representative Council (SRC) hosted a women's convention event for the first time on Thursday, 31 August 2023. The purpose of the convention was to empower young SMU women with different sets of skills in leadership, finance, business and more. Over 400 SMU female students gathered inside the new auditorium to listen to several speakers.

The SRC came up with this initiative with the understanding that it has a responsibility to represent, protect and advance the interests of students at all times; and to make a substantive contribution towards the agenda of transforming the University and society.

Speaking during the convention, SRC Treasurer General Thato Phasha, explained that the SRC believes in empowering women not because it seems fashionable to do so, but because they believe that gender does not determine capacity. "I am a leader, please do not label me a female leader. We do not attach those labels to men in these positions, but we feel the need to announce my agenda before affirming that I am a leader", Phasha said. She further indicated that she cannot wait for a time when the gender balance policy will be implemented in the Student Representative Council. Not as a Favor to women, but simply because women in this institution have proven time and again that they are more than capable of leading.

"Those who have walked the mile need to pave the way for those who are left behind, and that is what the

SRC aims to do with such engagements. Women belong in all places where decisions are being made and I hope you receive what this engagement is meant to give to you. That you walk out of here, with everything that has your name written on it. No social political or economic barriers should dictate to you what you can and cannot do. Sometimes all it takes is reframing the way we think about leadership", she said.

Nene Mboweni-Kondlo spoke about the importance of immunization as it helps to prevent certain diseases. She also touched on the subject of contraceptives and preventative treatment and urged women not to feel bad or shamed when they need such services.

"It is very unfair that two teenagers in the same classroom engage in sex, and one falls pregnant, one must drop out, one does not and as health practitioners we are forced to not be part of the judgment cycle because we are educated and we have a responsibility that then means, wherever we exist, moving on, we need to ensure that those programs are easily accessible to young girls", she said.

Nonceba Mhlauli indicated that the country has made good progress in terms of women empowerment citing examples such as representation in Parliament, Cabinet and having a female Deputy Chief Justice. "Women end up facing the kind of backlash and fightbacks that we all face in different spaces, precisely because there are women-equal spaces. But that is exactly what empowerment is about, empowerment is about getting into spaces that you previously were not allowed to

occupy. Getting into those spaces, affirming ourselves in those spaces, and waking up every day and saying that I deserve to be here, and I am not going anywhere", Nonceba explained.

Mhlauli also mentioned that women have also proved to be the most organized and hardworking, whether it is in the church, at the university, at home and other spaces.

Lebogang Khunou mentioned that she found that there were opportunities in this country for women, and she took advantage of those opportunities by starting a business and restaurant in Melville. "The restaurant was a platform for actresses, it was a platform for powerful musicians, up-and-coming, well-served musicians and comedians, poets, you name them and artists. I used to sell stuff, I practically assisted People who needed a space to showcase their talent, and the biggest revenue was generated from production companies because movie companies would hire the space", Lebogang explained.

At the end, SRC Treasurer General explained that the success of the event was a clear indication that SMU women need to constantly be exposed to such opportunities and called upon the next SRC to build from what they have started.



SMU Statistical Science Students Visited CSIR

The SMU Statistical Science students recently visited the premises of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Pretoria for a demonstration and discussions on Statistics and Data Science. The presenters from various divisions within CSIR presented topics that entail the usage of statistics in health, deep/machine learning to predict seismic events, and natural language processing in social media data, to mention a few.

"I was so pleased to interact with students and staff from Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University. They visited us for demonstrations and discussions on Statistics and Data Science. The students are well-armed with the information they got today. We are hoping that some of these students will join us in future," said Jackie Phahlamohlaka, Chief Researcher at CSIR Information and Cybersecurity Centre.

On the use of statistics in health, it was said that the Pharmacovigilance Data Analytics Platform (PVDAP) was

developed for the South African Health and Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to provide it with data analytics tools to aid in monitoring the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines. Statistics played an important role in identifying safety signals associated with the administration of these vaccines to the South African population, guiding clinical and pharmacological experts to potential safety concerns. The integration of statistics with data science technologies was also crucial in monitoring data trends.

The presentation on the use of statistics to predict election outcomes showed how the use of a statistical algorithm, known as fuzzy c-means clustering, can be used to predict the election outcome on election night. By clustering voting districts based on past voting behaviour, one can apply the clusters to the first set of declared results for the new election and get accurate predictions per party using only about a 5% sample of voting district results. Deep learning was used to predict the probability of a seismic event occurring during the next worker shift in an underground mine.

The researchers explored the practical applications of natural language processing (NLP) on social media data, using a case study focused on the 2021 South African local government elections. Additionally, they delved into various other methods of employing NLP on text-based datasets. Furthermore, they showcased an analytics dashboard that demonstrated the outcomes of applying NLP to social media (specifically Twitter) data.

A presentation was also made around Event Prediction using Source Intelligence where the presenter said an in-progress development of a situational awareness tool designed to provide insights and predict the possibility of civil unrest. The tool utilizes Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) and machine learning. Consequently, various NLP methods employed to explore the data were discussed. It demonstrated visualisations that included the most common or top words using a word cloud, sentiment analysis performed using Valence Aware Dictionary and Sentiment Reasoner (VADER), as well as generated topics using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) and Non-negative matrix factorization (NMF or NNMF).

Students were also exposed to the work of the National Policy Data Observatory (NPDO) which is a government-led, national policy data observatory currently incubated at the CSIR. The Data and Decision Support Centre, which is housed in a secure facility at the CSIR, provides data collection and storage services, analytics, trends and dashboards on various socio-economic indicators. The data and insights generated by the Data Centre are already a significant input to National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS), the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Vaccination and other departments such as the Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) and Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

One of the Statistical Science honours students, Nkateko Mpangane said, "I would like to thank the people from the CSIR for the opportunity they have given us. We rarely find ourselves around people who will tell us what to expect in the industry. After today's presentations I am interested in pursuing a Masters Studies in cyber security or biostatistics/epidemiology".

The performance of the national logistics system is dependent on trustable, validated data to support strategic, tactical, and operational decision-making. CSIR's Logistics Observatory platform integrates information from multiple sources to provide insights into the status and performance of the logistics system.



Gugulethu Dhlamini embraces her heritage and poetic inspiration

Master of Science (MSc) in Medical Microbiology student Gugulethu Dhlamini is one of SMU's powerhouse poets and originates from the SiSwati tribe. Her love for poetry started in primary school while she was doing grade 7.

She explained that she started writing poetry in grade 7 and applied for an art and culture show at her school to recite poetry but unfortunately, did not make it to the performance list. She said not being chosen sparked something within her and that very same day she went to the organizer of the event to ask her to reconsider the decision and was later given a performance slot. "When I got on stage I poured my heart out. After my performance, I received positive feedback from some parents who were part of the audience. Reflecting on that opportunity made me realize which calling God gave me," expressed Gugulethu.

She uses poetry to retell stories that have shaped, challenged, and rebuilt her faith. She shared a quote she once heard that reads 'The genius in African history is in its repetition, but each time it is repeated something new is added to it'.

“I would like to put this quote forward to further amplify our need to look into what the previous generation added to our culture to make it what it is today and what we can add to make it what it needs to be for the next generation leaving room for them to do the same,” Gugu said.

She said our heritage is truly an inheritance passed down from one generation to another and finds value when we understand our cultures better. "We add value by contributing a new recipe, new fabric, or a new dance move, and even so when we bring storytelling. Do not be afraid to chant out your cultural songs, cook food that represents your people, and paint your face to show the trails your people left for their people," said Gugulethu.

Gugulethu mentioned that young people should get to know their cultures more because we live in a dynamic country where we are exposed to different cultures, traditions, and languages. She emphasized that it is important for people to fully immerse themselves in the richness of their land. Through it all, Gugulethu learned that everything she desires is worth fighting for and chasing after until it is attained.



Noluthando Tsele

Making Academic Progression through Entrepreneurship



Bachelor of Science in Dietetics second-year student Noluthando Tsele, embarked on her entrepreneurship journey while studying at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU). Noluthando indicated that she started her small business of selling doughnuts on campus as a side job to get extra cash to provide for herself since the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is not enough.

Noluthando aims to save her profit money to use as capital to start a big company before her graduation. She stated that running her business at SMU allowed her to instil great ideas in other students and for them to learn from her. Noluthando believes that in the future, when she becomes a well-known businesswoman, SMU students will be able to tell that she started

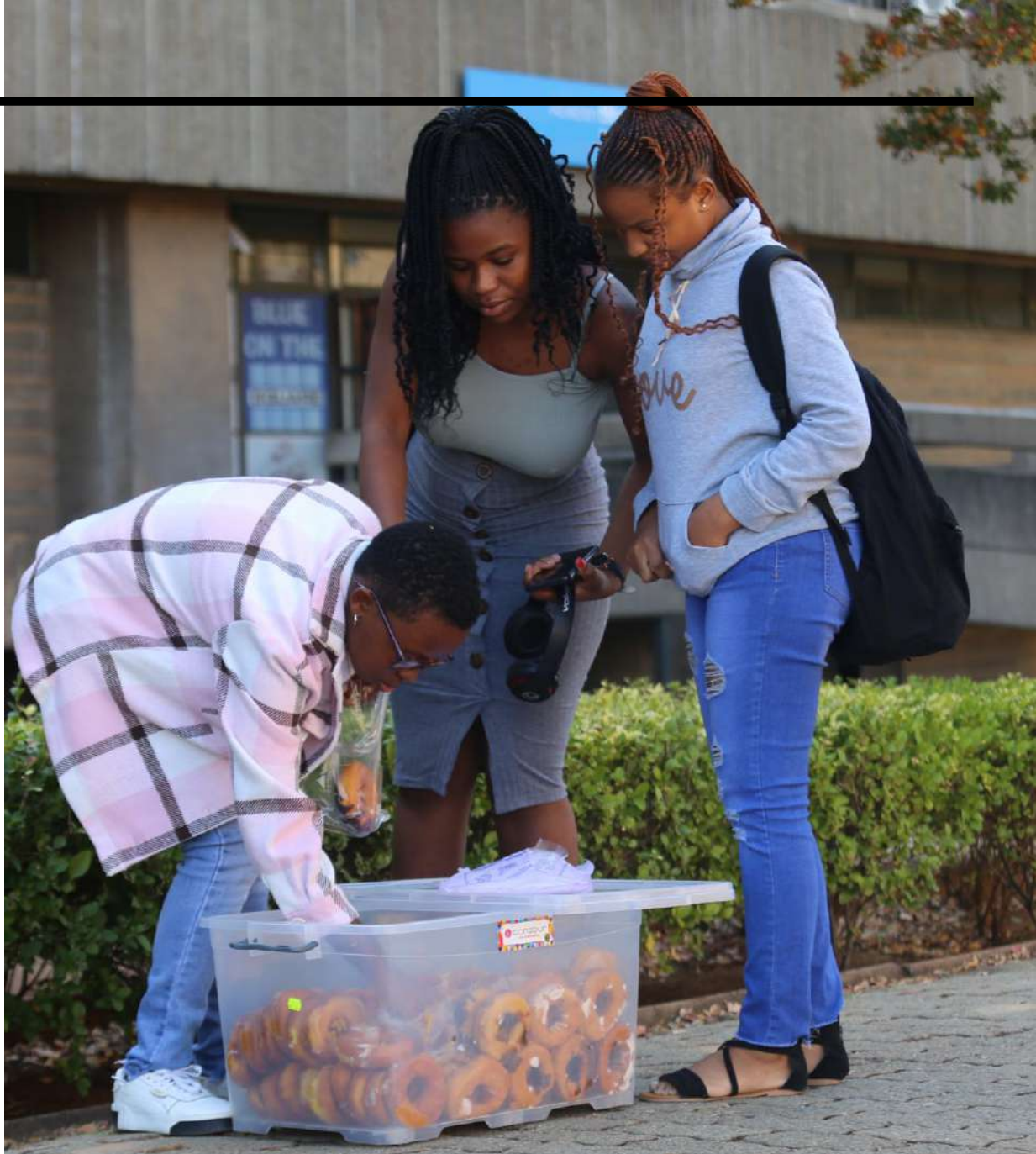
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from nothing to something. "At first, I did not know what to sell until a lady from my church who used to sell doughnuts at SMU advised me to consider selling doughnuts because the business would help me make money," she said.

"From a very young age, I always wanted to have my own business so that I can be able to create job opportunities for the youth and the less fortunate. I also wanted to have an orphanage of my own to give out and help the needy. I believe in starting small and growing. That is what motivated me to start my small business of selling doughnuts", said Noluthando.

Noluthando mentioned that in 2022 the University permitted SMU students to sell on campus. She further said that it was a good week for her because she decided to fix all the necessities needed for her business and started selling doughnuts. Noluthando mentioned that she does not bake the doughnuts herself but orders them from a bakery in Pretoria's central business district (CBD). Noluthando is also running other businesses back home in Kwa-Zulu Natal Eshowe.

What Noluthando hope to achieve in her business is to become a role model to young people and motivate them to start their businesses. "If you are passionate about becoming a great entrepreneur someday, the best thing to do is to pray to God about it before you take any steps, and he will guide you through. Have an understanding that running a business has its ups and downs. This should not discourage you but motivate you to strive for the better. Do not stress when things do not go your way because you are a person of a sound mind. Remember that you are a student and need to complete your Degree in record time, so weigh around your schedule to balance your academic work and business. Jeremiah 29:11, for I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and hope," Noluthando explained.



SMU Nursing Science Department Community Outreach at St John the Baptist Old Age Home

The Department of Nursing Science exposed its Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery (BNAM) students in Level 1 of their training to the community of the aged, at St John the Baptist Old Age Home in Winterveldt on the 5th and 12th of July 2023.

St John the Baptist Old Age Home was established in 1981 because there was a need for food and accommodation by several homeless, poor, and sick people who were spotted by the Catholic Church roaming in Winterveldt. The Church built the Old Age home to respond to this need by providing comfortable, safe, and hygienic homes for the aged men and women. The Home also provides adequate nursing, medical care, and pain management to the elderly. Community Nursing Science Lecturer, Ms Tshogfatso Mogotlane explained that SMU's Nursing Science Department is affiliated with the Old Age Home under geriatric nursing as part of their scope of practice as nurses.

BNAM first-level year students apply the theory taught in class by providing care to the elderly and attending to their basic needs such as helping with feeding, bed bath, bed making, grooming, and hygiene. These students ensure that the vital data which includes blood pressure and blood



glucose levels of the aged are measured for screening and health promotion. "Therapeutic communication with the elderly is enhanced as the students engage them within this community. The students get an opportunity to learn how to provide healthcare services beyond the traditional healthcare setting. It allows them to promote community health with the knowledge that they have acquired. The exposure to the community allows the students to achieve their learning outcomes under the module Hygiene and Grooming as well as observation of vital data and therapeutic communication with the community of the elderly," said Mogotlane.

The role of the lecturers was to oversee that the services that were rendered to the elderly within the old age home are within the scope of practice of the first-level BNAM students and they are of good quality. They also ensure that the students are learning how to take care of communities around them early in their training as future nurses since their programme is primary care driven. BNAM first-year level class

representative, Solly Namane shared that they interacted with the elderly by feeding and playing games with them. He said that this was very interesting for them as students because they gained more wisdom. "We had a 52-year-old patient who brought himself to the old age home in August 2022 and took his vital signs which came out very good. The patient enjoys being at the home, and seems happy and healthy because he had no complaints" reported Chwenga Maliwa.

Tshwanelo Mokobate had a 72-year-old patient who is very active and mentioned that he has a small garden at the back that keeps him busy during the day. She advised him that even though that is a good idea he must not be in the sun for a long time, must drink lots of water, and eat the vegetables he plants in the garden. The student's engagement with the aged enhanced and stimulated critical thinking and application of their nursing skills hence they dealt with different personalities.



Lesedi Moloto dedicates her poetry to Heritage Month

Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Life Sciences final year student Lesedi Moloto originates from the Bapedi tribe also known as the Northern Sotho people. She started writing poems in high school while doing grade 8 and started reciting in grade 12.

While commemorating Heritage Month under the theme 'celebrating our cultural diversity in a democratic South Africa,' to Lesedi this theme mean not forgetting our roots as people from different cultural societies and of different ethnicity within the same democratic space. She described that the traditions she still carries to this day include cooking bogobe ba makako (round-shaped porridge), a technique taught by her mother as a way of dishing up. "It is important to know when it comes to our tradition and culture to pass them to the next generation as we are a bridge between the previous generation and the next," Lesedi explained.

She recites the poem below:

Bogobe ba makako

Bomma ba tseba sephiri seo se re kopanyago le bao ba tlilego pele ga rena.
Our mothers know the secret that connects us to those who came before us.
They say it's within the boiling water in the pot.
It is in how you decrease the fire.
In how you pour while stirring
It is in the drum sound of pressure being released from the bubbles hitting the iron lid of the pot.
Our mothers know the secret that connects us to those who came before us.
They say it is in how you know it is ready without tasting it first.
How from the smell alone it reminds you of your own mother too,
Our mothers know the secret that connects us to those who came before us.
They say it is in how you dish it up,
How you first make it into rounded shapes like the moon just so it's easier to serve.

The Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics hosts the IPECP for SMU Second Year level students

SMU's Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics (DHND) held an Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (IPECP) at SMU under the theme 'Interprofessional health care to address community concerns through education, research, and clinical work'. This programme was implemented to train SMU's second-year level students to learn from each other about their different professions.

Second-year level students from departments such as Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, Physiotherapy, Radiography, Nursing, and Dental and Oral Health Sciences participated in the first-ever IPECP event specifically designed for them. A team of facilitators from all participating departments planned appropriate activities that align with the theme and specific IPECP core competencies. These students engaged in role clarification when they showcased their profession-specific assessment tools and techniques to their fellow team members. They also practiced Interprofessional communication and became engaged in shared community-focused problem-solving. Formal assessments were done according to reflections presented by the students through PowerPoint presentations.

DHND Lecturer Mrs Caida McDougall explained that the IPECP curriculum is based on content and knowledge that is covered in profession-specific curricula, and

provides opportunities for students to build on their prior knowledge and develop the required skills and attitudes to work in an interprofessional team. "According to the proposed curriculum, each year level of students should attend IPECP academic activities amounting to 16 credits, for instance 16 notional hours per semester. Therefore, the 16 credits were divided amongst four Wednesday afternoons, timeslots, and days that suited the timetables of most modules across campus" said McDougall. She indicated that training students together and letting them learn from, with, and about each other is recommended by the recent Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf).

Physiotherapy second year student TE Phiriga said he saw that if they work together, they can really be at their best. "Overall it was a great and exciting experience and I truly believe that this must be done more often so there is unity in hospital settings. Some professionals even retire without understanding what others do in the hospital and I truly believe that this does causes conflicts between professionals. One professional might undermine the other because they don't understand their role in a patient's life," expressed Phiriga.

IPECP applies to each year level of students in Medicine, Oral Health, Nursing, Pharmacy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Radiography, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, Human Nutrition, and



Dietetics professions. Values and ethics activities were designed to assist students to place the interest of patients and communities at the center of healthcare delivery, promoting health and health equity. Second-year level students were motivated to embrace cultural diversity within the bio-ethics realm. Teamwork was encouraged through collaborative discussions regarding community health concerns.



SMU Explosive Talent 2022 finalist explains the importance of balancing academics and talent in the arts

In the year 2022, Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Physiotherapy student Mokgethoa Molekwa entered the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University's (SMU) explosive talent competition to showcase his mesmerizing voice. This is a talent competition established for all SMU students.

Mokgethoa was doing his first year in Physiotherapy when he entered the competition and to win, contestants had to sell voting tickets and share their YouTube videos for people to like and comment on. "I surprisingly did not find it hard to get votes hence I successfully met the criteria and made it to the finals, all thanks to my family, friends, physio department, and all the students I approached and asked for votes" expressed Mokgethoa.

He mentioned that it was not easy tackling the competition and academics at the same time because the competition alone was time-consuming. He would sometimes rehearse until 10 p.m. and even past midnight. "My friends held my hand from the auditions until the very last day, which was when I knew that no man is an island. I eventually made it to the finals and what I can say is that I had the best moments of my life. I felt like a superstar and from those moments, I knew I was destined for greatness" shared Mokgethoa.

He indicated that this was not only a competition but a platform that allowed young, talented people to be heard and seen. He explained that he appreciates the competition's inclusivity since it accommodates all types of talents from students belonging to all faculties within SMU. According to Mokgethoa, the competition

helped him built a name for himself, it taught him to be humble and respectful. "I learned how to market myself and to communicate well with people. If given a chance, I would partake in other talent competitions because I want to grow as a solo singer and explore my talent. I believe that I have this voice for a purpose and it needs to be heard" highlighted Mokgethoa.

Not only is Mokgethoa an academic but also a singer. He indicated that he performs at some SMU events and a platform called Black Labone. "To anyone who has a talent, embrace it, it is a gift from God that no one can ever take away from you. Believe in yourself and be confident in everything that you do. Pray about everything that you want to achieve and do not wait for tomorrow, the time is now. The journey will not be easy but always know that Wen'uyindlovu", he said..

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.

HOLA EVERYONE. MY NAME IS NDABA FROM SEFAKO MAKGATHO HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY. I HAVE GOOD NEWS FOR YOU.

SMU IS OFFICIALLY ON TIKTOK!

FOLLOW US AND LET'S HAVE FUN WHILE SHARING IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

@smu_online



Nursing Students Empower Learners to Avert Social Ills

SMU third-year nursing students visited Filadelfia Secondary School in Soshanguve, North of Pretoria for a community engagement programme aligned with their learning objectives as required by the Council of Higher Education (CHE). The students staged a drama/play to demonstrate and educate learners about bullying and its effects, mental health, peer pressure, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and gender-based violence. The school currently has approximately 229 learners with special needs from all provinces of South Africa.

Third-year Clinical Facilitator Ms Tumisho Mokwele said learners with disabilities are within marginalised populations, and this motivated SMU Nursing Department to ensure that they include them when they do community engagements. "Our aim as Nursing Department of Sefako Makgatho Health Science University is to raise awareness about issues that face our communities, be it social issues or even contemporary issues related to mental health. We believe that when we teach and raise awareness in our communities a lot of social and mental health issues can be avoided among adolescents. The learners at Filadelfia engaged in fruitful discussions which were led by our Nursing Students, as they resonated with the struggles they face individually. To ensure inclusivity on the day, a Sign Language interpreter was on site to interpret for deaf learners and ensure mutual understanding during the deliberations with the Nursing students," explained Ms Mokwele.

"I think the age of the nursing students is compatible with the age of our learners, so the working relationship will be much better as they relate to our learners. And again, we have most of our learners that are not well and when we need extra hands it will help us to service them like ensuring that their health is taken good care of," said Mr Themba Temba, the principal of Filadelfia Secondary School.

"So we need to introduce more skills so that our deaf learners can venture into their skills because academically they are not doing well. When the students from SMU are free, they can even come and tutor our learners in mathematics, science and life sciences, and that in itself will assist," continues Mr Temba.



The Department of Student Affairs organized a session to set the agenda for future initiatives focusing on LGBTQIA+ Community



The Department of Student Affairs acknowledged Pride Month by hosting a session with the aim of fostering inclusivity and support for SMU's LGBTQIA+ students and to create a safe space for learning about the LGBTQIA+ community on 13 October 2023.

Speaking during the session, SMU Director of Student Affairs Mr Tulani Nkuntse emphasized that there is a real need to foster inclusivity within our campus that respects diversity. He said SMU's institutional values and consciousness compel us to act to ensure that everyone on campus feels human and that they belong. "We acknowledge that we have not invested energy in driving this component and this is the start of many more deliberate efforts to ensure that SMU fosters inclusivity. We shared ideas on how we can go about establishing a more sustained approach to creating learning opportunities for the SMU community on LGBTQIA+. We engaged on the presentation on research done within the LGBTQIA+ space and provided an opportunity to set an agenda for future initiatives", explained Nkuntse.

Public Health's NGAP Lecturer, Raikane Seretlo indicated that as part of the agenda for the day, was to assess and review if SMU is ready to produce healthcare professionals who have values of inclusivity and sensitivity. "The objective agreed upon was for our university to create a home for all regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation. To create and identify safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ students, and influence healthcare curriculum together with administrative activities of our institution to be inclusive," shared Seretlo.

He further said the goal was achieved because about 30 participants successfully gathered and were able to reflect on issues with practical and relevant experiences as well as providing impactful activities that we as a university can begin to do as we journey towards fostering inclusivity. A working structure to take the ideas forward was selected and a commitment was made to ensure that critical work continues within this area.



SMU celebrated its student entrepreneurs as part of Student Entrepreneurship Week

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) celebrated its student entrepreneurship week under the theme 'innovation for impact' on 12 October 2023 hosted by the Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator (CfERI).

Head of Department: Mathematics and Applied Mathematics Prof Maggie Aphane indicated that the purpose of this event was to identify students who have potential for entrepreneurship and assist them to grow by registering their business ideas. "The committee with the help of the marketing department will send a poster to all students with a closing date, criteria, and link to submit so that they can be shortlisted and invited for pitching," explained Prof Aphane.

Mr Dev Mamabolo from the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) and Prof Maggie Aphane were part of the judging panel. They used the criteria provisioned by the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) to select pitchers who were more innovative than the others. Senior Student Engagement Officer Mr Sandile Shabalala from EDHE motivated and shared insights about their contribution towards student entrepreneurship. EDHE alumni Mr. Abednego Maphanga spoke about his journey at EDHE and where he is today because of this institution whilst Mr Pontsho Mampuru, Technology Transfer Liaison Officer made a presentation about intellectual property (IP) that emanates from research projects and also assist with commercializing the IP.

Vukosi Mashele, a psychology student won first place for showcasing a variety of products from his business. "I am ecstatic and grateful for this opportunity because



the journey has been hard. With the prize I won, I am going to reinvest in my business," said Vukosi. Fourth-level year Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) student Kgaogelo Matlhwana won second place for pitching her business idea. The event gave students an opportunity to pitch their ideas and products, gain some valuable insight in terms of crafting and presenting successful business ideas and to prepare them for the future based on the feedback received from all the speakers and judges.







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